

Ties That Protect?

**The Significance of
Transnationality for the Distribution of
Informal Social Protection in
Migrant Networks**

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DFG Research Center (SFB) “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities”

Whether fat or thin, male or female, young or old – people are different. Alongside their physical features, they also differ in terms of nationality and ethnicity; in their cultural preferences, lifestyles, attitudes, orientations, and philosophies; in their competencies, qualifications, and traits; and in their professions. But how do such heterogeneities lead to social inequalities? What are the social mechanisms that underlie this process? These are the questions pursued by the DFG Research Center (Sonderforschungsbereich (SFB)) “From Heterogeneities to Inequalities” at Bielefeld University, which was approved by the German Research Foundation (DFG) as “SFB 882” on May 25, 2011.

In the social sciences, research on inequality is dispersed across different research fields such as education, the labor market, equality, migration, health, or gender. One goal of the SFB is to integrate these fields, searching for common mechanisms in the emergence of inequality that can be compiled into a typology. More than fifty senior and junior researchers and the Bielefeld University Library are involved in the SFB. Along with sociologists, it brings together scholars from the Bielefeld University faculties of Business Administration and Economics, Educational Science, Health Science, and Law, as well as from the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) in Berlin and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. In addition to carrying out research, the SFB is concerned to nurture new academic talent, and therefore provides doctoral training in its own integrated Research Training Group. A data infrastructure project has also been launched to archive, prepare, and disseminate the data gathered.

Research Project C3 “Transnationality, the Distribution of Informal Social Security and Inequalities”

The goal of this project is to determine the influence of transnationality, as a characteristic of heterogeneity, on the ways that migrants and their families in emigration and immigration countries access and utilize “informal” social security. The study extends across transnational spaces between Germany and Turkey, Germany and Poland, and Germany and Kazakhstan. The question guiding the research is how transnationality influences the distribution of informal social security and resulting inequalities. Particular emphasis is given to the impact of transnationality on the use of informal services such as childcare, care of sick relatives, money transfers, assistance with integration, and job placement.

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**Ties That Protect? The Significance of Transnationality for the Distribution of Informal
Social Protection in Migrant Networks***

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1. Introduction: Transnationality as a Continuum and as a Marker of Heterogeneity

The cross-border strategies of migrants in obtaining social protection, such as childcare, care for the elderly, medical care and remittances for relatives in need, are increasingly discussed in cross-border migration studies (Mahler and Pessar, 2001). There are at least two research perspectives on social protection and cross-border migration that are embedded in debates on social inequalities. The first perspective investigates conditions for informal cross-border protection and emphasizes the agency of migrant subjects (Parreñas, 2001). The second perspective holds that a new ‘global underclass’ is emerging which consists of female migrant care workers moving from countries at the global periphery to countries at the global centre (Anderson, 2000; Hochschild, 2000; for a critique of this approach see Kofman, 2004).

The present analysis questions these two approaches to some extent. As to the first perspective, we argue that research on migrants’ cross-border protection strategies would benefit from a more differentiated concept of transnationality which distinguishes between a high and a low degree of cross-border engagement of individuals and collectives. We also seek to avoid generalizing the class position of migrants on the global scale, as the second position by implication does, because class is one of many heterogeneities which are relevant in the genesis of social disadvantages in a cross-border realm.

To find an alternative way of addressing the formation of advantaged and disadvantaged positions in the context of transnational informal protection arrangements, one that acknowledges both the variety of degrees of transnationality and the relevance of multiple heterogeneities (rather than just that of class), this paper presents the preliminary results of an empirical study which uses ego-centric network analysis to outline repertoires of migrants’ informal protection in the context of three transnational spaces: Germany–Turkey, Germany–Poland and Germany–Kazakhstan. The results presented are based on 57 network charts and

questionnaires collected from migrants in Bielefeld, Dortmund and Bremen whose countries of origin are Turkey (n = 20), Poland (n = 18) and Kazakhstan (n = 19).¹

The central aim of this paper is to trace the interrelation between migrants' repertoires of informal protection (provided and received both within and across borders), the cross-border linkages in which migrants and their significant others are embedded, and the formation of unequal positions in the field of informal protection. Informal social protection is defined here as a set of risk-reducing practices in the area of human reproduction such as financial protection, child rearing, healthcare, elderly care and the exchange of various kinds of information about such issues as employment, education, health, laws and social activities.

