# SOCI 424 discussion questions—Sept 28, 2020

**Facilitator**:

*name*

**Secretary**:

*name*

**Other participants**:

*name*

*name*

*name*

## Prompts (try to respond to all of these)

* Two of the features of small-scale network structure discussed today and in the readings are (a) *homophily*, the tendency for network ties to exist more often between similar actors, and (b) *transitivity*, the tendency for actors to close ‘triangles’ by forming ties with others who are already tied to their network relations. How would a tendency toward homophily encourage transitivity in a network? How would a tendency toward transitivity encourage homophily? Are transitivity and homophily separate structuring forces in a network, or just different aspects of a single underlying force?
* ***Bonus question:*** *Can you come up with an example of a network that would have high levels of homophily but low levels of transitivity? One with high levels of transitivity but low levels of homophily?*
* Most of the examples from the reading (and in the literature more broadly) examine homophily on *categorical* variables—race, gender, political affiliation, etc. Does the concept of homophily require categorical distinctions? What would homophily look like with less reductive conceptions of, say, race or gender that recognize complexity of the social distinctions they describe (e.g. multiracial or gender non-binary people)? How might you measure such homophily?
* McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook’s (2001) review is now almost 20 years old, and the forms and norms of social interaction have changed substantially since its publication. Notably, a great deal of social interaction is now mediated through the internet and computers/phones. How might this transition decrease or increase homophily across different social dimensions (e.g. race, gender political beliefs, behavior, taste)? How does the distinction between “choice” homophily and “structural/opportunity” homophily discussed in the lecture play out differently in an online setting?