# Social Relations and Technology: Continuity, Context, and Change

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## Abstract

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Social relations, although basic to human nature, health and well-being, have become increasingly complicated as a result of changing population demography and technology. In this essay, we provide a historical overview of social relations, especially as they affect older people. We briefly review the evolution of theory and measurement surrounding social relations as well as early empirical evidence. We consider how social relations have changed over time as well as continuity and change regarding basic characteristics of social relations. Of special interest is the emerging influence of technology on how

**EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Edited by

Patrick Doreian

and

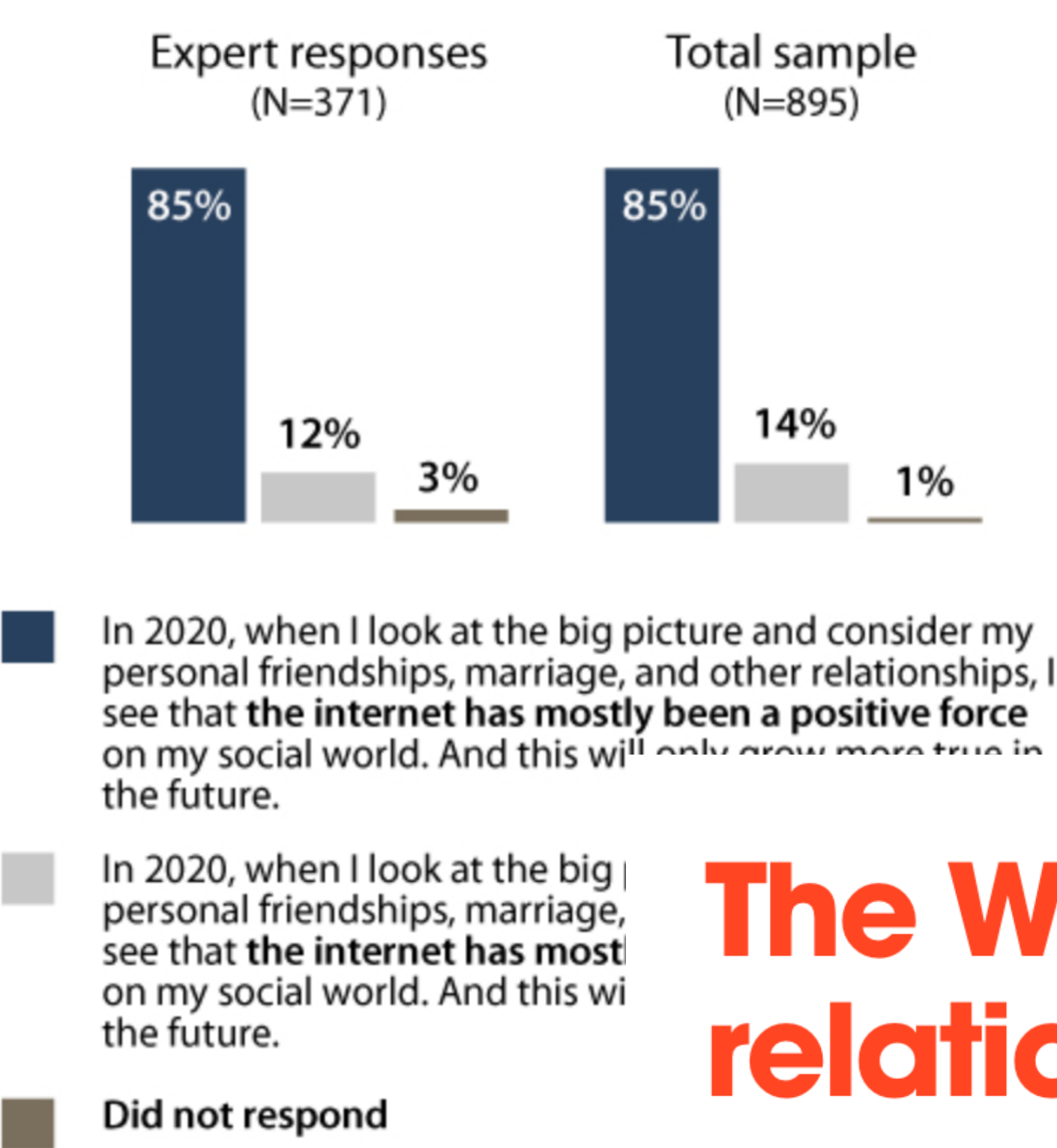Frans N. Stokman

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# The Effect of Technology on Relationships

The risks of internet addiction.

