

CONSEQUENCES OF MEN'S RETIREMENT FOR THE CONTINUATION OF WORK-RELATED PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Retirement is an important life-cycle marker and has a major impact on an individual's functioning. Based upon the social convoy model, it is hypothesized that retirement decreases the likelihood of continuation of coworker relationships. Socio-emotional selectivity theory predicts a decline in the number of peripheral relationships with ageing and thereby a decline in network size and number of co-worker relationships among working and retired people. Data comes from the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam, with five observations between 1992 and 2002. At baseline, 226 men aged 54-81 years were employed; 166 men retired in the course of the study. The results of multilevel regression analyses showed a stable network size for both working and retired men. Among all men, the number of work-related network members declined, but more strongly among retirees. It is concluded that the convoy model fits better with the data than does socio-emotional selectivity theory.

Older adults' networks of personal relationships change continuously. These changes can be understood from the convoy model, which is a life-span developmental model of personal networks based on role and attachment theories (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987; Kahn & Antonucci, 1981). Each person is thought of as moving through life surrounded by a convoy: a set of people to whom he or she is related through the exchange of help, emotional support, and companionship. The convoy is conceived as concentric circles, representing different levels of closeness to the focal person. The closer relationships are determined more by attachment, those in the outer circle more by role requirements. Society is structured around various roles that prescribe norms and expectations regarding behavior and attitudes. Role-guided relationships, such as those with coworkers, can be important and affectionate, but they are primarily tied to the role setting, which generally limits them in duration and content.

Socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Lang, 2001) addresses age-related decreases in social interaction in later life. Social interaction is theoretically motivated by the goals of information-seeking and emotional regulation. The perceived time horizon differentiates the importance attached to both goals: when the time horizon is limited (as in old age), the short-term goal (emotional regulation) becomes more important than the long-term goal (information-seeking). As a result, older people disengage from peripheral relationships, because emotional engagement with core network relationships is more rewarding. As was shown in an earlier study (Carstensen, 1992), the increasing focus on emotional engagement with core network relationships starts early in the life course.

In examining personal network changes in old age, the present study focuses on men's retirement. Retirement is a major life-cycle marker, and it is often assumed that retirement has a major impact on an individual's social and psychological functioning (Hurwicz et al., 1992). Based upon the convoy model, we hypothesize that retirement decreases the likelihood of the continuation of co-worker relationships. Based upon socio-emotional selectivity theory, we hypothesize that personal networks become smaller due to the loss of peripheral relationships, including those with co-workers. This second hypothesis specifies a general effect, where the first hypothesis specifies an effect among retirees only.

Previous research on network changes after retirement showed mixed effects. In a qualitative study Crawford (1971) distinguished between three types of adjustment: re-engagement, disengagement, and realignment. The 29 re-engaged retirees identified retirement with disengagement and were content with it. They spent most of the time at home and concentrated their energy on kin relationships and activities, withdrawing from non-kin networks. The 50 disengaged retirees also identified retirement with disengagement. However, loss of the work-role placed constraints upon them and they were forced to withdraw from activities and relationships. The 19 realigned retirees were looking forward to retirement to release them from pressures inherent in the work role. They saw retirement as a time for extending their lives in different, more meaningful directions. Manual workers were more likely to identify retirement with disengagement than non-manual workers. Crawford concluded that retirement is a crisis, in that an existing equilibrium is upset.

The longitudinal study by Palmore, Fillenbaum, and George (1984) departed from crisis and continuity theory. From crisis theory, they hypothesized that retirement has generally negative effects because occupational identity is the basic legitimizing role for workers in society. Loss of this role leads to withdrawal from social participation. In contrast, continuity theory assumes that occupational identity is not the central role for many workers, and consequently, the authors hypothesized little or no long-term effects of retirement. The results showed that certain activities increased and others decreased. The

authors concluded that retirement does not usually change men's patterns of social activities much or at all.

Mor-Barak, Scharlach, Birba, and Sokolov (1992) assessed differences in the network size of 31 employed and 144 retired people in a cross-sectional study. The network measure consisted of 10 items pertaining to the frequency of contact with family and friends and the availability of a confidant. Their results indicated that employment in the retirement years was related only to a larger number of friends. In another study by van Tilburg (1992), 50 men were interviewed just before retirement and again one year later. This study applied an extensive network-delineation procedure of 20 questions about the exchange of support and companionship. Network members were identified by name. The names of all the network members identified at the pre-retirement observation were compared and, if possible, linked with those identified after retirement. The results showed that the network size remained stable. The composition of the networks, as indicated by the type of the relationships, changed slightly; the greatest change was for work colleagues, where relative numbers decreased by about 50%. Many relationships, especially those with colleagues, were terminated.