The paper addresses three questions. Firstly, how do transnational linkages influence the distribution of protective resources between migrants and their immobile significant others? To answer this question, we use the term 'transnationality'. We define transnationality as a continuum that ranges from a high degree of cross-border activity (which may involve physical cross-border movements, media use, and communication, among other things) to a low degree of cross-border activity (Faist, 2012; for classic definitions see Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc, 1994; Levitt, 1998; Smith and Guarnizo, 1998; Itzigsohn et al., 1999; Glick Schiller and Fouron, 2001). Understood in this way, transnationality is a marker of heterogeneity that may become relevant in the formation of unequal social positions.

Secondly, what part does transnationality play in the distribution of informal protective resources at the intersection with other heterogeneity markers such as gender and class? Here, the study explicitly builds on a combination of transnational (Faist, 2000; 2012) and intersectional approaches (Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012).

¹ Rather than comparing country pairs, this study reconstructs the intersection of various heterogeneities – transnationality, gender and class – for all respondents included in the sample.

The third question concerns the differences in access to and use of informal protection that result from the interplay of relevant heterogeneities. The reconstruction of these differences provides insights into how the interplay of different heterogeneity markers co-determines unequal life chances and life conditions.

The article begins with a brief description of the aims, objectives and methodological aspects of the project (Section 2) and a review of the current state of research on cross-border migration and informal protection (Section 3). We then present the methodological tool used for the research: ego-centric network analysis (Section 4). The discussion of the preliminary results (Section 5) begins with a description of the sample according to the degree of transnationality and other heterogeneities (Section 5.1), followed by an analysis of how protective resources sent and received by migrants (within and across borders) are distributed both according to the migrants' degrees of transnationality and according to the interplay between transnationality, gender and class (Section 5.2). Finally, we use the concept of network density to present differences in access to and the use of informal protection resulting from the interplay of relevant heterogeneity markers (Section 5.3). In the Conclusion (Section 6) we summarize the findings and discuss further challenges.

2. “Transnationality and the Unequal Distribution of Informal Social Protection”: A Synopsis of the Project

2.1 Research Objectives

The aim of the project is to analyse how transnationality, which is defined as a marker of heterogeneity, influences access to and use of informal social protection by migrants and their significant others (friends and relatives) in three transnational social spaces: Germany–Turkey, Germany–Poland and Germany–Kazakhstan. Informal social protection is defined as

a set of risk-reducing practices in the area of human reproduction (Sabates-Wheeler and Feldman, 2011: 21). In particular, the project focuses on four areas of informal protection: 1) financial protection, 2) various types of care, 3) information exchange (Lund and Srinivas, 2000), and 4) social activities (House, 1981; Uchino, 2004).

2.2 Definition of Terms

In addressing these questions, the project uses the term ‘informal social protection’, which is different from ‘social support’. During the last three decades social support, as a network-based concept, has attracted considerable attention (see Song, Son and Lin, 2011, for an overview). However, it deals mainly with subjective well-being, which also includes the emotional dimension. The term protection, by contrast, treats supportive resources embedded in interpersonal networks and social policy regulations of the welfare state as closely interwoven. Studies on social protection such as Brunori and O’Reilly (2010) and Sabates-Wheeler and Feldman (2011) identify four dimensions of social protection: “(i) access to formal protection, (ii) portability of vested social security rights between host and origin countries, (iii) labour market conditions for migrants in host countries and the recruitment process for migrants in the origin country, and (iv) access to informal networks to support migrants and their family members” (Sabates-Wheeler and Feldman, 2011: 21) Thus, as a concept, social protection allows for the analysis of the mutual contingencies of formal and informal schemes for securing the livelihoods of migrants and their significant others. For the purposes of this study, the fourth component – the informal networks – will be at the centre of attention.

2.3 Research Design

The project is based on a qualitative research design, which includes semi-structured interviews, network analysis, participant observations and document analysis.² It draws on multi-sited ethnography (Falzon, 2009; Amelina, 2010), which assumes that researchers must trace social practices along their geographical paths of mobility in order to understand complex social phenomena in a globalized world. Data are therefore collected and analysed multi-locally, which means that semi-structured interviews are conducted and network charts generated in Germany and the contacts obtained through the interviewees are passed to country partners for further interviews in the countries of origin: Turkey, Poland and Kazakhstan. The purpose of this matched sample³ is to explore how social protection is organized across borders.

