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Personal Networks and Social Change in Northern California from 1977 to 2015

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in the

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University of California, Berkeley

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how changes in American society over the past four decades have shaped personal networks. Specifically, it uses survey data to assess changes in the personal networks of residents of northern California in 1977-8 and 2015-6. The dissertation is organized as three papers, each considering one key way that personal networks may have changed.

The first paper examines the changing role of distance in the maintenance of personal ties. Contra popular suppositions that technology is making social interactions superficial or that technology is a panacea for social support, I find that people today are more selective about friends and family whom they rely upon, both ignoring those nearby more often and casting a wider geographic net for emotional support. I examine changes in relationships with siblings, friends, and mothers and fathers. Intimate supportive exchanges that were not strongly differentiated by proximity in the late 1970s were more likely to be conducted with individuals who live farther away by the mid-2010s. Compared to respondents of the late 1970s, mid-2010s respondents were also more likely to feel “especially close” to parents and friends who lived more than an hour away. As one may suspect, exchanges that require getting together, such as socializing or obtaining practical support, are still sustained by proximity. Overall, people use distance and technology together to exchange more with their most important ties, while allowing others to wither.

The second paper asks whether women’s greater labor force participation has led to changes in the composition of their personal networks. I find that women have gained supportive work-related ties in the last four decades compared to men. For both time periods, I identify individuals associated with work who were also named as providers of four supportive exchanges: socializing, confiding, obtaining practical help, and asking for advice. Respondents could describe these individuals as coworkers, people who did the same kind of work, or people whom they had met at work. While women in the late 1970s lagged men in forming work-related supportive ties, women today have caught up with or surpassed men. Follow-up analyses support two explanations for the shift. First, women continue to largely befriend women, not men, at work; this suggests that some of the increase in women’s supportive ties at work can be attributed to the increased presence of women in the workplace. Second, compared to men today and to women of the late 1970s, women today who are not working are much more likely to interact with people associated with work. This suggests that women are better able than men to maintain work-related ties.

Paper three considers whether changing gender roles and norms at home and at work have led men’s and women’s personal networks to become more similar. Demographic changes such as women’s increasing and men’s decreasing labor force participation and related cultural changes such as more egalitarian beliefs about the division of labor in the household would suggest some convergence in the characteristics of men’s and women’s personal networks. Research on personal networks often emphasizes differences between men and women in terms of kin involvement, access to nonkin resources, emotional intimacy, and overall burdens and support. In each of the four areas mentioned, I find some evidence of convergence. The gap between men and women has decreased in terms of the number of kin they consider close, their willingness to confide, their ties to adult children, their overall network burdens, and access to people from work contexts. In the only instances of divergence, women pulled ahead of men in terms of access to advice from nonkin and, it seems, became even more likely than men to serve as confidants. In other ways the networks of men and women remained distinctive. I argue that

the overall picture is one of partial convergence and that we ought to view some of the differences typically associated with men and women's networks as products of their time.

In sum, the papers suggest that there are substantively significant and statistically measureable changes in the personal networks of Americans in the last four decades, particularly in terms of the balancing of men's and women's networks and in terms of using technology to maintain important ties regardless of distance.

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Claude Fischer finds praise embarrassing so I will keep it short. It would be impossible to thank Claude enough. Claude has not only taught me how to think and write more clearly, but often serves as an example of how to navigate every aspect of research life. The questions I regularly ask as I examine everyday life are questions I learned from Claude. Claude is such an excellent teacher and yet so humble that I do not think he will ever fully appreciate how much he helps his student grow. I am incredibly grateful to have been able to learn from him for the past six years.

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INTRODUCTION

Sociologists are fond of telling undergraduates that social relations connect individuals to society. Understanding this idea in concrete terms could be a lifelong project. A good place to start would be with personal networks. Here I define personal networks as the set of people with whom an individual exchanges social support, such as socializing, confiding, advice, or practical help. More simply, these are the family, friends and other associates upon whom individuals depend and who depend upon those individuals. Yet, personal networks are not merely assemblages of transacting individuals. Personal networks hold together shared narratives, legitimate an identity, and remind individuals to uphold commitments, among other functions. To sociologists, personal networks can serve as the anchor for a variety of questions – how does getting or giving support influence well-being, what is the role of friends and family in shaping beliefs, how might personal networks reproduce social inequalities? Outside the academy, from the standpoint of the policymaker interested in social support or the social critic concerned with the moral functions of “community,” the personal network is an equally important anchor.

Given their importance within sociology and their potential to inform everyday understanding of social issues, we might expect to see a great number of studies of personal networks and how they have changed over time. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The most comprehensive data we have comes from the General Social Survey’s Network Module, administered in 1985, 1987, and 2004 (will be administered again in 2017).¹ Due to changes in the 1985 and 2004 survey designs, it is hard to draw meaningful conclusions from these data about how Americans’ personal networks are changing (see Fischer, 2009; McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Brashears, 2009; Paik and Sanchagrin, 2013). Perhaps more importantly, the data reflect only a single question – “From time to time, most people discuss important matters with other people. Looking back over the last six months - who are the people with whom you discussed matters important to you?” Respondents only report upon those with whom they discuss important matters. Not only are these fragmentary representations of personal networks, they also lack critical details about the relationship between the respondent and confidant as well as characteristics of the confidant.² As a result, we know little about how personal networks have changed in recent years.

The papers in this dissertation arise from a unique opportunity to compare rich survey data from the late 1970s and the mid-2010s in order to examine how personal networks have changed in the intervening four decades. In particular, I examine changes in personal networks in northern California in 1977-8 and 2015-6. Comparisons between these two time points are limited in some key respects: the later survey is not a strict replication and has a much lower response rate than the earlier one, among other differences.³ Nonetheless, certain careful

¹ A brief version of the module was used in 2010 to determine whether the findings the increased number of Americans who had no confidants was an artifact of the changes from 1985 to 2004 survey designs (original findings in McPherson et al., 2006).

² Only Mok, Wellman and Carrasco’s (2010) comparison of east Toronto in 1978 and 2001 provides another analysis of changing personal networks in the North American context.

³ In addition, the geographic coverage of the two surveys differs – with the ’77-8 survey targeting individuals in a 200 mile x 200 mile square with San Francisco in the bottom-left corner and extending north and west past Sacramento. The ’15-6 survey covered six Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. The ’77-8 survey reflected a set of research questions about the differences in the personal networks of people living in more vs. less urban settings and thus over-sampled on people living in more rural settings – the ’15-6 survey attempted to reflect the populations of those six Bay Area counties. The ages of

comparisons allow us to assess how major societal changes in the past four decades have shaped personal networks.

Important changes in American society in the past four decades are best described elsewhere (e.g., Fischer and Hout, 2006), but here I mention those which are most likely to affect personal networks. Perhaps the greatest changes relate to women's empowerment. The percentage of women in the labor force has gone from under 40% prior to the mid-1960s to 48% in 1977 to just over 60% in the late 1990s and early 2000s to 57% in 2015 (US BLS, 2016). Among married women with children, labor force participation went from 40% in 1970 to almost 70% in 2005 (Kalleberg, 2011: 46). In other words, the percentage of families in which both spouses are working full-time has risen substantially in the past two generations.

Alongside a rebalancing of paid work, Americans have moved toward a more equitable (though not yet equal) division of labor at home (Messner, 1993; Thébaud, 2010; Chesley, 2011). Norms about men's and women's roles at home and at work have become more egalitarian (Wilkie, 1993; Hook, 2006; Galinsky, Aumann and Bond 2009; Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2011; Bianchi et al., 2012). Changing norms have, in turn, shaped aspirations and opportunities: women are completing college at higher rates than men (Fischer and Hout, 2006; Kalleberg, 2011: 41; DiPrete and Buchmann, 2013) and the ranks of women in higher status jobs have grown – though disparities in pay and promotion persist (Cohen, 2004; Crompton, 2006; Juhn and Potter, 2006; Schnittker, 2007; Percheski, 2008; Kalleberg, 2011). In other words, the public and private roles of men and women appear to have become more similar: expectations increased for men at home and for women at work.

Expectations about marriage and children have also changed. Many new jobs require more education, delaying marriage and children (Kalleberg, 2011). Alongside college and professional degrees, loftier career ambitions also postpone the start of a nuclear family (Fischer and Hout, 2006). From 1977 to 2015 women's median age at first marriage increased from 21 to 27 and mean age of having a first child increased from 22 to 26 (US Census Bureau, 2015). At the same time, men appear to be struggling to finish college relative to women and their labor force participation rate has declined from 78% in 1977 to 69% in 2015 (DiPrete and Buchmann, 2013; US BLS, 2016). Both men and women are taking longer to reach the milestones that typically signify adulthood, such as being employed, living independently, getting married, and having a child. When they do eventually marry and have children – they tend to have fewer children – leading to a smaller nuclear family as compared with the America of two generations past (from about 3 to 2 children per woman from the late 1970s to the mid-2010s, US Census Bureau, 2015). Combined with higher life expectancies this has led to the image of the American family taking on a “bean-pole” structure: more generations are alive at any one point, but each generation is smaller.

Yet, few Americans would jump to demographic trends when asked how society has changed in recent decades – instead, most would likely point to the greater role of technology in everyday life. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) have made staying in touch with family and friends dramatically easier and cheaper. Digital phone calls across any distance are extremely inexpensive today as compared with the long-distance phone plans of the 1970s and 1980s. Email is essentially free, instantaneous and (to most) less of a hassle than mailing a letter. Alongside instant-messaging, email enables an entire series of small or back-

respondents in the two surveys also differ, with the '77-8 survey capturing adults 18+ and the '15-6 survey capturing adults 21-30 and 50-70. Unlike the changes to the survey instrument and the drop in the response rate, these other differences in the two sets of results can be, to some extent, controlled for.

and-forth exchanges that would have taken weeks via mail or never taken place at all. Whereas video-calls were reserved for costly and clunky teleconferencing in the late 1970s, any modern smartphone or computer can provide a better experience for free. Lastly, airfare has drastically come down, making flying much more commonplace and thereby making face-to-face interaction more feasible.

Even with this brief and partial survey of changes in American society, it is easy to imagine a variety of potential implications for personal networks for sociologists to investigate. This dissertation addresses three questions that are of broad interest to sociologists studying technology, gender, and social support. First, the ease of keeping in touch with and visiting far-flung friends and relatives would suggest that a greater proportion of emotionally close friends and family will live faraway. Second, we might guess that women derive greater support from people associated with work. Third, we might expect the balancing of men's and women's roles at home and work to encourage their personal networks to become more similar. I briefly describe other potential projects in the Conclusion.

I take up each of these potential changes in the papers that follow. In the first paper, I examine how the geographic distribution of friends and family with whom respondents exchange support has changed. I address the question: *How have ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) affected our ability to maintain personal ties at a distance?* I do so by estimating how likely respondents are to exchange social support with and “feel close” to siblings, friends, mothers and fathers who live over one hour away in 1977 and 2015. I find that people are more likely to obtain emotional support from and “feel close” to family and friends who live over an hour away in the mid-2010s as compared with the late 1970s. At the same time, they depend equally, if not moreso, upon people who live nearby for socializing and practical help. I suggest that one effect of greater ICT use is that people have become pickier about the friends and family they depend upon: they obtain emotional support from those to whom they feel closest, regardless of how far away they live. Contra skeptics who believe that technology-use is thinning social relations, I argue that these findings show that people use communications technologies to preserve what matters most, their intimate ties.

Paper two examines whether women's personal networks began to reflect their greater participation in the workforce. The findings show that, relative to men, women have gained supportive ties associated with work. Using similar questions from both surveys, I examine the percentage of men's and women's work-related associates who were also named as providers of any of four types of support: socializing, confiding, practical help, and advice. Respondents could describe these individuals as coworkers, people who did the same kind of work, or people whom they had met at work. While women in the late 1970s lagged men in forming work-related supportive ties, women today form as many supportive ties at work as men do. Follow-up analyses support two explanations for the shift. First, women continue to largely befriend women, not men, at work; this suggests that some of the increase in women's supportive ties at work can be attributed to the increased presence of women in the workplace. Second, compared to men today and to women of the late 1970s, women today who are not working are much more likely to interact with people associated with work. This suggests that women have also caught up to men in supportive ties from work because they are better able to maintain those ties.

The third paper examines the potential convergence of the characteristics of men's and women's personal networks. Research on personal networks often emphasizes differences between men and women in terms of kin involvement, access to nonkin resources, emotional intimacy, and overall burdens and support. Demographic changes such as women's increasing

and men's decreasing labor force participation and related cultural changes such as more egalitarian beliefs about the division of labor in the household would suggest that these network differences may have shrunk over the past two generations. In each of the four areas mentioned, I find some evidence of convergence. Since the late 1970s, the gap between men and women has decreased in terms of the number of kin they consider close, their willingness to confide, their ties to adult children, their overall network burdens, and access to people from work contexts. In the only instances of divergence, women pulled ahead of men in terms of access to advice from nonkin and, it appears, are disproportionately relied upon as both men and women confide more often. In other ways the networks of men and women remained distinctive. I argue that the overall picture is one of partial convergence and that we ought to view some of the differences typically associated with men's and women's networks as products of their time.

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Chapter 1: The Primacy of Quality: Distance and Personal Relationships in the Late 1970s and Today

ABSTRACT

How distance affects social relations is a long-standing question in the literature on personal networks. Recently, much scholarship has concentrated on the role of technology in maintaining social ties at greater distances. Using survey data that allows comparison of hundreds of egocentric networks in 2015-16 to similar networks in 1977-78, I find that people today are more selective about friends and family whom they rely upon, both ignoring those nearby more often and casting a wider geographic net for emotional support. I examine changes in relationships with siblings, friends and mothers and fathers. I find that intimate supportive exchanges that in the 1970s were not strongly differentiated by proximity are in the 2010s more likely to be conducted with individuals who live farther away. 2010s respondents were also more likely to feel “especially close” to parents and friends who lived more than an hour away. As one may suspect, exchanges that require getting together are still sustained by proximity. Overall, people use distance and technology together to exchange more with their most important ties, while allowing others to wither.

What do we make of technology's growing role in our social lives? Much of the existing commentary can be divided into utopian and decline narratives. On one hand, we have tools that empower us to exchange information and support with individuals anywhere in the globe at nearly zero cost. The possibilities to enrich our social lives would appear limitless. On the other hand, it is we, with all our habits and weaknesses, who make use of these tools. We might use these to fill our time with distractions rather than enrichment; for instance, to mindlessly skim our newsfeeds rather than engage in meaningful conversation.

While examples to justify nearly any hypothesis abound, systematic data that compares social life before and after the rise of ubiquitous and low-cost communication tools has been lacking. The present study is one of the first to contrast data about personal networks prior to and after widespread adoption of mobile and internet tools (cf. Mok, Wellman and Carrasco, 2010). It relies on comparable surveys of personal networks from 1977 and 2015 to examine the role of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in the exchange of social support and maintenance of intimate ties. Specifically, I answer the question: *How have ICTs affected our ability to maintain personal ties at a distance?*

I address this question by examining exchanges of social support and feelings of closeness to friends, siblings, mothers, and fathers, in 1977 and 2015. I examine these four relationships in order to minimize the chance that any changes in exchanges or feelings of closeness by distance are the product of changing norms, such as the definition of "friend" or expectations around social contact with parents. Moreover, I include two exchanges that would appear to require proximity despite technological advances (socializing and practical support) to ensure that the results are not simply a methodological artefact. I find that, in most cases in the 1970s, proximity was not predictive of exchanges with and feelings of closeness to parents, siblings and friends. In the mid-2010s, individuals were more likely to maintain supportive confiding and advising relationships, as well as feelings of closeness, at a distance, while continuing to rely on those nearby for socializing and getting practical help. 2010s respondents exhibited more selectivity in how they maintained ties. They were less likely to exchange emotional support with friends or family simply because they lived nearby (out of convenience) – instead, they confided in and sought advice from those to whom they felt closest, regardless of where they lived. In sum, people appear to be using ICTs to keep the ties they most want to keep and are able to better maintain those ties.

In terms of what ICTs mean for social life, I argue that these findings support an agentic view of ICT-use. Rather than making use of technology to simply keep in touch better or more cheaply with everyone, technology use reflects people pursuing very particular preferences. The data suggest that people use ICTs and distance in conjunction to pursue the social lives they prefer. Whereas moving far away might have spelled the end of all but the best of relationships in the 1970s, the loss of face-to-face interaction can today be seen as a convenient selection mechanism for ties individuals are not willing to work to maintain via technology.

Personal Networks in Light of Social and Technological Change

What factors may have affected the geographic distribution of personal ties since the 1970s? In terms of demographics, the most obvious source of geographic dispersion of ties – mobility – has been decreasing since the 1970s (Fischer and Hout, 2006). This would reduce the need to keep in touch with far-flung ties (though the Bay Area may be an exception – see Data and Methods). Other large changes in family and social life may not have affected the

geographic distribution of ties in any obvious way, but I mention them as background. Some of these major changes fall under the *emerging adulthood* umbrella – people spend more time in school, marry or enter into stable partnerships later, and delay parenthood as compared with two generations ago. A related major demographic and economic change is that women are participating in the labor force at far higher rates – the percentage of women in paid work was already rapidly climbing by 1977 to almost one in two and peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s with about seven in ten working, which has dropped to about six in ten in recent years (US BLS, 2016). Alongside the changing roles of women at home and in the workplace, people’s attitudes about the division of work at home and the importance of women’s careers have become more egalitarian (e.g., Hook, 2006; Galinsky, Aumann and Bond 2009). Yet, apart from declining mobility, it is unclear what we should expect from these large-scale changes in terms of the geographic distribution of personal ties.

Perhaps the most perceptible change in terms of Americans’ staying in touch with far-flung family and friends is the use of technology. Technological changes have reduced the effort and cost associated with communicating and meeting face-to-face. Email does not require a stamp, nor a trip to the post office for large documents, and does away with the formality of writing letters. Email also allows for nearly instantaneous follow-up. People had to be at home to make phone calls in the late 1970s and long-distance phone calls were expensive – barriers that have been reduced by mobile phones and digital transmission rather than dedicated telephone lines. Video-calling, an exotic tool for businesses in the late 1970s, is essentially free today. Finally, whereas flying used to be relatively rare and exclusive, it has become relatively inexpensive and commonplace. People are more likely to use more of these ways of staying in touch with individuals to whom they feel more strongly connected (Haythornthwaite, 2005).

Despite these technological changes, many sociologists have been justifiably reluctant to accept the “demise of distance” hypothesis, as argued, for example, by Cairncross (2001). People prefer face-to-face contact and are more likely to befriend those they encounter more often (e.g., Festinger, Schachter and Back, 1950; Litwak and Kulis, 1987; Baym et al., 2004). Moreover, face-to-face contact tends to be with people who are not merely accessible, but who live very close by. Alters within five miles accounted for roughly two-thirds of Toronto residents’ face-to-face interactions (Wellman, 1996). As Mok, Wellman and Carrasco summarize of other survey data, “Face-to-face contact is predominantly local, which involves mainly short-distance relationships. Despite the widespread availability of cars, transit and planes, its frequency drops rapidly beyond 5 miles” (2010: 2780). Even within a person’s network, proximity remains one of the best predictors of interaction.

Proximity not only predicts face-to-face contact, it predicts who will be in a person’s network (Verbrugge, 1983; Preciado et al., 2012). Most people’s networks have a high rate of turnover to begin with, in which preserved ties tend to be family or one’s closest friends (Wellman et al., 1997; Morgan, Neal and Carter 1997; Cornwell et al., 2014). Mobility puts an extra strain on the maintenance of family and friend ties. For instance, studies of migrants’ networks find that they replace some of their far-flung friends, but tend to retain connections to family and to their emotionally closest friends (e.g., Lubbers et al., 2010). Maintaining relationships at a distance requires greater effort (Carrasco et al., 2008).

It would seem that cheaper and easier-to-use communication tools have not dampened people’s preference for nearby ties. In fact, sociologists argue that people’s use of technology as a tool for coordinating their social lives has led to greater face-to-face contact with those living nearby. Comparing data from the 1978 to 2005 in East Toronto, Mok, Wellman and Carrasco

find that the “frequency of face-to-face contact has increased and its sensitivity to distance has also increased between the 1970s and the 2000s” (2010: 2778). In general, all types of contact – phone, email and face-to-face, are higher when people live nearer to one another (Mok et al., 2010). People in fact tend to use technology to coordinate more face-to-face interactions with their most proximate ties; in this sense, technology reinforces the importance of proximity.

It would appear that sociologists generally conclude that proximity still matters. Yet, what of the potential for keeping in touch cheaply and easily with close friends and family who live faraway? Despite the importance of proximity for interaction, none of these studies foreclose the possibility that people are able to maintain intimate ties at a distance, even if they interact more frequently with people who live nearby.

In fact, distance has long been seen as a test of social ties (Thibaut and Kelley, 1957; Fischer and Steuve, 1977). Thibaut and Kelley argue that similarity on values leads to more intimate friendships. They suggest that, as a result, friends who hold more similar values are more likely to remain friends at a distance than friends who do not.⁴ If this proposition were true, it would mean that we ought to see people confiding in, asking for advice from, and labeling as “close” friends who live faraway.

Relying on a survey of men in Detroit in 1965-6, Fischer and Steuve (1977) follow up on Thibaut and Kelley’s hypothesis and largely confirm it. While they do not have data about the actual values of respondents or their alters, they do find that the higher quality the relationship, the more distance it is able to tolerate. They conclude, “Friends who live nearby may either be very intimate or not; but the farther away the potential friend, the more intimate he or she must be in order to be selected and for the relation to be maintained” (173). Above a certain very high threshold, such as close kin and childhood friends, they find that there is no relationship between the quality of the relationship and distance – the closest kin and nonkin are equally likely to live near and far.

As these studies indicate, people maintaining distant ties is no surprise to sociologists even if recent work has emphasized the importance of proximity for interaction. In Toronto of the 1970s, only about one in five close friends or relatives lived within one mile while one in three lived more than 100 miles away (Wellman, 1996, also see Mok and Wellman, 2007). Similarly, in northern California of the late 1970s, about one in four personal contacts lived within five minutes and slightly more than one in three lived more than an hour away (Fischer, 1982). Post-internet studies in Europe found only a slightly smaller share of important network members living far away. In 2005-6, roughly one in five members of Zurich residents’ networks lived at least 100 km away (Frei and Axhausen, 2007). In 2001, a bit fewer than one in five of Toulouse, France residents’ network members lived more than one hour away (Grossetti, 2007). Based on this work, it would appear that the spatial distribution of social ties is not only relatively similar across Western contexts, it has been little affected by cheaper communication tools. I will argue, however, that even if the spatial distribution of these ties has changed little, the quality and emotional intimacy of exchanges represented by these non-local ties have increased.

⁴ Thibaut and Kelley write, “If the physical distance separating the members of a dyad is greatly increased and if this adds to their cost of maintaining their relationship, then it would follow that a relationship voluntarily maintained over great distances would have to provide some sort of compensation for the high cost. Thus we might expect that the cost would be lower in other respects or that the reward provided would be higher, as compared with relationships maintained over short distances. If we assume that similarity with regard to values operates to reduce cost and/or heighten reward, then relationships maintained over great distances would be expected to show relatively high value similarity” (1957: 41).

Despite the interest in the role of technology in our social lives, there remains little work that looks at a population before and after the widespread use of the internet and mobile phones. The key study in this regard is the aforementioned Mok et al. (2010) analysis of Toronto in 1978 and 2005. They find that face-to-face and phone contact have not declined in frequency overall and both remain about as sensitive to distance as they were in the late 1970s. Phone contact becomes more sensitive to distance at 100 and 500 miles, and face-to-face contact becomes very sensitive to distance beginning around five miles (and email is relatively insensitive to distance). As expected, people who are more likely to be called are more likely to be seen face-to-face. Mok et al. also find that strong friendship ties and immediate kinship ties are more likely to survive distance than less intimate ties.

While the Mok et al. study is a very useful contribution, it is limited by a few factors that this study improves upon. The sample size for the 2005 period is small ($n=86$ respondents). Second, while they distinguish between kin and nonkin and close friends versus neighbors, they do not use these roles to explain changes in the frequency of interaction from 1978 to 2005. In other words, they do not attribute changes in frequency of contact to some aspect of the ties – they simply describe changes. Finally, their survey inquired about interaction and not specific supportive exchanges, such as socializing, confiding, or asking for advice. In contrast, the present study has a large sample size for both time periods ($n=577$ for age-matched respondents in 1977 and $n=1,149$ for 2015), has four types of supportive exchanges covered in both periods (as well as reports of “feeling close”), and focuses on particular roles (just friends,⁵ siblings, mothers and fathers) throughout to explain changes in the relationship between distance and tie maintenance.

I’ve mentioned two positions in this debate. In the first, represented by optimists such as Cairncross (2001) and pessimists such as Turkle (2012), technology acts upon people’s relationships. The optimists would suggest that because technology enables people to maintain contact with more people who live farther away, they will. The pessimists suggest that because technology enables people to pursue trivial online interaction, potentially at the expense of real-life interaction, they will. The second view is represented by recent sociological work: propinquity matters. I argue that this view is partially correct, propinquity still matters for getting to know people, seeing them often, and can make it much easier to maintain a relationship. Yet there are also cases in which propinquity matters less today – particularly for maintaining one’s higher quality ties. Individuals certainly use technology to better coordinate their face-to-face interactions with those who live nearby (e.g., Fischer, 1992; Mok, Wellman and Carrasco, 2010; Coscia and Hausmann, 2015), but this paper will show that they also make use of distance and widely available communication technologies to preserve the personal ties they value most and allow others to wither. I next discuss the survey data I relied upon.

Data and Methods

I make use of two surveys of people in northern California: the Northern California Communities Study (NCCS) of 1977-78 and the UC Berkeley Social Networks Study (UCNets) of 2015-16.⁶

⁵ I define friends in this study as “just friends” (Fischer, 1982b) – or people for whom the role of friend is the only role they maintain to the respondent.

⁶ For simplicity and because only a small portion of the data was gathered in 1978, I refer to 1977 as the date for NCCS. For the same reasons, I use 2015 rather than 2015-2016 as the date for UCNets.

The Northern California Community Study (NCCS, PI: Claude Fischer; ICPSR #07744) describes the egocentric networks of 1,050 respondents in 1977-1978 (over 19,000 ties). Respondents were sampled from a 200 by 200 mile area that begins with San Francisco and extends east and north. Relative to the population, NCCS oversampled on people living in small towns because the research addressed differences between the personal networks of those living in more urban versus more rural environments. Interviewers used eleven name-generators to obtain information about respondents' networks. For example, respondents named individuals whom they could count upon for socializing, confiding, advice, or a loan. Once a complete list of unique individuals was compiled, interviewers asked for information about each person, such as age, sex, religion, and whether they lived within five minutes or one hour of the respondent. These data have been previously analyzed on their own (e.g., Fischer, 1982; Feld, 1984; Blum, 1985) and for comparative purposes (Fischer and Shavit, 1995; Grossetti, 2007). A more detailed description of the NCCS survey is in the appendices to Fischer (1982).

UCNets is an NIH-funded study of social support and health. It is not a strict replication of the NCCS, though it is close enough to make meaningful comparisons and I attempt to control for major differences in method and sample. UCNets surveyed 1,149 residents of the northern California Bay Area (~60% in person and 40% on the web).⁷ Unlike the NCCS which surveyed people ages 18+, UCNets surveyed individuals 21-30 or 50-70 years old. Respondents were residents of six Bay Area counties: Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Alameda and Contra Costa. Although it had fewer name-generators than the 1977 survey, I lined up the name-generators from NCCS and UCNets as closely as possible when making comparisons. For both datasets, I only consider alters named to four supportive exchange questions, pertaining to asking for advice, confiding, socializing and obtaining practical help. The text to these questions, and differences between them in the two surveys, are presented in Table 1. Like the NCCS, UCNets also collected detailed data about the respondents' background characteristics, their relationships with alters and characteristics of those alters.

The samples differ in a few ways, some of which may affect the results and for which I introduce controls. Demographic changes mean that the sample composition and characteristics of people's networks will have changed. People today have fewer siblings, are separated in age from parents by more years, marry later and themselves have children later. Young people are more likely to be living with parents today than they were in the 1970s. The population of the Bay Area is also more diverse. The percentage of Asians and Latinos have increased greatly, while the percentage of Blacks has decreased slightly. Women and men have much more schooling. Nonetheless, these demographic changes do not detract from the generalizability of my findings. Some mirror changes in the U.S. as a whole and changes in the population are in fact a large part of the story. Other changes in the Bay Area overstate changes in the U.S., but I try to control for their effects in my regression models. The variables that I kept in the models as controls are described in the *Control Variables* section below.

The California Bay Area is unique in some regards and representative of the United States in others. The biggest departure from U.S. trends found in the Bay Area for this study is relatively high mobility. Mobility in the U.S. has been decreasing since the 1970s, but the percentage of Bay Area residents who *grew up* in California in the 1977 survey was 46.1% (n=478; 53.6% of all 1,050 respondents grew up in California) and the percentage of respondents *born* in California in the 2015 survey was 45.1%. In other words, mobility appears to be steadier

⁷ After excluding poor quality cases – here defined as people who did not answer a question toward the end of the survey about their educational attainment (dropping 205 cases).

among Bay Area residents than in the U.S. If anything, this helps strengthen the comparison between the two time periods (changing mobility is less of a concern), but adds a layer of interpretation when we try to extend the implications of this study to the U.S. as a whole.

Nonetheless, the key question for the generalizability of study is whether the people of the Bay Area are systematically different from other Americans in how they maintain their social ties. Given the surprisingly strong similarities observed between northern Californian's networks of the 1970s, French people's networks of 2005 (Grossetti, 2007) and Israeli's networks of 1991 (Fischer and Shavit 1995), I am skeptical that the people of northern California are so different from other Americans that we cannot learn about general tendencies from them. I do not claim that the measures here are exact estimates for the larger population, but I do believe that the direction of associations between variables, particularly those with strong effects and high significance would generalize.

Dependent Variables

Table 1: Text of Dependent Variable Questions for 1977 and 2015 Surveys

	1977 text	2015 text
Ask Advice	Often people rely on the judgment of someone they know in making important decisions about their lives--for example, decisions about their family or their work. Is there anyone whose opinion you consider seriously in making important decisions? [if yes:] Whose opinion do you consider? PROBE: Is there anyone else?	When you have to make important decisions – for example, about taking a job, family issues, or health problems – are there any people whose advice you seek out or would seek out in making those decisions? They can be family, friends, or professional advisors. Whose advice do you or would you seek out? I can take up to six names.
Confide	When you are concerned about a personal matter--for example, about someone you are close to or something you are worried about--how often do you talk about it with someone--usually, sometimes, or hardly ever? When you do talk with someone about personal matters, who do you talk with? [PROBE:] Anyone else?	Sometimes personal matters come up that concern people, like issues about relationships, important things in their lives, or difficult experiences. Do you ever confide in someone about these sorts of things or do you never confide in anyone? Who do you confide in about these sorts of things?
“Feels Close”	Which of the people on this list do you feel especially close to?	Which of the people on this list do you feel especially close to?
Practical Help	In the past three months, have any friends or relatives helped with any tasks around the home, such as painting, moving furniture, cooking, cleaning, or major or minor repairs?	In the last few months, have any friends, relatives, or acquaintances given you any practical help like moving furniture, doing repairs, picking up something at the store, looking after a child, giving you a ride, or

	[if yes:] Who helped you? [six lines]	things like that? [if yes:] Please give us the names of people who have done things like this for you in the last few months. [initially four lines, expandable]
Socialize	<p>Which, if any, of these have you done in the last three months?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had someone to your home for lunch or dinner? - Went to someone's home for lunch or dinner? - Someone came by your home to visit? - Went over to someone's home for a visit? - Went out with someone (e.g., a restaurant, bar, movie, park) - Met someone you know outside your home (e.g., a restaurant, bar, park, club) - [R can volunteer other activity] <p>[if yes on any:] May I have the first names of the people you do these things with? [interviewer has eight lines, but some Rs went over eight]</p>	<p>First, I am going to ask you about activities that you might do with other people and about how often you do them – at least once a week, a couple of times a month, several times during the year, once a year or less? [SHOW CARD]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About how often do you get together at your or a friend's or relative's house for a meal? - Go out to eat at a restaurant with friends or relatives? - Go out to a live sports event with friends or relatives? - Go out to concerts, plays, music clubs, or other cultural events with friends or relatives? <p>Please think about people you typically do these sorts of things with – or other social things as well, such as going shopping, out for drinks, to the park, or just hanging out. Who are the people you usually do these sorts of things with? I can take up to nine names.</p>

Independent Variables

My main independent variable is *within1hr*, a binary measure of whether the alter lives an hour's distance from the respondent. In each case, the respondent was presented with a list of the alters whom he or she had named and then asked to indicate whether each alter lived within an hour's drive. The question wording in 1977 was, "Which of the people on this list live outside this area, that is, more than an hour's drive from here? [IF NECESSARY: 30 to 40 miles.]" In 2015, the question changed very slightly, "Which of the people on this list live over an hour's drive away from you?"

Control Variables

The most important control variables in this study are gender and marital status. Gender is crucial because women appear better able and more willing than men to maintain supportive exchanges with family, to form and maintain new friendships in older age (e.g., Moore, 1990; Liebler and Sandefur, 2002; Fischer and Beresford, 2014). There are more women than men in both surveys, though the new survey is more heavily skewed toward women (from 55.5% in

1977 to 65.6% in 2015), making a control for gender important in drawing comparisons. Marriage has been shown to lead to a decrease in reliance upon parents and friends among the young – they instead rely on spouses. A smaller percentage of 21-30 year olds are married in 2015 than in 1977.

I included a control variable for total number of kin named (*total_kin_n*) because I wanted to distinguish between respondents' relationship to kin as a whole and their relationship to individual kin. For example, the total number of kin in one's network positively predicted confiding with and "feeling close" to fathers. I included an education-related control (*BAhigher* – for attaining a bachelor's degree or greater) because it has been shown to be associated with maintaining a larger, more diverse network. Moreover, the percentage of people in the 2015 data with a BA or greater is over 60%, which is higher than the 1977 survey sample (nearly 23%).

