

1 Fitness benefits of providing services to others: Sociality predicts survival in a neotropical
2 primate

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23 ABSTRACT

24 Across multiple species of social mammals, evidence is accumulating that sociality is associated
25 with fitness. In long-lived species, like primates, lifespan is one of the main fitness components.
26 Here, we provide the first direct evidence that females who provide more in social services live
27 longer. We used 18 years of data from the Lomas Barbudal Monkey project to quantify sociality
28 in 11 capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*) social groups using three interaction types: grooming, support
29 in coalitionary aggression, and foraging in close proximity. We analyzed each domain separately
30 to understand how giving and receiving social favors predict survivorship. To estimate female
31 sociality in each of these domains, we implemented an adaptation of the Social Relations
32 Model. This approach enabled us to estimate individual rates of giving and receiving
33 interactions while accounting for the inherent measurement uncertainty in these estimates due
34 to varying amounts of observations of each individual. Subsequently, we modeled adult
35 females' survival as a function of their sociality estimates, rank, age, group size, and maternal
36 kin presence using a Bayesian Cox proportional hazards model. We found that females who
37 provide more grooming to other group members survive longer, but other social interaction
38 types had little effect on survivorship.

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43 Keywords: capuchins, *Cebus*, sociality, social relationships, survival, fitness

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45 INTRODUCTION

46 A key question for understanding the evolution of animal sociality is: Do animals that
47 are more social enjoy greater fitness benefits? A number of studies link components of
48 reproductive success, such as fecundity (Fedigan et al., 2008; Schülke et al., 2010; Gilby et al.,
49 2013) and offspring survival (Silk, 2009; Silk et al., 2003; Kalbitzer et al., 2017), to differences in
50 the social behavior of individuals.

51 In long-lived, iteroparous species, lifespan is also an important component of
52 reproductive success contributing to fitness variation (Clutton-Brock, 1998). In human
53 populations, being socially connected is associated with a lower probability of dying (Holt-
54 Lunstad et al., 2010; Shor and Roelfs, 2015; Shor et al., 2013), while having few and poor social
55 relationships is associated with a higher risk of death (Roelfs et al., 2011). In nonhuman species
56 there is similar evidence that various aspects of individual sociality are associated with lifespan
57 (e.g., Silk et al. 2010).

58 Detailed longitudinal behavioral records are necessary for relating an individual's social
59 behavior patterns to longevity (Clutton-Brock, 1988). Because these data are logistically difficult
60 to collect in many habitats, the data are often challenging to analyze given heterogeneous
61 sampling across time periods, social groups, and individuals. Although research on sociality
62 often ignores this sampling variability (reviewed in Silk et al. 2013), the measurement
63 uncertainty can be substantial, complicating inferences.

64 The primary objective of this paper is an investigation of the effects of sociality on
65 survivorship among female white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*). We test this relationship
66 using data spanning 18 years of capuchin monkeys' social interactions and demography from

67 the Lomas Barbudal Monkey dataset. To quantify individual sociality, we selected interactions
68 from three domains to represent the variety of social behaviors that capuchin monkeys engage
69 in: grooming, coalitionary aggression, and foraging in proximity to others. A secondary goal of
70 the paper is to develop analytical approaches for the measurement uncertainty stemming from
71 heterogenous sampling, which we address by adapting the multilevel Social Relations Model
72 (Snijders and Kenny, 1999; Koster et al. 2020). We generate individuals' sociality estimates that
73 reflect the measurement uncertainty, which are subsequently used to test the hypothesis that
74 social behavior predicts longevity.

75 METHODS

76 *Study subjects and the dataset*

77 We studied members of the wild white-faced capuchin population at the Lomas
78 Barbudal Biological Reserve and surrounding private lands in Guanacaste, Costa Rica (Perry et
79 al., 2012). The dataset has longitudinal records including demographic information, pedigree
80 information, and social interactions on individuals living in 11 capuchin social groups. The data
81 on capuchin behavior were collected between January 2002 and December 2019. All groups in
82 this study were observed in at least 7 calendar years (mean = 13.27). The primary subjects of
83 this analysis were 132 adult females, where adulthood is assumed to begin at the age of 5
84 years. The behavioral and demographic data on each group were collected by experienced
85 observers during visits lasting at least 6 hours/day.