The three transnational social spaces under study (Germany–Turkey/–Poland/–Kazakhstan) allow us to access particular legal categories of migrants with potentially varying degrees of transnationality. In particular, the legal statuses covered are: labour migrants and asylum seekers (Germany–Turkey), EU migrants (Germany–Poland) and resettlers (Germany–Kazakhstan).

In the project as a whole, the analysis will be conducted in four steps, the first of which is to identify the repertoires of informal social protection strategies according to their degrees of transnationality.⁴ To identify migrants' repertoires of informal protection, five different data collection tools have been used: semi-structured interviews, a socio-demographic

² The design also considers some quantitative elements to be relevant, in particular in the ego-centric network analysis.

³ The matched-sample method is introduced in Mazzucato (2009).

⁴ The next steps are as follows:

Step 2: The interrelation between informal protection strategies and welfare regimes is investigated on the basis of expert interviews and document analyses in the sending and receiving countries.

Step 3: Participant observations are conducted to identify the categories relevant for the unequal distribution of social protection within the migrants' networks.

Step 4: A content analysis based on coding procedures and sequence analysis is conducted to identify the social mechanisms responsible for the overlapping of different heterogeneity markers and the transformation of heterogeneities into patterns of unequal distribution of social protection.

questionnaire, a network chart, a network grid and a questionnaire on aspects of social protection.⁵

This paper focuses exclusively on the results of the ego-centric network analysis and the findings derived from the questionnaire. The study's sampling was based on the multiple snowball sampling strategy, making it possible to cover all the variants in the sample. In all of the cases, both non-religious and religious communities were contacted. To recruit Kazakh migrants, hometown associations such as Klubi Zemljakov (Bielefeld) and Jehovah's Witnesses and Mennonite communities (Bielefeld and Dortmund) were contacted. To find Polish migrants, we approached the integration courses, Polish School and the Polish Church (Bielefeld and Dortmund). The main entry points to access migrants of Turkish origin were integration courses, mosque and Alevi organizations (Bielefeld and Bremen).

2.4 The Theoretical Basis: Combining Transnational and Intersectional Perspectives

In analysing the distribution of resources within the field of informal social protection, we refer to Charles Tilly's definition of social inequality as "a relationship between persons or sets of persons in which interaction generates greater advantages for one than for another" (Tilly, 2000: 782). 'Inequality' also implies that the advantages produced refer to valued resources. Here, access to and distribution of informal social protection are seen as proxies for valuable resources which are indicative of life chances and opportunities to partake in social life. This project uses intersectional approaches to investigate social inequality, thus highlighting its multi-dimensional and relational character (Anthias, 2001; Walby, Armstrong and Strid, 2012). Generally speaking, these approaches regard gender, class and ethnicity (and sometimes other heterogeneities) as central structural principles in the production of social

⁵ Our research partners in Turkey, Poland and Kazakhstan conducted interviews and collected data for the network charts in 2011 and 2012. However, we are not yet ready to present the results of the multi-sited research.

inequalities (Klinger, Knapp and Sauer, 2007). It is crucial to note that markers of heterogeneity are not defined in essentialist terms. Instead, the intersectional lens focuses on processes of categorical boundary-making, thereby drawing attention to the mutual shaping of various heterogeneity markers and their effects on relational life chances and life conditions (Anthias, 2001). The question of which heterogeneities become relevant in such interactions cannot be answered a priori, and is therefore the subject of our empirical analysis. The project in general and the ego-centric network analysis presented here in particular build on this perspective to investigate how valued resources are distributed depending on different heterogeneity markers and their intersections in the respective areas of informal social protection.

By combining the transnational and the intersectional approaches, we re-conceptualize “transnationality” as a marker of heterogeneity. Transnationality is thought of here as a multi-layered category which includes various social and cultural/symbolic dimensions. It refers to the deep and permanent embeddedness of migrants and their offspring, and non-migrant relatives in the countries of emigration, in cross-border social formations such as fields of contact, kinship groups, networks, organizations and diaspora communities (Faist, 2000; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004). However, not all international migrants maintain transnational ties. Indeed, many are oriented primarily on the country of immigration or on the country of emigration, with the latter perhaps applying more to seasonal labour migrants and cross-border commuters. Consequently, we do not conceptualize transnationality as a binary marker (of being transnational or not) but as a continuum that ranges from frequent to rare cross-border contacts and transactions (Faist, 2012).