According to **Durkheim**, the collec**ti** **interactions**. In particular, **Durkhe** families and small communities, gr may eat together, work together, an
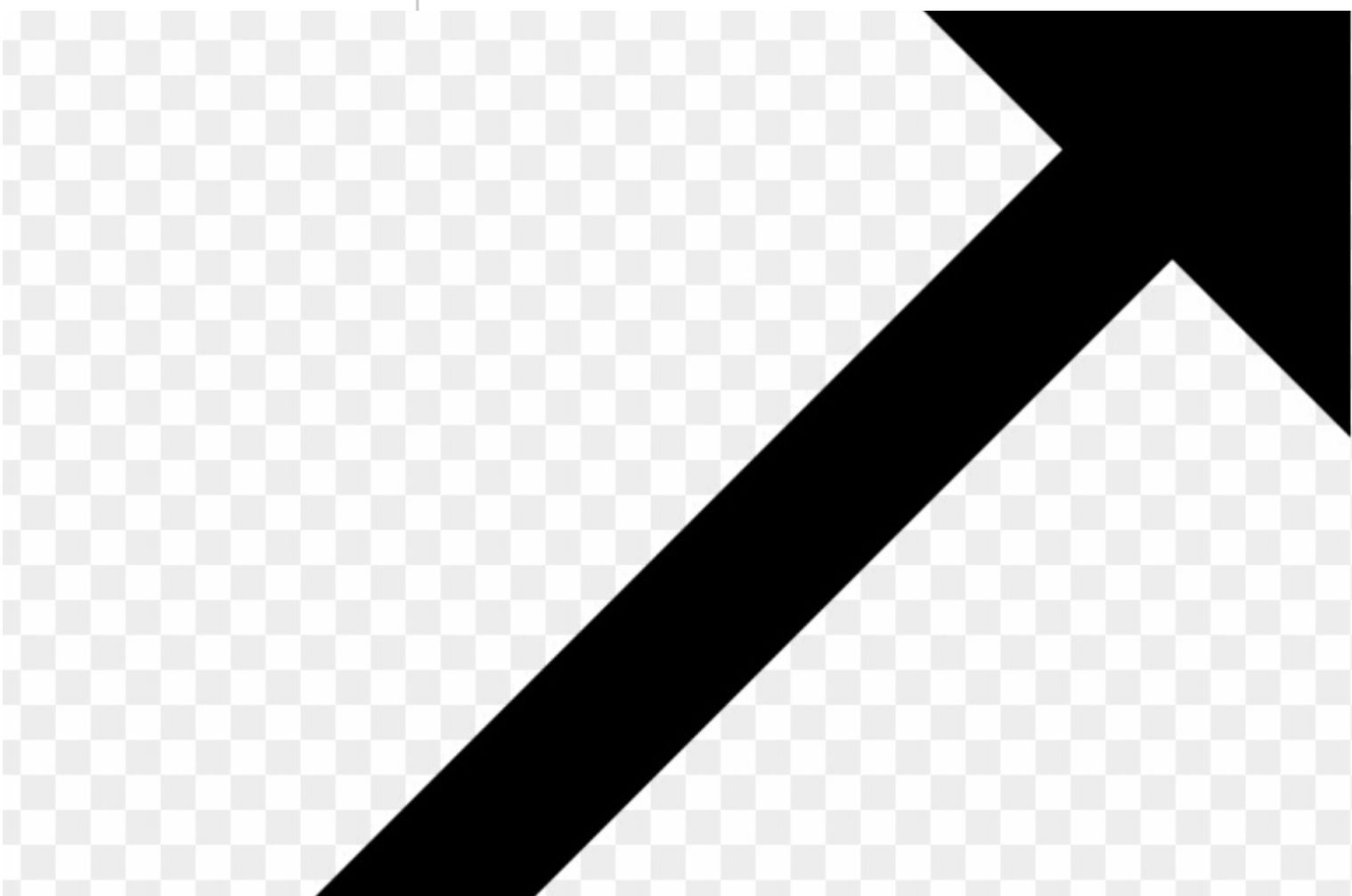
# Durkheim

## What Is the Internet Doing to Relationships?

**Does the internet degrade friendship, kinship, civic involvement, and social capital?**

One of the great debates about the internet is what it is doing to the relationships that Americans have with friends, relatives, neighbors, and workmates.

On the one hand, many extol the internet's abilities to extend our relationships — we can contact people across the ocean at the click of a mouse; we can communicate kind thoughts at two in the morning and not wake up our friends. Back in the early years of the internet, some prophets felt that the internet would create a global village, transcending the pace. As John Perry Barlow, a leader of the Electric Frontier 5:

## Will social relations get better?

Tension pair on the future of social relations

| | Expert responses (N=371) | Total sample (N=895) |
|---|---|---|
| | 85% | 85% |
| | 12% | 14% |
| | 3% | 1% |

■ In 2020, when I look at the big picture and consider my personal friendships, marriage, and other relationships, I see that **the internet has mostly been a positive force** on my social world. And this will only grow more true in the future.

▢ In 2020, when I look at the big p personal friendships, marriage, see that **the internet has mostl** on my social world. And this wi the future.

▬ Did not respond

**The Web has changed our relationships forever**