86 *Measuring Sociality*

87 As measures of female sociality, we focused on three behavioral domains: grooming,
88 coalitionary aggression, and foraging. We treated grooming and coalition formation as directed

89 behaviors, and we used observations of individuals as both initiators and recipients of the
90 behavior. We did not have information about which individual had initiated the proximity when
91 foraging, and therefore foraging in proximity was treated as an undirected behavior. In
92 calculating the frequency with which adult females engaged in these interactions, we used
93 behavioral records from all the individuals who resided in the 11 respective groups during the
94 study period. There were a total of 563 monkeys and 13,770 unique dyads. We treated each of
95 the five interaction types (*grooming giving*, *grooming receiving*, *support giving*, *support*
96 *receiving*, *forage in proximity*) as a separate measure of sociality.

97 *Grooming (groom giving and groom receiving)*

98 Grooming rates were estimated using data collected during 10-minute focal follows. To
99 estimate individual grooming rates, we calculated dyadic counts of grooming and dyadic
100 opportunities for grooming. The opportunity for a dyad, A-B, to engage in grooming, was
101 calculated as the sum of the focal follows of A and the focal follows of B at times when A and B
102 were co-resident. A count of 1 was assigned if A groomed B at least once during a focal follow,
103 otherwise 0 was assigned. The same was done when evaluating if B groomed A.

104 *Joining a coalitionary conflict (support giving and support receiving)*

105 The behavior of joining a coalitionary conflict was defined as an individual intervening
106 on one side during an ongoing aggressive conflict. This definition only indicates the functional
107 aspect of joining a side; it entails no inferences about internal psychological states such as the
108 intent to help a specific individual. Since aggressive interactions are salient and harder to miss
109 than quiet activities like grooming, aggressive interactions were collected both *ad libitum* and
110 during focal follows. The chronological stream of aggressive behaviors was divided into 5-

111 minute intervals. In order to identify instances of joining a coalitionary conflict, monkey A is
112 identified as joining monkey B if A performed an aggressive behavior toward either monkey B's
113 opponent or victim within the context of the intervals. The measure is dichotomous, and a
114 single instance was recorded for the occasions when there were multiple observations of
115 monkey A joining monkey B during the interval. To calculate the opportunities to join a
116 coalitionary conflict, all individuals who were co-resident during the aggressive conflict were
117 regarded as having the opportunity to join on either side during the conflict.

118 *Foraging in proximity*

119 *Foraging in close proximity* was estimated from group scans that occurred in the
120 context of foraging. In group scans, the identity of the scanned individuals, their activity and
121 their proximity to other individuals within 10 body lengths (~2 m) was noted. We considered
122 individuals to be foraging in close proximity if they were scanned within 5 body lengths (~1m) of
123 each other. For each dyad, we scored whether they were observed foraging within close
124 proximity in 10-minute intervals. The number of opportunities that the dyad had to forage
125 within close proximity is a sum of group scans in the foraging context that are 10 minutes apart,
126 where one of the individuals is a subject of a group scan.

127 *Individual sociality measures*

128 The data for these analyses were collected across eighteen years and the number of
129 observed social groups and individuals generally increased over time. As a result, the density of
130 data is uneven across time periods, social groups, and individuals. We incorporated uneven
131 distributions of the data by aggregating the data annually and using adaptations of the
132 multilevel Social Relations Model (Snijders and Kenny, 1999; Koster et al. 2020) to estimate

133 individual annual rates of grooming, coalitionary support, and foraging (see supplemental
134 material). This method provided estimates of individual sociality that reflect the measurement
135 uncertainty, with the uncertainty increasing for infrequently observed individuals.