There are two main advantages to combining the intersectional and transnational perspectives. First, the understanding of transnationality as a marker of heterogeneity allows us to address the relevance and the significance of cross-border practices in a much more differentiated

manner (than previous studies on transnational protection have done, as we shall see in Section 3), because it goes beyond the binary understanding of transnationality. Second, analysing transnationality as one heterogeneity among many others (such as gender, class, ethnicity/race, etc.) allows new light to be shed on complex configurations and multiple sources of inequality within protective arrangements.

The general aim of the project is to examine whether and how transnationality (at the intersection with various markers of heterogeneity) is involved in the processes leading to the unequal distribution of protective resources. The particular goal of this study is to identify how particular markers such as transnationality, gender and class lead to unequal access to and unequal use of informal social protection. Ethnic categories and categorizations are not considered, because such categories cannot be derived from the network analysis but must be obtained from qualitative interviews and participant observations, which will be interpreted in one of the next research steps.⁶

3. Exploring the Field: Informal Protection in Cross-Border Migration Studies

There are two prominent lines of research which address the nexus between cross-border migration, informal protection arrangements and social inequalities: 1) transnational motherhood and transnational protection studies, and 2) studies on gendered and racialized exploitation of female care workers in the immigration countries, particularly the care chain approach.

(1) The advocates of the transnational motherhood approach focus on phenomena of distance motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). They draw on empirical research to

⁶ Nationality is the only category to be found in the network charts, but it does not allow for the reconstruction of the social processes of ethnic boundary-making. Consequently, ethnic categories are reconstructed from the interviewees' accounts and participant observations.

identify various strategies of managing motherhood over long distances (such as telephone conversations, correspondence to provide emotional support, remittances and specific rituals performed during visits to the home country). In addition, they assume that female migrant care workers (such as care workers from Latin America in the United States) enjoy higher levels of empowerment in their families. According to these researchers, transnational connections significantly transform family structures and parenthood and household politics.

The more general approaches to transnational protection (e.g., Aranda, 2003; Orozco and Lowell, 2006) focus on historical contexts of kinship-based care provision in migration processes. In particular, they identify the relevant conditions for cross-border protection such as migration regimes and citizenship rights, and also technologies (communication and travel) available to provide transnational protection (Baldassar, 2007). These studies also address the question of how the provision of transnational protection is structured along the dynamics of life courses, which may include emigration, marriage, access to employment, childbirth, retirement, family reunification or return migration (Bailey and Boyle, 2004). Thus, the research on transnational social protection explores practices of care and mutual informal protection over long distances to emphasize the agency of migrant subjects.

However, sometimes this research paints a picture of protection practices among migrants that is too optimistic. The studies on distance motherhood would benefit from a more differentiated view of the empowerment of female migrants within cross-border families, because the fact that they send remittances could also be interpreted as intrafamilial exploitation (Amelina, 2011). Furthermore, the studies on cross-border protection suffer from the tacit implication that transnational families are heteronormative entities, communities characterized by a balance of power and equal distribution of financial, emotional and care-related resources among family members. Transnational families are defined as “families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet stick together and create

something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders” (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2003: 3). Likewise, some migration scholars regard the circulation of protective resources within cross-border friendship networks as being based on conflict-free reciprocal relations (Ryan et al., 2008).

Besides these criticisms, the studies on distance motherhood and informal transnational protection still refer to the cross-border embeddedness of migrants and their significant others in a very general way: migrants and their practices are described as either being transnational or not being transnational at all. Cross-border practices have not been discussed as one of several heterogeneities, and no distinction between degrees of transnationality has been made.

(2) The global care chains approach focuses on female migrant care workers from what have been termed the ‘peripheral countries’ who are employed in domestic and care services in Western industrialized countries (Hochschild, 2000; Yeates, 2009). Care work is defined as “the work of looking after the physical, emotional and developmental needs of one or more people” (Kofman and Raghuram, 2009: 3). This approach addresses strategies by which those domestic workers who leave their own children in the country of origin organize distance child care. Such care is usually provided by female relatives in the emigration country or by a migrant care worker from a country even further down the economic scale. These networks between the households of core and peripheral countries, created by cross-border migration of women, are known as global care chains.