In the three-year longitudinal study by Bossé et al. (1993), retired men were compared with men who were in work at both observations. A quantitative measure of the social network was based on marital status, number of people in the household, number of children, number of relatives within an hour's drive, number of close friends, and the frequency of seeing children, other relatives, and friends. Three questions assessed the extent of coworker support. One question asked the respondents to list up to five confidants and whether there was or was not a coworker among them. A second question asked how many of the respondent's close friends were from the (former) workplace. A third question listed 10 possible sources of friendships, such as relatives, neighbors, or coworkers, and asked respondents to circle all sources that applied to them. A positive response to the coworker category indicated coworker support. No evidence was observed for a retirement effect on the network in general and on relationships with coworkers.

As pointed out by Bossé et al. (1993) and Gall, Evans, and Howard (1997), studies into changes after retirement should include pre- and post-testing and a control group of working people. According to Starker, Morgan, and March (1993), identifying network members by name is a minimum requirement for studying change in networks. None of the studies discussed above was able to fulfill all of these criteria. The current study among retired and working older adults in the Netherlands follows working older adults into retirement, and thereby facilitates the comparison of changes in retirees' networks with changes in the networks of age peers who continue their work. The applied method of identification of network members by name enhances the study of changes in personal networks. Gall, Evans, and Howard (1997) observed that the first year after retirement could be characterized as a "honeymoon" phase, with

many positive changes. However, they observed that retirees' satisfaction and well-being had decreased after six years. The current study includes multiple observations after retirement, which makes it possible to determine whether short-term effects of retirement have to be distinguished from long-term effects.

Method

Respondents

Personal interviews were conducted in 1992 (T_1) with 3,805 respondents in the Living Arrangements and Social Networks of Older Adults research program (Knipscheer, de Jong Gierveld, van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 1995). This program used a stratified random sample of men and women born between 1908 and 1937. The oldest individuals, particularly the oldest men, were over-represented in the sample. The sample was drawn from the population registers of 11 municipalities: the city of Amsterdam and two rural communities in the western region of the Netherlands, one city and two rural communities in the south, and one city and four rural communities in the east. These three regions were felt to represent the differences in religion and urbanization in the Netherlands at the time. Of the 6,107 eligible individuals in the sample, 2,302 (38%) were unwilling to participate due to a lack of interest or time, and another 734 were ineligible because they had died or were too ill or cognitively impaired to be interviewed.

In 1992-1993 (T_2 ; $N = 3,107$), 1995-1996 (T_3 ; $N = 2,545$), 1998-1999 (T_4 ; $N = 2,076$) and 2001-2002 (T_5 ; $N = 1,691$; 44% of the T_1 respondents); followups were carried out in the context of the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam (Deeg, van Tilburg, Smit, & de Leeuw, 2002). Between T_1 and T_5 , 38% had died; 4% were unable to participate in the study because of severe physical or mental health problems; 13% refused to be re-interviewed; and 2% could not be contacted due to a residential relocation to another country or to an unknown destination. In each wave, the interviewers received a four-day training and were intensively supervised. The interviews were tape-recorded to monitor and enhance the quality of the data obtained. The interviews took between one-and-a-half and two hours.

At baseline, 1,946 women and 1,859 men were interviewed. In this study, we confine ourselves to male respondents who were employed ($n = 270$). Longitudinal data on the personal network were missing for 44 men, leaving 226 men for whom data were available for the analyses. Their age at baseline ranged between 54 and 81 years ($M = 60.8$; $SD = 6.5$). All lived independently. The majority were married ($n = 186$); 5 others shared their household with a partner; 4 others had a partner outside their household; and 31 had no partner. After the baseline observation, 166 men retired. On average, 4.3 ob-

servations were available; 2.5 before retirement and 1.8 after retirement. At baseline and T_2 observations were available for 223 and 221 respondents respectively (some respondents having missing observations), and subsequent observations were available for a smaller number of respondents, 196, 176, and 161 respectively, mainly due to sample attrition. The average interval between T_1 and T_2 was about 11 months, and between subsequent observations about 3 years; between T_1 and T_5 it was 9.9 years with a minimum of 8.9 and a maximum of 10.5 years.