136 *Modeling survival as a function of individual sociality measure*

137 To investigate whether sociality is associated with adult female longevity, we used
138 Bayesian Cox proportional hazards models. In separate models, each of the five individual
139 sociality measures was modeled as a predictor of survival probability over one-year periods. In
140 addition to the respective sociality measures, these models included the following time-varying
141 (calendar year-specific) covariates: the female's age, her dominance rank (ranges from 0 to 1,
142 where 1 represents the highest rank), the average number of individuals in her group, the
143 proportion of time during that year that her mother was alive, and the number of adult
144 daughters that she had (see supplemental material for further details on covariates).

145 *Modeling approach*

146 We specified the following model for the number of days before death, D_i . The
147 probability for the number of days before death comes from the cumulative probability
148 distribution:

149

$$150 \quad \Pr(D_i | \lambda_i) = \lambda_i \exp(-\lambda_i D_i) . \quad (3)$$

151

152 For females who did not die during the observation period, the probability of surviving D_i
153 comes from the complementary cumulative probability distribution:

154

155
$$\Pr (D_i | \lambda_i) = \exp (-\lambda_i D_i) . \quad (4)$$

156

157 We model the rate of dying, λ_i , as follows:

158
$$\lambda_i = 1/\mu_i . \quad (5)$$

159 where μ_i is the expected number of days till death

160
$$\log(\mu_i) = \alpha + a[id] + b_{sociality} * true\ sociality\ estimate[id] + b_{rank} * rank \quad (6)$$

161
$$+ b_{age} * age + b_{daughters} * daughters$$

162
$$+ b_{mother} * mother + b_{grsize} * group\ size .$$

163

164 where α denotes the intercept or the base rate of number of days survived, $\alpha[id]$ denotes

165 individual female random effects corresponding to the observation period. The model

166 coefficients $b_{sociality}$, b_{rank} , b_{age} , $b_{daughters}$, b_{mother} , and b_{grsize} describe the impact of

167 sociality, rank, age, number of daughters, mother's presence, and group size, respectively. We

168 adopted a latent variable approach to model the sociality estimates given that the individuals'

169 sociality estimates are not point estimates, but rather posterior distributions with means and

170 standard deviations that reflect the measurement uncertainty.

171 We used the Bayesian approach to fit Cox proportional hazards models (Singer and

172 Willett 2003). We assumed a Normal (8, 0.5) prior for a base rate of survival, α , which places

173 most of the prior mass between 0 to 20 years with the mean of 8 years and a long tail allowing

174 more extreme values. For fixed effects, we assumed Normal (0, 1) priors. For individual-level

175 random effects, $\alpha[id]$, we use a Normal (0, 1) prior (see supplemental material). All of the

176 covariates, except the number of daughters, were standardized by subtracting the mean and

177 dividing it by the standard deviation. The number of daughters was centered by subtracting the
178 mean number of daughters for each age.

179 Models were run using Stan (v.2.19.1) and the *rethinking* package (v. 1.93; McElreath,
180 2020) in R (v. 3.6.2; R Core Team 2019).

181 RESULTS

182 For perspective on the individual sociality measures, Figure 1 illustrates how the
183 estimates of *grooming*, *coalitionary support*, and *foraging in proximity* by adult females
184 compare to the estimates for other age-sex classes. Females differ the most from the other
185 age-sex classes in their distribution of *grooming giving* measures. A majority of the females
186 (80%) groom more than an average monkey in the population (Figure 1, panel A). The female
187 distributions for the rest of the behavioral domains are comparatively similar to the other age-
188 sex distributions, indicating that females behave similarly to adult males and immatures in
189 those domains.

190 We plotted the pairwise correlations between each of the sociality measures in Figure 2
191 in order to investigate if female profiles are similar across all five measures, e.g. is a frequent
192 groomer also a frequent recipient of grooming and coalitional support? Within the coalitional
193 aggression domain, estimates of female giving and receiving coalitional support were highly
194 correlated ($r=0.97$). In the grooming domain, the correlation between giving and receiving
195 estimates was moderate ($r=0.57$). The correlations across behavioral domains are smaller than
196 within a domain, between 0.15 and 0.37.