Hochschild and Yeates emphasize that economic differences and racial and gender hierarchies between emigration and immigration countries lead to the exploitation of migrant care workers in the immigration country as well as of their female relatives and migrant care workers providing care in the emigration country. Some researchers have also noted that mother love of care workers who have left their children behind is absorbed by the

households of the core countries, resulting in an unequal exchange of an “emotional surplus value” (Hochschild, 2000: 105).

Although the global care chain approach considers racial and gender hierarchies, it is the economic differences between countries that are defined as the central source of cross-border inequality formation. To overstate the case somewhat, we could say that female migrant care workers are stylized as the contemporary ‘global underclass’; however, we argue that, in line with intersectional approaches, the emphasis on and the equal relevance of other heterogeneities besides class should be taken into account much more strongly, as we do in our approach. The cross-border activities of migrants should be addressed in a more differentiated manner, because migrant workers with different degrees of transnational embedding may experience different forms of oppression and disadvantages.

To address this need, the present study sets out to identify advantaged and disadvantaged positions in the field of informal social protection, building on the ego-centric network analysis method, which is introduced in the next section.

4. Ego-Centric Network Analysis as a Methodological Tool

The intention of this paper is to reconstruct the unequal distribution of protective resources within the system of familial and friendship ties of migrants and their non-migrant significant others within and across national borders. Using the methodological tool of ego-centric network analysis, ‘transnationality’ is defined here as an attribute of ego.

Social network analysis identifies individuals’ patterns of interaction. In the context of network analysis, the way an individual lives is considered to depend largely on how that individual is connected within a larger network of social ties. For this reason, the interviewees were asked to name the individuals on whom they could rely for informal social protection

(name generator question). Since we recruited respondents primarily according to their legal status, our analysis will enable us to examine the protection strategies of individuals whether they are transnationally active or not. This decision reduces the risk of sampling on the dependent variable, which is a major criticism (Portes, 2001) of transnationally oriented migration studies.

A network chart was used to identify significant others (that is, individuals who provide social protection for egos) and to collect comparable, quantifiable data (Antonucci, 1986). The respondents were asked to place these individuals in four concentric circles in the network chart according to their degree of importance, ranging from 'very important' to 'unimportant'. The concept of 'importance' was not pre-defined. Instead, the interviewees were asked to reflect upon the meaning of the term (Bernardi, 2010). Prior to the study proper, the network guide and social protection questions were piloted on international students. This enabled us to adjust the wording of the guide and customize the interview questions.

Once the network chart was completed, a number of alteri-related questions concerning age, gender, citizenship, location, frequency of contact, duration of relationship, type of relation and other aspects were asked to further investigate the relationships maintained by the respondents. Other actors identified during these questions were included in the network chart as well. In order to generate a network grid to measure the alter–alter relationships, the egos were asked if their alteri knew each other. The results were then used to determine the network density. The information provided about network density enabled us to determine the structure of the networks in question.

The network chart proved to be useful to the respondents because it facilitated their cognitive performance, in that it made it easier for them to remember their significant others and to explain their relationships during the interviews. It also allowed the interviewers to collect data systematically using the software VennMaker, which displays the nodes as graphic

images and portrays the protective relations. In addition, the software allows the user to arrange the shape, size and colour of any specific relationship or feature of the actor that he or she wants to highlight, and generates an easy-to-read graph for each case. The purpose of the program is to provide a simple and faster way to code, visualize and analyse social networks (Gamper, Schönhuth and Kronenwett, 2012).

The questionnaire on social protection considered protection that is provided and received both in the immigration country and across borders. It consisted of 18 questions, which covered areas of protection such as

- Financial protection: many transfers (within and across borders); regular, occasional, large amounts, small amounts
- Various types of care:
 - help with household chores
 - childcare (regular, occasional)
 - elderly care
 - healthcare (serious illness, non-serious illness)
 - help with moving house
 - emergency situations
- Exchange of information on:
 - employment
 - education
 - health
 - legal status
 - legal matters
- Social activities (having meals or coffee together, going to the cinema, museums, cafés, playing sports together, sharing hobbies).