Measurements

At baseline, whether men were in employment was assessed with the question, "Are you currently employed?" To be employed included being a professional, having one's own company or practice, working in a family business or practice, working on a freelance basis, working through a temporary agency, having a paid apprenticeship, being on temporary sick leave, or being employed in a sheltered workshop. The 226 working respondents were asked the number of hours a week they worked according to the employment contract. In the absence of a contract (e.g., because the respondent was self-employed), an approximation of the actual number of hours was sought. The men worked on average for 42.7 hours per week, with a large variation ($SD = 15.7$; range 3-98). In the Netherlands the employment contract in most occupations ends at the age of 65 years; however, pre-retirement opportunities are common. Among the respondents under 65 years, 175 were employed for more than 20 hours a week and 4 for fewer hours. Among the older men, 27 were employed for more than 20 hours a week and 20 for fewer hours. After baseline, the questions asked were these: "Are you doing paid work at this moment? Please report also one or several hours per week or short temporary work." The question "How many hours per week are you working?" was asked of working men.

In order to obtain adequate information on the networks of the older adults, subjects were asked to provide detailed information on their relationships and to identify their network members by name. The main objective was to identify a network that reflected the socially active relationships of the older adult in both the core and outer layers of the larger network (van Tilburg, 1995). The procedure was adopted from Cochran et al. (1990). Network members were identified in seven domains of the network: household members (including the partner, if there was one); children and their partners; other relatives; neighbors; colleagues; fellow members of organizations (e.g., athletic clubs, church, political parties); and others (e.g., friends and acquaintances). With respect to these domains, the question was posed, "Name the people (e.g., in your neighborhood) with whom you have frequent contact and who are important to you." Only people over the age of 18 could be named. The maximum number of names was set at 80, but no one reached this limit. The

design of the measurements for the five observations was the same, thus giving equal chances to network members identified in a previous observation and to others to be identified in later observations. The network size was computed as the number of individuals identified, the partner excluded. Information was gathered on all network members with regard to the type of the relationship with the respondent, gender, and contact frequency. Contact frequency was sought in eight categories ranging from never to daily, and converted to days per year. The names of all the network members identified in different observations were compared and, if possible, linked, in order to detect changes in network composition.

Socioeconomic status was measured at baseline. Educational level was measured in years, and ranged from 5 to 18 ($M = 11.0$; $SD = 3.3$). The monthly net household income was asked in 12 classes. The median category indicated an income between €1360 and €1600; 50 respondents had an income higher than €2270. The skill level of the occupation and occupational prestige were assessed based on a coding scheme devised by Sixma and Ultee (1983). The skill level had five categories ranging from elementary to scientific; half of the respondents had a medium level. The occupational prestige scale had values from 17 to 82 and the mean was 44.7 ($SD = 14.9$). These four indicators of socioeconomic status correlated modestly (r between 0.33 and 0.57), with an exception of the correlation between the skill level of the occupation and the occupational prestige ($r = 0.92$). The prestige measure was selected for further analyses due to the well-distributed scores, along with education and income. The capacity to perform activities in daily life (ADL) was measured at each observation, with six questions about having difficulty performing the activities of daily living, e.g., "Can you walk up and down stairs?" The five possible answers were: not at all, only with help, with a great deal of difficulty, with some difficulty, and without difficulty. The six items constituted hierarchically homogeneous scales at the five observations (Loevinger's coefficient of Homogeneity $\geq .59$), which were reliably measured ($p \geq .83$). The scales ranged from 6 (numerous problems) to 30 (no problems). Furthermore, on the basis of the home address and a question in the interview at the follow-up observations, we assessed whether the men had moved, and if so, whether they had moved to another municipality.

Procedure

In explaining changes in network size and the number of work-related network members, multilevel regression analysis was applied. The regression models were analyzed by means of ML3, a program for multilevel analysis (Prosser, Rasbash, & Goldstein, 1991). Unstandardized (B) regression coefficients will be reported. The respondent's baseline characteristics—age, educational level, occupational prestige, and household income—were included in the equations as control variables. The equations were extended with time-

specific respondent characteristics. The mean number of working hours was assigned to retirees to avoid multi-collinearity with retirement. The availability of a partner was included, since people with a partner usually are known to have larger networks than people without. Furthermore, time-specific observations of the ADL capacity and geographical relocation were included to control for effects of the capacity to maintain relationships. In analysis of the number of work-related network members, the network size at each observation was included as a control variable.