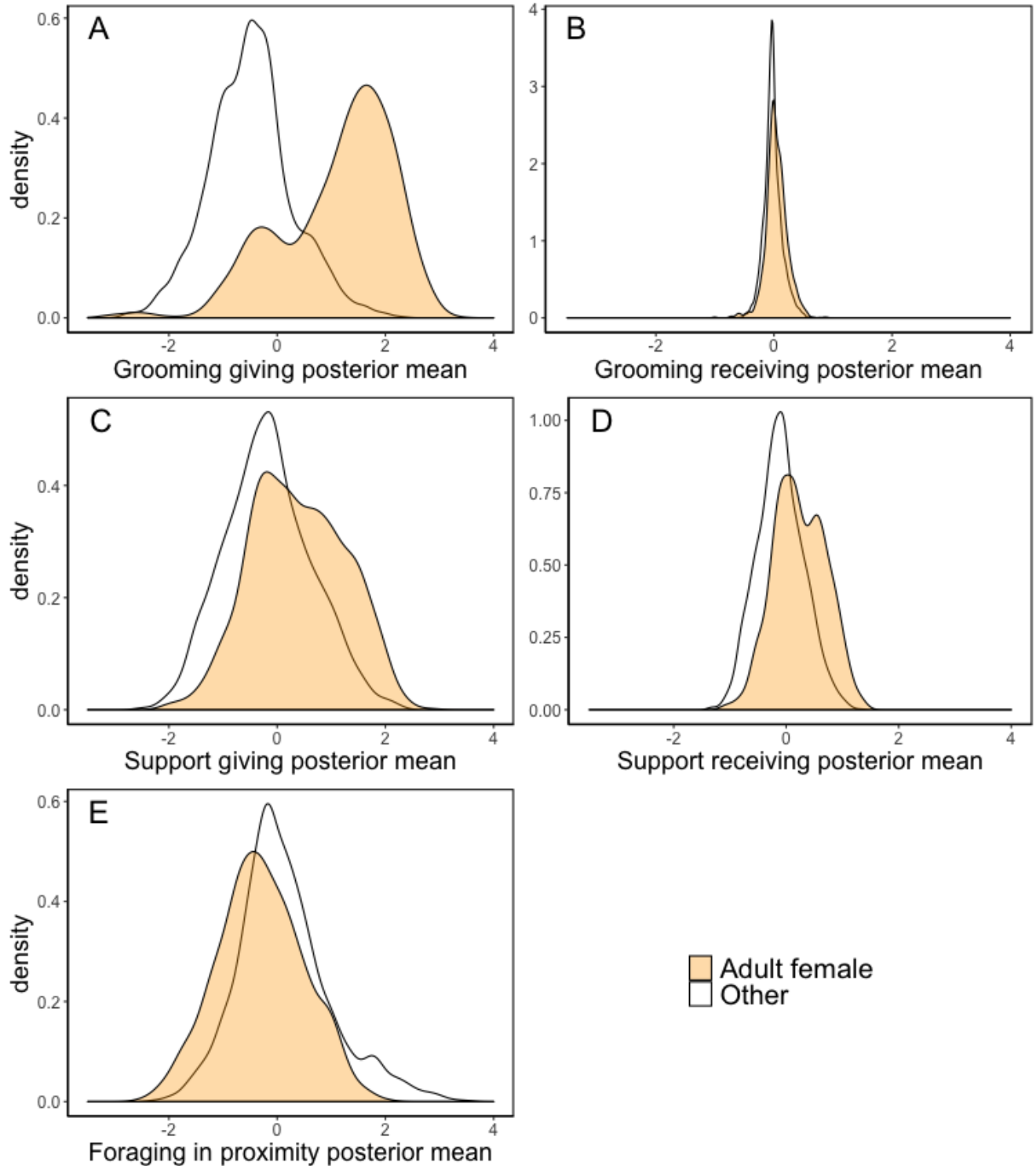
197 Our primary objective was to test the effects of sociality on survivorship. Table 1
198 presents the Cox proportional hazards model posterior mean estimates and the 95% Highest

