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## Mapping and explaining inequalities in personal networks between migrant generations in the U.S.

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Scholars of international migration have long studied the central role that personal networks play in the lives of migrants at different stages of migration and incorporation trajectories. While studies of social networks in specific immigrant communities have grown in number in recent years, systematic comparisons of migrants' personal networks with those of non-migrants are still rare. These comparisons, however, could be key to understanding disadvantages, resources, and inequalities linked to migration. This study offers a comprehensive and systematic comparison of personal networks between three migration status groups in the San Francisco Bay area of California (USA): first-generation migrants, second-generation migrants, and individuals with no migration background. We use uniquely rich, longitudinal personal network data collected in 2015-2018 with a population-representative panel survey. Analyses consider (1) personal relationships in different domains (e.g., family, social companions, practical support providers, etc.); (2) various characteristics of personal ties, including emotional closeness, spatial dispersion, and difficult or demanding relationships; (3) the structure of alter-alter ties; and (4) the dynamics of personal networks over time. We first describe differences between migration groups (overall and net of confounding sociodemographic factors); then we explore explanations for these differences from existing theories. We find that first-generation migrants have, on average, significantly smaller personal networks, more limited access to social support in all domains, and more geographically dispersed ties. There is no evidence, however, that migrants' networks are characterized by higher prevalence of difficult relationships and strong ties (operationalized as emotionally closer or multiplex relationships). There is also no evidence, across a wide battery of measures, that migrants are characterized by different patterns of participation in organizations, social groups, and foci of interaction. We conclude that observed differences in personal networks cannot be explained by variation in levels or types of participation in foci of sociability between migration groups.

### Keywords

ego-networks, migration, social support, inequalities, survey data

### Topics

- Egonetworks and applications

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