Two models were examined by a further extension of the equations. In the first model, changes in the network of retirees were compared with changes in the networks of age peers who continued their work. The equations were extended by the inclusion of time (i.e., the interval between the first and following observations) as an indicator of general change. In a final step, a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent was retired at that time was included. The second model evaluated whether short-term effects of retirement differ from long-term effects. Only one pre-retirement and two subsequent post-retirement observations of retirees were analyzed. The two post-retirement observations were indicated by dummy variables. Since the interval between the observations varies across respondents, the equations were extended with a variable concerning this variation in time around the observations.

Results

On average, large networks were identified. At baseline the average size was 15.1 (SD = 10.9), ranging between 0 and 54 network members. Among them, there were on average 1.7 work-related network members (SD = 2.8; range 0-14), that is, a colleague, a former colleague, or the spouse of a (former) colleague. About half the respondents ($n = 116$) had no coworkers among their personal network members; the networks of 61 respondents consisted of 1% to 20% coworkers; the networks of 35 respondents consisted of 21% to 40% coworkers; and 11 respondents had more than 40% coworkers in their networks. Due to the linking of network members across observations, the composition of the total network including all unique network members can be described. This total network consisted of 5,362 relationships, of which many were kin relationships ($n = 2,457$, or 46%). Among the non-kin network members, the majority were identified as neighbor, friend, or acquaintance, and not as work-related ($n = 2,306$, or 43% of the total number of network members). The other 599 network members (11%) were identified at least once as work-related. Among these 599 network members, 99 were identified as neighbor, friend, or acquaintance at other observations; 42 of these 99 were referred to as work-related at the first time that they were identified as network member. Of the 599 work-related network members, 131 were female. For each relationship, the highest frequency of contact across the obser-

variations was determined. Within kin relationships, this was on average 83.9 days per year (SD = 113.3), within work-related relationships the average was 154.0 (SD = 149.1), and for other non-kin relationships the average was 78.7 (SD = 98.2). These figures show that work-related relationships are an important part of the personal network.

The figures presented in Table 1 show that working men decreased their number of working hours. The relative number of men with a partner was stable; for men the likelihood of losing their spouse by widowhood in this period is small. On average, the respondents had a very good ADL capacity at all observations, but in the course of the study the variation increased, indicating that some men lost capacities. A small number of respondents moved. There was a decline in network size between T_1 and T_2 . Methodological as-

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Time-Specific Variables: Means and Standard Deviations (between parentheses), or Percentages					
	T_1	T_2	T_3	T_4	T_5
N	223	221	196	176	161
Time (years)	0	0.9	3.9	6.9	9.9
		(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.2)	(0.2)
Retired	0%	16%	52%	76%	85%
Working hours per week for working men	41.5	42.4	31.3	24.0	18.2
	(15.7)	(15.7)	(16.4)	(18.1)	(17.6)
Having a Partner Relationship	86%	88%	88%	88%	88%
ADL Capacity (6-30)	29.6	29.6	29.2	29.1	28.8
	(1.3)	(1.3)	(2.2)	(2.2)	(2.5)
Moved		4%	12%	9%	9%
Moved to an other municipality		2%	5%	4%	2%
Network Size (0-72)	15.1	13.9	16.6	16.3	16.4
	(10.9)	(9.0)	(10.7)	(11.1)	(9.6)
No. of Work-Related Network Members (0-14)	1.7	1.1	1.3	0.9	0.9
	(2.8)	(1.8)	(1.9)	(1.8)	(1.9)

pects, such as the effect of repeated measurement, might have caused this decline (see for further discussion van der Zouwen & van Tilburg, 2001). From the third observation, the network size increased somewhat. The number of work-related network members also shows a decline between T_1 and T_2 and an increase after T_2 ; however, the dominant trend is a decline after the baseline observation both in the mean and standard deviation.