Although the proportion of Asians has increased – they represent slightly more than one in seven respondents in the 2015 data, I did not see a theoretically compelling reason to include an indicator variable for Asian respondents. Moreover, when I did try including an indicator variable for Asian (and, in other runs: indicators for Black and Latino), I found few instances in which they differed significantly from the rest of the 1977 or 2015 data. The statistics for parents who live within an hour are calculated based on parents who were named to an exchange of social support. In contrast, the statistics for questions about exchanges with or "feeling close" to parents are calculated based on the entire sample, regardless of whether parents were actually mentioned (or were alive). For the 1977 data we only know about the parents who were named by respondents to a name-generating question so for the sake of consistency I present both datasets as if each respondent in could name parents to exchanges of social support and "feeling close."⁸ As noted later, in the analyses I use only 21-30 year-olds in order to make the assumption that an equal share of 1977 and 2015 respondents' mothers and fathers were alive.

⁸ For 2015, 1,149 respondents had 582 living fathers and 723 living mothers. Among 21-30 year olds who *mentioned mothers or fathers in 2015*, 41.7% lived near their fathers and 44.6% lived near their mothers (n=545). Among 21-30 year olds *who mentioned their mothers or fathers in 1977*, 61.5% lived near fathers and 64.9% lived near mothers.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for 1977 Data

Statistic	Min	Pctl(25)	Median	Mean	St. Dev.	Pctl(75)	Max	N
genderF	0	0	1	0.558	0.497	1	1	577
age	21	25	30	41.185	17.388	58	72	577
BAhigher	0	0	0	0.232	0.423	0	1	577
income	0	6	8	8.007	3.352	10	16	536
bornAbroad	0	0	0	0.052	0.222	0	1	577
BACounty	0	0	0	0.442	0.497	1	1	577
married	0	0	1	0.523	0.500	1	1	576
Asian	0	0	0	0.036	0.187	0	1	577
Black	0	0	0	0.038	0.192	0	1	577
Latino	0	0	0	0.064	0.245	0	1	577
dad_mentioned	0	0	0	0.213	0.410	0	1	577
dad_askAdvice	0	0	0	0.125	0.331	0	1	577
dad_confide	0	0	0	0.061	0.239	0	1	577
dad_feelsClose	0	0	0	0.156	0.363	0	1	577
dad_practical	0	0	0	0.054	0.226	0	1	577
dad_socialize	0	0	0	0.075	0.263	0	1	577
dad_within1hr	0	0	1	0.618	0.488	1	1	123
mom_mentioned	0	0	0	0.303	0.460	1	1	577
mom_askAdvice	0	0	0	0.133	0.340	0	1	577
mom_confide	0	0	0	0.149	0.356	0	1	577
mom_feelsClose	0	0	0	0.248	0.432	0	1	577
mom_practical	0	0	0	0.059	0.236	0	1	577
mom_socialize	0	0	0	0.151	0.358	0	1	577
mom_within1hr	0	0	1	0.674	0.470	1	1	175
justFriends_n	0	1	2	2.872	2.590	5	11	577
justFriends_askAdvice_n	0	0	0	0.180	0.532	0	5	577
justFriends_confide_n	0	0	0	0.516	0.947	1	8	577
justFriends_feelsClose_n	0	0	0	0.768	1.228	1	8	577
justFriends_practical_n	0	0	0	0.321	0.852	0	7	577
justFriends_socialize_n	0	0	2	2.496	2.360	4	10	577
justFriends_within1hr	0	1	3	3.068	2.219	4	10	438
siblings_n	0	0	0	0.577	0.936	1	7	577
siblings_askAdvice_n	0	0	0	0.123	0.430	0	5	577
siblings_confide_n	0	0	0	0.239	0.551	0	5	577
siblings_feelsClose_n	0	0	0	0.383	0.743	1	7	577
siblings_practical_n	0	0	0	0.156	0.493	0	3	577
siblings_socialize_n	0	0	0	0.305	0.683	0	7	577
siblings_within1hr	0	0	1	0.996	0.954	1	7	224

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for 2015 Data

Statistic	Min	Pctl(25)	Median	Mean	St. Dev.	Pctl(75)	Max	N
genderF	0	0	1	0.661	0.473	1	1	1,149
age	21	27	53	46.130	18.060	63	70	1,149
BAhigher	0	0	1	0.723	0.448	1	1	1,149
income	1	3	6	5.730	3.409	8	13	1,140
bornAbroad	0	0	0	0.086	0.281	0	1	1,149
married	0	0	0	0.318	0.466	1	1	1,149
Asian	0	0	0	0.169	0.375	0	1	1,149
Black	0	0	0	0.070	0.255	0	1	1,149
Latino	0	0	0	0.104	0.305	0	1	1,147
dad_mentioned	0	0	0	0.240	0.427	0	1	1,149
dad_askAdvice	0	0	0	0.164	0.371	0	1	1,149
dad_confide	0	0	0	0.049	0.215	0	1	1,149
dad_feelsClose	0	0	0	0.144	0.352	0	1	1,149
dad_practical	0	0	0	0.078	0.269	0	1	1,149
dad_socialize	0	0	0	0.054	0.226	0	1	1,149
dad_within1hr	0	0	0	0.417	0.494	1	1	266
mom_mentioned	0	0	0	0.365	0.482	1	1	1,149
mom_askAdvice	0	0	0	0.243	0.429	0	1	1,149
mom_confide	0	0	0	0.151	0.359	0	1	1,149
mom_feelsClose	0	0	0	0.232	0.422	0	1	1,149
mom_practical	0	0	0	0.106	0.308	0	1	1,149
mom_socialize	0	0	0	0.094	0.292	0	1	1,149
mom_within1hr	0	0	0	0.446	0.498	1	1	419
justFriends_n	0	0	2	2.530	2.499	4	16	1,149
justFriends_askAdvice_n	0	0	0	0.594	1.001	1	6	1,149
justFriends_confide_n	0	0	0	0.971	1.274	2	6	1,149
justFriends_feelsClose_n	0	0	1	1.048	1.429	2	10	1,149
justFriends_practical_n	0	0	0	0.478	0.907	1	6	1,149
justFriends_socialize_n	0	0	1	1.981	2.129	3	9	1,149
justFriends_within1hr	0	0	1	1.836	2.102	3	11	1,149
siblings_n	0	0	0	0.538	0.800	1	5	1,149
siblings_askAdvice_n	0	0	0	0.292	0.586	0	5	1,149
siblings_confide_n	0	0	0	0.277	0.569	0	4	1,149
siblings_feelsClose_n	0	0	0	0.390	0.678	1	4	1,149
siblings_practical_n	0	0	0	0.145	0.408	0	3	1,149
siblings_socialize_n	0	0	0	0.225	0.556	0	4	1,149
siblings_within1hr	0	0	0	0.234	0.546	0	4	1,149
mode.web	0	0	0	0.442	0.497	1	1	1,149

Modeling Strategy

Because the datasets differ in their age ranges, I restricted the 1977 data to the responses of individuals 21-30 and 50-70 (to match the 2015 data). I structured the data such that each respondent and each of his or her alters represented one row. Because all my dependent variables represent binary outcomes, I used binomial logistic regression. In the case of friends and siblings, in which there are multiple rows per respondent, I calculated clustered standard errors and p-values at the respondent level (these observations violate the assumption of independence). I built models in an additive fashion, beginning with a simple bivariate model (e.g., effect of living within one hour on an exchange), and then examined potential control variables (e.g., *BAhigher*). All statistical work was done in *R*.

Results

A brief overview and contextualization of the results: people who lived within an hour of their parents were no more or less likely to exchange support with or feel close to them in the 1970s. In 2015, those living near their mothers or fathers became more likely to socialize with and get practical help from them, whereas those living more than an hour away were more likely to get advice from, confide in, or “feel close” to them. This suggests some selection on the basis of the emotional intimacy rather than proximity is operating with parents. Moreover, despite the higher proportion of respondents who lived far from parents in 2015, the 2015 respondents named mothers and fathers in response to four similar exchange questions at about the same rates as 1977 respondents. In 1977, 47% of 21-30 year-old respondents mentioned mothers and 37% mentioned fathers, whereas 50% and 37% of similarly aged 2015 respondents did so. People mention parents with whom they have better relationships, regardless of where they live.

In the late 1970s and mid-2010s, respondents were more likely to socialize with siblings who were nearby rather than those who lived more than an hour away. Like 1977 respondents, those in 2015 were more likely to obtain advice from siblings who lived more than an hour away. Respondents in 2015 were more likely than respondents in 1977 to obtain practical help from siblings living within one hour. In response to the four matched exchange questions, 1977 respondents mentioned 333 siblings ($n=577$, average of .58 per respondent), while 2015 respondents mentioned 618 siblings ($n=1,149$, average of .54 per respondent). When we consider that families have gotten smaller on average in the intervening four decades, it may well be that people are better able to keep in touch with more siblings. Because many of these relationships involved exchanges of advice or feelings of closeness, it is not the case that people are simply staying in touch because it is “easy,” instead it would appear that people wanted to stay in touch with siblings and now are better able to do so.

Supportive exchanges with friends followed a pattern similar to parents and siblings, but the pattern was much more pronounced. In the 1970s, people were already more likely to feel “especially close” to friends living more than an hour away than those living within an hour. People continue to feel closer to friends who lived more than an hour away. They are even more likely to obtain advice from and confide in these far-flung friends. Yet, in the 1970s, people socialized with their friends who lived nearby and they continue to do so today. Increased selectivity may be a part of the story: 1977 respondents provided the names of 2.9 friends to four exchange-related questions while 2015 respondents named 2.5 friends in response to very similar

questions (though straightforward comparisons of the two surveys are difficult because of changes in question wording).

It would appear that the way people manage ties with family is becoming more similar to the way they manage ties with friends (more consideration of distance for socializing and practical help and less consideration of distance for emotional intimacy: advice, confiding and “feeling close”). To explore this idea, I begin with an analysis of how friendships have changed.

Friendships

Already in the 1970s, respondents were more likely to indicate that they felt “especially close” to friends living more than an hour away than those living within an hour. In other words, respondents were already holding onto emotionally close friendships – perhaps their very best friends – despite distance. In the 1970s, friends could be divided into those who were nearby but superficial (larger share), nearby and emotionally close (smaller), and distant but emotionally close (larger). Today, friends are even more specialized by geography. Friends for socializing and practical support tend to live within an hour, but “especially close” friends who can be counted upon for advice and confiding are more likely to live more than an hour away. In other words, 2015 respondents maintained the pattern of labeling geographically distant friends “close” – but they also became more likely to obtain advice and confide in these far-flung friends.

Figure 1 contrasts exchanges with and “feels close” to friends who live within an hour versus more than an hour away from respondents in 1977 and 2015. These are simply raw figures without controls. Nonetheless, we can see that specialization in terms of socializing and obtaining practical help is taking place with friends. People in 2015 were more likely to rely upon nearby friends for socializing and getting practical help than people in 1977. In addition, even though 2015 respondents were overall more likely to rely upon friends for advice, confiding and felt closer to a larger share of their friends – they were disproportionately likely to do so with friends who lived more than 1 hour away.

Figure 1: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Friends by Distance in 1977 and 2015

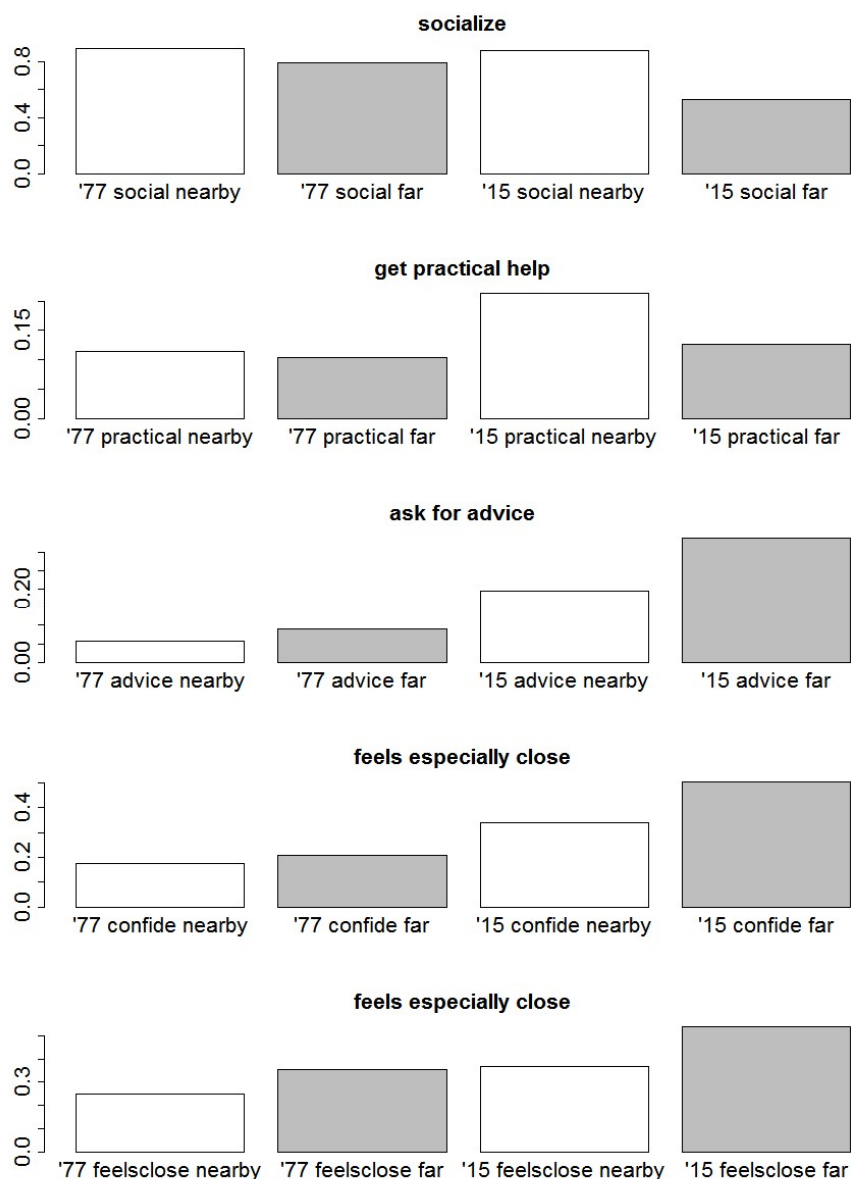


Table 4 presents the results of logistic regressions predicting exchanges with and “feel close” to friends in 1977 and 2015. In 1977, living within an hour of one’s friends doubled the odds of socializing ($p < .01$), but had no significant correlation with other exchanges. People already had 70% greater odds of naming friends to whom they felt close who lived more than one hour away than who lived within an hour. This suggests that a strong selective pressure was in place in the 1970s: people held onto emotionally “close” friendships, despite distance and despite not regularly conducting supportive exchanges with those friends.

The 2015 data suggests that people are using technology to keep in touch better with those distant, higher-quality friends. The coefficient for confide became significant and more negative: friends farther than an hour away had double the odds of being confidants as compared with friends within an hour ($p < .01$). In 1977, the odds of confiding with far-flung friends relative

to those nearby were only about 20% greater (NS). Similarly, the coefficient on asking for advice became more negative and more significant, suggesting that people are more likely to depend on advice from friends living more than one hour away.⁹ The coefficient for feeling “close” and living within an hour remained negative and significant, suggesting that people remain able to maintain feelings of emotional intimacy with friends who live far away. Whereas people in 1977 might have maintained feelings of emotional intimacy to distant friends without supportive emotional exchanges, people of 2015 are able to confide in and ask for advice from those “close” friends. It appears people are using technology to exchange social support with emotionally close friends who live far away.

Meanwhile proximity became more important for socializing and practical help. The 2015 respondents living within an hour of a friend had 6.4 times greater odds of socializing with that friend (also reflected in an interaction term for *within1hr* and *year*: see Table A2 in the appendix), while the positive value for obtaining practical help became significant. In other words, people continue to rely on nearby friends for social activities and for practical support. The fact that the importance of proximity has *increased* for some exchanges but *decreased* for others helps confirm that the changes we see are not simply due to a larger secular shift or to a survey artefact.

The other predictor variables enrich the story. Married people exchange less with friends in both time periods, presumably because they are able to depend upon their spouses. Women were less likely to name friends whom they asked for practical help in both periods and were more likely than men to name confidants in 2015. Finally, as noted in the methods section, I make use of clustered standard errors (and associated p values) in estimating models for exchanges and “feels close” with friends.

To sum up: in the 1970s, people had already begun to treat friends who live nearby and faraway as they do today. Friends who lived faraway were more likely to be described as “close”, which suggests an intimate relationship that people would seek to maintain. Back then and even moreso today, friends who lived nearby could be counted upon for socializing and for practical help. However, the 2015 respondents show a deepening of their relationships with far-flung friends. People became significantly more likely to confide in and ask their far-flung friends for advice. Meanwhile, respondents continued to indicate that they felt “closer” to their friends who lived far away than those who lived nearby. The pattern suggests that the friendships people choose to preserve regardless of distance are the more emotionally rewarding friendships and that people today can exchange more support with those friends.

⁹ When I run the same regressions for 1977 with all the observations, not simply those of respondents 21-30 and 50-70, the coefficient on *askAdvice* and *within1hr* is -.53 and significant at $p < .01$.

Table 4: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to “Just Friends” in 1977 and 2015

	1977					2015				
	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	0.278 (0.207)	-0.381 (0.238)	-0.522* (0.274)	-0.673*** (0.169)	-0.268 (0.168)	0.057 (0.144)	-0.199 (0.152)	-0.580*** (0.142)	-0.279** (0.115)	-0.075 (0.125)
within1hr	0.713*** (0.232)	0.184 (0.286)	-0.444 (0.275)	-0.178 (0.201)	-0.524*** (0.166)	1.864*** (0.133)	0.660*** (0.143)	-0.725*** (0.114)	-0.687*** (0.104)	-0.733*** (0.111)
RGenderM	-0.287 (0.204)	0.306 (0.226)	-0.212 (0.253)	-0.161 (0.172)	-0.131 (0.161)	0.084 (0.138)	0.179 (0.129)	-0.137 (0.124)	-0.628*** (0.111)	-0.106 (0.109)
BAhigher	0.030 (0.227)	0.023 (0.251)	0.310 (0.283)	0.271 (0.185)	-0.049 (0.175)	-0.197 (0.148)	-0.240* (0.142)	-0.057 (0.134)	-0.079 (0.114)	-0.208* (0.126)
ageGroupYoung	-0.214 (0.218)	0.843*** (0.278)	-0.219 (0.261)	-0.052 (0.173)	-0.143 (0.172)	-0.016 (0.150)	0.158 (0.144)	-0.356*** (0.138)	-0.327*** (0.113)	-0.466*** (0.122)
BACounty	0.581*** (0.207)	-0.592** (0.230)	-0.509* (0.261)	-0.251 (0.162)	0.095 (0.161)					
mode.xweb						0.401*** (0.139)	0.010 (0.135)	0.052 (0.124)	0.009 (0.106)	0.166 (0.116)
Constant	1.253*** (0.268)	-2.540*** (0.372)	-1.786*** (0.326)	-0.954*** (0.227)	-0.350 (0.238)	0.064 (0.170)	-1.863*** (0.188)	-0.319** (0.159)	0.488*** (0.147)	0.512*** (0.161)
Observations	1,649	1,649	1,649	1,649	1,649	2,898	2,898	2,898	2,898	2,898
Log Likelihood	-611.938	-556.410	-379.134	-761.197	-947.978	-1,313.862	-1,380.624	-1,529.223	-1,863.936	-1,914.735
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,237.876	1,126.820	772.268	1,536.395	1,909.955	2,641.725	2,775.249	3,072.445	3,741.873	3,843.470

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Mothers and Fathers

Family ties were much less sensitive to distance than were friendships in the 1970s. Because I lacked a variable describing whether respondents’ parents were living in 1977, I chose to analyze only the 21-30 year olds in both samples in order to make the assumption that the vast majority of their mothers and fathers were alive and thereby available to be nominated for each exchange. We would also expect other factors, such as early death or estranged relationships to be randomly distributed, and no more or less likely in either sample.

Figure 2 compares the raw percentages of people who exchanged support with and “felt close” to fathers living within one hour versus farther than an hour in 1977 and 2015. Here we see specialization in the case of practical help – fathers who live nearby have become more likely to give practical help. We also see a relative shift “favoring” fathers living more than an hour away in terms of respondents asking them for advice, confiding in them, or “feeling close” to them.

Figure 2: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Fathers by Distance in 1977 and 2015 (ages 21-30)

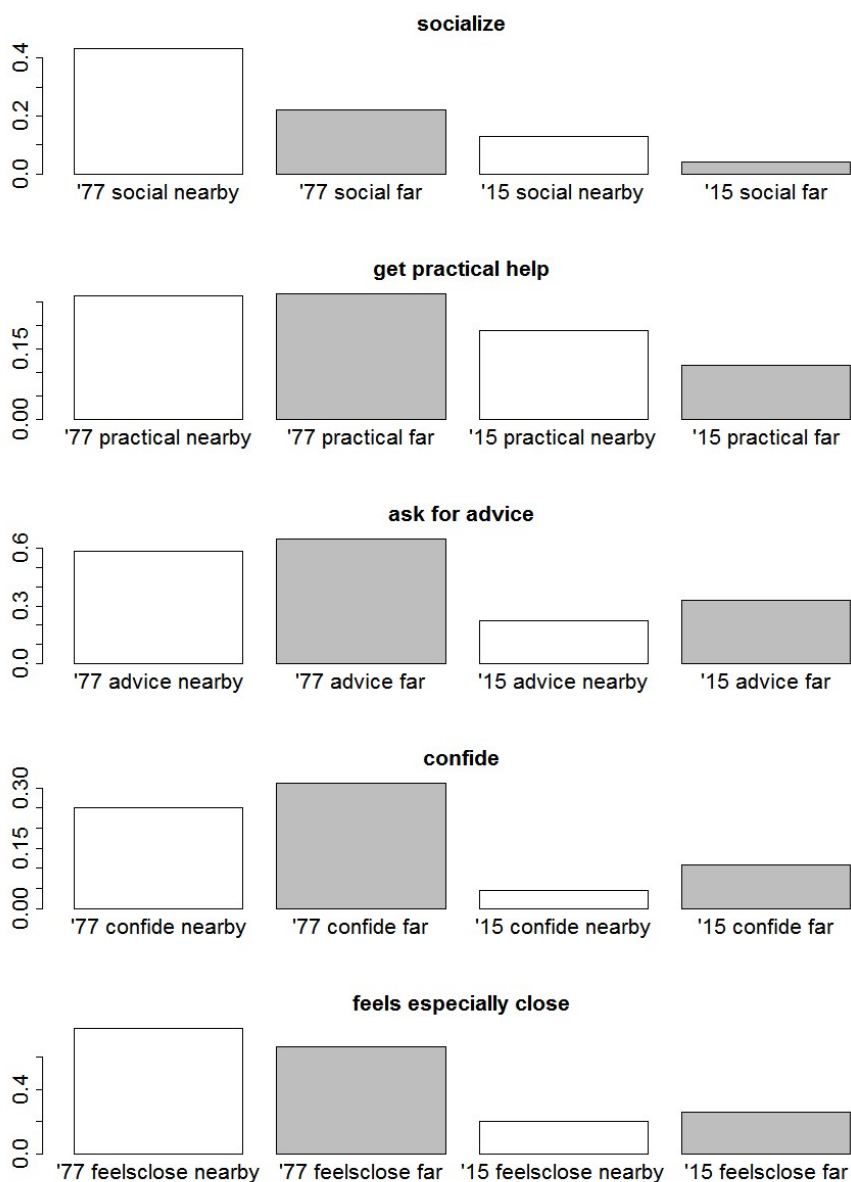


Table 5 presents the results of logistic regressions predicting whether respondents had socialized, gotten practical help, asked for advice, confided in, or claimed to “feel close” to their fathers in 1977 and 2015. In 1977, people living within an hour of their fathers were no more or less likely exchange social support or feel close to them (except socialize, positive at $p < 0.1$). In contrast, the 2015 data show people living within an hour of their fathers were more likely to socialize and have gotten practical help from them ($p < 0.01$). People who lived more than an hour from their fathers had twice the odds of asking them for advice ($p < .01$), nearly three times the odds of confiding in them ($p < .01$), and 60% greater odds of considering their father emotionally “close” ($p < 0.1$). This suggests that a key way respondents interact with their fathers who live far away is to ask them for advice and to confide in them. To summarize: whereas living within an

hour was not statistically predictive of most exchanges with or “feeling close” to fathers in 1977, it predicted socializing with and having gotten practical help from fathers in 2015. Moreover, asking for advice and confiding characterizes the relationships of adult children and fathers living more than an hour away.¹⁰

The control variables in these models merit a bit of attention. Surprisingly, whether respondents were married did not predict whether they exchanged with or felt close to fathers. Also surprising was that men were less likely to ask their fathers for practical help in both time periods. Respondents with bachelor’s degrees or higher were less likely to socialize with their fathers in both time periods (though NS in 2015). There were only ten 21-30 year-old respondents who lived with their fathers in 1977 (more in 2015, but still few enough to provide unreliable estimates) so I left the *inhousehold* variable out of the models.¹¹ Finally, the total number of kin that a respondent mentioned in response to name-eliciting questions positively predicted “feeling close” to fathers in both time periods. Being in touch with more family meant respondents were more likely to be in touch with their fathers.

¹⁰ I did not have a measure of asking for money in the 2015 data, but other work shows that fathers are also often called upon for money.

¹¹ I wanted to control for the potential that living in the same household as one’s father would lead to different patterns of exchange and “feeling close,” but the fact that very few people ask fathers for practical help or confide in them led to very large coefficients and SEs for these variables.

Table 5: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Fathers in 1977 and 2015 (ages 21-30)

	1977					2015				
	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	0.474 (0.461)	0.144 (0.473)	-0.556 (0.421)	-0.580 (0.487)	-0.341 (0.469)	0.799 (0.521)	-0.635 (0.511)	-0.095 (0.339)	0.565 (0.422)	0.011 (0.349)
dadWithin1hr	0.902* (0.498)	0.293 (0.480)	-0.423 (0.429)	-0.561 (0.468)	0.622 (0.458)	1.204*** (0.378)	0.589** (0.270)	-0.752*** (0.238)	-1.069*** (0.410)	-0.467* (0.244)
RGenderM	-0.098 (0.460)	-1.351*** (0.509)	0.779* (0.416)	0.623 (0.463)	-0.355 (0.451)	-0.932** (0.459)	-1.042*** (0.336)	0.253 (0.223)	-0.192 (0.352)	0.226 (0.232)
BAhigher	-1.821*** (0.667)	1.229** (0.535)	0.199 (0.470)	-0.209 (0.520)	0.335 (0.513)	-0.426 (0.377)	0.424 (0.317)	0.969*** (0.279)	0.703 (0.441)	0.737** (0.287)
total_kin_n	0.178* (0.107)	0.070 (0.110)	-0.029 (0.097)	0.288*** (0.111)	0.099 (0.114)	0.336*** (0.085)	0.289*** (0.068)	0.477*** (0.064)	0.335*** (0.084)	0.421*** (0.063)
BACounty	-0.257 (0.502)	-0.885 (0.541)	-0.220 (0.436)	-0.002 (0.472)	-0.197 (0.467)					
mode.xweb						0.523 (0.413)	0.683** (0.317)	0.414* (0.235)	-0.567* (0.331)	0.443* (0.248)
Constant	-1.688** (0.690)	-1.164* (0.699)	0.763 (0.592)	-1.785*** (0.667)	0.585 (0.641)	-4.074*** (0.556)	-3.332*** (0.438)	-2.981*** (0.371)	-3.186*** (0.527)	-3.078*** (0.383)
Observations	117	117	117	117	117	545	545	545	545	545
Log Likelihood	-62.975	-60.359	-74.556	-64.116	-65.727	-120.240	-199.642	-282.804	-145.226	-265.543
Akaike Inf. Crit.	139.950	134.718	163.111	142.233	145.455	254.479	413.284	579.609	304.452	545.087

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The results for mothers are similar to those of fathers but the patterns are stronger, likely because people tend to interact with mothers more. Again, raw comparisons first. Figure 3 shows the tendency for people to specialize their ties by distance. In both time periods, those who lived within an hour were more likely to socialize with mothers. By 2015, those who lived more than an hour away had become more likely to ask their mothers for advice, confide in them, or “feel close” to them.

Figure 3: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Mothers by Distance in 1977 and 2015 (ages 21-30)

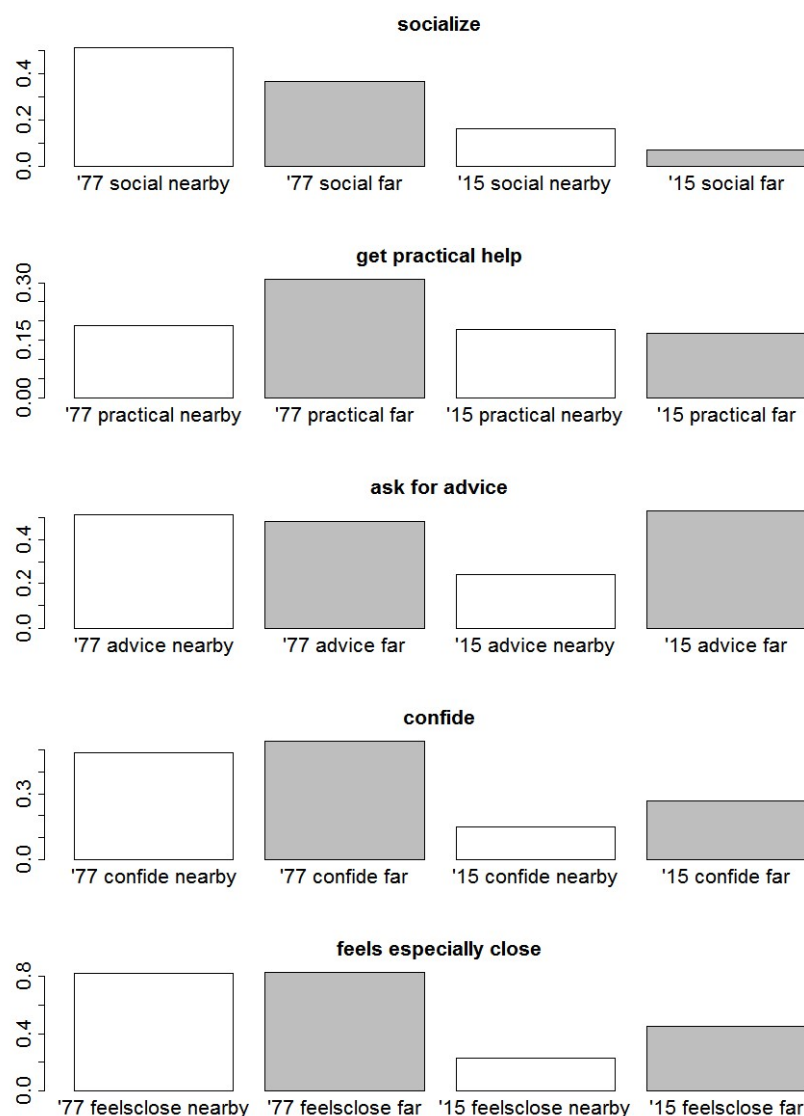


Table 6 present the results of binomial logistic regressions predicting exchanges with and “feel close” to mothers in 1977 and 2015. In 1977, people who lived within an hour of their mothers were statistically no more or less likely to exchange any type of support or “feel close” to them. The 2015 data show that people living within an hour of their mothers had 2.7 times greater odds of socializing with them ($p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, people who lived more than an hour from their mothers had 3.6 times greater odds of asking them for advice, twice the odds of confiding in them, and 2.9 times the odds of “feeling close” to them ($p < 0.01$).¹²

¹² Asking for advice and confiding were name-generating questions in our survey, but “feeling close” was not. In other words, we cannot simply attribute the association between asking for advice, confiding, and “feeling close” to mothers who live more than an hour away to an artifact of survey design. It is likely that respondents who live far away from their mothers do “feel close” to them and do feel that they can count on them for advice, perhaps

Other predictor variables enrich the story. Whether the respondent was married (keeping in mind that these particular analyses only cover 21-30 year olds) only predicted confiding with mothers in 2015. The negative association between being male and exchanging with and “feeling close” to mothers seems to have strengthened. Having a bachelor’s degree or higher negatively predicted socializing with mothers in 1977, but positively predicted asking for advice, confiding and “feeling close” in 2015. Similar to fathers, I omitted the *inhousehold* control variable because only fourteen 21-30 year-old respondents lived with their mothers in 1977, whereas sixty-four did in 2015 (but the number who lived with mothers and exchanged various types of support with them was too small to provide reliable estimates).¹³ Finally, the number of total kin whom respondents named in the survey positively predicted all four exchanges and “feeling close” in 2015, but none of these in 1977 - suggesting that overall contact with family is more predictive of contact with mothers today than in the late 1970s.