199 Posterior Density Interval (HPDI), representing the narrowest interval containing the 95%
200 probability mass. Independent of the effects of covariates, females who groomed others more
201 survived at higher rates than other females. The other sociality measures had mean estimates
202 consistent with sociality predicting greater survival, but their HPDI intervals were wide and
203 included zero, suggesting uncertainty about the effects of these estimates.

204 To facilitate the interpretation of the Cox proportional hazards model coefficients, we
205 plotted model predictions showing the probability of dying in a given year (Figure 3). Across all
206 five sociality measures, the less social females have a greater probability of dying than more
207 social females, but only the slopes for *groom giving* confidently suggest a beneficial effect on
208 survivorship (Figure 3, panel A).

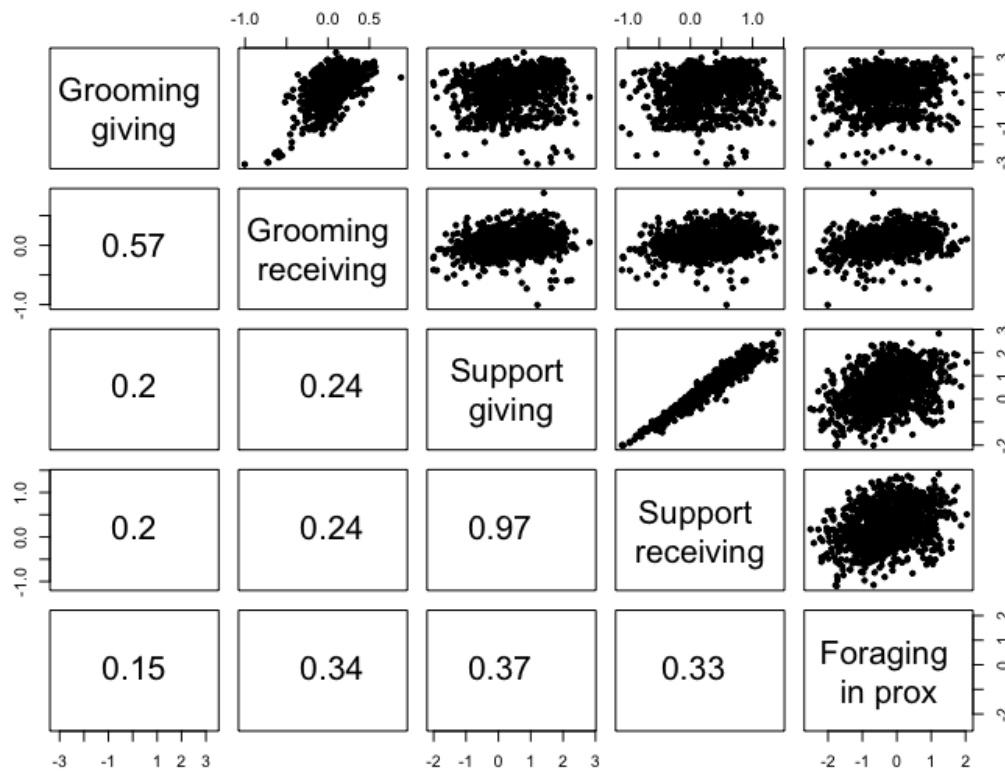
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210 **Figure 1.** Posterior mean distributions of annual individual sociality measures for each type of
211 behavior. The orange density represents adult females whereas the white density represents
212 the rest of the population. The population base rate is normalized at approximately zero.
213
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215

216 **Figure 2.** Bivariate correlations of individual sociality measures. Each point represents the
 217 posterior mean of an annual estimate for an individual female in the sample.