The first multilevel regression model pertains to changes in the network of retirees compared with changes in the networks of age peers who continued their work (Table 2). The results of the analyses showed that the network size was not dependent on most of the control variables. Age at baseline ($B = -0.21$) indicates a cross-sectional difference in network size: the networks of the youngest men (54 years of age) included about 5.7 members more than the networks of the oldest (81 years). At each observation, the networks of men with a partner included about 3 members more than the networks of men without a partner. The network size was stable over time and retirement did not change the network size.

Table 2

Regression of Network Size and Number of Work-Related Network Members (N Respondents = 226; N Observations = 977)						
	Network Size			Number of Work-Related Network Members		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>t</i>
Constant	20.92	8.47	2.5 *	-0.61	1.59	-0.4
<i>Baseline Characteristics</i>						
Age (years)	-0.21	0.09	-2.3 *	0.00	0.01	0.2
Educational Level (5-18 years)	-0.04	0.21	-0.2	0.06	0.03	1.7
Occupational Prestige (18-79)	0.07	0.05	1.5	0.01	0.01	0.8
Income (1-8)	0.01	0.23	0.1	0.05	0.03	1.5
<i>Time-Specific Characteristics</i>						
Working Hours (per week)	-0.02	0.02	-0.9	-0.01	0.01	-0.9
Partner (no-yes)	3.08	1.11	2.8 **	-0.39	0.22	-1.7
ADL Capacity (6-30)	0.06	0.17	0.4	-0.01	0.04	-0.2
Moved to an other municipality (no-yes)	1.03	1.47	0.7	-0.08	0.35	-0.2
Network Size (0-72)				0.10	0.01	14.3***
Time (years)	0.02	0.11	0.2	-0.06	0.02	-2.4 *
Retired (no-yes)	0.83	0.71	1.2	-0.49	0.16	-3.1 **

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

In analyzing the number of work-related relationships, there was a significant effect on network size. Within larger networks, there were more work-related relationships than within smaller networks. Before including the retirement variable into the equation, the effect of time was -0.09 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that in a period of 10 years there was, on average, a loss of nearly one work-related relationship. Within the final equation (Table 2), the effect of time was disentangled in a general effect of a loss, on average, of half a work-related relationship for both retired and non-retired men ($B = -0.06$, i.e., a decline of 0.6 relationships over 10 years) and another half due to retirement ($B = -0.49$).

For both dependent variables, the analyses were repeated for the 175 men under the age of 65 years at baseline who were employed for more than 20 hours per week; a total of 779 observations were available for the analyses. The estimates of the retirement effect were $B = 1.10$ ($SE = 0.84$; $t = 1.3$; $p > 0.05$) for differences in network size and $B = -0.67$ ($SE = 0.18$; $t = -3.7$; $p < 0.001$) for differences in the number of work-related network members. The deviations of these estimates from the estimates from analyses among the whole sample are small, and we conclude that the large variation in age and working hours at baseline does not affect our results.

By means of the second model, it was possible to evaluate whether short-term effects of retirement differ from long-term effects. Data from 131 retired men with one observation before retirement and two observations after retirement were analyzed. Effects of the control variables did not deviate substantially from those reported in Table 2 and therefore are not reported. Both estimates of the retirement effect on network size are not significant. The estimate shortly after retirement is $B = 1.40$ ($SE = 0.93$; $t = 1.5$; $p > 0.05$) and on average 3 years later the estimate is $B = 0.95$ ($SE = 1.16$; $t = 0.8$; $p > 0.05$). With respect to the number of work-related relationships, there is a significant decline shortly after retirement ($B = -0.76$; $SE = 0.19$; $t = -4.1$; $p < 0.001$), which persists three years later ($B = -1.03$; $SE = 0.22$; $t = -4.6$; $p < 0.001$; the difference between these two post-retirement estimates was not significant; $t = -1.5$; $p > 0.05$). Within a specific post-retirement observation, the decline is larger when the observation interval is larger ($B = -0.30$; $SE = 0.10$; $t = -3.0$; $p < 0.01$). There are small differences between the estimates of the retirement effect derived from this model and Model 1. These differences stem from the selection of respondents with at least two post-retirement observations and the exclusion of some pre- and post-retirement observations in testing Model 2.