Table 6: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Mothers in 1977 and 2015 (ages 21-30)

	1977					2015				
	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	-0.231 (0.370)	0.005 (0.424)	-0.669* (0.365)	-0.270 (0.355)	0.050 (0.465)	0.349 (0.457)	0.259 (0.367)	-0.120 (0.322)	1.139*** (0.321)	-0.111 (0.321)
momWithin1hr	0.457 (0.394)	-0.511 (0.428)	0.193 (0.389)	-0.297 (0.376)	0.117 (0.490)	1.004*** (0.310)	0.116 (0.249)	-1.271*** (0.218)	-0.774*** (0.253)	-1.065*** (0.218)
RGenderM	-0.312 (0.371)	-0.663 (0.457)	-0.876** (0.374)	-0.400 (0.355)	-0.744* (0.452)	-0.877** (0.363)	-1.061*** (0.305)	-0.608*** (0.218)	-0.538** (0.259)	-0.213 (0.215)
BAhigher	-1.460*** (0.552)	0.009 (0.535)	0.709 (0.480)	-0.774* (0.467)	0.235 (0.630)	0.085 (0.324)	0.087 (0.280)	1.218*** (0.263)	0.489* (0.296)	0.796*** (0.258)
total_kin_n	0.147 (0.091)	0.078 (0.098)	-0.080 (0.090)	-0.005 (0.086)	-0.090 (0.109)	0.277*** (0.073)	0.238*** (0.063)	0.418*** (0.062)	0.405*** (0.063)	0.394*** (0.060)
BACounty	-0.201 (0.370)	0.126 (0.418)	-0.547 (0.373)	0.124 (0.355)	-0.060 (0.462)					
mode.xweb						0.028 (0.312)	0.357 (0.271)	0.226 (0.221)	-0.190 (0.249)	0.385* (0.223)
Constant	-0.501 (0.577)	-1.057* (0.642)	0.908 (0.585)	0.618 (0.557)	2.097*** (0.731)	-3.289*** (0.470)	-2.322*** (0.386)	-1.783*** (0.342)	-2.300*** (0.382)	-1.968*** (0.341)
Observations	148	148	148	148	148	545	545	545	545	545
Log Likelihood	-93.621	-76.809	-95.204	-100.291	-67.077	-170.221	-234.323	-301.982	-246.086	-305.647
Akaike Inf. Crit.	201.243	167.618	204.408	214.582	148.154	354.441	482.645	617.964	506.172	625.293

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

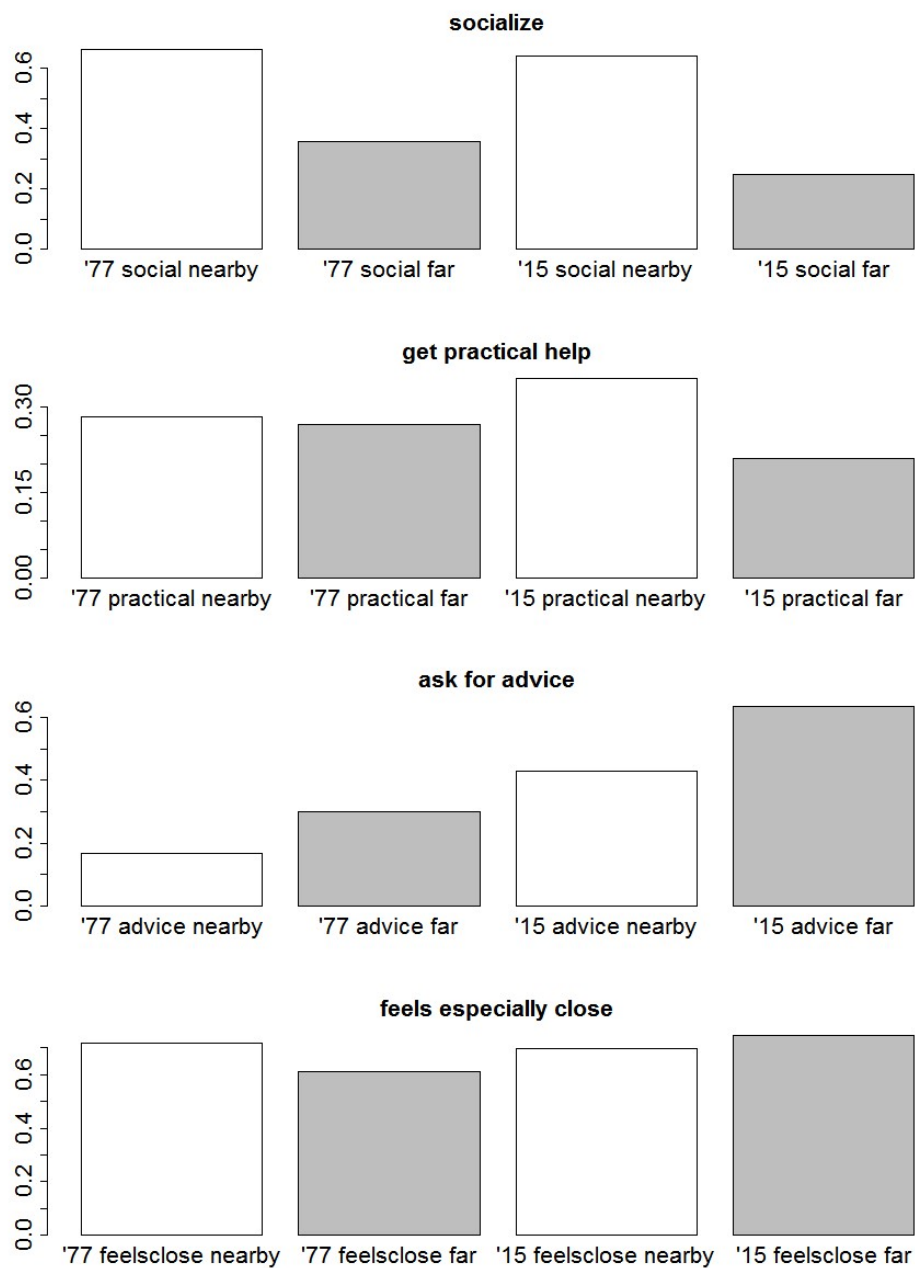
substituting for more everyday exchanges such as socializing and getting practical help that would occur if they lived nearby.

¹³ Nonetheless, this small latter number led to inflated coefficient estimates for 2015, particularly for seeking practical help from moms who live in the same household.

Siblings

Figure 4 presents descriptive data about changes in exchanges with siblings by distance. We see some evidence of specialization by distance: from 1977 to 2015, respondents became a little more likely to rely on nearby siblings for socializing and practical help, but saw only slight increases in their likelihood of relying upon distant siblings for advice or feeling close to them (no change in confiding, not shown).

Figure 4: Key Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Siblings by Distance in 1977 and 2015



As Table 7 shows, people who lived near siblings in the 1970s had 3.3 times higher odds of socializing with them ($p < .01$), but their odds of getting practical help from those siblings were only slightly increased relative to siblings living more than an hour away (NS). In 2015, people who lived near siblings had 5.6 times higher odds of socializing with them, but also had 2.3 times higher odds of getting practical help from them ($p < .01$). Meanwhile, at both time points, people had higher odds of obtaining advice from siblings who lived more than an hour away than from those living nearby ($p < .05$ for 1977; $p < .01$ for 2015). Far-flung siblings are relied upon for advice while nearby siblings are increasingly relied upon for socializing and practical help. Meanwhile the direction on the coefficient for feeling close and living within an hour has reversed: people are more likely to consider siblings living more than an hour away emotionally close (though NS). People are treating siblings more like friends: they stay in touch with those who are emotionally intimate regardless of distance (with the exchange of advice being a large part of their relationship) and rely on those who are nearby for socializing and practical help.

Table 7: Exchanges with and “Feels Close” to Siblings in 1977 and 2015

	1977					2015				
	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	0.468*	-1.283***	0.180	0.350	0.167	0.216	-0.712***	0.006	0.045	0.309
	(0.273)	(0.355)	(0.350)	(0.280)	(0.311)	(0.236)	(0.241)	(0.202)	(0.200)	(0.232)
within1hr	1.206***	0.205	-0.869**	-0.221	0.520*	1.728***	0.811***	-0.778***	0.083	-0.214
	(0.274)	(0.332)	(0.352)	(0.292)	(0.315)	(0.206)	(0.216)	(0.179)	(0.181)	(0.196)
RGenderM	0.051	0.159	0.815**	-0.939***	-0.117	-0.082	-0.395*	-0.116	-0.369*	-0.242
	(0.292)	(0.348)	(0.341)	(0.287)	(0.334)	(0.218)	(0.234)	(0.215)	(0.206)	(0.227)
BAhigher	-0.750**	-0.094	1.068***	-0.003	0.426	-0.066	0.164	0.444**	-0.153	0.101
	(0.317)	(0.373)	(0.393)	(0.333)	(0.440)	(0.245)	(0.248)	(0.213)	(0.222)	(0.231)
total_kin_n	0.071	0.085	-0.115*	-0.103*	-0.050	0.194***	0.029	-0.043	-0.027	0.025
	(0.052)	(0.054)	(0.065)	(0.059)	(0.065)	(0.059)	(0.055)	(0.048)	(0.047)	(0.055)
BACounty	-0.359	-0.307	-0.109	-0.026	-0.028					
	(0.271)	(0.315)	(0.350)	(0.287)	(0.307)					
mode.xweb						-0.428*	0.610***	0.097	-0.010	0.251
						(0.219)	(0.211)	(0.192)	(0.190)	(0.211)
Constant	-0.800**	-0.890**	-0.926**	0.491	0.560	-1.639***	-1.578***	0.338	0.327	0.784***
	(0.391)	(0.401)	(0.423)	(0.392)	(0.403)	(0.324)	(0.363)	(0.277)	(0.295)	(0.281)
Observations	324	324	324	324	324	618	618	618	618	618
Log Likelihood	-199.699	-179.818	-153.413	-210.609	-200.254	-357.216	-338.630	-408.872	-425.243	-359.281
Akaike Inf. Crit.	413.399	373.635	320.827	435.218	414.508	728.431	691.261	831.744	864.486	732.561

Note:

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

In sum, relationships with siblings and parents appear to be converging toward the pattern of interaction exhibited with friends – a more selective and specialized pattern. In the 1970s, people who lived near their mothers and fathers were no more or less likely to exchange any type of support or feel close to their mothers and fathers (except socialize with dads at $p < .1$). In contrast, today, those living near parents are more likely to socialize with and obtain practical

help from them. Meanwhile, people are more likely to obtain advice from and confide in mothers and fathers when they live more than an hour away from them. People who live more than an hour from mothers and fathers (marginal significance) are also more likely to feel close to them. In parallel, people increasingly relied upon nearby siblings for socializing and practical help, while continuing to rely upon distant siblings for advice.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper began with a simple question: *How have ICTs affected our ability to maintain personal ties at a distance?* In the late 1970s, among all types of support, living near family only positively predicted socializing and negatively predicted advice-seeking with siblings (and marginally predicted socializing with dads). Living near friends positively predicted socializing and negatively predicted “feeling close.” By the mid-2010s, individuals exchanged emotional support with and felt close to more friends and family who did not live nearby. Part of this change was driven by greater selectivity: people increasingly confide in, seek advice from, and feel close to their highest quality ties, regardless of geographic proximity.

Because of increased selectivity, relationships with friends, parents, and siblings also appeared to specialize with regard to distance. In the 1970s, friends who lived faraway were already labeled close – this pattern grew stronger by the mid-2010s, with confiding and advice-giving also being more likely to occur at a distance. Meanwhile, people became even more likely to rely on nearby friends for socializing and obtaining practical help. Parental interactions and “closeness” were not strongly tied to proximity in the 1970s. By the mid-2010s, people were more likely to feel close to and obtain advice from parents who lived more than an hour away, but more likely to socialize with and obtain practical help from those within an hour. Relationships with siblings changed the least, but trended in the same direction. Asking for advice became strongly correlated with living more than an hour from siblings, and socializing and practical help became even more likely if siblings lived within an hour of each other.

The findings suggest that people work to maintain those relationships that they most value regardless of distance. By 2015, more friends, parents, and siblings to whom respondents felt closest could be called upon for advice despite the inconvenience of face-to-face contact. Friends and parents with whom respondents had the most important relationships could be labeled “close” even though they were more likely to live more than an hour away. Finally, friends who lived far away could increasingly be relied upon as confidants. If a single idea can explain all these findings is it that people prioritize quality in the maintenance of their social ties.

There are, of course, important caveats to this story. Most of the key compositional and demographic differences between the two time periods (e.g., education) could be controlled for in our models and are less likely to push the results too far in one direction or another. As noted in the Data and Methods section, although mobility is down nationally since the 1970s, it appears to have increased in northern California. Thus, the share of family and friends living more than an hour away might be higher than in other parts of the U.S. Furthermore, we could not “control for” possible cultural changes, for instance norms around staying in touch with parents or changing expectations about friendships. Nonetheless, it is difficult to imagine a cultural change that would simultaneously shape relationships with parents, siblings and friends.

Some of my argument – in particular the tendency to develop more specialized relationships and exchange with individuals regardless of distance – may seem reminiscent of Rainie and Wellman’s theses in *Networked* (2012). Rainie and Wellman argue that group and

communal membership has become less important than the particular set of ties an individual has. Memberships are shorter, personal networks are less dense, ties are more specialized. The key idea is that it is up to individuals, (hence their term, *networked individualism*) to assemble and invest in their networks. Insofar as my study suggests that people are indeed specializing their ties – by distance and emotional intimacy, the findings are complementary. Yet, I make no claims about the disembedding of individuals from groups or communities, nor claims about changes in multiplexity. Their theorizing encompasses a much wider set of alters around the ego than friends, parents and siblings. Relatedly, my account differs from theirs in suggesting that it is intimacy (they focus on complexity and specialization) that drives particular patterns of exchange across distance.

To resume, technology use largely reflects efforts to prioritize and preserve higher-quality social ties. At least with these data, reflecting exchanges of social support and feelings of closeness, there is no monolithic “effect” of technology. People could have instead, for instance, used technology to orchestrate their ties with nearby friends even better – obviating the need to work to maintain contact with friends who live farther than one hour away. Or, if technology made meaningfully keeping in touch completely effortless, we might have seen more fathers and more siblings appear in response to questions about supportive exchanges. Instead, we saw people prioritizing those relationships that they wanted to work to maintain via ICTs and allowing others to wither. While there may be many superficial and trivial uses of ICTs (Turkle, 2012), ICT-use also reflects peopling work to preserve what’s important to them.

Put another way, this study supports an agentic view of technology use. People are largely using new technology to do the things they already wanted to do. This is largely in line with the “consumption junction” view of technology use developed by Cowan (1983; 1987). Cowan argues that we ought to imagine the “consumer as a person embedded in a network of social relations that limits and controls the technological choices that she or he is capable of making” (1987: 262). In *More Work for Mother* (1983), Cowan illustrates how in some cases families adopted labor-saving technologies for men, but not for women. In other cases, families adopted labor-saving technologies for women, but increased their standards such that women spent as much or more time doing domestic work. She attributes this gendered adoption and use of technology to families’ desire to maintain a private, highly autonomous home. In other words, they adopted and used technology to pursue a particular cultural vision of family life; to focus on the things they valued most.¹⁴

Stepping back, what does this view mean for understanding technology use and social relations? It suggests people are not in danger of using technology to do things that they do not already want to do. More likely, as this study suggests, is that they will continue to find ways to use technology to obtain social support from those best suited to providing it.

¹⁴ Fischer extends this “consumption junction” view in studying American adoption of the telephone to argue that people largely make use of technologies to better do the things they already wanted to do (Fischer, 1992). Contra technological-determinist predictions, the telephone did not lead to a rapid rise in adultery nor to a massive decline in provincialism. It did allow people to stay in touch, particularly those who lived in more rural areas. Initially marketed as a tool for important communications, AT&T staff were dismayed to see that people were using the telephone for everyday conversation: “The fact that subscribers have been free to use the wires as they pleased without incurring additional expense [i.e., by using flat rates] has led to the transmission of large numbers of communications of the most trivial character” (1992: 78). In later years the company followed its users’ example and marketed the telephone as a tool for sociability.

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Appendix

Table A1: Binomial Logistic Coefficients for Top Three Modes of Keeping in Touch with Kin and Nonkin Living Within 1 Hour of Respondent (2015 only)

	kin	nonkin
letters	-0.213 (0.335)	-0.186 (0.324)
landline	0.426*** (0.162)	0.204 (0.168)
mobileCall	-0.052 (0.148)	-0.070 (0.117)
text	0.081 (0.142)	-0.127 (0.126)
email	-0.396*** (0.136)	0.111 (0.120)
socialMedia	-0.362*** (0.138)	0.134 (0.114)
IM	-0.033 (0.194)	-0.095 (0.138)
videoChat	-1.154*** (0.182)	-0.791*** (0.176)
Constant	0.544*** (0.095)	1.386*** (0.072)
Observations	2,595	7,058
Log Likelihood	-1,711.350	-3,605.228
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,440.701	7,228.456

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

*note: only covers alters named to confiding, socializing, getting advice or practical help; uses clustered standard errors

Table A2: Interaction Test for Friend Proximity and Year

	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	0.044 (0.114)	-0.298** (0.120)	-0.426*** (0.115)	-0.292*** (0.090)	-0.038 (0.096)
within1hr	0.758*** (0.228)	0.124 (0.278)	-0.506* (0.267)	-0.234 (0.199)	-0.523*** (0.165)
Yr2015	-1.182*** (0.228)	0.274 (0.292)	1.548*** (0.237)	1.234*** (0.202)	0.805*** (0.184)
RGenderM	-0.080 (0.114)	0.237** (0.111)	-0.134 (0.111)	-0.476*** (0.094)	-0.097 (0.091)
BAhigher	-0.070 (0.119)	-0.150 (0.126)	-0.039 (0.122)	-0.0002 (0.100)	-0.171* (0.102)
within1hr:Yr2015	1.106*** (0.264)	0.514 (0.313)	-0.205 (0.289)	-0.422* (0.224)	-0.175 (0.198)
Constant	1.369*** (0.209)	-2.104*** (0.263)	-2.056*** (0.222)	-1.007*** (0.183)	-0.477*** (0.163)
Observations	4,556	4,556	4,556	4,556	4,556
Log Likelihood	-1,951.183	-1,961.821	-1,926.693	-2,650.145	-2,886.434
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,916.365	3,937.642	3,867.386	5,314.291	5,786.868

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table A3: Interaction Test for Father Proximity and Year

	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	0.446 (0.353)	-0.437 (0.330)	-0.466* (0.267)	0.041 (0.331)	-0.270 (0.284)
dadWithin1hr	1.275*** (0.489)	0.330 (0.465)	-0.202 (0.420)	-0.329 (0.451)	0.787* (0.457)
Yr2015	-0.826 (1.069)	-1.660* (0.885)	-0.897 (0.776)	-0.200 (0.904)	-0.522 (0.805)
RGenderM	-0.492 (0.307)	-1.059*** (0.274)	0.371** (0.188)	0.099 (0.268)	0.116 (0.204)
BAhigher	-0.734** (0.300)	0.721*** (0.276)	0.879*** (0.228)	0.347 (0.311)	0.715*** (0.243)
dadInHH	-2.097** (1.050)	-2.333** (1.054)	-0.283 (0.484)	0.075 (0.692)	-0.841 (0.540)
total_kin_n	0.285*** (0.067)	0.238*** (0.058)	0.330*** (0.052)	0.288*** (0.064)	0.363*** (0.055)
dadWithin1hr:Yr2015	-0.105 (0.602)	0.424 (0.527)	-0.482 (0.468)	-0.784 (0.589)	-1.189** (0.504)
Constant	-3.644*** (0.949)	-2.028** (0.840)	-0.658 (0.753)	-1.820** (0.819)	-1.586** (0.790)
Observations	662	662	662	662	662
Log Likelihood	-184.774	-262.199	-372.430	-214.249	-335.700
Akaike Inf. Crit.	387.548	542.397	762.861	446.499	689.400

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table A4: Interaction Test for Mother Proximity and Year

	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	-0.169 (0.300)	-0.009 (0.281)	-0.512** (0.239)	0.364 (0.241)	-0.238 (0.262)
momWithin1hr	0.945** (0.385)	-0.351 (0.420)	0.549 (0.375)	0.157 (0.371)	0.416 (0.479)
Yr2015	-1.536*** (0.428)	-0.438 (0.402)	-0.107 (0.364)	-0.672* (0.362)	-1.826*** (0.439)
RGenderM	-0.565** (0.254)	-0.942*** (0.252)	-0.627*** (0.183)	-0.412** (0.204)	-0.296 (0.192)
BAhigher	-0.360 (0.264)	0.095 (0.250)	1.148*** (0.223)	0.242 (0.235)	0.776*** (0.235)
momInHH	-16.644 (515.632)	-16.286 (531.875)	-0.965** (0.425)	-1.337** (0.561)	-1.468*** (0.474)
total_kin_n	0.242*** (0.059)	0.200*** (0.053)	0.270*** (0.049)	0.265*** (0.051)	0.314*** (0.053)
momWithin1hr:Yr2015	0.166 (0.481)	0.673 (0.478)	-1.629*** (0.425)	-0.761* (0.434)	-1.291** (0.517)
Constant	-1.239*** (0.433)	-1.490*** (0.429)	-1.075*** (0.386)	-1.100*** (0.388)	0.386 (0.452)
Observations	693	693	693	693	693
Log Likelihood	-253.519	-302.053	-408.099	-357.563	-375.889
Akaike Inf. Crit.	525.038	622.106	834.198	733.127	769.777

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table A5: Interaction Test for Sibling Proximity and Year

	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RisMarried	0.341* (0.177)	-0.939*** (0.203)	0.061 (0.174)	0.130 (0.160)	0.229 (0.186)
within1hr	1.274*** (0.276)	0.248 (0.320)	-0.752** (0.325)	-0.246 (0.276)	0.511* (0.311)
Yr2015	-0.170 (0.283)	-0.404 (0.305)	1.005*** (0.300)	0.149 (0.269)	0.509 (0.310)
RGenderM	-0.011 (0.171)	-0.254 (0.193)	0.150 (0.186)	-0.555*** (0.167)	-0.215 (0.190)
BAhigher	-0.322* (0.189)	0.154 (0.197)	0.629*** (0.194)	-0.121 (0.186)	0.230 (0.197)
total_kin_n	0.137*** (0.039)	0.060* (0.036)	-0.070* (0.037)	-0.061* (0.036)	-0.015 (0.042)
within1hr:Yr2015	0.426 (0.341)	0.505 (0.379)	-0.004 (0.373)	0.328 (0.328)	-0.719* (0.371)
Constant	-1.302*** (0.298)	-0.951*** (0.312)	-0.770*** (0.287)	0.294 (0.271)	0.435 (0.293)
Observations	942	942	942	942	942
Log Likelihood	-563.122	-527.055	-568.376	-638.624	-561.795
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,142.245	1,070.110	1,152.753	1,293.248	1,139.590

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Chapter 2: Men and Women's Supporters from Work in the late 1970s and mid-2010s

ABSTRACT

Using survey data on northern Californians' networks in 1977-8 and 2015-6, I find that women have gained supportive work-related ties in the last four decades compared to men. For both time periods, I identify individuals associated with work who were also named as providers of four supportive exchanges: socializing, confiding, obtaining practical help, and asking for advice. Respondents could describe these individuals as coworkers, people who did the same kind of work, or people whom they had met at work. While women in the late 1970s lagged men in forming work-related supportive ties, women today form as many supportive ties at work as men do. Follow-up analyses support two explanations for the shift. First, women continue to largely befriend women, not men, at work; this suggests that some of the increase in women's supportive ties at work can be attributed to the increased presence of women in the workplace. Second, compared to men today and to women of the late 1970s, women today who are not working full-time are much more likely to interact with people associated with work. This suggests that women have also caught up to men in supportive ties from work because they are better able to maintain those ties.

Research on gender inequality at work has rightly prioritized differences in wages and status. Yet, there are other benefits of work that remain important. One of these is the role of the workplace in meeting people. People met at work can be an important source of social support (McGuire 2007, 2012; Sloan, Newhouse and Thompson, 2013). With women participating more in the labor force, and completing college at higher rates than men, are women also catching up to men in supporters from work? I use a novel comparison to answer this question: two surveys of the northern California Bay Area separated by nearly four decades (1977-8 and 2015-6). I examine the gap between men and women ages 21-30 and 50-70 in mentioning 1) coworkers, 2) people in the same kind of work, and 3) people met at work in response to four questions about social support. Relative to men, women have gained coworkers and people met at work since the late 1970s. The difference between men and women in supporters who do the same kind of work was small in the late 1970s and became smaller by the mid-2010s.

Overall, women today appear to have about as many supportive work-related associates as men, even though women remain less likely than men to be working. In secondary analyses, I attribute these changes to the greater availability of other women to befriend at work and to women today keeping in touch better with work-related associates than men do today and women did in the 1970s. While we do not know the career benefits of these changes for women, the balancing of social support men and women enjoy due to work could be seen as a small part of the trend toward more equitable rewards from work.

Differences in Personal Support by Gender

Men's and women's networks tend to differ in a few key respects. Past research has found that while men and women typically have networks of the same size, women's networks contain more kin and men's contain more nonkin.¹⁵ Women's networks provide greater emotional support whereas men's provide greater access to information and opportunities (Moore, 1990; Antonucci, Akiyama and Takahashi, 2004; Hall, 2011). Summarizing their findings from the Americans' Changing Lives survey (primarily the 1986 wave, n=3,617), Umberson et al. write:

Clearly, men and women have different relationships. Women score higher than men on measures indicating more intimate and informal social ties, such as having a confidant, receiving social support from friends and family, and visiting with friends. Women also are more likely to provide care to impaired individuals. Although men report less social support from most relationships (except in marriage), they report having more people to call on for advice or help, and they are more likely to have someone attempt to regulate their health (1996: 851).

Women are more likely than men to be involved with friends and engaged in more structured social activities, such as clubs and church groups. Women are also more likely than men to have confidants besides their partners. Women not only have access to more support, they are more likely to provide support to kin and nonkin (Wellman and Wortley 1990; Gerstel and Gallagher 1993; Liebler and Sandefur, 2002; Pavalko and Wolfe, 2016).

¹⁵ Though Antonucci and Akiyama (1987) find that women have larger, more diverse, and more intimate networks than men.

Some of the differences in men and women's networks can be attributed to structural opportunities to interact with nonkin. Men's greater opportunities to meet nonkin are one traditional source of differences in men's and women's networks. Differences in opportunities for nonkin contact may arise from the gendered division of labor in the family (Bott, 1955), differences in years of schooling and years of participation in the labor force (Moore, 1990; Moen, 2001; Fischer, 2011). Although women were catching up by the 1970s, men still went to school longer and were less likely to leave the labor force after having children (Fischer and Hout, 2006). Compared with today, men of the late 1970s spent more time than women in places where they could meet nonkin.

Even with exposure to nonkin, gender roles may make it more difficult to form durable ties. Among the working class in mid-20th century England, this resulted in the apt observation of one of Bott's interviewees, "Men have friends. Women have relatives" (Bott, 1955).¹⁶ Even if women interacted with nonkin, they were expected to rely upon kin for social support. In 1970s northern California, among the professional and managerial class, the expectation that women entertain guests led to the finding that wives knew their husbands' friends, but husbands did not know their wives' friends (Fischer, 1982). In other words, the husband's friends and colleagues took priority when the couple jointly entertained. In addition, traditional expectations of wives being caregivers and homemakers, on top of their careers, likely reduced the time women of recent generations had to keep in touch with colleagues (Hochschild, 1989). Finally, the types of jobs women were more likely to hold in the 1970s may have also been less conducive to forming friendships at work. Women were more likely to be working in low-status or low-wage jobs in which they had little contact with peers.

In addition to structural and role explanations for the differences in men's and women's coworker networks, there are dispositional sources of difference. Four decades ago, men may have been socialized to view friendships at work more favorably than did women. Thus, men may have pursued and maintained these relationships more often than did women. Alongside the changes in the discourse around women's careers, these attitudes may have also changed. In addition, research suggests that women appear to be better at keeping in touch and better at making new friends, particularly later in life (Fischer and Oliner, 1983, Liebler and Sandefur, 2002; Stevens and Tilburg, 2011; Fischer and Beresford 2014). These factors suggest that given *equal* structural and role chances, women *would* tend to form more contacts at work and retain them longer.

Historically, men have reported more coworkers in their personal networks than women (Marsden, 1987; Moore, 1990). Women's increasing participation in the workforce may have come to balance the number of coworkers men and women have in their networks, as well as offset some of the traditional differences in personal networks by gender noted above. Moreover, people do provide social support to coworkers. Based on in-depth interviews with forty men and women, McGuire (2007) finds that coworkers regularly support one another in a variety of ways – the most common being listening (to, for example, personal problems), sharing (chatting) and counseling (offering advice about non-work problems). These ties may also persist as supportive friendships when people change jobs or retire. For example, retired professional women report having more friends than do homemakers (Ajrouch et al., 2005).

¹⁶ While this describes the situation in the case of socializing in mid-century England, the story for other forms of social support today is closer to Antonucci and Akiyama's (1987) finding that many men only rely on their spouse, while women tend to have a wider array of potential supporters. Among older adults they conclude, "men rely on their spouse; women rely on children and friends in addition to their spouse" (748).

Large and measurable changes that may influence women's forming of friendships at work relate to a) the types of work women do and b) the greater number of years they participate in the workforce.

The past four decades have seen a large shift in the opportunities men and women have to meet people. Younger women in the Northern California Bay Area today are slightly more educated than their male counterparts. In 1980, the reverse was true: young men were a bit more educated than young women. Women are thus more likely to have met people in school, some of whom will end up in the same line of work. Moreover, as a result of their greater education, women are more likely to be in jobs that provide greater opportunities and freedom to develop friendships.

In addition to changes in educational attainment and associated job quality, women are more likely to be employed today than in the 1970s. Women's labor force participation in the U.S. went from about 48% in 1977 to about 57% in 2015 (U.S. BLS, 2016). Among married mothers, labor force participation went from four in ten in 1970 and to nearly seven in ten in 2005 (Kalleberg, 2011: 46). Because women in the Bay Area were already participating in the labor force at high rates by the late 1970s, the increase is less pronounced in my data, but still present. Across ages 25-70, women in the early 2010s averaged 5-15% higher in terms of labor force participation than women in 1980 (IPUMS). This higher labor force participation means that women are spending more years around coworkers, increasing their opportunities for forming lasting ties.

In sum, there are structural and cultural reasons we would expect women to have more coworkers in their networks. More women are working and they occupy higher-status jobs requiring more education. Gender roles, both in the household and at work, have been called into question. For instance, the expectation that the man is the primary breadwinner has diminished. These changes suggest that we ought to see women more involved with people from work. This leads to my research question: *How have women's work-related ties changed since the late 1970s?*

To address this question, I make use of three items present in the 1977 and 2015 surveys. The first asks people to indicate which of the people they named are coworkers. In the case of a doctor, this might be a nurse working at the same hospital. The second asks which of the people they named "do the same kind of work" as the respondent. In the case of a doctor, this could include other doctors working at other hospitals. The third question begins with a subsample of five individuals and asks whom was met at work. For a doctor, this might include doctors or nurses who have since moved to other hospitals. The first question gets at people in the immediate workplace. The second gets at the community of people who have a similar job. The third gets at people from previous workplaces. Finally, I only considered individuals whose names came up in response to four name-generating questions that were relatively similar in both time periods, which covered asking for advice, confiding, socializing, and obtaining practical help.

Data and Methods

I make use of two surveys of northern Californians: the Northern California Communities Study (NCCS) of 1977-78 and the UC Berkeley Social Networks Study (UCNets) of 2015-16.¹⁷

The Northern California Community Study (NCCS, PI: Claude Fischer; ICPSR #07744) describes the egocentric networks of 1,050 respondents in 1977-1978 (over 19,000 ties). Respondents were sampled from a 200 by 200 mile area that begins with San Francisco and extends east and north. Relative to the population, NCCS oversampled on people living in small towns because the research addressed differences between the personal networks of those living in more urban versus more rural environments. Interviewers used eleven name-generators to obtain information about respondents' networks. For example, respondents named individuals whom they could count upon for socializing, confiding, advice, or a loan. Once a complete list of unique individuals was compiled, interviewers asked for information about each person, such as age, sex, religion, and whether they lived within five minutes or one hour of the respondent. These data have been previously analyzed on their own (e.g., Fischer, 1982; Feld, 1984; Blum, 1985) and for comparative purposes (Fischer and Shavit, 1995; Grossetti, 2007). A more detailed description of the NCCS survey is in the appendices to Fischer (1982).

UCNets is an NIH-funded study of social support and health. It is not a strict replication of the NCCS, though it is close enough to make meaningful comparisons and I attempt to control for major differences in method and sample. UCNets surveyed 1,149 residents of the northern California Bay Area (~60% in person and 40% on the web).¹⁸ Unlike the NCCS which surveyed people ages 18+, UCNets surveyed individuals 21-30 or 50-70 years old. Respondents were residents of six Bay Area counties: Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Alameda and Contra Costa. Although it had fewer name-generators than the 1977 survey, I lined up the name-generators from NCCS and UCNets as closely as possible when making comparisons. For both datasets, I only consider alters named to four supportive exchange questions, pertaining to asking for advice, confiding, socializing and obtaining practical help. The text to these questions, and differences between them in the two surveys, are presented in Table 1. Like the NCCS, UCNets also collected detailed data about the respondents' background characteristics, their relationships with alters and characteristics of those alters.

Although UCNets had fewer name-generators, I lined up the name-generators from NCCS and UCNets to make comparisons. For instance, when I compare whether people mentioned coworkers, people who do the same work, or people met at work in 1977 and 2015, I only use four name-generators about social support that occurred in both surveys. The name generators that occurred in both surveys pertain to asking for advice, confiding, socializing and obtaining practical help. The text to these questions, and differences between them in the two surveys, are presented in Table 1.

The samples differ in a few ways, some of which may affect the results and for which I introduce controls. Other differences are less likely to affect the results. Demographic changes mean that the sample composition and characteristics of people's networks will have changed. People today have fewer siblings, are separated in age from parents by more years, marry later and themselves have children later. Young people are more likely to be living with parents today

¹⁷ For simplicity and because only a small portion of the data was gathered in 1978, I refer to 1977 as the date for NCCS. For the same reasons, I use 2015 rather than 2015-2016 as the date for UCNets.

¹⁸ After excluding poor quality cases – here defined as people who did not answer a question toward the end of the survey about their educational attainment (dropping 205 cases).

than they were in the 1970s. The population of the Bay Area is also more diverse. The percentage of Asians and Latinos have increased, while the percentage of blacks has decreased slightly (in these data, subsetting the 1977 sample to 21-30 and 50-70 year olds, the percentages have all increased). Women and men have much more schooling. Nonetheless, these demographic changes do not detract from the generalizability of my findings. Some mirror changes in the U.S. as a whole and changes in population demographics could be seen as a large part of the story. Other changes in the Bay Area overstate changes in the U.S., but I try to control for their effects in my regression models. The variables that I experimented with and kept in the models as controls are described in the *Variables* section below.