In addition, we asked four questions to find out if the ego was receiving or providing the various types of protection. Next, the ego-centric network data were entered into SPSS, as this type of data is more complex than, for example, the data obtained in surveys with individuals as units of analysis. As a descriptive tool, SPSS is also useful for qualitative network analysis because it allows the researcher to describe the sample (Müller, Wellman and Marin, 1999).⁷ In performing a network analysis, the researcher collects various types of information such as the characteristics of the ego and the alteri (age, gender, country of origin, income, education, country of education, citizenship, prior citizenship), characteristics of ties between the ego and the alteri (frequency of contact, duration and type of relation, who provides what kind of protection), or network composition and structural features of the network (density, number of clusters) (ibid.). The network data for egos and alteri were anonymized and entered into SPSS as one dataset.

However, it should be noted that it is not this study's objective to quantitatively generalize the description of the sample in terms of degrees of transnationality or the results of the network analysis. Clearly, it is not intended as a representative sample or study. The sample not being representative, the associations between 'transnationality' as an attribute of ego and protective resources are only significant for the present study.

⁷ Although Müller, Wellman and Marin (1999) recommend that researchers work with two datasets to analyse ego-centred networks on the level of the focal individuals, network members, their ties and the network data, a single dataset was created to achieve the highest level of usability in the data management strategy (particularly during data input). Using different filter variables (for example, for network, focal individual or country analyses) is just as effective for data splitting and analyzing on different levels as Müller Wellman and Marin's approach – and it eliminates the risk of introducing errors while merging the data (see ibid.: 93).

5. In What Ways Does Transnationality Matter? ‘Winners’ and ‘Losers’ in Informal Protection Arrangements

This section discusses the results of the ego-centric network analysis, which is guided by three questions: (1) How does transnationality influence the distribution of informal social protection? (2) How does transnationality intersect with other markers of heterogeneity in informal protection arrangements, in particular with gender and class? (3) What differences emerge from the interplay of the various heterogeneities in the field of protection?

To address these questions, we provide a brief overview of the sample in question (5.1) and discuss how different degrees of transnationality at the intersection with gender and class influence the direction (incoming or outgoing), frequency, and amounts of protection (5.2). Finally, we reconstruct the structure of respondents’ networks by analysing their density (5.3). This will allow us to determine exactly how the protective networks of migrants with a high, moderate or low degree of transnationality are structured and how this structure contributes to disparities in the flows of valued resources.

5.1 Transnationality and Other Relevant Heterogeneities in the Sample

Operationalizing Transnationality

The sample includes 57 egos and the relationships to their significant others (n = 676). The respondents (the egos) were interviewed in the German cities of Bielefeld, Bremen and Dortmund. These egos filled in the network charts and completed a questionnaire. In order to understand how transnationality as an attribute of ego is associated with the quantity and distribution of protective resources, we consider transnationality as a multi-dimensional category, which includes various social and cultural/symbolic dimensions that are operationalized as:

1. Interpersonal cross-border contacts (operationalization: the ratio obtained by dividing the total number of an ego's cross-border contacts by the total number of the ego's interpersonal contacts)
2. Virtual cross-border communication (e.g., telephone calls, paper mail, e-mail and Skype sessions) (operationalization: low for once a year, moderate for once a month and high for every day)
3. Physical border-crossing (e.g., trips to the country of origin) (operationalization: low for less than once a year, moderate for once a year and high for more than once a year)
4. Media use across borders (i.e., the use of television, the internet, social media and country-of-emigration, third-country and/or ethnic media in Germany) (operationalization: low for once a year, moderate for once a month and high for every day)
5. Language use (use of the mother tongue in everyday life, including conversations with family members, friends and co-workers) (operationalization: yes/no)
6. Dual citizenship (operationalization: yes/no)
7. Membership of transnational organizations (in particular, membership of political organizations, religious communities, hometown associations and business associations, including business relationships in general) (operationalization: yes/no).

Addressing transnationality as a heterogeneity, we conceptualize it as a continuum ranging from a high degree of cross-border interaction to a low degree of cross-border activity.

The operationalization of the category of ‘transnationality’ builds on the analytical distinction between ‘transnationality’ and ‘protection strategies’. Consequently, ‘transnationality’ was operationalized as various types of cross-border activities and membership. Drawing on the literature on social protection (Lund and Srinivas, 2000; Sabates-Wheeler and Feldman, 2011), we specified ‘protection strategies’ as ‘financial protection’, ‘various types of care’, ‘information exchange’ and ‘social activities’. By using the category of ‘protection’, we took into account that relevant resources could be exchanged between migrants both in the immigration setting and across borders.