218

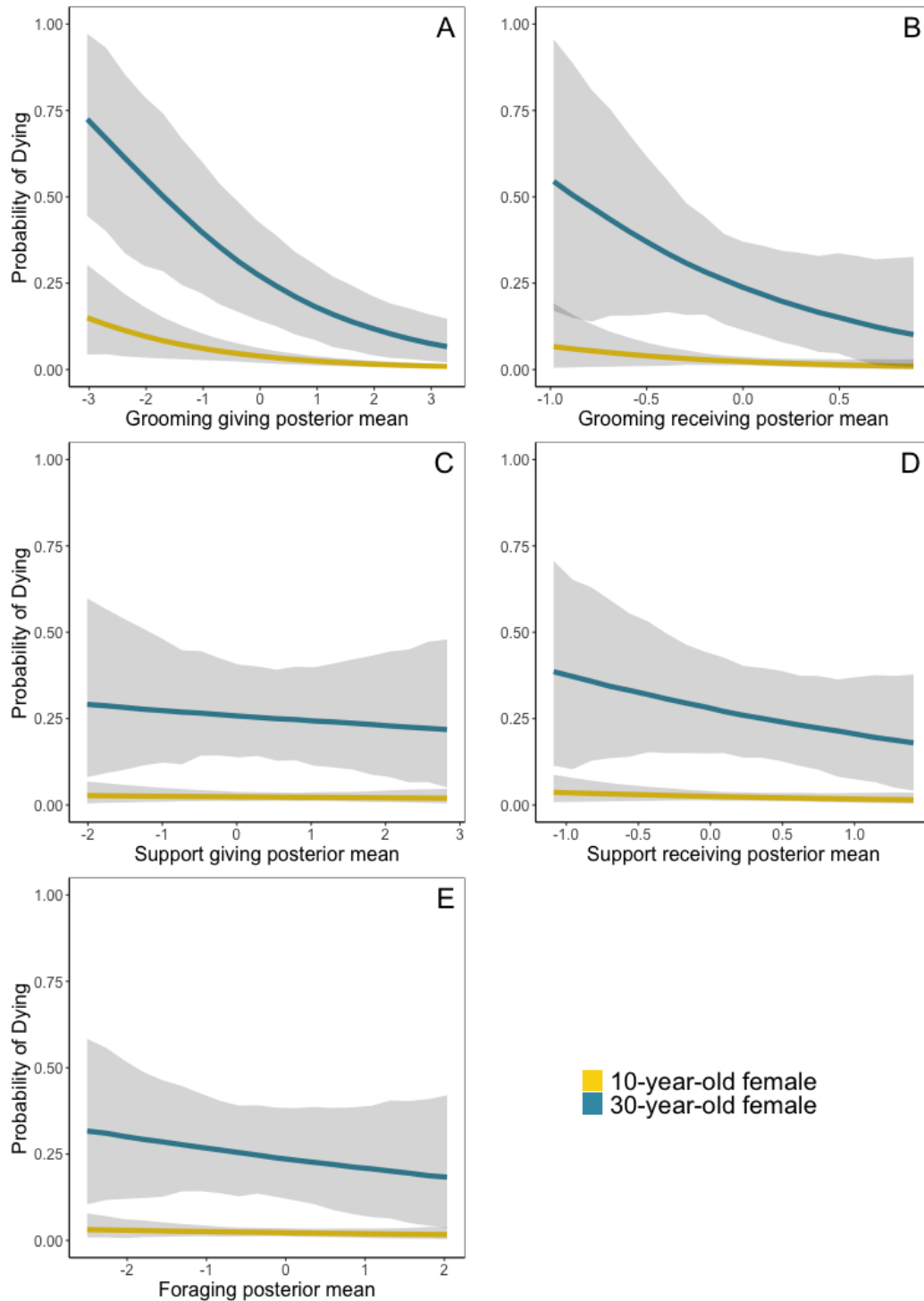
219 **Table 1.** Estimates of fixed effects of each of the Cox proportional hazards models: posterior
 220 means and 95% HPDI (see supplemental material for graphical representation of this table).