Conclusions

Old age is a “socially unstructured” period of life (Hagestad & Neugarten, 1985), meaning there are few social expectations about the roles for older adults to fulfill, and few institutionalized mechanisms that impose order in life. Within this context, retirement is a significant marker of entering old age due to the loss of the work role. In the current study we did not emphasize the

continuing and cumulative influence of earlier advantages and disadvantages on trajectories later in life. For example, characteristics of the employment situation such as job strain have been identified as relevant for older people's lives after retirement (Falk, Hanson, Isacsson, & Östergen, 1992). A person's biography is not one-dimensional, but made up of various life domains. Status changes in one life domain may be related to status changes in other life domains. For example, retirement might be a trigger to changes in health (Mein et al., 2003) and to geographical relocation (Robison & Moen, 2000). This multidimensionality of personal biographies is one of the key features of the life-course approach (Elder, 1985), and might contribute to the heterogeneity in late life. However, the results of our study showed that neither men's ADL capacity as an indicator of health nor a geographical relocation significantly affected the number of relationships, probably because most men who remained with our study maintained good health and only a small number moved to an other municipality.

In studying personal network changes after retirement, we observed a stable network size and a decline in the number of work-related network members. The decline in the number of work-related network members was observed among men who continued their employment as well as—more strongly—among retirees. Based upon the convoy model of change in personal networks, we hypothesized that retirement decreases the likelihood of continuation of coworker relationships due to a change in the work role of men. The results support this hypothesis. Based upon socio-emotional selectivity theory, we hypothesized that networks become smaller due to the loss of peripheral relationships, including those with coworkers. The general trend of a decline in the number of work-related network members among both working and retired men seems to support this hypothesis. However, in contrast with this hypothesis, we did not observe that networks became smaller, but that relationships with (former) co-workers were replaced by other relationship types. Data on the closeness of specific relationships were not available, and we were not able, therefore, to test whether the replacements resulted in a network consisting of more close relationships. However, the applied network delineation procedure asked respondents to identify people who were important to them, thereby providing the respondents with a standard related to closeness.

The development in network size among retirees does not fit clearly with the picture of the first period after retirement as one with positive changes, as was noted by Gall, Evans, and Howard (1997). The non-significant positive effect indicates that shortly after retirement some men had an enlarged network while others had fewer network members. The same was true at the second observation after retirement, three years later. Furthermore, the loss of coworker relationships shortly after retirement continued. This indicates that retirement triggers long-term changes in the network. At baseline, coworkers formed an important and distinct category within the personal network, as indicated by the high-contact frequency as compared with kin and other non-

kin relationships and the small number of coworkers identified after baseline as network members in other categories. Loss of coworker contacts results in a less diverse network that might end in less well-being, since people with heterogeneous networks cope actively, are well informed, and are able to access a range of resources (Cattell, 2001).

Our results confirm those from an earlier longitudinal study among men from another Dutch sample (van Tilburg, 1992). But our findings deviate from those from the longitudinal study by Bossé et al. (1993) conducted in the United States. Study characteristics could explain the differences between the Dutch studies and that by Bossé and colleagues. Both Dutch studies applied a name-generating procedure by which large networks were delineated; core and peripheral socially active relationships were included in the networks; and the network members were identified by their name. In contrast, the study by Bossé et al. asked general questions of confidants and (close) friends and assessed whether there were coworkers among them. The more peripheral relationships might have been under-represented in their study. Contrary to the study by Bossé et al., we did not split up our sample into working men employed part-time and employed full-time (however, we controlled for the number of working hours in the analyses). We assumed that each level of labor participation could facilitate the personal contact with coworkers. We did not distinguish between (former) coworkers and their spouses, and assumed that both categories are work-related relationships. A large majority of the work-related relationships was identified only within that category, and these relationships were not identified within other categories of relationship type at other observations. This indicates that work-related relationships form a distinct category within the personal network. Furthermore, the period in which the data were collected might have influenced the results. The data for the van Tilburg (1992) study were collected in 1986-1987, for the Bossé et al. study in 1985-1988, and for the current study between 1992 and 2002. Employment rates of men aged 55 years and older have decreased since decades and are particularly low in the Netherlands (Guillemard & Rein, 1993). For example, the employment rates in the U.S. in 1989 (76% for 55-59 year-olds and 52% for 60-64 year-olds) were about the same as the Dutch rates in the mid 1970s: the Dutch rates in 1989 were 62% and 24%, respectively. Dutch employed men of 55 years and older, therefore, form a much more selective category than men in that age range living in the U.S. Future studies must reveal whether changes in national employment rates affect the consequences of men's retirement for the continuation of work-related personal relationships.

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Author Note

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