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A personal network analysis of remote workers

The rise of remote work has introduced a new axis of inequalities in the labor market, reshaping both where and how people work. While research on social networks has long emphasized the importance of personal ties in job searches and status attainment, the rapid diffusion of remote work—now nearly four times prepandemic lev-els—opens new and largely unexplored avenues of inquiry. Drawing on egocentric network data from 4,097 workers and 22,402 professional and household ties, we examine how three distinct work arrangements—fully remote, hybrid, and on-site—shape the structure and quality of personal networks. Using multivariate and multi-level techniques, we test hypotheses focused on access to and mobilization of social support, the emergence of workplace and household conflict, and structural inequalities. Our findings show that fully remote workers have more geographically dispersed networks and, overall, less conflictive relationships with colleagues in lower or equal hierarchical positions. In contrast, managers working remotely report significantly higher proportion of difficult ties. Moreover, on-site work appears to shield against the emergence of tensions with children. This article provides novel empirical evidence on a growing and powerful driver of personal network dynamics in today's labor market.

Keywords/Topics

Remote work, Conflicts, Support, Personal networks

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