221

Parameter	Sociality measure				
	Grooming giving	Grooming receiving	Support giving	Support receiving	Foraging in proximity
Intercept	9.20 [8.86,9.56]	9.13 [8.78,9.52]	9.07 [8.74,9.42]	9.06 [8.73,9.41]	9.08 [8.74,9.42]
β sociality	0.49 [0.26,0.70]	0.19 [-0.09,0.45]	0.11 [-0.21,0.45]	0.06 [-0.28,0.40]	0.16 [-0.18,0.47]
β rank	-0.20 [-0.51,0.11]	-0.11 [-0.45,0.24]	-0.10 [-0.45,0.24]	-0.10 [-0.47,0.28]	-0.16 [-0.54,0.23]
β age	-0.57 [-0.88,-0.25]	-0.66 [-0.96,-0.37]	-0.66 [-0.96,-0.37]	-0.68 [-0.99,-0.38]	-0.69 [-0.98,-0.39]
β daughters	-0.08 [-0.45,0.28]	-0.08 [-0.45,0.31]	-0.07 [-0.44,0.31]	-0.06 [-0.43,0.30]	-0.05 [-0.43,0.32]
β mother	0.26 [-0.09,0.63]	0.31 [-0.02,0.66]	0.33 [-0.01,0.67]	0.32 [-0.01,0.65]	0.33 [-0.01,0.66]
β group size	0.19 [-0.1,0.49]	0.18 [-0.10,0.46]	0.19 [-0.10,0.48]	0.18 [-0.1,0.46]	0.18 [-0.09,0.46]

222

223 **Figure 3.** The predicted annual probabilities of dying at two representative ages (10 and 30) as a
224 function of the sociality levels in five behavioral domains, as calculated from the Cox
225 proportional hazards models. For both ages, we assumed median group size, median rank, and
226 average number of daughters for the age. For 10-year-old females, we assumed a co-resident
227 mother, while predictions for the 30-year-old assume the mother is deceased.
228



230 DISCUSSION

231 In female white-faced capuchin monkeys, providing grooming to others is associated
232 with greater survival rates. Females who provide more grooming die at lower rates than
233 females who engage in this behavior less often. By contrast, there was no strong evidence that
234 females who receive more grooming, participate more often in coalitionary aggression, and
235 forage more often in close proximity of others also have higher survivorship. Our results in the
236 grooming domain are consistent with findings that social integration is associated with
237 longevity in humans (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010) and adds a neotropical primate species to the
238 list of mammalian species where a similar association between sociality and longevity has been
239 demonstrated (Fagen and Fagen, 2004; Yee et al. 2008; Cameron et al. 2009; Silk et al., 2010;
240 Archie et al., 2014; Brent, 2017; Thompson and Cords, 2018).

241 A biologically interesting question deals with the mechanisms that facilitate the
242 relationship between sociality and longevity. In the human literature, two general models have
243 been proposed for the influence of social relationships on health (Holt-Lunstad et al. 2010).
244 First, the stress buffering model assumes that social relationships provide resources that affect
245 either behavioral or neuroendocrine responses which buffer the influence of stress on health.
246 Second, the main effects model assumes that participating in social relationships itself
247 encourages healthy behaviors.

248 In the primate literature, recently there has been discussion of the specific pathways
249 that connect social behavior to fitness (Ostner and Schülke 2018; Thompson, 2019). Consistent
250 with the stress buffering model, providing grooming can have either direct effects on longevity
251 or influence other behaviors that in turn influence survival.

