

Changes in Personal Networks: Causes, Differences, and Consequences

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Scholarly research confirms that personal relationships and the composition and structure of personal networks are far from static, both on the short run and over the longer course of people's lives. But we know comparatively little about:

(a) the reasons for, or causes of these network changes, which may be found on multiple levels, including the individual level (e.g., life course transitions; strategic choices), the network level (e.g., structural network embeddedness), and the contextual level (meeting opportunities; institutional conditions; cross-national variations);

(b) differences between social groups (e.g., young and old, ethnic groups and interethnic contacts, subcultures); and

(c) the consequences of these network changes in terms of, e.g., the changes in the resources embedded in these networks that affect individual life chances.

For this session, I invite original contributions on these issues, which address theoretical perspectives, innovative methodological approaches/issues, and/or present empirical findings.

Key words: personal networks; changes; causes; consequences; social resources

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