By including multiple dimensions in ego’s attribute ‘transnationality’, we were able to cover a variety of cross-border relationships maintained by our interviewees, and by entering the network and questionnaire data into SPSS the category could be arranged into a scale, with degrees operationalized as low, moderate and high.

Transnationality and Other Heterogeneities in the Sample

In order to obtain a picture of how protective resources are distributed, and in what ways transnationality matters, we must first briefly describe the sample. As noted above, the ego-centric network analysis was used to define transnationality as an attribute of the ego: Figure 1 illustrates the degrees of transnationality of the interviewees in the sample. Figure 2 shows the degrees of transnationality for each country of origin, and Table 1 shows the number of interviewees according to their degree of transnationality and country of origin.

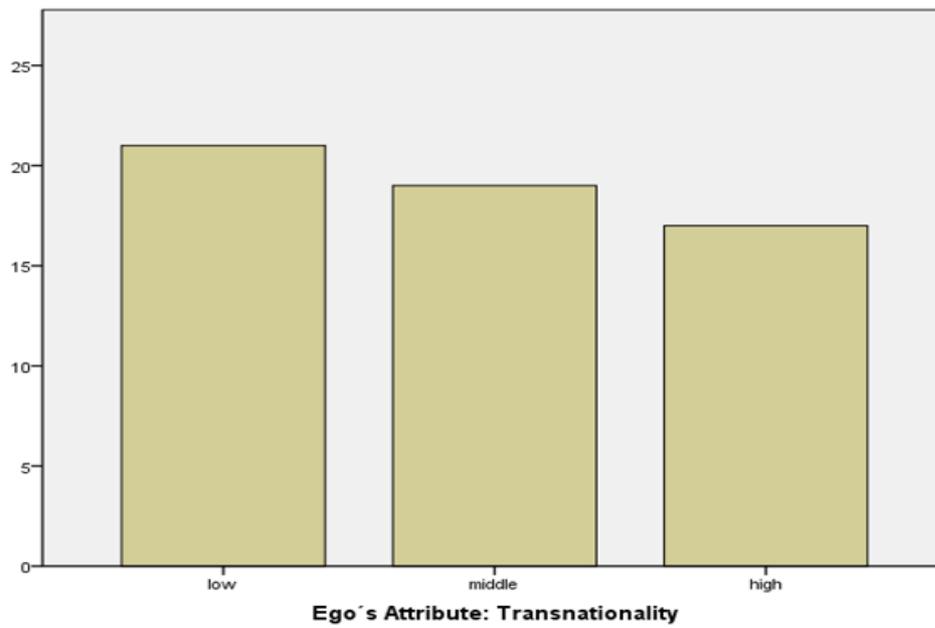


Figure 1: Varying degrees of transnationality in the sample

(Source: Own research, 2011-2012)

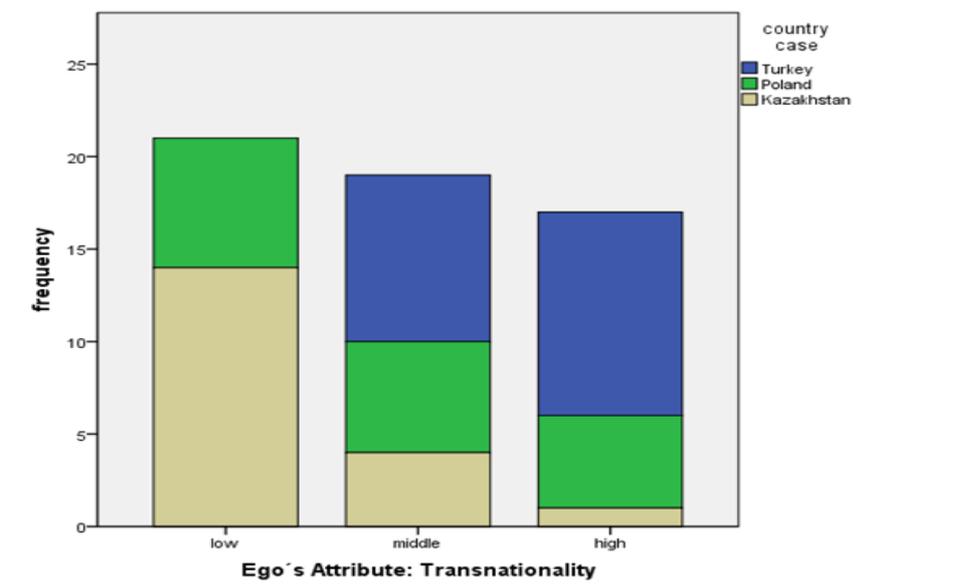


Figure 2: Degrees of transnationality of the interviewees by country of origin

(Source: Own research, 2011-2012)