The California Bay Area is unique in some regards and representative of the United States in others. The pertinent question for the generalizability of this study is whether the direction and scale of the changes by gender parallel those of the nation as a whole. Given the surprisingly strong similarities observed between northern Californians' networks of the 1970s, French people's networks of 2005 (Grossetti, 2007) and Israelis' networks of 1991 (Fischer and Shavit 1995), I am skeptical that the people of northern California are so different from other Americans that we cannot learn about general tendencies from them. I do not claim that the measures here are exact estimates for the larger population, but I do believe that the direction of associations between variables, particularly those with strong effects and high significance would generalize.

Variables

The analyses rely on several questions present in both surveys. Table 1 presents the questions used to identify coworkers and people in the same line of work in 1977 and 2015. The questions to identify coworkers and people in the same line of work are quite similar. The questions for advice and practical help have become both broader and more specific to jog respondents' memories. As a result, we might expect to see more people named to these questions in 2015 as compared with 1977. The confiding question has changed a bit, but it is difficult to guess how it would affect responses. The socializing question has changed in terms of structure, but not substance and I do not expect large differences in responses simply due to these changes.

Table 1: Question Wording for Key Study Variables in 1977 and 2015

	1977	2015
coworker	This is a list of some of the ways people are connected with each other. Some people will be related in more than one way. So, when I read you a name, please tell me all the ways that person is connected with you right now. [OPTION] Co-worker (someone you work with or see regularly at work)	People can be connected to each other in a few different ways, even family members. Here is a list of the ways people can be connected. When I read a name to you, please tell me all the different ways that you are connected to that person nowadays. What are all the ways that you are connected to [[name]]? [OPTION] Know at work
sameWork	IF R EMPLOYED, LAID-OFF,	IF EMPLOYED FULL- OR PART-

	<p>LOOKING FOR WORK, OR RETIRED:</p> <p>Please look at the list of names again. Which of those people do you think of as doing the same kind of work you (do/did)?</p>	<p>TIME, UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK, UNEMPLOYED AND NOT LOOKING FOR WORK, OR RETIRED:</p> <p>Which of the people on this list do/did the same kind of work as you do/did?</p>
metAtWork	<p>[Subset of up to five alters] How did you first meet this person?</p> <p>[OPTION] At work</p>	<p>[Subset of up to five alters] Here is a list of ways that people meet. Which one of the following ways best describes how you first met [selected names[]]. Choose one.</p> <p>[OPTION] Met at work</p>
Ask Advice	<p>Often people rely on the judgment of someone they know in making important decisions about their lives--for example, decisions about their family or their work. Is there anyone whose opinion you consider seriously in making important decisions? [if yes:] Whose opinion do you consider? PROBE: Is there anyone else? [interviewer has six lines]</p>	<p>When you have to make important decisions – for example, about taking a job, family issues, or health problems – are there any people whose advice you seek out or would seek out in making those decisions? They can be family, friends, or professional advisors. [if yes:] Whose advice do you or would you seek out? [interviewer states: “I can take up to six names”; web form provides six lines]</p>
Confide	<p>When you are concerned about a personal matter--for example, about someone you are close to or something you are worried about--how often do you talk about it with someone--usually, sometimes, or hardly ever? When you do talk with someone about personal matters, who do you talk with? [PROBE:] Anyone else? [interviewer has six lines]</p>	<p>Sometimes personal matters come up that concern people, like issues about relationships, important things in their lives, or difficult experiences. Do you ever confide in someone about these sorts of things or do you never confide in anyone? [if yes:] Who do you confide in about these sorts of things? [interviewer states: “I can take up to six names”; web form provides six lines]</p>
“Feels Close”	<p>Which of the people on this list do you feel especially close to?</p>	<p>Which of the people on this list do you feel especially close to?</p>
Practical Help	<p>In the past three months, have any friends or relatives helped with any tasks around the home, such as painting, moving furniture, cooking, cleaning, or major or minor repairs? [if yes:] Who helped you?</p>	<p>In the last few months, have any friends, relatives, or acquaintances given you any practical help like moving furniture, doing repairs, picking up something at the store, looking after a child, giving you a</p>

	[interviewer has six lines]	ride, or things like that? [if yes:] Please give us the names of people who have done things like this for you in the last few months. [interviewer states: “I can take up to six names”; web form provides six lines]
Socialize	<p>Which, if any, of these have you done in the last three months?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had someone to your home for lunch or dinner? - Went to someone's home for lunch or dinner? - Someone came by your home to visit? - Went over to someone's home for a visit? - Went out with someone (e.g., a restaurant, bar, movie, park) - Met someone you know outside your home (e.g., a restaurant, bar, park, club) - [R can volunteer other activity] <p>[if yes on any:] May I have the first names of the people you do these things with? [interviewer has eight lines]</p>	<p>First, I am going to ask you about activities that you might do with other people and about how often you do them – at least once a week, a couple of times a month, several times during the year, once a year or less? [SHOW CARD]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About how often do you get together at your or a friend’s or relative’s house for a meal? - Go out to eat at a restaurant with friends or relatives? - Go out to a live sports event with friends or relatives? - Go out to concerts, plays, music clubs, or other cultural events with friends or relatives? <p>Please think about people you typically do these sorts of things with – or other social things as well, such as going shopping, out for drinks, to the park, or just hanging out. Who are the people you usually do these sorts of things with? [interviewer states: “I can take up to nine names”; web form provides nine lines]</p>

Next I present the background variables I used. Table 2 contains descriptive statistics about the respondent-level variables that might predict naming coworkers and people in the same line of work, such as having children, employment status and education. Some clear differences emerge from the two datasets that I control for in the analyses. The proportion of people who have a BA or greater has increased from 23% to almost 64%. The proportion of people working full-time has decreased, while the proportion working part-time has increased. The proportions of Asians, Blacks, and Latinos in the samples have increased, but I did not find them to be significant predictors of network differences in any models. The proportion of females has increased from about 56% to almost 66% - a difference I control for in the models. youngCohort refers to the people in each sample who are 21-30 years old. As noted earlier, UCNets (2015) only surveyed people 21-30 and 50-70, whereas NCCS (1977) surveyed individuals 18+.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Respondent Level Variables

1977							2015						
Statistic	Min	Median	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	N	Statistic	Min	Median	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	N
Asian	0	0	0.019	0.137	1	578	Asian	0	0	0.169	0.375	1	1,149
BACounty	0	0	0.443	0.497	1	578	BAhigher	0	1	0.723	0.448	1	1,149
BAhigher	0	0	0.232	0.422	1	578	Black	0	0	0.070	0.255	1	1,149
Black	0	0	0.038	0.192	1	578	children_n	0	0	0.260	0.669	6	1,149
children_n	0	0	0.369	0.799	5	578	empFullTime	0	0	0.402	0.491	1	1,149
empFullTime	0	1	0.522	0.500	1	578	empPartTime	0	0	0.185	0.388	1	1,149
empPartTime	0	0	0.111	0.314	1	578	fb_flag.x	0	0	0.251	0.434	1	1,149
income	0	8	8.009	3.349	16	537	genderF	0	1	0.661	0.473	1	1,149
Latino	0	0	0.064	0.245	1	578	income	1	6	5.730	3.409	13	1,140
RisMarried	0	1	0.522	0.500	1	578	Latino	1	2	1.896	0.305	2	1,147
total_kin_n	0	2	2.782	2.500	15	578	mode.web	0	0	0.442	0.497	1	1,149
young	0	1	0.542	0.499	1	578	RisMarried	0	0	0.318	0.466	1	1,149
							total_kin_n	0	2	2.265	1.958	14	1,149
							young	0	0	0.419	0.494	1	1,149

Table 3 presents alter-level dependent variables. I use the gender of the alter in the next section to determine whether changes in women's coworker networks are due to befriending men or other women. The change in askAdvice (from 16% to 35%) might be attributed to the fact that an earlier question in the 1977 survey asked respondents to name individuals from whom they sought work-related advice. This may have subsequently decreased the number of people named for other types of advice.¹⁹ The rest of these summary statistics are presented to provide an overview of the dataset – not to suggest that there are changes in the population in closeness, confiding, getting practical help and so on. They may well have changed, but my claims will be limited to changes in gender differences (contrasting men and women from the same time periods).

¹⁹ It is difficult to say what the overall effect of this work advice question might have on the results of other questions. It could be argued that by priming people to recall individuals from work, they became more likely to name those individuals to other types of exchanges. An alternative is that the work advice question captured enough of the role that alters from work played in respondents' lives that they did not feel the need to mention them in other exchanges. Despite these concerns, it is unlikely that the presence of the work advice question altered the gender differences associated with coworkers and people in the same line of work.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Alter Level Variables

1977							2015						
Statistic	Min	Median	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	N	Statistic	Min	Median	Mean	St. Dev.	Max	N
alterGenderF	0	1	0.517	0.500	1	5,200	alterGenderF	0	1	0.591	0.492	1	9,653
askAdvice	0	0	0.164	0.370	1	5,201	askAdvice	0	0	0.350	0.477	1	9,653
close	0	0	0.413	0.492	1	5,201	close	0	0	0.497	0.500	1	9,653
confide	0	0	0.282	0.450	1	5,201	confide	0	0	0.391	0.488	1	9,653
coworker	0	0	0.088	0.283	1	5,201	coworker	0	0	0.092	0.289	1	9,653
givenPractical	0	0	0.156	0.363	1	5,201	givenPractical	0	0	0.231	0.422	1	9,653
sameWork	0	0	0.114	0.318	1	5,201	sameWork	0	0	0.170	0.376	1	9,653
social	0	1	0.722	0.448	1	5,201	social	0	1	0.683	0.465	1	9,653

Modeling Strategy

Because the datasets differ in their age ranges, I restricted the NCCS data to the responses of individuals 21-30 and 50-70 (to match UCNeTs). I structured the data such that each respondent and each of his or her alters represented one row. Because all my dependent variables represent binary outcomes, I used binomial logistic regression. In addition, because there are multiple rows per respondent, I calculated clustered standard errors and p-values at the respondent level (these observations violate the assumption of independence). I built models in an additive fashion, beginning with a simple bivariate model (e.g., effect of being female on having a coworker tie), and then examined potential control variables (e.g., *BAhigher*). All statistical work was done in *R*.

Findings

At least in the northern California Bay Area, women have caught up to men in terms of the number of *coworkers* and the number of people they *met at work* whom they can rely upon for support. Relative to men, women's likelihood of naming coworkers has increased over 50% and their likelihood of naming people met at work has increased over 70% ($p < .05$ for both). There was little difference between men and women in the late 1970s in the number of people they named who did the *same kind of work* as them (and no difference today). I start with descriptive statistics illustrating these findings. I go on to build regression models of coworkers, people from the same line of work, and people met at work being named to supportive exchanges in 1977 and 2015. I then do an interaction test of year and gender to see whether there is a statistically significant increase for women relative to men since 1977.

Compared to men, the percentage of women's supportive ties who are coworkers or who were met at work increased from 1977 to 2015 (Table 4). The gap between men and women in terms of coworkers has gone from a 4.5% difference in favor of men to a 1.8% difference in favor of women (both highly significant though I do not emphasize the latter in my discussion because it is substantively small). The gap between men and women in terms of people met at work has gone from 7.0% in favor of men ($p < .001$) to 0.9% in favor of women (NS). In other words, the gap in terms of coworkers and people met at work has essentially closed. Meanwhile, the gap in terms of people who do the same kind of work was quite small to begin with – 1.5% and significant only at $p < .10$ in 1977. It has also closed.

**Table 4: Coworkers, People Who Do the Same Kind of Work, and People Met at Work
As a Percentage of Supportive Alters**

variable	year	Men		Women		X ² (two-sided)
		%	n	%	n	
sameWork	1977	12.3	2,256	10.8	2,945	X ² =2.9; p=.09
	2015	17.1	3,027	16.9	6,626	X ² =.02; p=.86
coworker	1977	11.3	2,256	6.8	2,945	X ² =31.5; p<.001
	2015	7.9	3,027	9.7	6,626	X ² =8.0; p<.01
metAtWork	1977	18.0	737	11.0	1,033	X ² =17.0; p<.001
	2015	12.5	1,075	13.4	2,334	X ² =0.5; p=.48

To control for differences in circumstances that might affect the results, I built several regression models predicting whether men and women would nominate coworkers for supportive exchanges. As noted in the methods section, throughout the analyses I use binomial logistic regression (with clustered standard errors) because the outcomes are binary – they reflect whether a supportive tie was work-related. For the 1977 data (columns 1-6 in Table 5), once control variables are introduced for working part or full-time, the difference between men and women in naming coworkers disappears. For the 2015 data (columns 7-12 in Table 5), women’s supporters are more likely to be supporters even before we control for employment status (women being less likely to be working). Once we control for employment status and other factors, women have about 30% (model 12) greater odds of naming a supporter who is a coworker than do men ($p<.05$).

Table 5: Supportive Coworkers in 1977 and 2015

	1977						2015						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
RGenderF	-0.554*** (0.154)	-0.072 (0.151)	-0.111 (0.149)	-0.106 (0.159)	-0.063 (0.160)	-0.052 (0.152)	0.239* (0.127)	0.280** (0.121)	0.267** (0.122)	0.264** (0.121)	0.266** (0.122)	0.254** (0.121)	
empFullTime		3.558*** (0.505)	3.482*** (0.507)	3.394*** (0.509)	3.432*** (0.510)	3.509*** (0.508)		1.313*** (0.141)	1.290*** (0.144)	1.308*** (0.152)	1.264*** (0.153)	1.251*** (0.144)	
empPartTime		3.092*** (0.533)	2.987*** (0.540)	2.954*** (0.539)	2.972*** (0.538)	2.984*** (0.540)		0.811*** (0.178)	0.806*** (0.179)	0.837*** (0.179)	0.777*** (0.181)	0.756*** (0.181)	
BAhigher			0.122 (0.156)	0.074 (0.167)	0.028 (0.166)				0.047 (0.133)	0.029 (0.137)	-0.006 (0.137)		
RisMarried			-0.334** (0.149)	-0.358** (0.157)	-0.341** (0.165)	-0.272* (0.160)			-0.158 (0.125)	-0.289* (0.154)	-0.252* (0.153)	-0.059 (0.124)	
income				0.001 (0.023)	0.007 (0.025)					0.021 (0.022)	0.023 (0.022)		
young				0.149 (0.166)	0.058 (0.168)					-0.112 (0.152)	-0.170 (0.154)		
total_kin_n					-0.112*** (0.031)	-0.121*** (0.031)						-0.038 (0.032)	-0.048 (0.033)
children_n					0.193** (0.093)	0.196** (0.085)						-0.253** (0.100)	-0.153* (0.092)
fb_flag.x										-0.112 (0.201)	-0.118 (0.202)		
mode.xweb							-0.126 (0.114)	-0.182* (0.110)	-0.212* (0.111)	-0.080 (0.145)	-0.083 (0.147)		
Constant	-2.060*** (0.101)	-5.347*** (0.508)	-5.137*** (0.527)	-5.135*** (0.564)	-4.931*** (0.573)	-4.919*** (0.531)	-2.402*** (0.114)	-3.250*** (0.150)	-3.202*** (0.185)	-3.270*** (0.204)	-3.053*** (0.217)	-3.104*** (0.169)	
Observations	5,201	5,201	5,201	4,847	4,847	5,201	9,653	9,653	9,653	9,584	9,584	9,653	
Log Likelihood	-1,529.510	-1,373.085	-1,367.091	-1,255.728	-1,239.629	-1,348.116	-2,954.256	-2,837.315	-2,835.347	-2,816.434	-2,805.084	-2,831.586	
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,063.019	2,754.171	2,746.182	2,527.456	2,499.258	2,710.233	5,914.511	5,684.631	5,684.694	5,652.869	5,634.169	5,677.172	

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I combine the data from 1977 and 2015 to examine the number of supportive coworkers women have relative to men using an interaction term for gender and year (Table 6). The coefficient for RGenderF:Year2015 of .434 represents a 54% increase in the odds women name coworkers relative to men doing so (p<.05).

Table 6: Interaction Test for Women Gaining Supportive Coworkers from 1977 to 2015

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	coworker						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
RGenderF	-0.063 (0.094)	0.115 (0.089)	0.076 (0.090)	0.096 (0.094)	0.122 (0.094)	0.113 (0.091)	-0.167 (0.145)
empFullTime		1.672*** (0.132)	1.634*** (0.134)	1.631*** (0.141)	1.629*** (0.143)	1.637*** (0.132)	1.619*** (0.133)
empPartTime		1.171*** (0.163)	1.140*** (0.166)	1.172*** (0.167)	1.148*** (0.168)	1.116*** (0.166)	1.098*** (0.166)
BAhigher			0.097 (0.091)	0.067 (0.093)	0.031 (0.094)		
RisMarried			-0.222** (0.095)	-0.339*** (0.113)	-0.275** (0.114)	-0.155 (0.096)	-0.142 (0.098)
income				0.021 (0.015)	0.021 (0.015)		
young				-0.098 (0.093)	-0.083 (0.093)		
total_kin_n					-0.086*** (0.023)	-0.090*** (0.022)	-0.089*** (0.022)
children_n					0.030 (0.063)		
Yr2015							-0.173 (0.144)
RGenderF:Yr2015							0.434** (0.190)
Constant	-2.269*** (0.074)	-3.566*** (0.132)	-3.493*** (0.148)	-3.540*** (0.174)	-3.339*** (0.180)	-3.245*** (0.151)	-3.149*** (0.177)
Observations	14,854	14,854	14,854	14,431	14,431	14,854	14,854
Log Likelihood	-4,505.221	-4,256.514	-4,248.358	-4,116.955	-4,099.101	-4,228.459	-4,222.058
Akaike Inf. Crit.	9,014.441	8,521.029	8,508.716	8,249.909	8,218.203	8,468.919	8,460.116

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I next conduct similar analyses for people who do the same type of work, rather than coworkers (Table 7). Before and after fitting models for 1977 and 2015, we see small and non-significant differences between men and women in the odds of naming people in the same type of work.

Table 7: Supporters Who Do the Same Kind of Work in 1977 and 2015

	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderF	-0.153 (0.132)	0.139 (0.138)	0.107 (0.136)	0.076 (0.143)	0.106 (0.148)	0.155 (0.137)	-0.038 (0.096)	-0.026 (0.093)	-0.037 (0.093)	-0.042 (0.093)	-0.024 (0.093)	-0.020 (0.093)
empFullTime		1.296*** (0.194)	1.191*** (0.195)	1.090*** (0.206)	1.108*** (0.208)	1.195*** (0.196)		0.852*** (0.101)	0.827*** (0.102)	0.763*** (0.106)	0.758*** (0.106)	0.820*** (0.102)
empPartTime		1.207*** (0.258)	1.110*** (0.266)	1.099*** (0.279)	1.103*** (0.275)	1.102*** (0.264)		0.757*** (0.122)	0.752*** (0.122)	0.755*** (0.121)	0.735*** (0.122)	0.727*** (0.123)
BAhigher			0.353** (0.139)	0.311** (0.149)	0.274* (0.148)	0.296** (0.139)			0.053 (0.108)	0.029 (0.109)	0.014 (0.109)	0.035 (0.107)
RisMarried			-0.243* (0.133)	-0.306** (0.142)	-0.258* (0.145)	-0.139 (0.133)			-0.171* (0.094)	-0.247** (0.112)	-0.214* (0.112)	-0.139 (0.094)
income				0.015 (0.022)	0.017 (0.023)					0.024 (0.016)	0.024 (0.016)	
young				0.111 (0.149)	0.060 (0.160)					0.051 (0.123)	0.081 (0.129)	
total_kin_n					-0.081*** (0.031)	-0.081*** (0.030)					-0.081*** (0.024)	-0.080*** (0.021)
children_n					0.082 (0.096)						0.034 (0.070)	
fb_flag.x										-0.010 (0.149)	-0.027 (0.149)	
mode.xweb							0.260*** (0.089)	0.231*** (0.087)	0.199** (0.087)	0.220** (0.106)	0.224** (0.106)	0.202** (0.087)
Constant	-1.962*** (0.093)	-3.090*** (0.208)	-2.982*** (0.228)	-3.031*** (0.284)	-2.852*** (0.295)	-2.809*** (0.236)	-1.690*** (0.084)	-2.242*** (0.109)	-2.195*** (0.133)	-2.298*** (0.162)	-2.118*** (0.169)	-1.996*** (0.141)
Observations	5,201	5,201	5,201	4,847	4,847	5,201	9,653	9,653	9,653	9,584	9,584	9,653
Log Likelihood	-1,848.050	-1,781.766	-1,771.029	-1,647.812	-1,638.478	-1,762.043	-4,389.232	-4,293.009	-4,289.054	-4,250.873	-4,235.777	-4,272.873
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,700.100	3,571.532	3,554.057	3,311.625	3,296.957	3,538.086	8,784.464	8,596.018	8,592.107	8,521.746	8,495.555	8,561.746

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8 combines the 1977 and 2015 data to test whether there have been any changes by gender in the number of people named to supportive exchanges who do the same kind of work. Column 7 shows the interaction term for Gender=F and Year=2015. We find an increase in supporters who do the same kind of work for both sexes, not just women (the coefficient on Yr2015 is positive and significant while the coefficient on the interaction term, RGenderF:Yr2015, is slightly negative and not significant). This agrees with the descriptive statistics presented earlier – both men and women have seen large increases in the number of people they know who do the same type of work. That both men and women have seen increases may be a method effect – a product of sampling or survey instrument differences. With that very large caveat, the coefficient represents an increase in the odds of naming supporters who do the same kind of work of 54% from 1977 to 2015.

**Table 8: Interaction Test for Women Gaining Supporters
Who Do the Same Kind of Work from 1977 to 2015**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>						
	sameWork						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
RGenderF	-0.002 (0.076)	0.094 (0.076)	0.037 (0.076)	0.017 (0.078)	0.041 (0.078)	0.065 (0.077)	0.102 (0.129)
empFullTime		0.921*** (0.089)	0.853*** (0.088)	0.818*** (0.094)	0.817*** (0.094)	0.847*** (0.088)	0.904*** (0.089)
empPartTime		0.886*** (0.111)	0.834*** (0.111)	0.834*** (0.111)	0.812*** (0.112)	0.808*** (0.112)	0.806*** (0.111)
BAhigher			0.340*** (0.076)	0.322*** (0.078)	0.294*** (0.078)	0.303*** (0.076)	0.142 (0.089)
RisMarried			-0.288*** (0.076)	-0.297*** (0.087)	-0.246*** (0.088)	-0.229*** (0.076)	-0.175** (0.076)
income				0.001 (0.012)	0.0004 (0.013)		
young				0.036 (0.077)	0.049 (0.078)		
total_kin_n					-0.083*** (0.018)	-0.081*** (0.017)	-0.081*** (0.017)
children_n					0.045 (0.051)		
Yr2015							0.433*** (0.132)
RGenderF:Yr2015							-0.103 (0.158)
Constant	-1.729*** (0.061)	-2.430*** (0.093)	-2.456*** (0.105)	-2.431*** (0.137)	-2.238*** (0.142)	-2.252*** (0.112)	-2.473*** (0.133)
Observations	14,854	14,854	14,854	14,431	14,431	14,854	14,854
Log Likelihood	-6,292.607	-6,138.623	-6,094.320	-5,932.439	-5,906.528	-6,068.055	-6,047.996
Akaike Inf. Crit.	12,589.210	12,285.250	12,200.640	11,880.880	11,833.060	12,150.110	12,113.990
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01						

Finally, we turn to analyses of supportive alters who were met at work (Table 9). For the 1977 data, the difference between men and women loses significance once we control for employment status. It regains significance in one model, but this is fragile as adding controls or paring the model back to key variables causes it to lose significance again. In the final model, women have 17% lower odds of naming supporters met at work than men (NS).

For the 2015 data, the difference between men and women does not change much as we control for various factors. Women have about 17% more supportive ties met at work than men in the final model (again, NS).

Younger people (ages 21-30) were had 54% lower odds in 1977 and 39% lower odds in 2015 of naming supporters met at work relative to older people (50-70). Thus, women's relative increase in people met at work is not being driven by young people befriending coworkers in their first few years of work.

Table 9: Supporters Met at Work in 1977 and 2015

	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderF	-0.574*** (0.160)	-0.245 (0.167)	-0.277* (0.166)	-0.364** (0.175)	-0.261 (0.174)	-0.182 (0.167)	0.121 (0.121)	0.145 (0.120)	0.144 (0.121)	0.147 (0.122)	0.159 (0.124)	0.154 (0.123)
empFullTime		1.177*** (0.222)	1.091*** (0.227)	1.200*** (0.231)	1.212*** (0.222)	1.279*** (0.190)		0.693*** (0.128)	0.703*** (0.128)	0.790*** (0.138)	0.749*** (0.140)	0.781*** (0.112)
empPartTime		0.038 (0.374)	-0.074 (0.374)	-0.063 (0.420)	-0.128 (0.416)			0.155 (0.163)	0.157 (0.163)	0.223 (0.164)	0.146 (0.166)	
BAhigher			0.181 (0.178)	0.073 (0.197)	-0.031 (0.201)				-0.058 (0.126)	-0.046 (0.129)	-0.102 (0.128)	
RisMarried			-0.337** (0.161)	-0.517*** (0.182)	-0.196 (0.189)	-0.184 (0.165)			0.002 (0.119)	-0.289** (0.144)	-0.237* (0.143)	-0.153 (0.126)
income				0.013 (0.026)	0.010 (0.027)					0.030 (0.022)	0.032 (0.022)	
young				-0.483*** (0.177)	-0.396** (0.190)	-0.491*** (0.167)				-0.682*** (0.175)	-0.687*** (0.176)	-0.781*** (0.130)
total_kin_n					-0.210*** (0.042)	-0.216*** (0.041)					-0.109*** (0.032)	-0.127*** (0.029)
children_n					-0.150 (0.132)						-0.149 (0.110)	
fb_flag.x										-0.027 (0.220)	-0.042 (0.223)	
mode.xweb							-0.353*** (0.115)	-0.385*** (0.114)	-0.381*** (0.116)	-0.108 (0.139)	-0.117 (0.141)	
Constant	-1.513*** (0.112)	-2.437*** (0.236)	-2.250*** (0.265)	-1.980*** (0.341)	-1.593*** (0.345)	-1.609*** (0.273)	-1.835*** (0.107)	-2.189*** (0.131)	-2.154*** (0.155)	-2.182*** (0.176)	-1.846*** (0.184)	-1.755*** (0.136)
Observations	1,770	1,770	1,770	1,638	1,638	1,770	3,409	3,409	3,409	3,386	3,386	3,409
Log Likelihood	-706.655	-678.575	-675.114	-613.347	-594.235	-649.596	-1,318.497	-1,298.324	-1,298.206	-1,273.429	-1,260.860	-1,270.837
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,417.311	1,365.150	1,362.228	1,242.693	1,208.470	1,311.192	2,642.994	2,606.649	2,610.411	2,566.858	2,545.721	2,553.674

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I combined the data from 1977 and 2015 to do an interaction test of gender and year (Table 10). In the fitted model (7), women's odds of meeting people at work increased by over 70% relative to men ($p < .05$). While the coefficient for year (Yr2015) appears unstable when we drop most control variables (model 8), the interaction term appears more robust. Relative to men, women became more likely to meet supporters at work.

Table 10: Interaction Test for Women Gaining Supporters Met at Work from 1977 to 2015

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	metAtWork							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
RGenderF	-0.174*	-0.059	-0.069	-0.069	-0.031	-0.040	-0.372**	-0.343**
	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.096)	(0.097)	(0.097)	(0.166)	(0.159)
empFullTime		0.854***	0.842***	0.937***	0.914***	0.865***	0.854***	0.784***
		(0.108)	(0.109)	(0.116)	(0.117)	(0.102)	(0.103)	(0.095)
empPartTime		0.152	0.139	0.213	0.138			
		(0.151)	(0.151)	(0.152)	(0.152)			
BAhigher			0.011	-0.062	-0.133			
			(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.096)			
RisMarried			-0.095	-0.374***	-0.251**	-0.255**	-0.264**	
			(0.094)	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.113)	(0.113)	
income				0.037**	0.038**	0.036**	0.028*	
				(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	
young				-0.606***	-0.573***	-0.563***	-0.617***	
				(0.101)	(0.101)	(0.102)	(0.106)	
total_kin_n					-0.157***	-0.161***	-0.162***	
					(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	
children_n					-0.070			
					(0.075)			
Yr2015							-0.458***	-0.234
							(0.167)	(0.152)
RGenderF:Yr2015							0.533**	0.451**
							(0.208)	(0.201)
Constant	-1.756***	-2.297***	-2.254***	-2.168***	-1.793***	-1.821***	-1.458***	-2.109***
	(0.075)	(0.109)	(0.127)	(0.152)	(0.159)	(0.141)	(0.201)	(0.136)
Observations	5,179	5,179	5,179	5,024	5,024	5,024	5,024	5,179
Log Likelihood	-2,038.026	-1,990.640	-1,990.017	-1,898.814	-1,868.617	-1,870.594	-1,865.522	-1,987.997
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,080.052	3,989.279	3,992.033	3,813.628	3,757.235	3,755.189	3,749.043	3,985.993

Note:

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Discussion and Conclusion

In this Chapter, I measured the extent to which men and women rely upon coworkers, people in the same line of work, and people met at work for social support in 1977 and 2015. I found that the gap between men and women has closed in terms of the role coworkers and people met at work play in providing social support. There was little gap between men and women in terms of people in the same line of work providing support in both 1977 and 2015. These patterns appeared in simple descriptive statistics and persisted when I controlled for several background characteristics.

What might explain these patterns? We controlled for full- and part-time employment in the regression models so these results are not the outcome of an increase in women's labor force participation (in addition, because of the ages sampled there was only a small increase). In these data, I find two potential drivers of the changes.

First, there are more women at work to befriend. Women are primarily naming other women, not men, as supporters from work contexts. The percentage of male supporters named by women who were in the same line of work remained about the same from 1977 (24%) to 2015 (25%). Similarly, the percentage of male coworkers women named to supportive exchanges was 32% in 1977 and 28% in 2015.²⁰ Women might befriend more coworkers and people in the same line of work simply because there are more women around. Thus, the increasing number of women in the workplace may have also made work a better source of social support for women.

Second, women are staying in touch with people from work contexts at higher rates today than they were in the late 1970s, *including when they are not working*. Women still work fewer years than men and are less likely to be working than men, but non-working women became more likely than non-working men to name people from work contexts.²¹ Of women who were not working full-time in the late 1970s, their supporters included 1.9% coworkers, 6.4% people in the same kind of work, and 5.1% people met at work. These figures are much lower than those of men in the late 1970s (see Table A3 in Appendix). For women not working full-time in 2015, their supporters included 6.7% coworkers, 13.8% people in the same kind of work, and 10.8% people met at work. These figures are *higher* than those of 2015 men. Thus, women appear to better hold onto ties made via work than men today and women of the late 1970s.

Women's better maintenance of ties from work fits with the finding that women in later life tend to be better at retaining friends than men (e.g., Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987; Stevens and Tilburg, 2011; Fischer and Beresford, 2014). Yet, the fact that women are keeping in touch better with people from work contexts today as compared with the late 1970s also suggests that women may be prioritizing these relationships. This might be due to the greater emphasis placed on women's careers and the fact that a much larger share of women today have college degrees or higher.

One underexplored benefit of women's greater labor force participation is that women have another context in which to meet people who may be able to provide social support. This paper found that women make use of work as a place in which to meet supportive ties just as much as men, despite their still-lower participation in the labor force. In certain respects, people

²⁰ For their part, men do report slightly more friendships with female coworkers: in 1977, 204 men nominated 193 men and 62 women coworkers to one of four supportive exchange questions. In 2015, 209 men nominated 161 men and 94 women.

²¹ Women's labor force participation in the 2015 data appears to be only a bit higher than the women in the 1977 data (58% vs. 52%). Men's labor force participation was lower in 2015 than 1977.

met at work may be more similar to the focal individual than those met through traditional sources of community, such as extended kin and religious groups. They might share particular formative experiences, outlooks, or pressures. These similarities might be important to providing social support. Future work might examine these other bases of similarity and consider the extent to which present and past coworkers may be more likely to provide particular kinds or quality of support.

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Appendix

Table A1 combines coworkers and individuals who do the same work to examine predictors of each type of supportive exchange as well as feelings of closeness. It shows that women were more likely in both time periods to socialize with coworkers or people who did the same type of work. Women in 2015 were less likely to seek practical advice from these alters, but more likely to confide in them. There were no gender differences in feelings of closeness to coworkers or people who did the same kind of work.