252 Directly, females might derive benefits when grooming others, such as social bonding
253 through the release of hormones (Dunbar 2010). Both providing and receiving grooming
254 seemingly influence oxytocin and glucocorticoid levels in primates (reviewed in Crockford et al.
255 2017), but our analysis reveals a stronger effect of providing grooming on survival in
256 comparison to receiving grooming. The variation in engaging in these behaviors among
257 individuals helps to explain this pattern: Adult females do not vary greatly in how much
258 grooming they receive; therefore, the neuroendocrine benefits they receive from it are less
259 likely to differentiate the stress buffering among individuals. However, females vary
260 considerably in how much they are likely to groom others, and those who are the most avid
261 groomers are likely to derive the greatest benefits related to stress reduction.

262 Indirectly, grooming interactions potentially shape females' participation in coalitionary
263 behavior via the effects of mediating variables. Notably, the females who groom others the
264 most are usually not the same females who participate in coalitionary aggression the most
265 frequently. It is possible that avid groomers receive less aggression and, as a result, fewer of the
266 detrimental consequences that directly reduce survival.

267 In this study, confidence in the statistical findings is enhanced by a methodological
268 approach that incorporates the measurement uncertainty that typifies observational data. Data
269 from the natural habitats are notoriously difficult to gather. Inevitably, the records for social
270 interactions are sparse (Farine, 2015) and some individuals are observed more often than
271 others (Silk et al., 2013). Based on limited observational data, some dyads may appear to have
272 no social relationship, whereas if behavioral sampling were sufficiently dense, they would be
273 observed to interact, albeit rarely (Farine, 2015).

274 To address the uneven sampling effort of individuals and social groups in our dataset,
275 we adapted the Social Relations Model. Based on multilevel partial pooling (McElreath 2002),
276 the resulting estimates of sociality reflect the latent uncertainty of observational data. We
277 generated these estimates from dyadic observations of adult females with all other group
278 members rather than demographic subsets of peers as in previous studies (e.g. Silk et al., 2010;
279 Archie et al., 2014; Kalbitzer et al., 2017). The methods used in this study, however, offer
280 similar benefits for research on subgroups of dyads and more generally provide an alternative
281 that is suited to the imbalanced data structures of observational research.

282 CONCLUSION

283 Across taxa, research on sociality has revealed diverse effects on components of fitness.
284 This study examines sociality in detail, showing that grooming others is the social behavior that
285 most prominently distinguishes individuals, and this aspect of sociality concomitantly predicts
286 the survivorship of adult female capuchins. These results accentuate the need for greater
287 attention to the mechanistic pathways that connect sociality to fitness (Ostner and Schülke,
288 2018). As longitudinal data become increasingly common in studies of animal behavior, careful
289 analyses can better elucidate the evolutionary consequences of variation in sociality among
290 individuals.

291 ETHICS

292 The study was strictly observational, all protocols were approved by UCLA's Animal Care
293 Committee (protocol 2016-022). All necessary permits were obtained from SINAC and MINAE
294 (the Costa Rican government bodies responsible for research on wildlife) and renewed every 6
295 months over the course of the study; the most recent scientific passport number being #117-

296 2019-ACAT and the most recent permit being Resolución # M-P-SINAC-PNI-ACAT-072-2019. This
297 research is in compliance with the Animal Behavior Society's Guidelines for the Use of Animals
298 in Research.

299 DATA AND CODE ACCESSIBILITY

300 The data and code used to produce the analyses in this paper are available at:

301 [www.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3961479](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3961479)

302 AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

303 K.K. and S.E.P. designed the study, wrote the queries to assembled the data set. K.K. collected
304 some of the data. S.E.P. runs the long-term study, wrote the grants funding data collection, was
305 the primary data collector and data cleaner, supervised the data collection and cleaning done
306 by others, and manages the database. K.K. and J.K. developed SRM analyses and K.K. set up and
307 carried out the implementation. K.K. and A.W. developed and analyzed Bayesian Cox
308 proportional hazards model. K.K. took the lead in writing the manuscript. All authors provided
309 critical feedback and helped to write the manuscript.

310 COMPETING INTERESTS

311 We declare we have no competing interests.

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