Table A1: Exchanges with coworkers and people who do the same kind of work in 1977 and 2015

	1977					2015				
	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RGenderF	0.485** (0.200)	0.163 (0.328)	-0.374* (0.218)	0.284 (0.177)	0.079 (0.178)	0.277** (0.132)	-0.265* (0.139)	-0.059 (0.126)	0.433*** (0.123)	-0.034 (0.133)
empFullTime	0.111 (0.230)	-0.330 (0.334)	-0.142 (0.288)	0.175 (0.221)	-0.308 (0.216)	-0.136 (0.138)	0.007 (0.141)	0.208* (0.121)	0.099 (0.116)	-0.237* (0.124)
RisMarried	-0.432** (0.217)	-0.048 (0.334)	-0.215 (0.225)	0.183 (0.186)	0.458** (0.200)	-0.202 (0.147)	-0.226 (0.165)	-0.142 (0.138)	-0.015 (0.135)	-0.215 (0.141)
BAhigher	0.248 (0.188)	0.222 (0.325)	0.113 (0.236)	-0.107 (0.187)	-0.259 (0.177)	0.164 (0.165)	-0.253* (0.153)	0.342** (0.141)	-0.203 (0.134)	-0.006 (0.142)
children_n	0.265 (0.199)	0.063 (0.217)	0.108 (0.172)	-0.282** (0.143)	-0.262 (0.172)	-0.104 (0.106)	0.043 (0.111)	-0.030 (0.096)	0.091 (0.095)	0.074 (0.105)
young	0.066 (0.221)	0.420 (0.392)	0.127 (0.261)	0.021 (0.202)	-0.214 (0.211)	0.128 (0.159)	0.005 (0.171)	-0.318** (0.150)	-0.321** (0.148)	-0.611*** (0.148)
mode.xweb						0.079 (0.135)	0.086 (0.149)	0.257* (0.132)	0.282** (0.124)	0.424*** (0.133)
Constant	0.690** (0.315)	-2.503*** (0.399)	-1.006*** (0.291)	-0.625** (0.280)	-0.026 (0.245)	0.702*** (0.199)	-0.862*** (0.197)	-0.896*** (0.190)	-0.567*** (0.176)	0.144 (0.181)
Observations	726	726	726	726	726	1,932	1,932	1,932	1,932	1,932
Log Likelihood	-411.841	-223.665	-386.946	-485.198	-482.023	-1,127.887	-1,023.010	-1,240.231	-1,290.532	-1,310.559
Akaike Inf. Crit.	837.682	461.330	787.892	984.395	978.045	2,271.775	2,062.020	2,496.462	2,597.064	2,637.119

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I present an interaction test of year and gender to determine which of the changes in exchanging and feelings of closeness between 1977 and 2015 are statistically significant. Table A2 uses the same predictor variables as above, but combines the 1977 and 2015 responses.

Table A2 echoes the finding from above that women's socializing with coworkers and people who do the same work is present in both periods and not new to the 2015 data. It also suggests that people do not need to be employed full time to feel close to people in the same line of work. This would support the idea that women may be keeping in touch with people in the same line of work as much as men despite working fewer years. People aged 50-70, with greater experience and more time to evaluate their relationships, are using the label of "close" for supportive coworkers and people in the same line of work more often than are young people (ages 21-30).

The interaction test in Table A2 does not reveal a shift in exchanges or feelings of closeness by gender and year. Women today are not exchanging support with coworkers and people in the same line of work in a way that is different from the past. Instead, the coefficients on the variable for year suggest that it both men and women who are exchanging support differently with coworkers and people in the same line of work. Compared to 1977, the 2015 data show an increase in the amount of practical help and advice available to respondents from coworkers and people in the same line of work. Yet, we cannot know whether this increase is real or whether it is simply due to a change in question wording (the questions for practical help and advice changed the most, becoming both more expansive and specific).

Table A2: Significance tests for interaction of gender and year on exchanges with coworkers and people who do the same kind of work

	social	practical	askAdvice	confide	close
RGenderF	0.467** (0.196)	0.183 (0.318)	-0.346 (0.228)	0.257 (0.174)	0.048 (0.177)
empFullTime	-0.076 (0.118)	-0.044 (0.130)	0.133 (0.114)	0.094 (0.103)	-0.261** (0.107)
RisMarried	-0.227* (0.121)	-0.198 (0.146)	-0.155 (0.117)	0.0004 (0.108)	-0.045 (0.115)
BAhigher	0.181 (0.126)	-0.162 (0.143)	0.274** (0.120)	-0.149 (0.110)	-0.067 (0.113)
children_n	0.017 (0.095)	0.066 (0.094)	0.038 (0.083)	-0.011 (0.076)	0.002 (0.081)
young	0.206* (0.119)	0.105 (0.138)	-0.090 (0.115)	-0.192* (0.107)	-0.379*** (0.112)
Yr2015	-0.111 (0.182)	1.360*** (0.296)	0.336* (0.191)	-0.128 (0.181)	0.104 (0.183)
RGenderF:Yr2015	-0.177 (0.234)	-0.439 (0.347)	0.302 (0.260)	0.201 (0.212)	-0.040 (0.222)
Constant	0.743*** (0.202)	-2.288*** (0.293)	-1.135*** (0.204)	-0.397** (0.181)	0.143 (0.175)
Observations	2,658	2,658	2,658	2,658	2,658
Log Likelihood	-1,543.207	-1,249.012	-1,632.735	-1,783.030	-1,807.554
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,104.415	2,516.023	3,283.471	3,584.061	3,633.108

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table A3: Men and Women's Work-Related Supporters by Work Status, 1977 and 2015

	1977				2015			
	Work FT		Do not work FT		Work FT		Do not work FT	
	M (176)	F (126)	M (79)	F (197)	M (163)	F (299)	M (226)	F (461)
cowork	13.9% (1432)	14.0% (1192)	4.5% (624)	1.9% (1753)	13.3% (1368)	14.0% (2739)	3.5% (1659)	6.7% (3887)
same	13.4% (1432)	17.2% (1192)	9.5% (624)	6.4% (1753)	22.1% (1368)	21.4% (2739)	13.0% (1659)	13.8% (3887)
metAt	20.5% (523)	20.3% (404)	12.1% (214)	5.1% (629)	17.6% (461)	17.3% (937)	8.6% (614)	10.8% (1397)

note: () indicate number of observations per cell

Chapter 3: The Converging Social Lives of Men and Women

ABSTRACT

Research on personal networks often emphasizes differences between men and women in terms of kin involvement, access to nonkin resources, emotional intimacy, and overall burdens and support. Demographic changes such as women's increasing and men's decreasing labor force participation and related cultural changes such as more egalitarian beliefs about the division of labor in the household suggest these differences may have shrunk over the past two generations. I examine whether men's and women's networks have become more similar over the past four decades using comparable survey data of individuals in northern California ages 50-70 in the late 1970s and the mid 2010s. In each of the four areas mentioned, I find some evidence of convergence. Since the late 1970s, the gap between men and women has decreased in terms of the number of kin they consider close, their willingness to confide, their ties to adult children, their overall network burdens, and access to people from work contexts. In the only instances of divergence, women pulled ahead of men in terms of access to advice from nonkin and appear to be relied upon to a greater extent by both men and women as confidants. In other ways the networks of men and women remained distinctive. I argue that the overall picture is one of modest convergence and that we ought to view some of the differences typically associated with men and women's networks as products of their time.

A long line of literature argues that gender is fundamentally relational (e.g., Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; West and Zimmerman, 1987; Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin, 1999; Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Schneider, 2012). The meanings of *masculine* and *feminine* are, in part, tied to the gendered division of labor in society. In the United States since the 1960s, attitudes about gender have become more egalitarian and traditional gender roles have been challenged (Wilkie, 1993; Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004; England, 2010; Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman, 2011). In the domestic sphere, men have increasingly taken on roles associated with women (Messner, 1993; Thébaud, 2010; Chesley, 2011). In the public and professional sphere, women have increasingly taken on roles associated with men (Cohen, 2004; Crompton, 2006; Juhn and Potter, 2006; Schnittker, 2007; Percheski, 2008).

What does growing gender equality mean for the differences typically associated with men's and women's social lives? This paper tests the proposition that there has been a convergence of personal networks across gender. It relies on survey data from the late 1970s and the mid-2010s to examine the extent to which the social lives of middle-aged men and women continue to differ by gender. Over this same period, women's labor force participation rate went from 48% to 57% (US BLS) and men's and women's attitudes about gender became more egalitarian (Hook, 2006; Galinsky, Aumann and Bond 2009). I find that men and women are becoming more similar in considering kin close, naming adult children to supportive exchanges, willingness to confide, number of confidants, and the extent to which they are burdened by others. Men continued to lag women in terms of overall support and serving as confidants. Meanwhile, women caught up to men in supporters from work contexts and surpassed men in terms of nonkin advisors. Overall, men's and women's personal networks have, to some extent, converged.

A basic assumption motivating the study of interpersonal relationships is that if anything conditions the experience of our lives it is the people in them, how we support one another, and what that means to us. We assume that many key differences between men and women arise because they inhabit different social worlds. These findings suggest that in terms of their interpersonal relationships, men and women are becoming more similar. Increasingly, men and women are surrounded by people who play similar roles, who make similar demands and offer similar help.

Traditional differences between men and women's personal networks can be organized into four dimensions: kin involvement, emotional intimacy, access to resources, and the overall levels of burden and support from one's network. I next provide a schematic of each along with hypotheses about how men's and women's relationships may have changed.

Kin Involvement

Women's networks have historically been much richer than men's in connections to and support from kin. Women tend to be more connected to family members – to socialize more with them, to provide more support to them, and to receive more support from them (e.g., Fischer, 1982; Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987; Wellman and Wortley, 1990; Moore, 1990; Antonucci, Akiyama and Takahashi, 2004). For example, studies of caregiving find that three in four caregivers to the elderly are women – daughters, wives and other female relatives (see Brody, 2006 for a review). In fact, women average 31 hours per year of caring for individuals with high

need while men only average 17 (Umberson et al., 1996).²² Despite a rebalancing of much of care work at home, women remain just as likely to provide intensive care (nine or more hours per week) to elderly or ill family members (Pavalko and Wolfe, 2016).

In addition to providing more care, women are simply better connected to family than are men. Moore (1990) found that even after controlling for working status and other structural features of people's lives, women were still better connected to kin than were men. And, as we might expect, women also have more kin whom they consider emotionally close than do men (Fischer, 1982; Antonucci et al., 2004). Similarly, while 72% of adults feel "very close" to their mothers, only 55% feel "very close" to their fathers (Lawton et al., 1994).

Women are also more likely than men to maintain ties among family members. Women do more kinkeeping work: they keep in touch, organize gatherings, and play a crucial role at gatherings (Rosenthal, 1985; Gerstel and Gallagher, 1993). Women not only communicate with adult children and aging parents more often than do men (Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987; Moore, 1990), they orchestrate family social life across generations and outside the nuclear family (Rosenthal, 1985). Men tend to socialize with family less and tend to rely on their spouses for arranging get-togethers.

Among all these disparities, I concentrate on three that touch upon different aspects of men's and women's relationships with family: 1) the number of family members with whom they socialize, 2) the number of family members to whom they feel close, and 3) the exchange of support with other generations in the family. Next, I discuss reasons we might suspect that the gaps between men and women in these aspects of their relationships with family may be closing.

First, roles have changed. More families have two earners, likely leading to a rebalancing of expectations around the division of labor in the family and household (Hook, 2006). In 1977, 66% of working people were in two-income households; by 2008, that figure was 80% (Galinsky, Aumann and Bond 2009). While men's and women's hours devoted to the family are close to even when paid employment is included, the distribution of labor has changed (Bianchi et al., 2000; Sayer, 2005; Sayer et al., 2009). In 1965, mothers spent an average of eight hours on paid work, thirty-two hours on housework, and ten hours on child-care per week. Meanwhile, fathers spent two and a half hours on childcare, four hours on housework, and forty-two hours on paid work. By 2011, men had increased their housework to seven hours a week and childcare to ten hours a week. Women cut their hours of housework to eighteen, but increased their childcare hours to fourteen, while increasing their average hours of paid work to twenty-one (Parker and Wang, 2013; also see Galinsky, Aumann and Bond 2009). Overall, men do more work at home, and women do more paid work.

Men who invest more time in care and household work are more likely to develop stronger bonds with children and aging parents. These stronger ties might be reflected in the willingness of men's children and parents to provide support to them. This leads us to Hypothesis 1: *The gap between men and women in how often they name parents and adult children as providers of support will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Alongside changes in *roles* we have also witnessed changes in *norms*. The percentage of working people who agree that it's better for everyone if, "The man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home and children" has declined from 64% in 1977 to 39% in 2008 (Galinsky, Aumann and Bond, 2009). The fact that men's estimates of their own participation in childcare, cooking and cleaning have not only increased, *but outpaced women's estimates of*

²² Though according to self-reported time-use data, the ratio of men's to women's time spent caring for adults began hovering around one by the mid-1970s (Sayer, 2016).

men's participation suggests that it is more normatively desirable for men to be involved with family work (Galinsky, Aumann and Bond, 2009). While we do not have direct data on trends in kin-keeping work, we might surmise that the growing normativity of care and housework for men also means that men are also more expected to perform kin-keeping work. Certainly the expectation that a father is off the hook simply for bringing home a paycheck has diminished. Fathers are expected to spend more time with family, to take greater responsibility in care work and to be emotionally closer to children (O'Brien, 1991; Cabrera et al., 2000; Morman and Floyd, 2002). If men today are spending more time with and forming stronger ties with children and parents, we might also expect them to socialize with their adult children and parents more often. This leads us to Hypothesis 2: *The gap between men and women in the number of kin with whom they socialize will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Finally, if there are significant shifts in terms of men obtaining support from family members or socializing with family members, we would also expect men to describe more family members as emotionally "close." This leads us to Hypothesis 3: *The gap between men and women in the number of kin whom they consider close will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Intimacy

Another important way of contrasting men's and women's social lives is in terms of emotional intimacy. Some argue that women place greater emphasis on emotional closeness in their relationships whereas men are more likely to be interested in joint activities (e.g., Bell, 1981; Caldwell and Peplau, 1982; Williams, 1985; Aukett, Ritchie, and Mill, 1988). Women have higher expectations for intimacy in friendships than do men. In over 100 interviews with older men and women, women placed more emphasis on intimacy with friends than did men (Felmlee and Muraco, 2009). Similarly, a meta-analysis of research on gender differences in friendships found that women demand greater self-disclosure and loyalty (Hall, 2011).

As noted earlier, men are not only expected to make time available for the traditionally feminine work of childcare and housework – they are expected to be emotionally available to family members. Even outside the family, men are expected to be more empathic and emotionally expressive (e.g., O'Brien, 1991). As Stearns summarizes:

For men, the twentieth century has witnessed a complex juggling act designed to preserve certain masculine personality traits inherited from the nineteenth century or before, while at the same time adapting to important new pressures toward greater surface friendliness or selective emotional openness (1990: 224).

Popular discourse, from that on relationships to child-rearing to psychological health, appears to advocate for men to be more emotionally expressive.²³ Although women remain the more emotionally expressive gender (see Brody and Hall, 2008 for a review), a variety of factors encourage men to be more expressive.

²³ For example: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/10/education/edlife/teaching-men-to-be-emotionally-honest.html?_r=0
<http://www.alternet.org/gender/masculinity-killing-men-roots-men-and-trauma>
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/living-the-questions/201401/how-crack-the-code-men-s-feelings>

In addition to lagging behind women in terms of expressiveness, men also lag in terms of how much they share with friends and family. A meta-analysis of 205 self-disclosure studies from 1960s, 70s, and 80s concluded that women disclose more than men and both men and women tend to disclose to women more often (Dindia and Allen, 1992). A more recent study among college students finds that women continue to disclose more than men in face-to-face interactions (Sheldon, 2013). Yet, we do not have a simple comparison of differences between men and women of yesterday and today in terms of willingness to confide when they confront difficult issues. This leads to Hypothesis 4: *The gap between men and women in their willingness to confide will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Men and women have also historically differed in terms of the number of people in whom they confide. Research often finds women have more confidants, particularly excluding spouses and kin (Antonucci, Akiyama and Lansford, 1998; Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987). The number of nonkin available to men and women as close associates varies over the life-course. In the late 1970s, men knew more nonkin than women immediately post marriage and child-birth. Soon after, men began to lose touch with nonkin, while women continued to make friends and stay in touch. By the time children left home and men retired the discrepancy in nonkin was quite wide – with women reporting 8.2 friends and men only 5.6 around age 65 (Fischer and Oliner, 1983). Women continue to make friends at every age, whereas men are more likely to rely upon the friends they made in early in life (Fischer and Oliner, 1983; Fischer and Beresford, 2014). Women have historically led men in the number of confidants they can rely upon. Hypothesis 5 examines whether this has changed: *The gap between men and women in terms of the number of confidants they have (excluding spouses) will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Given their different trajectories in forming confiding relationships, it is perhaps unsurprising that women are more likely to serve as confidants than men (Bell, 1981; Fischer, 1982; Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987; Aukett, Ritchie and Mill, 1988; Wellman and Wortley, 1990). Half of married men rely upon their spouse as primary confidant while only 20% of married women do so (Umberson et al., 1996). Among friends, coworkers, and neighbors, Liebler and Sandefur (2002) found that three in five women reported giving emotional support while nearly half received it. In contrast, one in two men reported giving emotional support and only one in three reported receiving it. Put simply, women are more likely to serve as confidants, and confidants to more people, than are men. Hypothesis 6 considers whether men are catching up to women in serving as confidants: *The gap between men and women in terms of serving as non-spouse confidants will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Access and Opportunities

Men have historically had greater access to instrumental help via their personal networks than did women. This instrumental help includes advice as well as crucial information like job leads (Umberson et al., 1996). Some of these differences arise from structural opportunities: men spend more time around nonkin who can provide advice and valuable information (e.g., Moore, 1990; Fischer and Oliner, 1983).

Yet, exposure to nonkin through work does not explain everything. Men's jobs have historically provided better exposure to nonkin than women's. Women of the 1970s were more likely than women today to be in lower-status jobs, working relatively independently and possibly lacking other female colleagues at their level (e.g., Kalleberg, 2011; Blau, Brummund and Liu, 2013; Mandel and Semyonov, 2014; del Río and Alonso-Villar, 2015). As a result,

women were less able to befriend coworkers who could be helpful to their careers. An unequal division of labor at home did not help: in the late 1970s, married women, even without children, reported fewer coworkers in their networks than did similar men (Fischer and Oliker, 1983). Moreover, the small percentage of women who had young children and continued working full-time faced what Hochschild called a “second shift” once they got home (1989). Finally, if both spouses worked, the husband’s job was often seen as more important. This attitude diminished the motivation for women to cultivate collegial relationships and led more couples to socialize exclusively with the husband’s coworkers (Fischer, 1982; Fischer and Oliker, 1983: 129).

Despite the advantages men held in access to nonkin, some studies found that working men and working women had similar nonkin networks. For example, using 1985 General Social Survey data, Moore finds, “...men and women with similar family- and work-related characteristics have nonkin networks that are also similar” (1990: 733). Thus, women may have connected with as many nonkin as did men, despite being in lower-status positions and less emphasis placed on their career success. Yet, even if this is the case, we would expect there to be a shift in terms of the percentage of all supportive ties represented by people from work.

If there is a gap between men and women in the number of people they know from work, we would expect that women have been catching up. We can view this disparity between men and women differently: as percentage of supportive ties from work. In other words, rather than measuring access to people from work in an absolute sense, we can examine the extent to which work-life represents an equal share of men and women’s social lives. Because women held greater responsibilities than men outside of work, this is an even more conservative measure than an absolute count of people known from work. Given the balancing of labor at home and the greater emphasis on women’s careers, we would expect that this share of supportive ties from work has been increasing for women relative to men. This leads us to *H7: The gap between men and women in the percentage of supportive ties formed through work contexts will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

This touches upon a broader point – that men may have historically had greater access to opportunities via nonkin. While we do not have a comprehensive measure of all the instrumental benefits provided by network measures, the closest proxy might be the number of nonkin whom individuals can rely upon for advice. In the 1970s work outside the home remained more legitimate for men and work within the home remained more legitimate for women. Albeit only true in certain settings, such as the English working class in the middle of the twentieth century, the stereotype was that men had more nonkin associates, such as friends, while women were responsible for maintaining kin ties (Bott, 1955). In the context of northern California in the 1970s, we might surmise that men still held an advantage over women in terms of access to advice from nonkin. This leads us to Hypothesis 8: *The gap between men and women in the number of nonkin they can rely upon for advice will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Burdens and Overall Support

The next set of comparisons take a broader view. They can be seen as reflecting how the overall conditions of men’s and women’s networks have changed. Research finds that women tend to be both more burdened and more supported than men. These burdens arise from having too many obligations. They arise not from having an ailing parent, but an ailing parent, a needy adult child, and a full-time job. The number of kin supported, not the number

of hours devoted to supporting them, predicts feelings of depression (Gerstel and Gallagher, 1993).

Women's burdens typically surpass those of men after getting married and having children. It is unclear whether this is because women are taught to feel more obligated, are taught how to provide care, have better relationships with those they care for, or because others expect care from them (see Neff and Karney, 2005). Nevertheless, it is women who provide the lion's share of care among kin and nonkin (Fischer, 1982; Wellman and Wortley, 1990; Umberson et al., 1996; Pavalko and Wolfe, 2016). This can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and anxious or, as noted, depressed (Kessler, McLeod, and Wethington, 1985; Doress-Worters, 1994).

One of the best predictors of whether one will have regular contact with and support from grown children is having a daughter (Spitze and Logan, 1990). It follows that parents are more likely to live with adult daughters than sons (Townsend, 1968). Women who are employed tend to continue to provide support to their parents while men who are employed are more likely to cut back their hours of care (Stoller, 1983; Brody and Schoonhover, 1986). Wives are as likely as husbands to do care work considered masculine (e.g., repairs), but husbands are much less likely to do work considered feminine (e.g., making meals; Gerstel and Gallagher, 2001). When men do provide extensive care, it tends to be because their wives also provide extensive care (Gerstel and Gallagher, 2001).

In addition to dedicating more time to care work than men, women also tend to exhibit more concern about the people in their lives. Women are more likely to express concern about their children and parents than are men (Lieberman, 1978; Menaghan, 1978; Brody, 1981). Women are more likely to say that other people's important life events were important to them, too (Dohrenwend, 1977; Kessler, McLeod and Wethington, 1985). Women experience more burden (psychological distress) associated with raising children than do men (Bird, 1997).

At a network level, women are supported and burdened for the same reason: they are better integrated (Kawachi and Berkman, 2001). It is partly because women are better connected to friends and family that they experience both greater support and greater burdens. As noted earlier, at every stage in the life course, women are better connected to kin than men (Fischer and Olicker, 1983; Moore, 1990). Yet, it is particularly in middle age that we begin to see large differences in support by gender due to women gaining a nonkin advantage over men (Fischer and Olicker, 1983; Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987). Women in middle and older ages continue to make new friends and better keep in touch with existing friends (Stevens and Tilburg, 2011; Fischer and Beresford, 2014). Middle aged women exchange more emotional support than do men (Liebler and Sandefur, 2002). As men age, the likelihood of relying solely on spouses increases, making them vulnerable to isolation if they become divorced or widowed (Fischer and Olicker, 1983; Levitt et al., 1985; Antonucci and Akiyama, 1987; Fischer and Beresford, 2014). Although women are more burdened by their networks, they are also better supported.

There are reasons to think the balance of support and burden might be changing. The rise of the dual-earner household has challenged the traditional division of care labor. Laws such as the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 encourage husbands to be involved in taking care of family. The fact that aging parents are living longer means that there are more years of care work to be done, which may itself prompt some redistribution of care work. Finally, more people express support for more equal divisions of labor between men and

women (e.g., Hook, 2006; Galinsky, Aumann and Bond, 2009). Hypotheses 9 and 10 examine whether these changes have balanced support and burden across men and women's networks. If the earlier hypotheses each focused on one aspect of personal networks, these hypotheses take snapshots at 30,000 feet. To some extent, they will also be shaped by changes we might see in earlier hypotheses.

H9: The gap between men and women in terms of network burdens will have decreased since the late 1970s.

H10: The gap between men and women in terms of overall support will have decreased since the late 1970s.

Stepping back, I use hypotheses 1-10 to examine a more general idea: to the extent that gender differences in personal relationships are rooted in structural and cultural circumstances and those circumstances have become more egalitarian in the last 40 years, we would expect to see declining gender differences in personal networks. Put simply, my central goal is to test the notion that personal networks are becoming less gendered. I next describe the data I used and how I analyzed them.

Data and Methods

I make use of two surveys of people in northern California: the Northern California Communities Study (NCCS) of 1977-78 and the UC Berkeley Social Networks Study (UCNets) of 2015-16.²⁴

The Northern California Community Study (NCCS, PI: Claude Fischer; ICPSR #07744) describes the egocentric networks of 1,050 respondents in 1977-1978 (over 19,000 ties). Respondents were sampled from a 200 by 200 mile area that begins with San Francisco and extends east and north. Relative to the population, NCCS oversampled on people living in small towns because the research addressed differences between the personal networks of those living in more urban versus more rural environments. Interviewers used eleven name-generators to obtain information about respondents' networks. For example, respondents named individuals whom they could count upon for socializing, confiding, advice, or a loan. Once a complete list of unique individuals was compiled, interviewers asked for information about each person, such as age, sex, religion, and whether they lived within five minutes or one hour of the respondent. These data have been previously analyzed on their own (e.g., Fischer, 1982; Feld, 1984; Blum, 1985) and for comparative purposes (Fischer and Shavit, 1995; Grossetti, 2007). A more detailed description of the NCCS survey is in the appendices to Fischer (1982).

UCNets is an NIH-funded study of social support and health. It is not a strict replication of the NCCS, though it is close enough to make meaningful comparisons and I attempt to control for major differences in method and sample. UCNets surveyed 1,149 residents of the northern California Bay Area (~60% in person and 40% on the web).²⁵ Respondents were 21-30 year old or 50-70 year old men and women residents of six Bay Area counties: Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Alameda and Contra Costa (here I only rely upon the older sample,

²⁴ For simplicity and because only a small portion of the data was gathered in 1978, I refer to 1977 as the date for NCCS. For the same reasons, I use 2015 rather than 2015-2016 as the date for UCNets.

²⁵ After excluding poor quality cases – here defined as people who did not answer a question toward the end of the survey about their educational attainment (205 dropped cases).

n=666). Although it had fewer name-generators than the 1977 survey, I lined up the name-generators from NCCS and UCNets as closely as possible when making comparisons. For both datasets, I only consider alters named to four supportive exchange questions, pertaining to asking for advice, confiding, socializing and obtaining practical help. The text to these questions, and differences between them in the two surveys, are presented in Table 1. Like the NCCS, UCNets also collected detailed data about the respondents' background characteristics, their relationships with alters and characteristics of those alters.

The samples differ in a few ways, some of which may affect the results and for which I introduce controls. Other differences are less likely to affect the results. Demographic changes mean that the sample composition and characteristics of people's networks will have changed. People today have fewer siblings, are separated in age from parents by more years, marry later and themselves have children later. Young people are more likely to be living with parents today than they were in the 1970s. The population of the Bay Area is also more diverse. The percentages of Asians and Latinos have increased greatly, while the percentage of blacks has decreased slightly. Women and men have much more schooling. Nonetheless, these demographic changes do not detract from the generalizability of my findings. Some mirror changes in the U.S. as a whole and changes in the population are in fact a large part of the story. Other changes in the Bay Area overstate changes in the U.S., but I try to control for their effects in my regression models. The variables that I kept in the models as controls are shown in Table 2 below.

The California Bay Area is unique in some regards and representative of the United States in others. The pertinent question for the generalizability of this study is whether the people of the Bay Area are systematically different from other Americans in how they maintain their social ties. Given the surprisingly strong similarities observed between northern Californians' networks of the 1970s (Fischer, 1982), French people's networks of 2005 (Grossetti, 2007), and Israelis' networks of 1991 (Fischer and Shavit 1995), I am skeptical that the people of northern California are so different from other Americans that we cannot learn about general tendencies from them. I do not claim that the measures here are exact estimates for the larger population, but I do believe that the direction of associations between variables, particularly those with strong effects and high significance, would generalize.

Variables

The analyses rely on several questions present in both surveys. Table 1 presents the text of name generators, the “feels close” question, as well as questions to identify coworkers and people in the same line of work in 1977 and 2015. The questions to identify coworkers and people in the same line of work are quite similar in both years. The questions for advice and practical help have become both broader and more concrete to jog respondents’ memories. As a result, we might expect to see more people named to these questions in 2015 as compared with 1977. The confiding question has changed a bit, but it is difficult to guess how it would affect responses. The socializing question has changed in terms of structure, but not substance and I do not expect large differences in responses simply due to these changes.

Table 1: Questions for Study Variables in 1977 and 2015

	1977	2015
Ask Advice	Often people rely on the judgment of someone they know in making important decisions about their lives--for example, decisions about their family or their work. Is there anyone whose opinion you consider seriously in making important decisions? [if yes:] Whose opinion do you consider? PROBE: Is there anyone else?	When you have to make important decisions – for example, about taking a job, family issues, or health problems – are there any people whose advice you seek out or would seek out in making those decisions? They can be family, friends, or professional advisors. Whose advice do you or would you seek out?
Burdens	1) “About how often do you feel that the people that you live with make too many demands on you these days?” [Options: “A lot of the time,” “Some of the time,” “Once in a while,” “Never”] 2) “About how often do you feel that your friends and (other) relatives make too many demands on you?” [Options: “A lot of the time,” “Some of the time,” “Once in a while,” “Never”]	There are sometimes people we know who ask a lot of us, who are sometimes demanding or difficult. Who are the people that you sometimes find demanding or difficult? They can be people you’ve already named or new people. I can take up to six names.
Ever confide, confidants	When you are concerned about a personal matter--for example, about someone you are close to or something you are worried about--how often do you talk about it with someone--usually, sometimes, or hardly ever? When you do talk with someone about personal matters, who do you talk with? [PROBE:] Anyone else?	Sometimes personal matters come up that concern people, like issues about relationships, important things in their lives, or difficult experiences. Do you ever confide in someone about these sorts of things or do you never confide in anyone? [“Yes”, “No, never confide”] Who do you confide in about these sorts of things?
“Feels	Which of the people on this list do you	Which of the people on this list do you

Close”	feel especially close to?	feel especially close to?
Practical Help	In the past three months, have any friends or relatives helped with any tasks around the home, such as painting, moving furniture, cooking, cleaning, or major or minor repairs? [if yes:] Who helped you?	In the last few months, have any friends, relatives, or acquaintances given you any practical help like moving furniture, doing repairs, picking up something at the store, looking after a child, giving you a ride, or things like that? [if yes:] Please give us the names of people who have done things like this for you in the last few months.
Socialize	Which, if any, of these have you done in the last three months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had someone to your home for lunch or dinner? - Went to someone's home for lunch or dinner? - Someone came by your home to visit? - Went over to someone's home for a visit? - Went out with someone (e.g., a restaurant, bar, movie, park) - Met someone you know outside your home (e.g., a restaurant, bar, park, club) - [R can volunteer other activity] [if yes on any:] May I have the first names of the people you do these things with?	First, I am going to ask you about activities that you might do with other people and about how often you do them – at least once a week, a couple of times a month, several times during the year, once a year or less? [SHOW CARD] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About how often do you get together at your or a friend’s or relative’s house for a meal? - Go out to eat at a restaurant with friends or relatives? - Go out to a live sports event with friends or relatives? - Go out to concerts, plays, music clubs, or other cultural events with friends or relatives? Please think about people you typically do these sorts of things with – or other social things as well, such as going shopping, out for drinks, to the park, or just hanging out. Who are the people you usually do these sorts of things with?
coworker	This is a list of some of the ways people are connected with each other. Some people will be related in more than one way. So, when I read you a name, please tell me all the ways that person is connected with you right now. [OPTION] Co-worker (someone you work with or see regularly at work)	People can be connected to each other in a few different ways, even family members. Here is a list of the ways people can be connected. When I read a name to you, please tell me all the different ways that you are connected to that person nowadays. What are all the ways that you are connected to [[name]]? [OPTION] Know at work

sameWork	IF R EMPLOYED, LAID-OFF, LOOKING FOR WORK, OR RETIRED: Please look at the list of names again. Which of those people do you think of as doing the same kind of work you (do/did)?	IF EMPLOYED FULL- OR PART- TIME, UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK, UNEMPLOYED AND NOT LOOKING FOR WORK, OR RETIRED: Which of the people on this list do/did the same kind of work as you do/did?
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Table 2: Summary Statistics for 1977 and 2015 Variables

1977 (NCCS)						2015 (UCNets)					
Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max	Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
age	362	58.536	8.413	45	75	age	666	60.917	5.943	50	70
allSupport_n	362	10.478	4.842	1	28	allSupport_n	666	13.255	6.184	1	27
Asian	362	0.028	0.164	0	1	Asian	666	0.096	0.295	0	1
askAdvice_wNonkin_n	362	0.456	0.874	0	4	askAdvice_wNonkin_n	666	1.444	1.513	0	6
BACounty	362	0.390	0.488	0	1	BACounty	666	1.000	0.000	1	1
BAhigher	362	0.202	0.402	0	1	BAhigher	666	0.697	0.460	0	1
Black	362	0.030	0.172	0	1	Black	666	0.080	0.271	0	1
bornAbroad	362	0.069	0.254	0	1	bornAbroad	666	0.126	0.332	0	1
confide_wNonkin_n	362	0.942	1.234	0	5	confide_wNonkin_n	666	2.345	1.694	0	6
confide_wNonSpouse_n	362	1.812	1.639	0	8	confide_wNonSpouse_n	666	2.826	1.849	0	6
coworker_n	362	0.494	1.072	0	6	coworker_n	666	0.718	1.367	0	8
disab	362	0.343	0.475	0	1	disab	666	0.120	0.325	0	1
empFullTime	362	0.398	0.490	0	1	empFullTime	666	0.315	0.465	0	1
empPartTime	362	0.072	0.259	0	1	empPartTime	666	0.185	0.388	0	1
genderF	362	0.586	0.493	0	1	genderF	666	0.644	0.479	0	1
income	344	8.201	3.554	1	16	income	659	6.844	3.238	1	13
kinClose_n	362	1.854	2.006	0	10	kinClose_n	666	1.535	1.700	0	9
Latino	362	0.039	0.193	0	1	Latino	664	0.060	0.238	0	1
married	362	0.624	0.485	0	1	married	666	0.465	0.499	0	1
mentionChild	362	0.541	0.499	0	1	mentionChild	666	0.282	0.450	0	1
mentionParent	362	0.122	0.327	0	1	mentionParent	666	0.189	0.392	0	1
neverConfide	362	0.304	0.461	0	1	mode.web	666	0.246	0.431	0	1
nTooDemanding	257	1.673	1.324	0	6	neverConfide	665	0.086	0.280	0	1
sameWork_n	362	0.760	1.279	0	10	nTooDemanding	387	1.261	1.304	0	6
social_wKin_n	362	1.917	2.282	0	10	sameWork_n	666	1.216	1.600	0	10
spouseEmp	362	0.323	0.468	0	1	social_wKin_n	666	1.383	1.874	0	9
total_kin_n	362	2.906	2.651	0	15	spouseEmp	666	0.312	0.464	0	1
						total_kin_n	666	2.275	2.127	0	14

Explanation of selected variables:

- *BACounty* indicates that the respondent lives in one of the six Bay Area counties surveyed in 2015: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco. This is used to control for any differences between 1977 respondents living in one of these counties (sample included San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin) and those who did not.
- *BAhigher* indicates whether the respondent completed college (incl. higher degrees)
- *disab* indicates whether the person suffers from a long-term illness or injury that interferes with their daily activities.
- *married* included people in long-term partnerships

- *mode.x* (not shown in table) indicated whether 2015 respondents took the survey face-to-face (FtF) or via web (web)

Other notes:

- *Definition of kin*: in both periods kin includes parents, siblings, children and in-laws. Kin excludes spouses/partners because I am interested in non-spouse interactions.
- *Age ranges*: The sampling in the 2015 survey targeted 50-70 year olds specifically so I had data for 666 individuals. For the 1977 data, the sample targeted individuals ages 18+, leaving me with many fewer observations for the 50-70 age group. I experimented with using both 50-70 year olds and 45-75 year olds and the coefficients were very similar. I ended up reporting results for 45-75 year olds to bolster the sample size.

Findings

The findings are organized in terms of the major distinctions typically drawn between men's and women's personal networks: kin involvement, intimacy, access and opportunities, burdens and support. I begin with the hypotheses regarding men's and women's involvement with kin.

Kin Involvement

Some of the traditional gender differences in personal networks stem from the different roles men and women play in family life. The first three hypotheses consider the extent to which interactions between men and women and their families have changed.

H1: The gap between men and women in how often they name parents and adult children as providers of support will have decreased since the late 1970s.

If men are catching up to women in terms of their involvement with family life, we should expect to see men enjoying more support from various family members. Here I consider whether men and women in the late 1970s and mid-2010s named parents and adult children to four exchanges: socializing, confiding, asking for advice, and getting practical help. First I present simple comparisons of the raw percentages of men versus women who could rely upon adult children or parents at each time point. I find that men were much less involved with adult children than were women in the late 1970s (Table 3). Nearly 29% of women named adult children as sources of social support compared to only 18% of men ($p < .001$). By the mid-2010s, men appeared just as likely as women to name adult children to supportive exchanges. A little more than one in four men and women named adult children to supportive exchanges in 2015.

Surprisingly, the raw data suggests that there was little discrepancy between men and women in naming *parents* to supportive exchanges in the 1970s – at least in northern California. It also appears that this parity persists today.

Table 3: Percentage of Men and Women Who Exchange Support with Adult Children and Parents in 1977 and 2015

	Year	Men	Women	z-test
Adult Children	1977	18.2	28.8	Z=-4.10, p<.001
	2015	28	27.2	Z=.24, p=.81
Parents	1977	33.0	34.6	Z=-.56, p=.57
	2015	18.8	18.3	Z=.16, p=.87

To examine these relationships more closely, I ran binomial logistic regressions that predicted whether individuals named their parents or adult children to supportive exchanges (Tables 4 and 5). The predictor of greatest interest here is RGenderM, which tells us how much being male affects the log odds of naming a parent or adult child. The other variables simply serve as controls. We see that in the case of adult children (Table 4), the difference between men and women was quite large in the late 1970s, before and after introducing various control variables. In model 6, the coefficient for being male corresponds to a 56% decrease in the odds of naming an adult child, all else held constant ($p < .01$). In contrast, the difference between men and women in the mid-2010s is small and not significant in the bivariate model and remained so after introducing controls. In the final model (12), men have 7% higher odds of naming adult children than women (NS).

Table 4: Men and Women Naming Adult Children to Supportive Exchanges in 1977 and 2015

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>											
	mentionChild											
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	-0.749*** (0.217)	-0.925*** (0.237)	-0.813*** (0.249)	-0.812*** (0.263)	-0.813*** (0.264)	-0.810*** (0.248)	0.100 (0.179)	0.047 (0.181)	0.073 (0.182)	0.109 (0.184)	0.119 (0.185)	0.074 (0.182)
BAhigher		-0.304 (0.271)	-0.252 (0.274)	-0.306 (0.301)	-0.303 (0.303)	-0.254 (0.273)		-0.453** (0.185)	-0.424** (0.186)	-0.539*** (0.195)	-0.533*** (0.198)	-0.424** (0.186)
married		0.605** (0.240)	0.594** (0.241)	0.683** (0.278)	0.680** (0.280)	0.593** (0.241)		0.465*** (0.176)	0.465*** (0.178)	0.265 (0.211)	0.281 (0.213)	0.461*** (0.176)
empFullTime			-0.358 (0.235)	-0.346 (0.267)	-0.346 (0.269)	-0.362 (0.235)			-0.453** (0.198)	-0.556*** (0.207)	-0.568*** (0.208)	-0.454** (0.197)
bornAbroad			-0.083 (0.432)	-0.107 (0.477)	-0.101 (0.481)				-0.043 (0.264)	0.050 (0.268)	0.027 (0.306)	
income				0.010 (0.041)	0.011 (0.042)					0.067* (0.035)	0.075** (0.035)	
Black				-1.661** (0.832)	-1.655** (0.834)						0.302 (0.337)	
Latino				-0.135 (0.568)	-0.133 (0.570)						-0.050 (0.381)	
Asian				0.352 (0.742)	0.354 (0.743)						0.180 (0.337)	
disab					-0.004 (0.242)						0.248 (0.269)	
BACounty					-0.023 (0.246)							
Constant	0.481*** (0.141)	0.242 (0.185)	0.341* (0.197)	0.226 (0.292)	0.231 (0.320)	0.336* (0.196)	-0.969*** (0.108)	-0.870*** (0.178)	-0.761*** (0.185)	-1.036*** (0.234)	-1.172*** (0.264)	-0.765*** (0.184)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	362	666	666	666	659	659	666
Log Likelihood	-243.630	-239.839	-238.632	-224.404	-224.399	-238.651	-396.179	-390.195	-387.441	-381.904	-380.886	-387.454
Akaike Inf. Crit.	491.260	487.678	489.265	468.807	472.799	487.302	796.359	788.391	786.882	777.808	783.772	784.909

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Next we turn to respondents naming their parents to supportive exchanges (Table 5). The results bear out the simple comparisons in Table 3. Even after controlling for a variety of characteristics, there is little difference between men and women in naming parents to supportive exchanges in 1977 and in 2015. Across all models for 1977 and 2015, the coefficient for RGenderM represents a difference between men's and women's odds of naming parents of less than 10% and is not significant.

Table 5: Men and Women Naming Parents to Supportive Exchanges in 1977 and 2015

<i>Dependent variable:</i>												
	mentionParent											
	1977				2015							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	0.187 (0.324)	0.238 (0.346)	-0.091 (0.369)	-0.119 (0.392)	-0.115 (0.394)	-0.077 (0.368)	0.092 (0.205)	0.085 (0.206)	0.046 (0.209)	0.072 (0.210)	0.124 (0.213)	0.048 (0.209)
BAhigher		0.305 (0.379)	0.210 (0.387)	0.110 (0.436)	0.122 (0.440)			-0.086 (0.214)	-0.141 (0.217)	-0.201 (0.225)	-0.105 (0.232)	
married		-0.257 (0.349)	-0.233 (0.353)	-0.208 (0.414)	-0.262 (0.421)	-0.222 (0.352)		0.051 (0.200)	0.105 (0.203)	0.022 (0.240)	-0.022 (0.245)	0.095 (0.203)
empFullTime			0.943*** (0.353)	0.937** (0.397)	0.984** (0.400)	0.962*** (0.350)			0.634*** (0.205)	0.557*** (0.216)	0.489** (0.220)	0.623*** (0.205)
bornAbroad			-0.672 (0.768)	-0.149 (0.790)	-0.054 (0.799)	-0.651 (0.766)			-0.540 (0.344)	-0.478 (0.347)	-0.596 (0.392)	-0.539 (0.344)
income				0.010 (0.063)	0.026 (0.065)					0.031 (0.040)	0.054 (0.041)	
Black				-16.768 (2,012.260)	-16.657 (2,023.587)						0.684* (0.356)	
Latino				-16.507 (1,714.880)	-16.454 (1,708.691)						1.172*** (0.362)	
Asian				-16.810 (2,019.778)	-16.728 (2,017.873)						0.257 (0.396)	
disab					0.347 (0.360)						-0.006 (0.317)	
BACounty					-0.236 (0.380)							
Constant	-2.058*** (0.217)	-1.991*** (0.276)	-2.258*** (0.312)	-2.248*** (0.461)	-2.423*** (0.507)	-2.234*** (0.309)	-1.488*** (0.125)	-1.451*** (0.207)	-1.590*** (0.219)	-1.714*** (0.274)	-2.080*** (0.318)	-1.680*** (0.173)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	362	666	666	666	659	659	666
Log Likelihood	-133.773	-133.210	-129.311	-117.144	-116.487	-129.454	-322.941	-322.837	-316.961	-314.176	-308.138	-317.172
Akaike Inf. Crit.	271.546	274.421	270.621	254.288	256.973	268.908	649.882	653.673	645.921	642.352	638.277	644.344

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

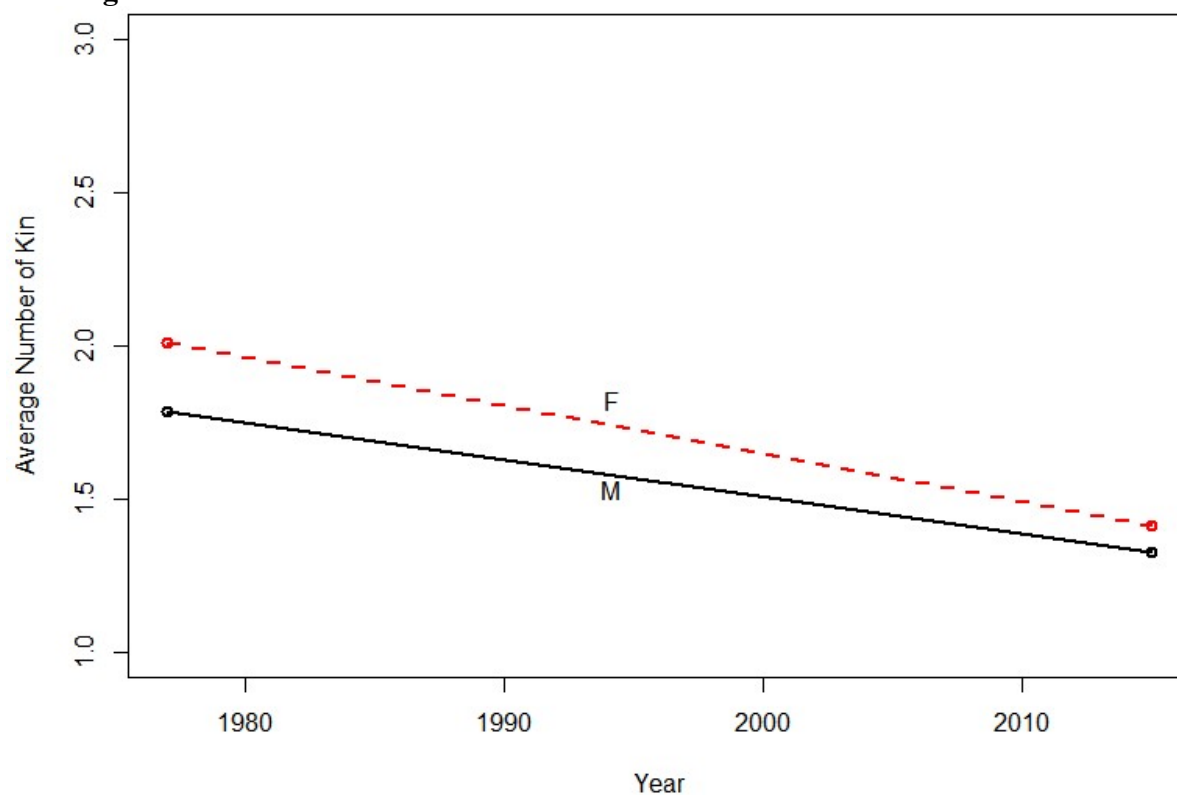
We find partial support for Hypothesis 1. Men today name adult children to supportive exchanges about as often as women, which is more balanced than in the late 1970s when women named adult children more often. Surprisingly, there was no discrepancy between men's and women's naming of older parents to supportive exchanges in the late 1970s, which remains today. Nonetheless, we can say that men's and women's networks did converge a bit: men became as likely as women to name adult children as potential sources of support.

H2: The gap between men and women in the number of kin with whom they socialize will have decreased since the late 1970s.

Hypothesis 2 considers whether men are taking on a larger share of kin-keeping work. Specifically, I compare the number of kin men and women named when asked about with whom they did a variety of social activities, such as going out to restaurants, cultural or sporting events, or having a meal at someone's home.

Figure 1 shows the number of kin with whom men and women socialized in 1977 and 2015. Women saw the mean number of family members with whom they socialized decrease from 2 in 1977 to 1.4 in 2015. Similarly, men had an average of 1.8 family-members with whom they socialized in 1977, but that figure dropped to 1.3 in 2015 (we will see later that this may be due to a shift toward relying upon nonkin). As noted earlier, due to differences in the survey instruments and sampling frames, we cannot infer much from the slope of these two lines but can be more confident about the gap between men and women at each time point.

Figure 1: Number of Kin with whom Men and Women Socialize in 1977 and 2015



To measure the mean gender difference at each time, I control for key background characteristics in negative binomial regressions (Table 6). The coefficient for $RGenderM$ is the difference in the logs of the expected counts for men and women. None of the differences are statistically significant. Furthermore, the coefficients in the fitted regressions (models 6 and 12) indicate small substantive differences between men and women (.2 kin in 1977 and .1 kin in 2015 – again, not significant).

Table 6: Average Differences in Number of Kin with whom Men and Women Socialize in 1977 and 2015

<i>Dependent variable:</i>												
social_wKin_n												
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	-0.118 (0.145)	-0.182 (0.150)	-0.175 (0.159)	-0.168 (0.164)	-0.173 (0.165)	-0.183 (0.150)	-0.066 (0.117)	-0.134 (0.117)	-0.141 (0.117)	-0.132 (0.117)	-0.113 (0.117)	-0.134 (0.116)
BAhigher		-0.364** (0.182)	-0.368** (0.184)	-0.279 (0.198)	-0.284 (0.199)	-0.370** (0.182)		-0.247** (0.119)	-0.249** (0.119)	-0.280** (0.123)	-0.295** (0.124)	-0.272** (0.119)
married		0.433*** (0.154)	0.427*** (0.154)	0.565*** (0.176)	0.571*** (0.177)	0.428*** (0.154)		0.352*** (0.112)	0.366*** (0.112)	0.308** (0.133)	0.297** (0.133)	0.367*** (0.112)
empFullTime			-0.023 (0.153)	0.066 (0.171)	0.072 (0.172)				0.045 (0.119)	-0.006 (0.124)	-0.021 (0.124)	
bornAbroad			-0.357 (0.292)	-0.360 (0.314)	-0.366 (0.316)	-0.360 (0.291)			-0.146 (0.170)	-0.106 (0.171)	-0.283 (0.194)	-0.324* (0.190)
income				-0.037 (0.026)	-0.037 (0.027)					0.019 (0.022)	0.026 (0.022)	
Black				-0.671 (0.492)	-0.681 (0.494)						0.071 (0.214)	
Latino				-0.449 (0.389)	-0.441 (0.389)						0.247 (0.226)	
Asian				0.017 (0.464)	0.017 (0.465)						0.446** (0.206)	0.423** (0.204)
disab					0.046 (0.153)						0.195 (0.168)	
BACounty					0.025 (0.157)							
Constant	0.698*** (0.092)	0.501*** (0.124)	0.532*** (0.131)	0.710*** (0.187)	0.686*** (0.204)	0.526*** (0.125)	0.347*** (0.069)	0.361*** (0.115)	0.361*** (0.120)	0.288* (0.148)	0.182 (0.164)	0.363*** (0.115)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	362	666	666	666	659	659	666
Log Likelihood	-677.465	-672.084	-671.330	-636.097	-636.043	-671.341	-1,076.512	-1,070.344	-1,069.909	-1,060.792	-1,057.092	-1,067.716
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,358.930	1,352.168	1,354.660	1,292.195	1,296.085	1,352.681	2,157.024	2,148.688	2,151.818	2,135.584	2,136.183	2,147.431

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

It turns out that the premise of H2 was wrong: women did not socialize with more family in the 1970s than did men – at least in northern California. Men and women continued to socialize with about the same number of family members in the mid-2010s. We fail to confirm *H2: The gap between men and women in the number of kin with whom they socialize will have decreased since the late 1970s*. The gap between men and women was small in the 1970s and remains small today.

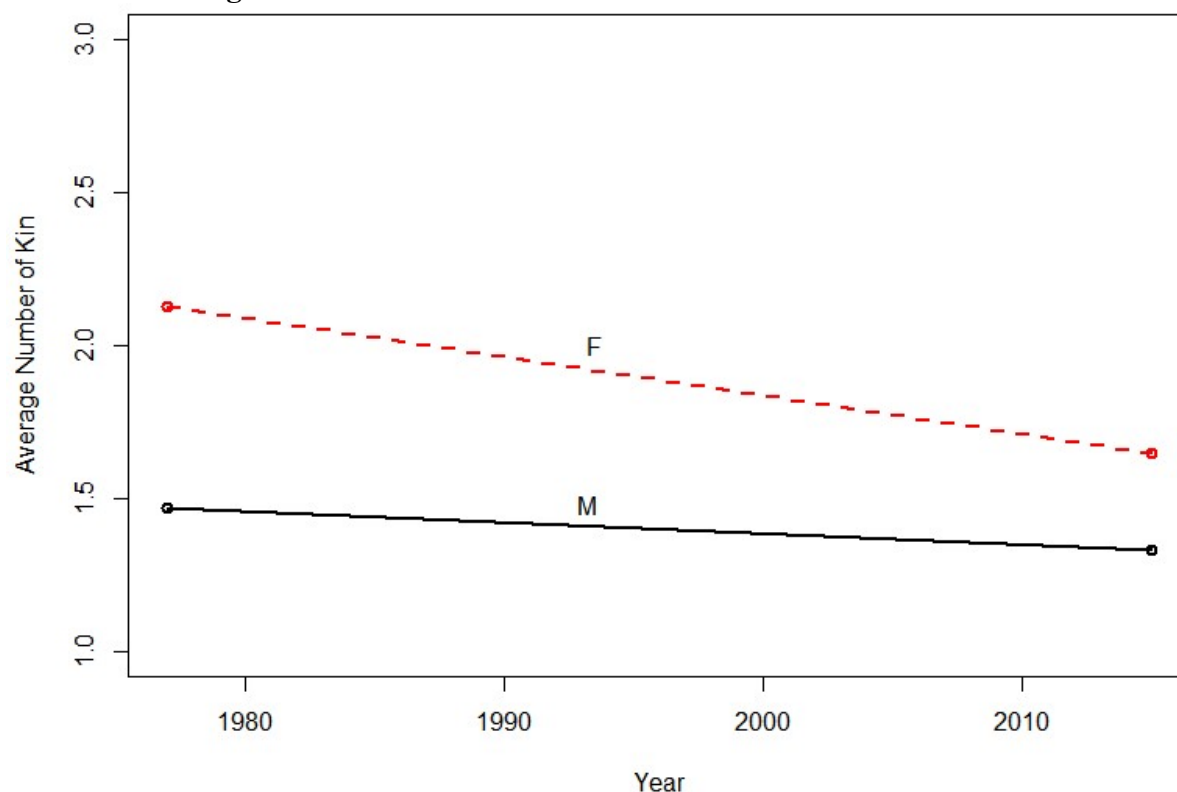
H3: The gap between men and women in the number of kin whom they consider close will have decreased since the late 1970s.

H3 examines whether the number of kin men and women consider close has converged since the 1970s. We know about these kin because they were named by respondents in 1977 and 2015 to four questions about with whom they exchanged social support, including socializing,

confiding, asking for advice and getting practical help. A follow-up question asked them to identify which of the people they had named they considered “especially close.” The analyses exclude partners.

Figure 2 shows the number of kin whom men and women consider close in 1977 and 2015. In the late 1970s, the average woman had 2.1 and the average man had 1.5 kin whom they considered close. By the mid-2010s, on average, women considered 1.6 and men considered 1.3 kin close. Simple descriptive statistics point to some convergence.

Figure 2: Number of Kin that Men and Women Consider Close



I use a negative binomial regression to estimate the difference between men and women after controlling for key background characteristics. In both time periods, men lag women ($RGenderM$) in the number of kin they consider close even after controlling for a few key demographic characteristics (Table 7).²⁶ In the fitted model for 1977 (6), we find that the median man had about 1.6 family members he considered close whereas the median woman had about 2.5 ($p < .01$). In the fitted model for 2015 (12), the median man had about 1.4 family members he considered close whereas the median women had about 1.8 ($p < .05$). Even after controlling for a wide range of variables, we find that the gap between men and women has shrunk.

²⁶ While the effect sizes for race and ethnicity were large in 1977 they corresponded to only 14 Latinos, 10 Asians and 11 African-Americans. As a result, I left them out of the final model.

Table 7: Difference in Number of Kin Considered Close by Men and Women in 1977 and 2015

<i>Dependent variable:</i>												
kinClose_n												
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	-0.372*** (0.122)	-0.485*** (0.127)	-0.530*** (0.134)	-0.472*** (0.138)	-0.469*** (0.139)	-0.488*** (0.126)	-0.210** (0.092)	-0.232** (0.092)	-0.238*** (0.092)	-0.229** (0.093)	-0.220** (0.093)	-0.212** (0.092)
BAhigher		-0.029 (0.147)	-0.034 (0.148)	0.019 (0.161)	0.007 (0.162)			-0.103 (0.093)	-0.107 (0.093)	-0.137 (0.096)	-0.129 (0.097)	
married		0.408*** (0.128)	0.410*** (0.128)	0.422*** (0.147)	0.411*** (0.147)	0.400*** (0.128)		0.160* (0.087)	0.171* (0.087)	0.107 (0.103)	0.093 (0.103)	0.151* (0.087)
empFullTime			0.115 (0.127)	0.111 (0.142)	0.095 (0.143)				0.050 (0.093)	0.026 (0.097)	0.025 (0.097)	
bornAbroad			-0.192 (0.236)	-0.154 (0.243)	-0.200 (0.260)				-0.150 (0.134)	-0.135 (0.136)	-0.155 (0.152)	-0.182 (0.135)
income				-0.003 (0.022)	-0.001 (0.022)					0.017 (0.017)	0.018 (0.017)	
disab				-0.176 (0.129)	-0.176 (0.129)					-0.056 (0.136)	-0.059 (0.136)	
BACounty				-0.085 (0.130)	-0.081 (0.131)							
Black					-0.341 (0.390)	-0.436 (0.382)					-0.074 (0.171)	
Latino					-0.235 (0.327)	-0.235 (0.322)					0.313* (0.170)	0.330** (0.168)
Asian					0.135 (0.376)						-0.025 (0.169)	
mode.xweb										0.135 (0.098)	0.134 (0.098)	0.137 (0.098)
Constant	0.755*** (0.075)	0.535*** (0.103)	0.519*** (0.109)	0.600*** (0.169)	0.615*** (0.171)	0.555*** (0.101)	0.498*** (0.053)	0.499*** (0.089)	0.501*** (0.093)	0.415*** (0.122)	0.395*** (0.130)	0.389*** (0.072)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	362	666	666	666	659	659	664
Log Likelihood	-663.632	-658.613	-657.948	-628.044	-627.336	-657.718	-1,121.496	-1,119.382	-1,118.614	-1,108.234	-1,106.310	-1,113.399
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,331.264	1,325.226	1,327.896	1,274.087	1,278.673	1,325.436	2,246.991	2,246.764	2,249.228	2,234.468	2,236.620	2,238.797

In sum, we see some convergence between men and women in terms of family life: men are today just as likely as women to rely upon adult children for support, men are closing the gap with women in terms of the number of kin whom they consider close. In two cases we saw that men and women were already similar in the 1970s: men were already as likely as women to rely upon parents for support in the 1970s and men already socialized with as many family members as did women in the 1970s.

Emotional Intimacy

The next three hypotheses consider changes in the level of emotional intimacy in men's and women's social lives.

H4: The gap between men and women in their willingness to confide will have decreased since the late 1970s.

Compared to women, men tend to have fewer close relationships and, within those relationships, exchange emotional support less. Has this pattern changed? One place to begin is to examine the percentage of men and women who claim to never confide in anyone. In other words, do men remain uninterested in maintaining emotionally intimate relationships?

Unfortunately, because the survey questions about confiding differ between 1977 and 2015, the data at most *suggest* a shrinking of the gap in openness to intimacy between men and women's social lives. In the 1977 survey, "never" confiding was not even an option, but was written-in by interviewers 49 times (out of 1,050 total respondents). The other choices were "Hardly ever," "Sometimes," and "Usually." There were only two options in 2015: "Yes" or "No, never confide." For the 1977 data, I combined the write-in "Never" with "Hardly ever." Finally, because comparing the surveys is even more tenuous in this case due to differences in the questions, I rely upon comparing contemporaneous men and women in these analyses.

In both 1977 and 2015 men were much more likely than women to claim that they hardly ever or never confide in anyone (Table 8).²⁷ This difference is highly significant in both cases ($p < .01$). We also see that the difference between the sexes has shrunk. In 1977 there was a 15.2% difference between men and women, which was down to 8.1% in 2015. If we compare 2015 men to 1977 men and 2015 women to 1977 women, we also see a relative reduction. The difference between 2015 and 1977 men is 25.2% and the difference between 2015 and 1977 women is 18.1%. The gap between men and women for each year persists after controlling for a wide variety of factors in a binomial logistic regression (about 19% difference in the odds of confiding in 1977 and about 7% difference in odds of confiding in 2015, Models 6 and 12 in Table A1). The absolute differences we can see in the descriptive statistics (Table 8) and in the regression coefficients for each year (Table A1) suggest that men are closing the gap with women in their willingness to confide.

Table 8: Percentage of Men and Women Claiming to Never Confide in 1977 and 2015

	Men (%)	Women (%)	X ² test
1977: Hardly ever or never confide	39.3 (n=150)	24.1 (n=212)	X ² =9.0, p<.01
2015: Never confide	14.1 (n=250)	6.0 (n=453)	X ² =12.0, p<.001

Despite the differences in the survey questions, we can accept *H4: The gap between men and women in their willingness to confide will have decreased since the late 1970s*. Even comparing contemporaneous men and women in 1977 and 2015, we see that the gap between men and women in willingness to confide has shrunk.

²⁷ Because the percentage of women who never confide in 2015 is very small (6%) and the n's are relatively small, I use a chi-squared test here rather than a Z-test to avoid violating the normality assumption.

H5: The gap between men and women in terms of the number of confidants they have (excluding spouses) will have decreased since the late 1970s.

If men are more likely to confide today than in the 1970s, are they confiding in more people? H6 examines whether, relative to women, men have gained non-spouse confidants. The question from the 1977 and 2015 surveys were similar, but we should be cautious in making direct comparisons between the two time periods (see Table 1 in Data and Methods).²⁸ Figure 3 is a representing the mean number of confidants men and women had in 1977 and 2015 (excluding spouses). In the late 1970s, men had an average of 1.2 confidants and women had an average of 2.2 confidants. Those figures rose to 2.1 and 3.2 by the mid-2010s, respectively.

Figure 3: Number of Non-Spouse Confidants for Men and Women in 1977 and 2015

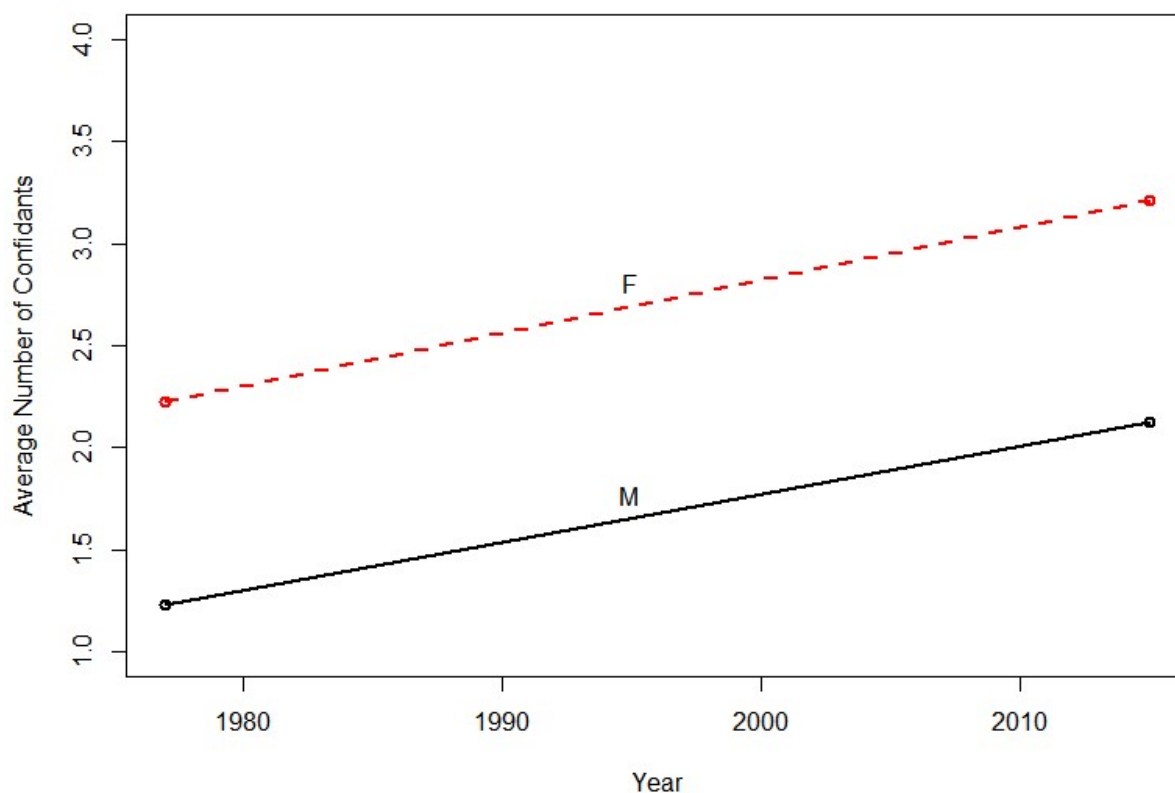


Table 9 displays the results of negative binomial regressions estimating the difference between men and women in non-spouse confidants after controlling for various characteristics. Across the different models, the means for men have increased from about 1.2 in 1977 to 2.1 in 2015, while increasing for women from about 2.2 in 1977 to 3.2 in 2015. Women have stayed about one confidant ahead of men. Though survey questions about confidants changed, I ran negative binomial regressions combining the two datasets with an interaction term for gender and year in order to verify that men were not closing the gap with women (Table A2). While the

²⁸ I illustrate the relationship between age and non-spouse confidants for the 1977 and 2015 data in Figures A1 and A2 in the appendix – in both cases men and women lose confidants over the life course, but the scatter plots suggest that women are better able to maintain non-spouse confiding relationships later in life.

coefficient was positive – it represented a modest difference (20%) and was only significant at $p < .10$.

The more reliable evidence (comparisons of the gap between men and women in the same year) suggests we ought to reject H5. Overall, men's and women's networks are not converging in terms of non-spouse confidants. Thus, while men today appear to be closer to women in their willingness to confide, they continue to trail women by about one confidant.

Table 9: Men and Women's Non-Spouse Confidants in 1977 and 2015

<i>Dependent variable:</i>												
confide_wNonSpouse_n												
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	-0.596*** (0.100)	-0.584*** (0.104)	-0.601*** (0.109)	-0.569*** (0.109)	-0.575*** (0.110)	-0.592*** (0.103)	-0.412*** (0.055)	-0.386*** (0.055)	-0.391*** (0.054)	-0.388*** (0.054)	-0.385*** (0.054)	-0.380*** (0.053)
BAhigher		0.201* (0.113)	0.213* (0.112)	0.121 (0.117)	0.132 (0.117)	0.216* (0.112)		0.140*** (0.054)	0.135** (0.054)	0.092* (0.055)	0.093* (0.055)	0.097* (0.055)
married		-0.105 (0.097)	-0.099 (0.096)	-0.174 (0.106)	-0.218* (0.117)	-0.100 (0.096)		-0.237*** (0.050)	-0.214*** (0.049)	-0.305*** (0.057)	-0.237*** (0.064)	-0.241*** (0.063)
empFullTime			0.025 (0.100)	-0.095 (0.107)	-0.096 (0.108)				0.062 (0.051)	0.023 (0.053)	0.027 (0.053)	
bornAbroad			-0.516** (0.211)	-0.469** (0.219)	-0.432* (0.222)	-0.512** (0.210)			-0.276*** (0.081)	-0.221** (0.089)	-0.228** (0.089)	-0.244*** (0.081)
income				0.022 (0.016)	0.025 (0.017)					0.025*** (0.009)	0.029*** (0.010)	0.033*** (0.009)
Black				-0.592* (0.324)	-0.568* (0.325)					-0.174* (0.096)	-0.177* (0.095)	
Latino				-0.822** (0.336)	-0.802** (0.336)					-0.006 (0.102)	0.001 (0.101)	
Asian				0.137 (0.291)	0.161 (0.293)					-0.085 (0.097)	-0.082 (0.096)	
spouseEmp					0.078 (0.123)						-0.156** (0.066)	-0.154** (0.066)
disab					0.060 (0.094)						-0.003 (0.073)	
BACounty					-0.117 (0.097)							
Constant	0.800*** (0.056)	0.816*** (0.075)	0.835*** (0.078)	0.779*** (0.113)	0.777*** (0.127)	0.841*** (0.074)	1.167*** (0.029)	1.162*** (0.051)	1.168*** (0.052)	1.094*** (0.069)	1.080*** (0.071)	1.038*** (0.064)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	362	666	666	666	659	659	659
Log Likelihood	-624.170	-622.099	-618.863	-576.954	-575.825	-618.895	-1,323.270	-1,309.608	-1,302.885	-1,285.053	-1,282.237	-1,284.493
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,252.340	1,252.198	1,249.726	1,173.907	1,177.650	1,247.790	2,650.540	2,627.217	2,617.769	2,590.107	2,588.473	2,582.985

Note:

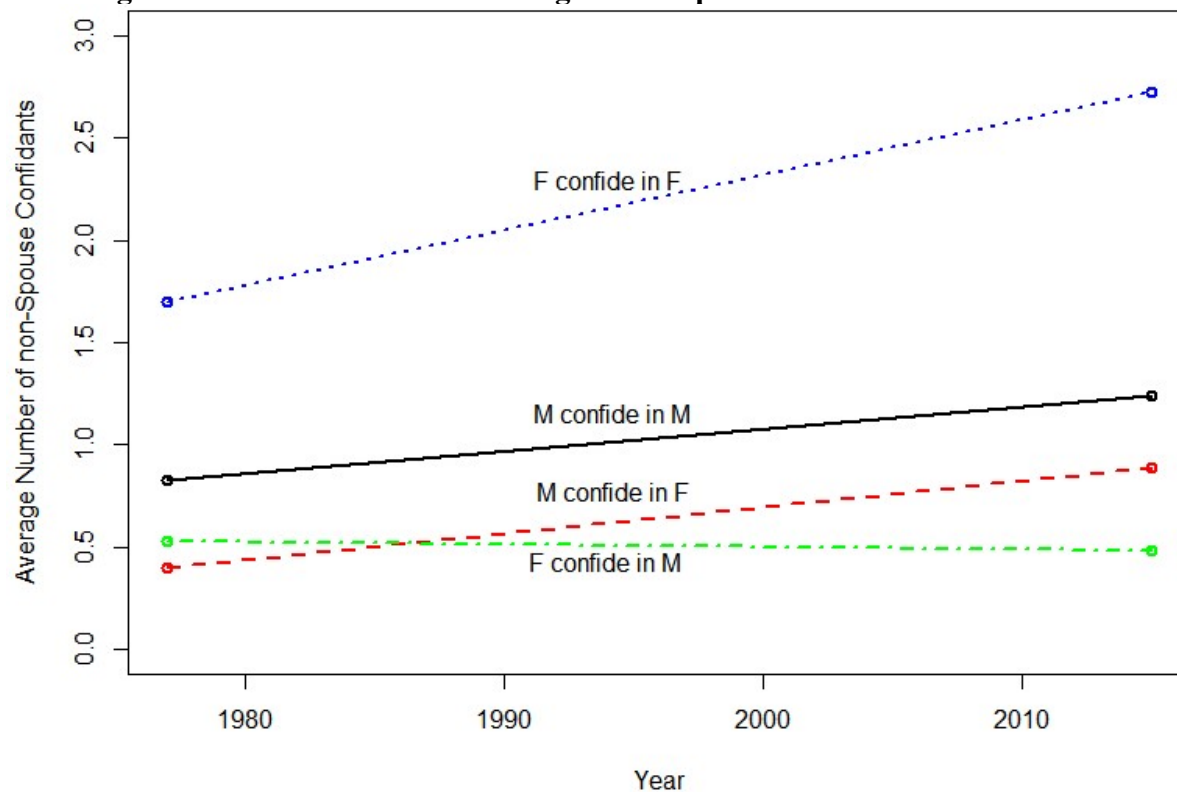
* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

H6: The gap between men and women in terms of serving as confidants will have decreased since the late 1970s.

We can also look at the confidants question in the opposite direction: Are men serving as confidants more often? I examine whether men are more likely to be named as confidants in the mid-2010s than in the late 1970s. Because norms about relying upon opposite sex non-spouse confidants may also be changing, I split the analyses by men and women. We can then better assess same-sex and cross-sex confiding behavior.

Figure 4 illustrates these results without any weighting or controls. Because the confiding questions were different in the 1977 and 2015 surveys, the overall upward trend ought to be treated with great caution. Instead, the largest change is that women have become even more likely to confide in other women rather than men. Meanwhile, men show only a small shift toward confiding in women more.

Figure 4: Men and Women Serving as non-Spouse Confidants in 1977 and 2015



Again, I split the data into male and female respondents for both time points. I then ran logistic binomial regressions to estimate the difference in odds of confiding in a man versus a woman in 1977 and 2015. Table 12 displays the results for 1977 men in models 1-6 and for 1977 women in columns 7-12. Although significant, I left the controls for black, Latino and Asian out of the final models because they had a negligible effect on the coefficient for alterGenderM for both male and female respondents. In the final models (6 & 12), men had 120% greater odds of confiding in men versus women, while women had 62% lower odds of confiding in men versus

women (both $p < .01$). I next examine whether these odds have changed to reflect more confiding in men in 2015.

Table 12: Reliance upon Female versus Male Confidants by Male and Female Respondents in 1977

	1977 Male Respondents						1977 Female Respondents					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
alterGenderM	0.771*** (0.194)	0.798*** (0.194)	0.677*** (0.187)	0.668*** (0.188)	0.655*** (0.187)	0.789*** (0.198)	-0.996*** (0.144)	-0.972*** (0.146)	-0.933*** (0.148)	-0.937*** (0.147)	-0.946*** (0.147)	-0.974*** (0.146)
BAhigher		-0.274 (0.246)	-0.314 (0.267)	-0.301 (0.263)	-0.370 (0.268)			0.086 (0.167)	0.134 (0.170)	0.175 (0.169)	0.172 (0.170)	
married		-0.629*** (0.239)	-0.620** (0.273)	-0.759*** (0.285)	-0.862*** (0.274)	-0.726*** (0.238)		-0.264** (0.130)	-0.204 (0.166)	-0.249 (0.177)	-0.273 (0.179)	-0.257** (0.130)
empFullTime			-0.054 (0.277)	-0.032 (0.314)	-0.165 (0.319)				-0.153 (0.156)	-0.153 (0.152)	-0.137 (0.153)	
income			-0.002 (0.043)	0.017 (0.043)	0.023 (0.044)				-0.022 (0.026)	-0.021 (0.028)	-0.023 (0.028)	
BACounty				-0.485** (0.226)	-0.486** (0.226)	-0.364 (0.227)				-0.170 (0.131)	-0.149 (0.133)	-0.131 (0.129)
spouseEmp				-0.009 (0.264)	0.026 (0.265)					0.091 (0.191)	0.137 (0.193)	
Black					-0.097 (0.603)							-0.533 (0.707)
Latino					-1.569* (0.803)							-0.340* (0.205)
Asian					1.340*** (0.387)							-0.679 (0.691)
Constant	-2.126*** (0.173)	-1.557*** (0.247)	-1.450*** (0.404)	-1.335*** (0.416)	-1.202*** (0.411)	-1.414*** (0.274)	-0.697*** (0.070)	-0.582*** (0.092)	-0.426** (0.166)	-0.373** (0.175)	-0.336* (0.172)	-0.514*** (0.104)
Observations	1,168	1,168	1,093	1,093	1,093	1,168	1,804	1,804	1,742	1,742	1,742	1,804
Log Likelihood	-497.875	-491.192	-456.774	-453.352	-447.597	-490.033	-1,000.021	-996.999	-962.722	-961.538	-959.349	-996.501
Akaike Inf. Crit.	999.750	990.384	925.548	922.704	917.194	988.066	2,004.042	2,001.999	1,937.444	1,939.076	1,940.698	2,001.001

Note:

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

The 2015 models for men remind us that men became more likely to confide in women as compared to other men. Men had only 29% greater odds of confiding in a man versus a woman in 2015, as compared with 120% greater odds in 1977 (both $p < .01$, Table 13, model 6). Meanwhile, women's odds of confiding in men also dropped slightly. Women in 2015 had 75% lower odds of confiding in men rather than women (Table 13, model 12) and 62% lower odds in 1977 (both $p < .01$). Even though the data suggest a greater number of confidants (though we do not know if this is an artifact), it appears that, if anything, both men and women are confiding in women, not men, more often.

Table 13: Reliance upon Female versus Male Confidants by Male and Female Respondents in 2015

	2015 Male Respondents						2015 Female Respondents					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
alterGenderM	0.266** (0.112)	0.256** (0.115)	0.254** (0.115)	0.264** (0.115)	0.270** (0.116)	0.256** (0.115)	-1.395*** (0.096)	-1.377*** (0.097)	-1.387*** (0.098)	-1.389*** (0.098)	-1.389*** (0.098)	-1.376*** (0.097)
BAhigher		-0.094 (0.138)	-0.082 (0.147)	-0.117 (0.151)	-0.129 (0.151)			0.044 (0.086)	0.031 (0.091)	0.045 (0.090)	0.045 (0.091)	
married		-0.734*** (0.137)	-0.725*** (0.152)	-0.626*** (0.162)	-0.584*** (0.163)	-0.751*** (0.137)		-0.387*** (0.075)	-0.409*** (0.089)	-0.303*** (0.107)	-0.291*** (0.107)	-0.383*** (0.075)
empFullTime			-0.018 (0.146)	0.041 (0.147)	0.120 (0.142)				0.004 (0.080)	0.007 (0.080)	0.007 (0.080)	
income			0.007 (0.025)	0.010 (0.026)	-0.005 (0.027)				0.008 (0.014)	0.015 (0.014)	0.013 (0.014)	
mode.xweb				0.247 (0.158)	0.236 (0.157)	0.239 (0.154)				0.018 (0.078)	0.021 (0.078)	0.027 (0.078)
spouseEmp				-0.252 (0.165)	-0.257 (0.166)					-0.238** (0.111)	-0.238** (0.110)	
Black					-0.409 (0.330)						0.015 (0.130)	
Latino					-0.638 (0.415)						-0.107 (0.130)	
Asian					-0.540* (0.280)						-0.108 (0.136)	
Constant	-1.083*** (0.096)	-0.617*** (0.142)	-0.665*** (0.184)	-0.713*** (0.186)	-0.555*** (0.209)	-0.730*** (0.125)	-0.096** (0.043)	0.037 (0.083)	-0.002 (0.100)	-0.038 (0.104)	-0.020 (0.110)	0.059 (0.058)
Observations	1,793	1,793	1,768	1,768	1,768	1,793	3,590	3,590	3,566	3,566	3,566	3,590
Log Likelihood	-1,062.773	-1,038.257	-1,028.644	-1,025.291	-1,018.094	-1,036.815	-2,240.916	-2,226.749	-2,210.201	-2,207.305	-2,206.664	-2,226.839
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,129.546	2,084.513	2,069.288	2,066.581	2,058.188	2,081.629	4,485.831	4,461.498	4,432.401	4,430.611	4,435.329	4,461.678

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Although the questions differ, I combined the two datasets to see if we could distinguish between the difference in the overall level of confiding in the two datasets and the change in reliance upon male confidants. In the case of both male and female respondents, we see that an interaction term is negative while the indicator variable for year is positive. In other words, the data suggest an increase in overall confiding, but a relative drop in reliance upon male confidants. Even if the increase itself is a product of a survey artifact, people are relying upon women as confidants in higher proportions today than they were in the late 1970s.

Table 11: Change in Men and Women's Reliance upon Male Confidants from 1977 to 2015

	Male Respondents						Female Respondents					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
alterGenderM	0.416*** (0.096)	0.414*** (0.099)	0.364*** (0.097)	0.365*** (0.097)	0.666*** (0.189)	0.792*** (0.198)	-1.293*** (0.080)	-1.263*** (0.081)	-1.257*** (0.082)	-1.258*** (0.082)	-0.934*** (0.147)	-0.966*** (0.145)
BAhigher		0.080 (0.117)	0.132 (0.120)	0.138 (0.122)	-0.171 (0.127)			0.255*** (0.067)	0.267*** (0.068)	0.282*** (0.069)	0.056 (0.080)	
married		-0.852*** (0.119)	-0.751*** (0.134)	-0.727*** (0.139)	-0.616*** (0.136)	-0.721*** (0.118)		-0.385*** (0.066)	-0.335*** (0.080)	-0.278*** (0.093)	-0.267*** (0.093)	-0.346*** (0.066)
empFullTime			-0.083 (0.131)	-0.039 (0.131)	0.050 (0.128)				-0.018 (0.072)	-0.017 (0.073)	-0.034 (0.071)	
income			-0.024 (0.021)	-0.032 (0.022)	-0.004 (0.022)				-0.016 (0.012)	-0.013 (0.013)	0.002 (0.013)	
spouseEmp				-0.051 (0.139)	-0.152 (0.138)					-0.117 (0.096)	-0.161* (0.096)	
Black				-0.353 (0.291)	-0.418 (0.288)					0.064 (0.122)	-0.025 (0.128)	
Latino				-0.721* (0.385)	-0.779** (0.359)					-0.046 (0.127)	-0.153 (0.120)	
Asian				-0.313 (0.276)	-0.366 (0.268)					-0.104 (0.135)	-0.162 (0.132)	
Yr2015					0.946*** (0.201)	0.875*** (0.190)					0.598*** (0.099)	0.576*** (0.085)
alterGenderM:Yr2015					-0.403* (0.221)	-0.537** (0.229)					-0.454*** (0.176)	-0.411** (0.174)
Constant	-1.424*** (0.084)	-0.938*** (0.126)	-0.764*** (0.165)	-0.655*** (0.177)	-1.414*** (0.260)	-1.566*** (0.187)	-0.273*** (0.037)	-0.245*** (0.061)	-0.153* (0.087)	-0.173* (0.092)	-0.545*** (0.109)	-0.525*** (0.077)
Observations	2,961	2,961	2,861	2,861	2,861	2,961	5,394	5,394	5,308	5,308	5,308	5,394
Log Likelihood	-1,595.188	-1,549.935	-1,501.846	-1,494.960	-1,476.865	-1,530.975	-3,274.286	-3,245.416	-3,196.357	-3,194.808	-3,171.788	-3,224.515
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,194.377	3,107.869	3,015.691	3,009.921	2,977.730	3,071.951	6,552.572	6,498.832	6,404.713	6,409.615	6,367.577	6,459.030

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Across these analyses, the evidence suggests that people are not relying upon men as confidants more often than they were in the late 1970s. If anything, a slightly higher proportion of men's and women's confidants appear to be women. Thus, we fail to support H6. The fraction of confidants who are men has not increased.

Access and Opportunities

Another dimension of difference between men's and women's networks pertains to their instrumental benefits. Typically, this is one area in which men appear to have had an advantage over women: they have had more nonkin willing to provide advice and more useful contacts at work. Has the story changed?

H7: The gap between men and women in the percentage of supportive ties formed through work contexts will have decreased since the late 1970s.

H7 investigates whether men's and women's networks are converging in terms of ties to people from work. I test H7 by looking at two questions that were relatively similar (see Table 1 in Data and Methods) in both surveys about people in the same line of work and about

coworkers. The question about people in the same line of work might include past coworkers, people in the same industry but not the same company. It is a complementary measure of how “immersed” a person is in the world of work. Both coworkers and people in the same line of work had to be mentioned in response to questions about whom respondents could rely upon for four kinds of social support: socializing, confiding, advice, and practical help.

I first examine the raw figures without controls (Table 12). In 1977, 8.4% of women’s and 10.5% of men’s supportive ties were to people who did the same kind of work (men only higher at $p < .10$). In 2015, 15.4% of women’s and 14.3% of men’s ties were to people who did the same kind of work (no statistical difference). Women gained even more dramatically in terms of coworkers. In 1977, 7.8% of men’s supportive ties were coworkers as compared with 4.9% of women’s supportive ties ($p = .001$). In 2015, 6.6% of men’s and 10.0% of women’s supportive ties were coworkers ($p < .001$). Without controlling for labor force status and other factors, it appears that women have caught up to men in being able to rely upon people who do the same kind of work and surpassed men in being able to rely upon coworkers.

**Table 12: Coworkers and People Who Do the Same Kind of Work
As a Percentage of All Supportive Alters**

variable	year	Men		Women		X ² (two-sided)
		%	n	%	n	
sameWork	1977	10.5	1,168	8.4	1,804	X ² =3.5; p=.06
	2015	14.3	1,793	15.4	3,590	X ² =1.0; p=.32
coworker	1977	7.8	1,168	4.9	1,804	X ² =10.1; p=.001
	2015	6.6	1,793	10.0	3,590	X ² =16.3; p<.001

The picture is a bit different if we introduce controls, particularly an indicator variable for being employed full-time (Appendix Tables A3 and A4). We find that women and men did not differ significantly in 1977 in terms of people whom they could rely upon who do the same kind of work nor coworkers. In other words, the difference between men and women for 1977 for both measures disappears when we control for employment. For 2015, there remains no difference between men and women in terms of the number of people they can rely upon who do the same work. Introducing controls sharpens the coworker difference between men and women in 2015: working women have 70% greater odds than working men of naming a supportive coworker (keeping in mind that the overall probability of naming a coworker is low). Even though women have surpassed men in terms of coworkers, I argue that this is an instance of convergence because it represents a case in which a greater number of women’s social lives look like men’s social lives.

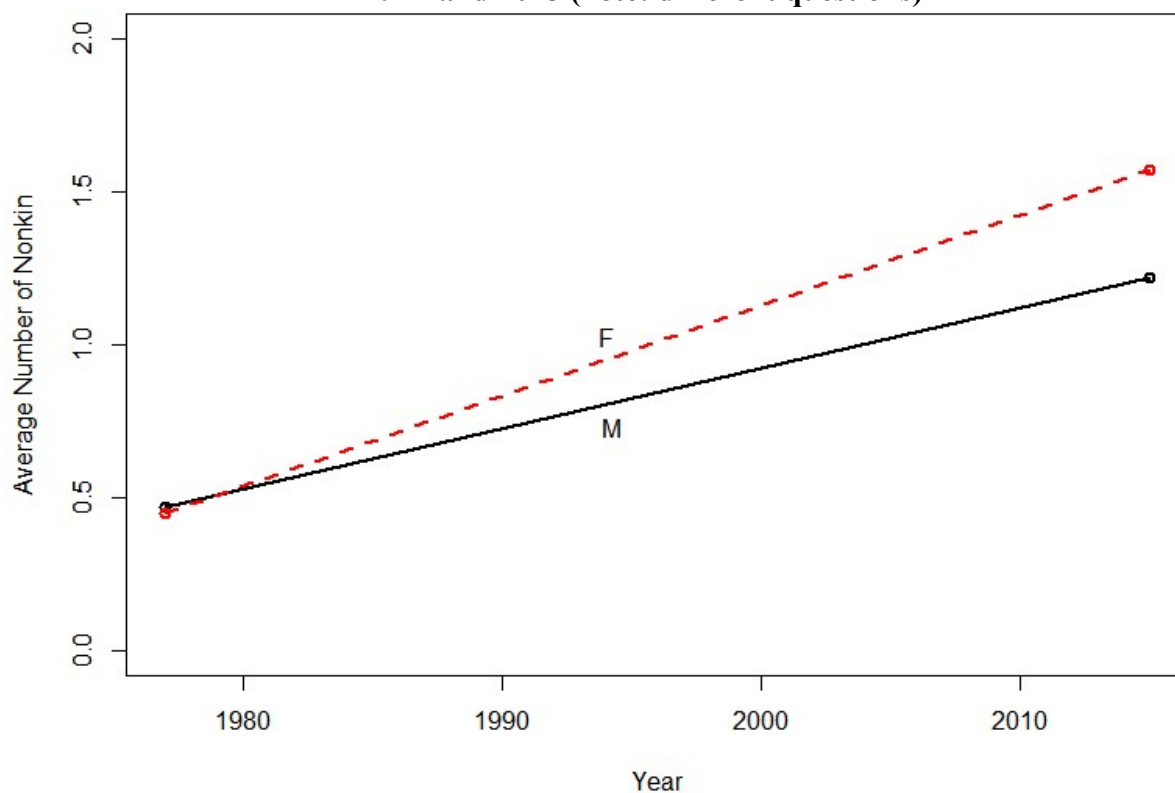
Overall, the evidence suggests we can accept *H7: The gap between men and women in the percentage of supportive ties formed through work contexts will have decreased since the late 1970s*. Simply in terms of their representativeness of the overall population (the descriptive statistics and chi-square tests), middle-aged men’s and women’s networks have converged – when we examine the subsets of men and women who are working we see that women have pulled ahead of men.

H8: The gap between men and women in the number of nonkin they can rely upon for advice will have decreased since the late 1970s.

Do women have more access to useful advice and information from non-family members today than they did in the 1970s? Hypothesis 8 tests whether men and women's networks have converged in terms of access to nonkin for advice. Unfortunately, differences in question wording (the 2015 question is more expansive) mean that direct comparison of the 1977 and 2015 results would be misleading. Instead, we can contrast men and women in each period.

Figure 4 shows the number of nonkin that men and women could rely upon for advice in 1977 and 2015. The results are surprising. On average, men had fewer nonkin whom they could count upon for advice (also see Table 13, Models 1-6). Thus, the premise of H8, based on literature suggesting that men have access to more information and advice via nonkin, is wrong in the case of 1970s northern California. By 2015, the average difference between men and women in nonkin sources of advice had increased to .35.

Figure 4: Number of Nonkin Who Can Be Relied upon for Advice among Men and Women in 1977 and 2015 (note: different questions)



I use negative binomial regression to estimate the differences between men and women in 1977 and 2015 after controlling for key background factors. In both 1977 and 2015 adding controls does not have a large effect on the coefficient for RGenderM, which represents the difference in the logs of the expected counts between men and women. For 1977, men and women are statistically equivalent regardless of the model. For 2015, women have significantly more nonkin confidants (about .3) regardless of the model.

Table 13: Nonkin Sources of Advice for Men and Women in 1977 and 2015

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>											
	askAdvice_wNonkin_n											
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	0.041 (0.213)	0.220 (0.223)	0.163 (0.236)	0.209 (0.244)	0.206 (0.243)	0.149 (0.230)	-0.252*** (0.091)	-0.202** (0.088)	-0.210** (0.088)	-0.201** (0.088)	-0.185** (0.086)	-0.163* (0.087)
BAhigher		0.712*** (0.234)	0.692*** (0.235)	0.513** (0.253)	0.531** (0.253)	0.532** (0.254)		0.491*** (0.096)	0.482*** (0.095)	0.442*** (0.098)	0.414*** (0.096)	0.433*** (0.097)
married		-0.727*** (0.220)	-0.713*** (0.220)	-0.993*** (0.249)	-1.083*** (0.277)	-0.932*** (0.241)		-0.441*** (0.084)	-0.417*** (0.084)	-0.499*** (0.099)	-0.454*** (0.108)	-0.544*** (0.095)
empFullTime			0.155 (0.223)	-0.085 (0.245)	-0.105 (0.250)				0.093 (0.087)	0.048 (0.090)	0.093 (0.088)	
bomAbroad			-0.059 (0.408)	-0.080 (0.450)	-0.021 (0.457)				-0.319** (0.136)	-0.286** (0.137)	-0.241 (0.148)	
income				0.064* (0.038)	0.068* (0.040)	0.054 (0.035)				0.027* (0.016)	0.018 (0.016)	0.031** (0.015)
Black				-1.810* (1.045)	-1.751* (1.048)						-0.637*** (0.181)	
Latino				-0.395 (0.612)	-0.407 (0.617)						-0.120 (0.176)	
Asian				0.466 (0.618)	0.470 (0.625)						-0.176 (0.160)	
disab					0.024 (0.224)						0.025 (0.122)	
spouseEmp					0.159 (0.283)						-0.112 (0.111)	
BACounty					-0.198 (0.223)							
mode.xweb											0.380*** (0.087)	0.374*** (0.088)
Constant	-0.803*** (0.138)	-0.658*** (0.166)	-0.699*** (0.178)	-0.925*** (0.272)	-0.888*** (0.301)	-0.923*** (0.266)	0.450*** (0.052)	0.253*** (0.091)	0.256*** (0.094)	0.150 (0.113)	0.172 (0.124)	0.017 (0.113)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	344	666	666	666	659	659	659
Log Likelihood	-326.118	-317.505	-317.263	-296.622	-296.026	-299.059	-1,087.600	-1,063.456	-1,060.098	-1,051.466	-1,034.941	-1,045.081
Akaike Inf. Crit.	656.236	643.009	646.526	613.243	618.053	608.119	2,179.200	2,134.913	2,132.195	2,116.933	2,095.882	2,102.162

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

We ought to reject *H8*. In northern California of the late 1970s, there was little gap between men and women in terms of access to advice from nonkin. Today, it appears women have more access to advice from nonkin than do men.

To sum up, we have one instance of convergence and one instance of divergence in the case of access and opportunities. More women's knew more people from work contexts, making their social circles more similar to men's. Surprisingly, women already at least as many nonkin whom they could rely upon for advice in the 1970s as did men. By 2015, women had .3 more nonkin whom they could rely upon for advice as compared with men.

Burdens and Support

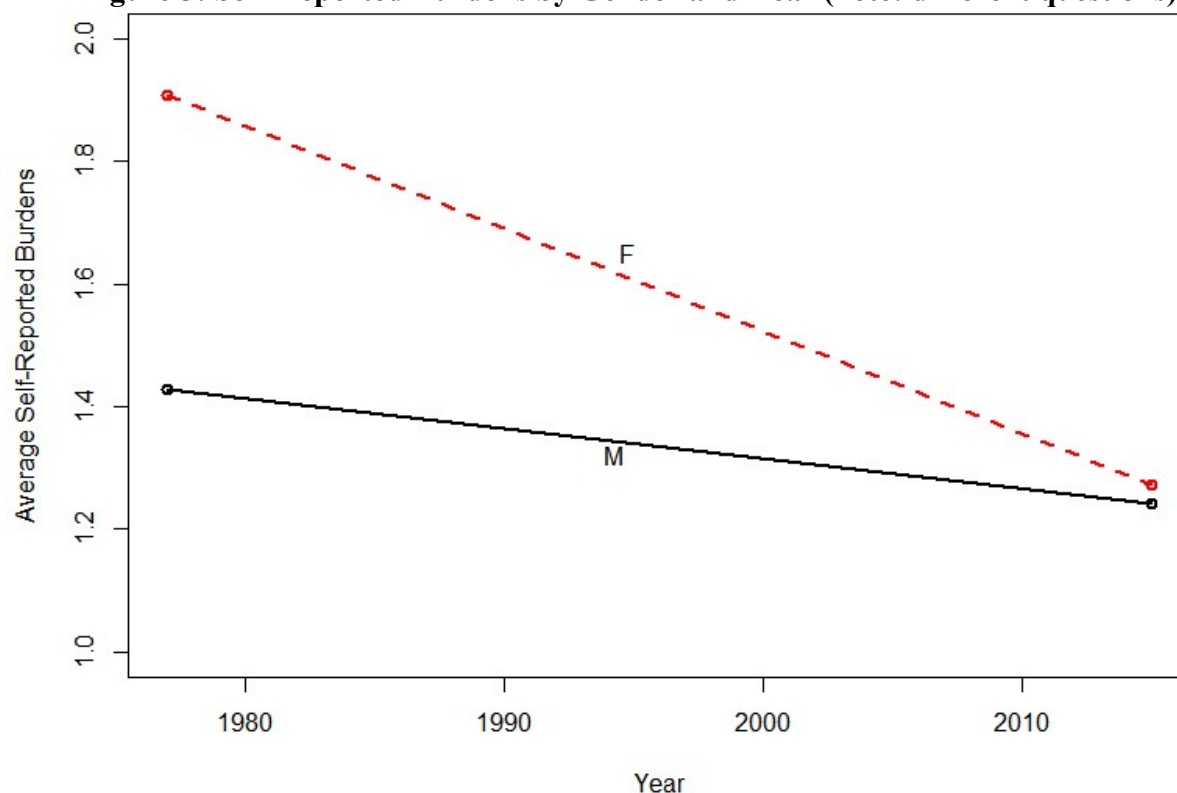
H9: The gap between men and women in terms of network burdens will have decreased since the late 1970s.

If men's and women's roles in family and friend networks have become more similar, we should see a balancing of network burdens between men and women. Two questions from the 1977 survey pertain to network burdens. The first asks how often people who live with the respondent make "too many demands" and the second asks how often people not living with the respondent make "too many demands." The options were: "never" (coded here as 0), "once in a while" (1), "some of the time" (2), and "a lot of the time" (3). I excluded the people who lived alone in 1977 (105 respondents). I summed these two questions into a measure of how burdened respondents perceived themselves to be. For the 2015 measure of burden, I used a count of the names given in response to the question: "Who are the people that you sometimes find demanding or difficult?" For 2015 I also exclude people who live by themselves so that the samples are more comparable (296 respondents). I scaled the 1977 and 2015 measures so that they were on the same range.

Despite the differences in the two sets of questions, we can at least compare the distribution of men's self-reported burdens to women's at each time point (Figure 5). We see that on average the distribution of men's burdens in the 1970s was lower than the distribution of women's. Women averaged "once in a while" in terms of how often people make too many demands. Men were a half point behind them.

For the 2015 data, the two distributions appear quite similar. Men in 2015 faced 1.1 difficult or demanding people and women faced 1.3. T-tests (Table 14) reveal that the difference in means in 1977 is significant ($p < .01$), but that the difference in means in 2015 is not significant ($p = .12$). We find similar results using negative binomial regression (Table A5 in the Appendix). When we control for a reasonable set of background characteristics, we find that the difference between men and women is about a half-point ($p < .05$) in 1977 and that the difference for 2015 remains small and non-significant.

We should accept *H9: The gap between men and women in terms of network burdens will have decreased since the late 1970s*. Men's and women's network burdens appear to be more similar today than they were in the late 1970s.

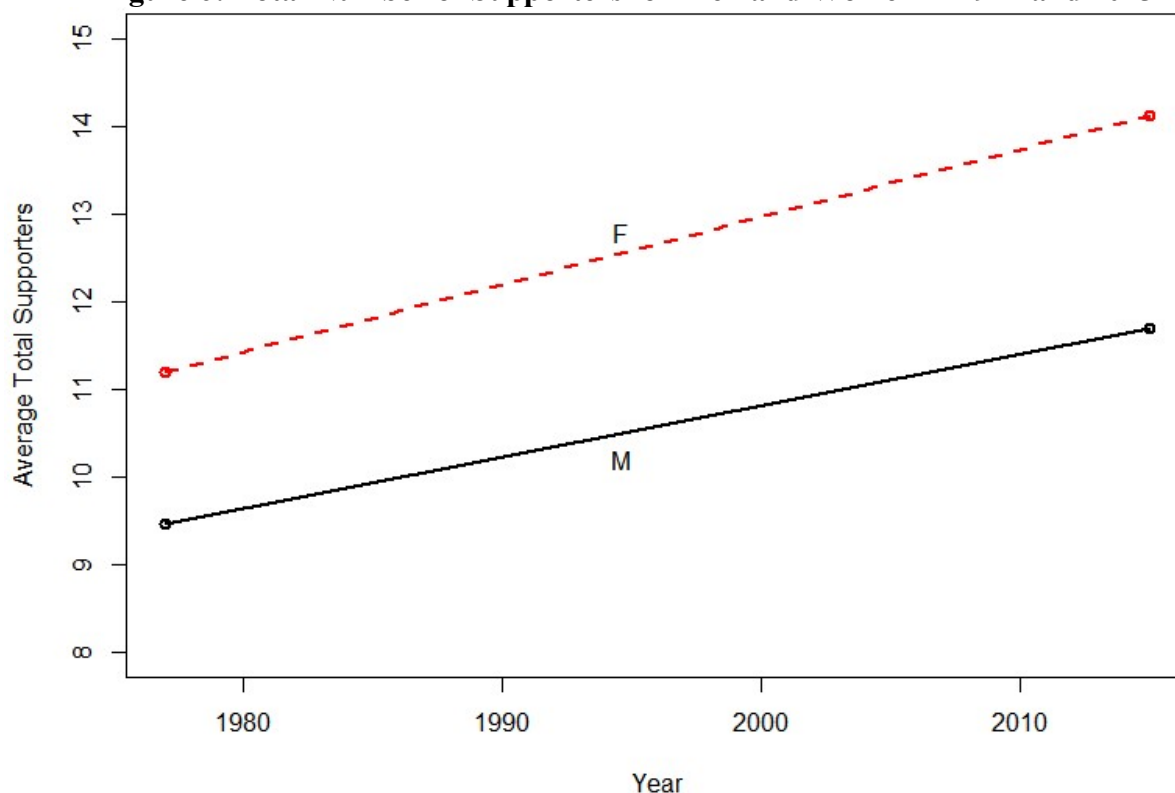
Figure 5: Self-Reported Burdens by Gender and Year (note: different questions)**Table 14: Self-Reported Level of Social Burdens for Men and Women in 1977 and 2015***

Year	Men	Women	T-test
1977	1.43 (n=126)	1.91 (n=131)	t=-3.0; p<.01
2015	1.21 (n=147)	1.28 (n=260)	t=-.48; p=.63

*different questions in 1977 and 2015; excludes people living alone

H10: The gap between men and women in terms of overall support will have decreased since the late 1970s.

One of the persistent distinctions drawn between men's and women's networks is that men, particularly those middle-aged and older, enjoy less overall support than women. Is there still a disparity in the level of support experienced by middle-aged men and women? I sum the number of people named to exchanges of four types of support (socializing, practical help, confiding, advice-giving) to create a composite portrait of support for both time points. Two of the questions have changed in important ways so the results should not be used to compare 1977 directly to 2015. As before, we can look at changes in the gap between men and women. Figure 6 shows the distributions of men and women's overall support in 1977 and 2015.

Figure 6: Total Number of Supporters for Men and Women in 1977 and 2015

In both 1977 and 2015, women have more overall support than men (Table 15). Without controls, the average difference between men and women in 1977 represented a gap of 1.7 supporters. The average difference in 2015 represented a gap of 2.3 supporters. In other words, in both time periods women appear to have about two more supporters than men. In raw terms, it also appears that men were not catching up (women 2015-1977=2.7, men 2015-1977=2.3).

Table 15: Mean Number of Supporters for Men and Women in 1977 and 2015

Year	Men	Women	T-test
1977	9.5	11.2	$t=-3.5; p<.001$
2015	11.7	14.0	$t=-4.8; p<.001$

Table 15 introduces controls in a negative binomial regression to explore the idea that men and women might have similar overall support but for differences in their circumstances. The bivariate models (1 and 7) present essentially the same information as our T-Tests in Table 15. Introducing controls does not reduce the gap between men and women, which is significant across all models. If we assume median income and education for men and women in models 6 and 12, we are left with men having about 2.5 fewer supporters in 1977 and 2.6 fewer supporters in 2015 than women. Combining the data for both time periods and using an interaction test for $RGender:year$, we confirm our impression that men were not “catching up” to women (Table A6 in Appendix).

Table 16: Supporters for Men and Women in 1977 and 2015

	Dependent variable:											
	allSupport											
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	-0.169*** (0.050)	-0.246*** (0.050)	-0.289*** (0.053)	-0.263*** (0.053)	-0.266*** (0.053)	-0.259*** (0.050)	-0.189*** (0.040)	-0.195*** (0.040)	-0.203*** (0.039)	-0.195*** (0.039)	-0.196*** (0.039)	-0.195*** (0.039)
BAlhigher		0.265*** (0.057)	0.250*** (0.057)	0.148** (0.060)	0.144** (0.060)	0.146** (0.060)		0.174*** (0.041)	0.165*** (0.041)	0.121*** (0.042)	0.114*** (0.042)	0.122*** (0.042)
married		0.157*** (0.051)	0.166*** (0.050)	0.052 (0.056)	0.051 (0.056)			0.060 (0.038)	0.076** (0.037)	-0.029 (0.044)	-0.036 (0.044)	
empFullTime			0.120** (0.050)	0.006 (0.054)	0.012 (0.055)				0.096** (0.040)	0.044 (0.041)	0.051 (0.041)	
bornAbroad			-0.126 (0.093)	-0.083 (0.098)	-0.083 (0.099)				-0.204*** (0.057)	-0.168*** (0.057)	-0.192*** (0.064)	
income				0.036*** (0.008)	0.037*** (0.009)	0.039*** (0.007)				0.031*** (0.007)	0.029*** (0.007)	0.031*** (0.006)
Black				-0.368** (0.148)	-0.367** (0.148)						-0.198*** (0.073)	
Latino				-0.276** (0.129)	-0.271** (0.129)						0.076 (0.076)	
Asian				0.062 (0.147)	0.069 (0.147)						0.018 (0.070)	
disab					0.042 (0.049)						0.032 (0.056)	
BACounty					0.002 (0.050)							
Constant	2.416*** (0.031)	2.287*** (0.041)	2.262*** (0.043)	2.105*** (0.061)	2.082*** (0.067)	2.091*** (0.061)	2.648*** (0.023)	2.497*** (0.040)	2.491*** (0.041)	2.364*** (0.050)	2.394*** (0.055)	2.345*** (0.049)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	344	666	666	666	659	659	659
Log Likelihood	-1,071.488	-1,055.911	-1,052.428	-988.541	-988.176	-994.816	-2,156.337	-2,145.802	-2,136.933	-2,106.450	-2,101.927	-2,111.868
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,146.977	2,119.823	2,116.856	1,997.083	2,000.353	1,997.632	4,316.674	4,299.604	4,285.865	4,226.899	4,225.855	4,231.737

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

It appears that the gap between men and women in terms of overall support has not decreased. Thus, we should reject *H10: The gap between men and women in terms of overall support will have decreased since the late 1970s.*

Discussion

We began with the goal of examining whether the characteristics of men's and women's personal networks have converged. Table 17 summarizes our results. We distinguished between men's and women's networks in four general respects: involvement with kin, emotional intimacy, access and opportunities, and burdens and overall support. With respect to involvement with kin, we found evidence of some convergence and some stability. Men today are more similar to women in the number of kin they consider "close" compared to the late 1970s. We found no difference between men and women in socializing with kin in 1977, nor 2015. Men and women already exchanged with parents at similar levels in 1977, which persisted in 2015. Men

caught up to women in exchanging with adult children. Overall, men of the mid-2015s appear a bit more involved with family than men of the 1970s, but have not caught up to women.

In terms of emotional intimacy, we also saw some stability and some convergence. We found some evidence that men today appear more willing than men of the late 1970s to confide. At the same time, women continued to retain more non-spouse confidants than men. Meanwhile it appears that both men and women are increasingly confiding in women. In other words, men are not catching up to women in terms of serving as confidants. Men are becoming more open to emotional intimacy, yet women continue to enjoy more emotional support and to provide more of it.

Access and opportunities was the one area in which men traditionally have more network resources than do women. We found that women caught up to men in terms of supporters who do the same kind of work. Women also caught up with and *surpassed* men in terms of supportive coworkers. Women appear to be just as, if not more, socially engaged in work as men. Even though women have surpassed men in terms of coworkers, I treat it as an instance of convergence because overall, when we take into account both people who do the same work and supportive coworkers, women's personal networks look more similar to men's today than they did in the 1970s. Furthermore, we were surprised to find that women in the late 1970s already had as many nonkin whom they could rely upon for advice as did men. By the mid-2010s, women had more nonkin whom they could rely upon for advice than did men. While we do not have comprehensive measures of the quality of information or opportunities that networks afford, the data we do have suggests that women are catching up to men in terms of the practical utility of their networks. Women even surpassed in the cases of coworkers and advice from nonkin.

Finally, in terms of overall burdens and support, which reflect many other network processes, we see some convergence. Men have "caught up" to women in terms of bearing some of the burdens of their family and friends. Nonetheless, men still have fewer total supporters than do women.

In five of our ten hypotheses, we saw at least some convergence. In only one did we see men and women diverge (nonkin advice). The overall picture is that men's and women's personal networks are more similar today than they were in the late 1970s.

Table 17: Summary of Results

Hypothesis	Topic	Finding
H1	Exchange with adult children and parents	Converge for adult children, already same for parents
H2	Socialize with kin	Same in 1977, same in 2015
H3	Consider kin close	Converge
H4	Willingness to confide	Converge
H5	Non-spouse confidants	Women retain more
H6	Serve as confidants	Steady or diverge, women higher
H7	Work-related supporters	Converge
H8	Nonkin advice	Diverge, women higher
H9	Network burdens	Converge
H10	Overall support	Women retain more

note: partially or fully supported hypotheses are in **bold**

Some caveats are in order. Because of sampling differences and wording differences, we should not make too much of any direct comparisons between the surveys. Instead, the more reliable findings are those in which we contrast contemporaneous men and women to see if the gap between them has changed. Second, some question wording differences might affect that gap. However, the fact that we see high consistency in the gaps that do persist suggests that changes in the survey instrument are not creating large artefacts. Third, we only examined a subset of all the potential ways men's and women's networks may have converged or diverged. I tried to select hypotheses to test based on differences found in previous studies, but many were left out.

If the caveats do not present too much of a problem, what does this mean for our understanding of men and women's personal networks? Many of the differences between men's and women's networks that we take as received wisdom ought to be seen as products of their time. Past findings may generalize to today or may not. Even within the span of four decades we have seen meaningful changes in men and women's networks.

Conclusion

In a crucial respect, in terms of their everyday social experience, men and women are a bit more similar today than they were in the late 1970s. Men's and women's social lives can still be typified by particular differences: women have more confidants, have more nonkin advisors, and have more overall support. Nonetheless, the trend is that men's and women's roles in home and work life have become more similar, leading the exchanges in and composition of their personal networks to be more similar.

The convergence of men's and women's social lives cannot be attributed to the convergence of their roles alone. If more women worked but were more inclined than men to view work as "just a job" and not a career they would be less likely than men to form useful connections and lasting friendships at work. If more men helped with childcare but were more inclined than women to view childcare as merely obligatory they would be less likely than women to form and maintain strong connections with their children. In other words, the gendered norms associated with men's and women's roles are also likely to have weakened for us to see some of the above changes (the survey data I used did not have questions about gender norms, but other researchers confirm this shift, such as Hook, 2006 and Galinsky, Aumann and Bond, 2009). Men's and women's expectations and assumptions about roles are likely to have converged.

We saw some confirmation of the changes in these norms in the covariates in our analyses. For instance, the role of marriage or long-term partnerships in mediating other relationships changed. Marriage stopped being a significant negative predictor of confiding, became less predictive of the number of kin considered close, and had less of an effect on the respondents' number of supporters who did the same kind of work. Nonetheless, there is potentially a great deal of work to be done in tracing how and men's and women's networks have been shaped by changing norms.

It is important not to overstate the changes in structural opportunities or cultural beliefs that may be driving the convergence of men's and women's networks. Women are still paid less for the same work, do more child-rearing and housework, and are relied upon more by men and women for emotional counsel. This paper reports on one form of progress toward a more egalitarian society, but how much progress is unclear. The implicit measure of progress at work

has been the extent to which men's and women's networks become difficult to distinguish by gender. A better indicator is the extent to which individuals feel they are flourishing in the social worlds they inhabit – and that depends on their ability to pursue the private and public lives they most desire.

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Table A1: Predictors of Never (or Rarely Ever) Confiding

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>											
	neverConfide											
	1977						2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	0.716*** (0.232)	1.030*** (0.260)	1.170*** (0.279)	1.134*** (0.288)	1.095*** (0.292)	1.074*** (0.264)	0.930*** (0.280)	0.887*** (0.282)	0.991*** (0.292)	0.923*** (0.296)	0.921*** (0.297)	0.920*** (0.291)
BAhigher		-0.101 (0.295)	-0.059 (0.298)	0.198 (0.323)	0.200 (0.329)			-0.102 (0.303)	-0.055 (0.311)	-0.008 (0.322)	-0.022 (0.330)	
married		-0.847*** (0.262)	-0.874*** (0.264)	-0.717** (0.297)	-0.492 (0.314)	-0.543* (0.283)		0.414 (0.285)	0.263 (0.294)	0.478 (0.353)	0.362 (0.396)	0.262 (0.293)
empFullTime			-0.384 (0.262)	-0.130 (0.291)	-0.012 (0.301)				-0.532 (0.335)	-0.388 (0.350)	-0.418 (0.353)	
bornAbroad			0.249 (0.459)	0.178 (0.476)	0.013 (0.515)				1.561*** (0.319)	1.558*** (0.324)	1.451*** (0.382)	1.521*** (0.318)
income				-0.066 (0.045)	-0.043 (0.047)					-0.068 (0.057)	-0.071 (0.059)	
BACounty				0.072 (0.267)	0.004 (0.272)							
Black					0.462 (0.737)						0.182 (0.587)	
Latino					0.399 (0.586)						0.149 (0.585)	
Asian					0.498 (0.744)						0.300 (0.451)	
spouseEmp					-0.693** (0.334)	-0.807*** (0.304)					0.244 (0.379)	
mode.xweb										-0.358 (0.375)	-0.359 (0.376)	-0.379 (0.372)
Constant	-1.150*** (0.161)	-0.761*** (0.197)	-0.682*** (0.208)	-0.387 (0.305)	-0.553* (0.315)	-0.755*** (0.192)	-2.783*** (0.206)	-2.907*** (0.320)	-3.089*** (0.343)	-2.712*** (0.406)	-2.743*** (0.441)	-3.153*** (0.283)
Observations	362	362	362	344	344	362	665	665	665	658	658	665
Log Likelihood	-217.499	-212.021	-210.855	-200.413	-197.692	-208.429	-188.986	-187.893	-176.261	-172.138	-171.650	-177.104
Akaike Inf. Crit.	438.999	432.042	433.711	416.826	419.385	424.858	381.972	383.785	364.521	360.276	367.300	364.207

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

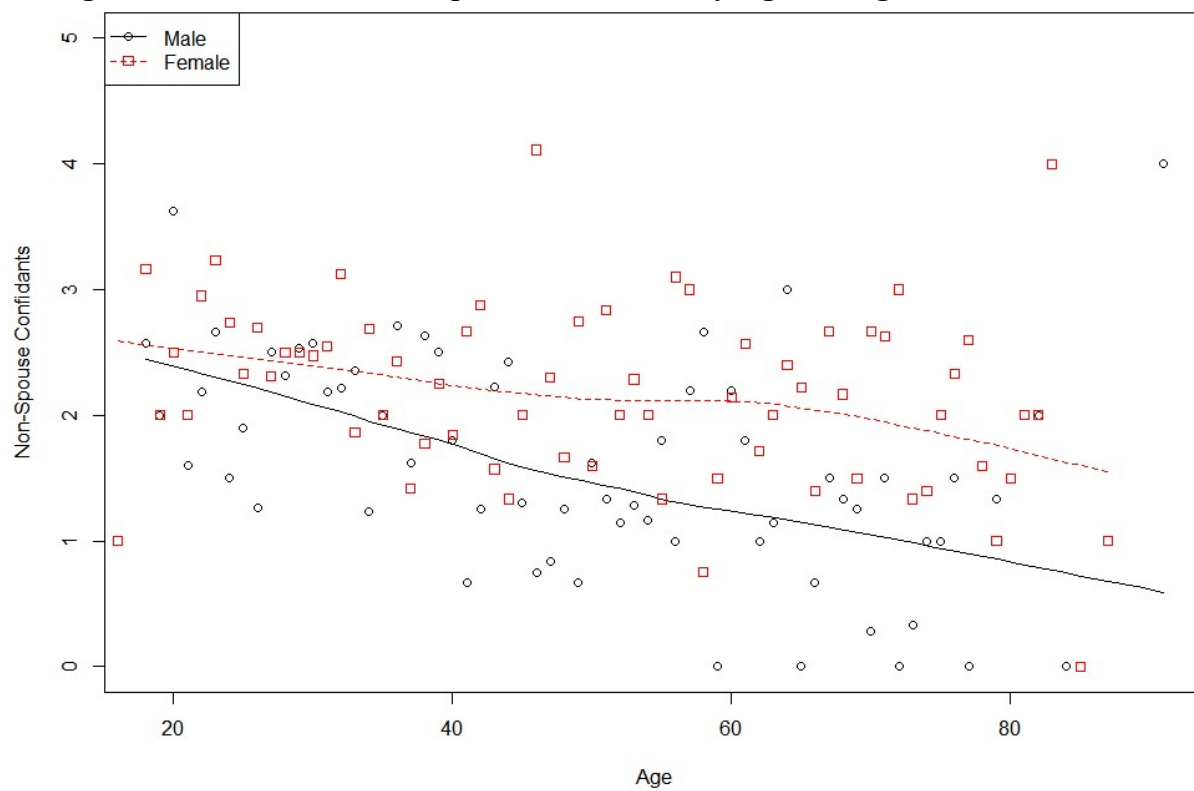
Figure A1: Number of Non-Spouse Confidants by Age among 1977 Men and Women

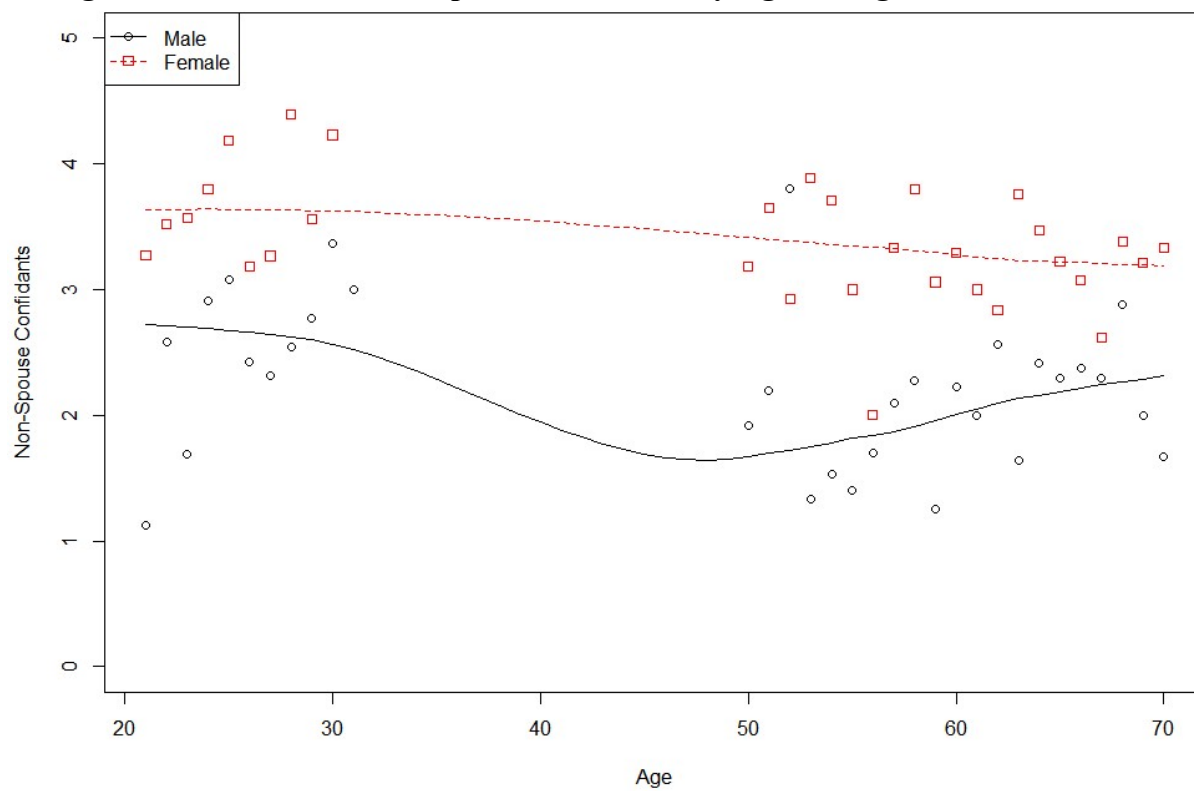
Figure A2: Number of Non-Spouse Confidants by Age among 2015 Men and Women

Table A2: Interaction Test of Number of Non-Spouse Confidants by Gender and Year

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	confide_wNonSpouse_n					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
RGenderM	-0.485*** (0.051)	-0.444*** (0.050)	-0.446*** (0.050)	-0.448*** (0.050)	-0.587*** (0.096)	-0.596*** (0.095)
BAhigher		0.285*** (0.045)	0.279*** (0.046)	0.274*** (0.046)	0.096* (0.051)	0.105** (0.051)
married		-0.245*** (0.045)	-0.278*** (0.052)	-0.251*** (0.058)	-0.220*** (0.056)	-0.218*** (0.055)
empFullTime		0.012 (0.048)	-0.013 (0.050)	-0.013 (0.050)	0.007 (0.048)	
bornAbroad			-0.258*** (0.087)	-0.268*** (0.087)	-0.275*** (0.084)	-0.289*** (0.077)
income			0.010 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.026*** (0.008)	0.028*** (0.008)
Black			-0.174* (0.096)	-0.176* (0.095)	-0.222** (0.093)	
Latino			-0.068 (0.102)	-0.067 (0.102)	-0.108 (0.100)	
Asian			-0.034 (0.097)	-0.034 (0.097)	-0.059 (0.094)	
spouseEmp				-0.063 (0.060)	-0.103* (0.059)	-0.105* (0.059)
disab				-0.074 (0.057)	0.026 (0.057)	
year2015					0.355*** (0.066)	0.327*** (0.064)
RGenderM:year2015					0.194* (0.110)	0.210* (0.109)
Constant	1.060*** (0.028)	1.002*** (0.043)	1.003*** (0.059)	1.019*** (0.062)	0.743*** (0.077)	0.723*** (0.071)
Observations	1,028	1,028	1,003	1,003	1,003	1,003
Log Likelihood	-1,986.772	-1,952.704	-1,894.370	-1,893.035	-1,867.664	-1,871.302
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,977.544	3,915.407	3,808.741	3,810.070	3,763.327	3,760.604

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A3: Men's and Women's Supportive Coworkers from 1977 to 2015

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>									
	coworker									
	1977				2015					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
RGenderF	-0.488*** (0.189)	-0.429** (0.201)	0.269 (0.215)	0.449** (0.229)	0.269 (0.215)	0.447*** (0.110)	0.421*** (0.111)	0.533*** (0.113)	0.506*** (0.114)	0.533*** (0.113)
BAhigher		0.866*** (0.195)	0.439** (0.204)	0.310 (0.231)	0.439** (0.204)		0.140 (0.111)	0.099 (0.112)	0.073 (0.117)	0.099 (0.112)
married		-0.050 (0.219)	0.021 (0.228)	-0.044 (0.262)	0.021 (0.228)		-0.222** (0.098)	-0.171* (0.099)	-0.258** (0.117)	-0.171* (0.099)
empFullTime			2.253*** (0.270)	2.240*** (0.285)	2.253*** (0.270)			0.880*** (0.098)	0.821*** (0.102)	0.880*** (0.098)
income				0.024 (0.041)					0.046** (0.020)	
Black				-1.311 (1.036)					0.407** (0.179)	
Latino				-13.955 (520.972)					0.214 (0.185)	
Asian				-0.536 (0.623)					-0.109 (0.179)	
mode.xweb								-0.251** (0.116)	-0.249** (0.117)	-0.251** (0.116)
Constant	-2.564*** (0.135)	-2.845*** (0.239)	-4.542*** (0.343)	-4.729*** (0.440)	-4.542*** (0.343)	-2.644*** (0.095)	-2.626*** (0.134)	-2.997*** (0.149)	-3.269*** (0.180)	-2.997*** (0.149)
Observations	2,154	2,154	2,154	2,072	2,154	5,383	5,383	5,383	5,334	5,383
Log Likelihood	-456.966	-447.580	-401.088	-375.171	-401.088	-1,604.799	-1,601.629	-1,557.470	-1,540.919	-1,557.470
Akaike Inf. Crit.	917.932	903.159	812.176	768.342	812.176	3,213.597	3,211.258	3,126.940	3,101.837	3,126.940

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

**Table A4: Men's and Women's Supporters
Who Do the Same Kind of Work from 1977 to 2015**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>									
	sameWork									
	1977					2015				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
RGenderF	-0.268*	-0.378**	-0.214	-0.172	-0.140	0.085	0.053	0.062	0.063	0.067
	(0.153)	(0.163)	(0.174)	(0.184)	(0.181)	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.083)
BAhigher		0.500***	0.407**	0.277			0.157*	0.145	0.200**	0.147*
		(0.165)	(0.169)	(0.189)			(0.088)	(0.089)	(0.093)	(0.088)
married		-0.502***	-0.493***	-0.718***	-0.680***		-0.268***	-0.262***	-0.276***	-0.261***
		(0.165)	(0.166)	(0.189)	(0.186)		(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.092)	(0.078)
empFullTime			0.455***	0.323*	0.319*			0.173**	0.132	0.168**
			(0.168)	(0.183)	(0.182)			(0.080)	(0.085)	(0.080)
income				0.054*	0.069**				0.009	
				(0.029)	(0.027)				(0.015)	
Black				-1.127					0.165	
				(0.739)					(0.154)	
Latino				-0.814					0.350**	
				(0.731)					(0.141)	
Asian				-1.061					-0.348**	
				(0.736)					(0.150)	
mode.xweb								0.064	0.048	
								(0.086)	(0.087)	
Constant	-2.177***	-1.938***	-2.215***	-2.449***	-2.594***	-1.788***	-1.757***	-1.834***	-1.922***	-1.820***
	(0.115)	(0.178)	(0.209)	(0.287)	(0.279)	(0.067)	(0.101)	(0.107)	(0.129)	(0.106)
Observations	2,154	2,154	2,154	2,072	2,072	5,383	5,383	5,383	5,334	5,383
Log Likelihood	-641.177	-632.999	-629.324	-596.931	-601.402	-2,279.322	-2,272.190	-2,269.755	-2,243.070	-2,270.030
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,286.353	1,273.997	1,268.648	1,211.863	1,212.805	4,562.644	4,552.380	4,551.510	4,506.140	4,550.059

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

*Results only use 1977 respondents ages fifty through seventy.

Table A5: Differences between Men and Women in Network Burdens in 1977 and 2015

<i>Dependent variable:</i>												
nTooDemanding												
	1977				2015							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
RGenderM	-0.290*** (0.098)	-0.275*** (0.102)	-0.224** (0.112)	-0.174 (0.114)	-0.188 (0.114)	-0.221** (0.103)	-0.025 (0.110)	-0.003 (0.112)	-0.007 (0.112)	0.003 (0.113)	0.020 (0.113)	-0.005 (0.110)
BAhigher		0.035 (0.119)	0.041 (0.122)	0.108 (0.130)	0.078 (0.132)			-0.008 (0.118)	-0.006 (0.116)	0.011 (0.121)	0.039 (0.121)	
married		-0.138 (0.133)	-0.161 (0.134)	-0.154 (0.150)	-0.161 (0.151)	-0.160 (0.133)		-0.135 (0.121)	-0.144 (0.121)	-0.102 (0.135)	-0.106 (0.135)	-0.128 (0.117)
empFullTime			-0.002 (0.110)	0.047 (0.120)	0.071 (0.120)				0.056 (0.112)	0.073 (0.114)	0.055 (0.115)	
bornAbroad			0.058 (0.190)	0.135 (0.197)	0.123 (0.198)				0.196 (0.141)	0.203 (0.146)	0.253 (0.170)	
total_kin_n			0.037** (0.018)	0.039** (0.020)	0.042** (0.020)	0.036** (0.018)			0.077*** (0.021)	0.074*** (0.021)	0.075*** (0.022)	0.079*** (0.021)
income				-0.020 (0.018)	-0.016 (0.019)					-0.011 (0.020)	-0.006 (0.021)	
Black				0.159 (0.346)	0.152 (0.346)						0.262 (0.241)	
Latino				0.059 (0.241)	0.093 (0.242)						0.325* (0.183)	
Asian				-0.335 (0.376)	-0.292 (0.376)						-0.101 (0.200)	
disab					0.171 (0.107)					0.228 (0.160)	0.249 (0.160)	
BACounty					0.013 (0.110)							
Constant	0.646*** (0.064)	0.748*** (0.122)	0.621*** (0.142)	0.732*** (0.191)	0.632*** (0.201)	0.633*** (0.135)	0.241*** (0.066)	0.338*** (0.124)	0.084 (0.141)	0.101 (0.173)	0.005 (0.180)	0.111 (0.119)
Observations	257	257	257	243	243	257	387	387	387	383	383	387

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Table A6: Interaction Test for Relative Change in Men and Women's Overall Support from 1977 to 2015

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	allSupport					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
RGenderM	-0.195*** (0.032)	-0.209*** (0.031)	-0.226*** (0.031)	-0.219*** (0.032)	-0.220*** (0.031)	-0.241*** (0.053)
BAhigher		0.260*** (0.030)	0.260*** (0.029)	0.229*** (0.030)	0.226*** (0.030)	0.124*** (0.034)
married		0.068** (0.030)	0.076** (0.030)	-0.012 (0.035)	-0.020 (0.035)	
empFullTime			0.086*** (0.031)	0.028 (0.033)	0.032 (0.033)	
bornAbroad			-0.168*** (0.049)	-0.136*** (0.049)	-0.159*** (0.055)	-0.159*** (0.048)
income				0.025*** (0.005)	0.023*** (0.005)	0.031*** (0.005)
disab				-0.019 (0.038)	-0.018 (0.038)	
Black					-0.176*** (0.064)	-0.203*** (0.063)
Latino					0.029 (0.066)	
Asian					0.030 (0.063)	
year2015						0.209*** (0.044)
RGenderM:year2015						0.040 (0.064)
Constant	2.577*** (0.019)	2.402*** (0.028)	2.390*** (0.029)	2.291*** (0.040)	2.315*** (0.042)	2.169*** (0.047)
Observations	1,028	1,028	1,028	1,003	1,003	1,003
Log Likelihood	-3,252.775	-3,213.698	-3,204.430	-3,121.349	-3,117.409	-3,100.207
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,509.551	6,435.396	6,420.859	6,258.697	6,256.817	6,216.415

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

CONCLUSION

This dissertation began with a very general question: what have key changes in American society in the last four decades meant for Americans' personal networks? Being too vast a topic to comprehensively address in one volume, I chose to focus on three aspects of personal networks associated with well-documented societal changes. First, I examined a question that occurs to most when they imagine changes in social life in recent years – how has greater technology use affected relationships with family and friends? In particular, I examined how growing use of ICTs and cheaper transportation have moderated the role of distance in personal networks. I found that technology allows people greater selection within and specialization of their personal networks on the basis of exchanges and emotional intimacy. People increased their reliance upon nearby friends and family for socializing and practical help. At the same time, friends and family considered emotionally close and relied upon for confiding or advice became even more likely to live more than an hour away.

The second societal change I considered is the rapid rise of women in the workplace. I examined whether women's higher labor force participation had led to an increase in the proportion of supporters associated with work for women relative to men. I relied on three indicators of association with work: people met at work, people who do the same kind of work, and coworkers. In the late 1970s, women only lagged men in work-related alters before controlling for employment status – working men and women roughly tied in terms of support from these alters. By the mid-2010s, women had not only caught up to men overall (before controlling for labor force status), it appeared they may have surpassed men in supporters met at work or who were coworkers (while remaining similar to men in terms of supporters who do the same kind of work). Interaction tests looking for a change by gender and year confirmed that the increase for women is significant for both coworkers and people met at work ($p < .05$). I concluded that women have at least caught up with men in terms of knowing potential supporters associated with work. In follow-up analyses I attributed this shift to two factors: the greater availability of other women to befriend at work (work-related supporters remained overwhelmingly female) and women's tendency to be better at maintaining their ties than men (thereby retaining more work-related ties than men even though they spent fewer years in the labor force).

In the third chapter, I considered several changes in men's and women's roles likely to have made their personal networks more similar. In addition to women entering the labor force and moving up the corporate ladder, support for egalitarian gender norms in house- and care-work has grown. In addition to spending more time on traditionally feminine tasks, fathers are expected to be more emotionally invested in family life. Past work on personal networks highlighted differences between men and women in terms of kin involvement, access to nonkin resources, emotional intimacy, and overall burdens and support. In each of these areas, I found some convergence. The gap between men and women shrunk in terms of the number of kin they consider close, their willingness to confide, their ties to adult children, their overall network burdens, and access to people from work contexts. In the only instances of divergence, women surpassed men in terms of nonkin whom they could rely upon for advice and, it seems, took on an even larger role in serving as confidants. In other ways the networks of men and women remained distinctive. Nonetheless, the changes suggest that social scientists ought to be more careful in generalizing from past findings about gender differences in personal networks.

Stepping back from the findings, I see two general opportunities for further research. The first is to better describe and measure the effects of social and economic inequalities in shaping personal networks. The second is to examine the emergence of norms about personal relationships in response to changing structural opportunities and constraints. I begin with the emergence of norms.

The forces that motivated personal network changes in Chapters 1-3 – greater gender equality and communications technology use – can be reframed as changes to the opportunities and constraints individuals face in forming and maintaining personal ties. Women had more opportunities in the labor force, thereby gaining access to a greater number of potential nonkin associates. Women who wanted to place a greater emphasis on their careers and engage in more professional networking could do so. Likewise, it became more normative (both acceptable and expected) for men to spend greater time on housework and childcare – thereby providing men who so desired opportunities to form stronger bonds with kin. The constraints on keeping in touch across large distances were greatly relaxed. Travel became cheaper and phone- and video-calling became essentially free. The ease of communicating or traveling allowed more relationships to be preserved despite distance. The rising proportion of men and women graduating from college also meant that younger adults were exposed to a wider variety of potential friends. In sum, many of these societal changes can be seen as creating room to maneuver in the construction of personal networks.

Some longstanding cultural norms still mattered. Work friendships in my data were overwhelmingly same-sex; most parents do not confide in adult children. Yet, overall the tendency appears to be toward more opportunities and more choices – the average person has more contexts in which to meet like-minded alters and more ways to communicate with those alters. If we can assume that people rely upon conscious or unconscious heuristics to bound decision-making about whom to befriend or support, there is an interesting research opportunity here. With structural constraints relaxed, culture might take on even more importance. Moreover, with more opportunities for meeting and staying in touch, individuals may seek out new heuristics for guiding their decisions about whom to meet and with whom to stay in touch.

Although I only scratched the surface in the analyses presented, changing norms are an important part of the story of personal networks over the last four decades. For instance, I speculated that changes in norms increased men's willingness to discuss personal matters and to confide in a wider range of individuals. Journalists have documented efforts by women across industries to change norms around workplace life – for instance, to make social outings equally appealing to women. Yet, perhaps the most readily apparent changes in norms center upon dating. Many claim that long-distance relationships are less difficult than they were in the past because of video-calling. Thus, the long-distance relationship itself is seen as more viable. Research into online and off-line dating finds that educational homophily is increasing – perhaps suggesting that this is one criterion individuals are using to filter potential dates. In the past two decades, socially acceptable answers to “how did you two meet?” have expanded from “mutual friends” and “at a bar,” to include online services initially designed for meeting sex partners. These examples merely suggest that there are numerous changes in society that sociologists could treat as natural experiments to better understand the emergence of new norms and heuristics that guide the construction of personal networks.

While culture may condition the choices individuals make, social structure conditions the opportunities they face in shaping their personal networks. Sociologists already know that personal network characteristics are associated with a variety of important structural factors. For

example, education and income are independently associated with larger, more diverse, and more far-flung networks. Certain jobs are more conducive than others to meeting nonkin who might become friends and supporters. Greater homogamy predicts marital success.

Other research finds that socioeconomic status is associated with networks that, in turn, provide greater social and economic opportunities. Important work describes personal networks as, in large part, the outcome of social structure and opportunity. Yet, little work delineates how the opportunities people face in constructing and maintaining are shaped by inequalities. Moreover, the ability to make use of these opportunities is contingent on circumstances – some households may require two-earners simply to stay afloat, some family members may be in such need of help that caring for them takes precedence over elective activities.

An important outcome of the processes behind inequality is a qualitatively different social experience. Personal networks can be seen as a dependent variable in inequality research. They can help to address a question just as legitimate as whether someone is able to move up the economic ladder: To what extent are Americans of different socio-economic backgrounds able to surround themselves with people who will help them thrive? The literatures on inequality and personal networks would both benefit from efforts to trace differences in the support afforded by personal networks to circumstances that reflect social and economic inequalities.