Table 1: Degrees of transnationality of the interviewees by country of origin

		Ego's attribute: Transnationality			Total
		low	moderate	high	
Country case	Turkey	0	9	11	20
	Poland	7	6	5	18
	Kazakhstan	14	4	1	19
Total		21	19	17	57

(Source: Own research, 2011-2012)

It first becomes evident that the number of egos with a low, moderate or high degree of transnationality is almost equal. This is a good precondition for the analysis, and results from the fact that the respondents were sampled according to their legal status in Germany (rather than according to the extent of transnationality).

Second, with regard to the country of origin (and thus the legal status), we found that the majority of migrants with a low degree of transnationality are originally from Kazakhstan or Poland (see Table 1). The finding that individuals from Kazakhstan show the lowest degrees of transnationality can be accounted for by distinct migration patterns resulting from their legal status as resettlers: as a rule, the whole family migrated from Kazakhstan to Germany, so that virtually no transnational family patterns emerged. To a lesser extent, this is also true of the migrants from Poland, who are defined as EU migrants.

However, the association between degrees of transnationality and country of origin/legal status is not clearly evident for respondents with a moderate degree of transnationality: this

category consists of resettlers, EU migrants and labour migrants. Similarly, the respondents with a high degree of transnationality have various legal statuses (EU migrants and labour migrants). To sum up, no clear association can be found between transnationality and legal status (indicated here by the country of origin), so we do not address legal status as a marker of heterogeneity for the further analysis.

Third, with regard to gender, we found that the sampling almost achieved gender balance (46% male, n = 26; 54% female, n = 31). Interestingly, the majority of female migrants in our sample show a moderate or low degree of transnationality, while the majority of male migrants show a high degree of transnationality. This indicates the relevance of association between the two heterogeneities 'transnationality' and 'gender'.

Fourth, the associations between transnationality and class were also taken into account. The heterogeneity 'class' was operationalized as including 'education' and 'perceived income'. A comparison of the relative degrees of transnationality and levels of education shows that the majority of interviewees with a low and moderate degree of transnationality had completed their vocational training either in the country of origin or in Germany.

Interviewees with a high degree of transnationality tend to have university degrees or are still studying for a degree. From this we can conclude that those with a low degree of transnationality are more likely to have received vocational training, while interviewees with a high degree of transnationality are likely to have a university degree or to be still studying for a degree.

The economic situation of respondents is based on subjective self-evaluation. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to describe their economic situation by selecting particular items. It is worth noting that interviewees with a low and moderate degree of transnationality tend to describe their economic situation as highly satisfactory or moderately

satisfactory. Interviewees with a high degree of transnationality, by contrast, describe their standard of living as moderately satisfactory. To conclude, egos characterized by a low degree of transnationality rate their economic situation as highly satisfactory, although most of them have had only vocational training, while those with a high degree of transnationality rate their economic standard as moderate, although they tend to hold university degrees or to be studying.

This is evidence of a clear association between ‘transnationality’ and ‘class’, although ‘educational level’ and ‘economic situation’ are associated in an inconsistent manner (meaning that having had vocational training is associated with a high degree of satisfaction with the living standard, while having had a university education is associated with a moderate degree of satisfaction with the economic situation). For reasons of analytical accuracy, the further analysis will only refer to educational level as an indicator of class, while the subjective evaluation of economic situation will not be considered.⁸

Finally, no significant association was found between the categories of ‘age’ and ‘marital status’ on the one hand and that of ‘transnationality’ on the other.

This sample description has shown that there may be three heterogeneities that are relevant for the analysis of protective networks: transnationality, gender and class (operationalized as ‘education’).⁹ This finding raises interesting questions: How is transnationality, understood as a marker of heterogeneity and conceptualized as a continuum, associated with the circulation of resources within protective networks, and how should the results be interpreted from an intersectional perspective? These questions are addressed in the next section.

⁸ This section included results on ‘perceived income’ in order to illustrate that we are aware of multiple aspects of ‘class’.

⁹ Here we only deal with one element of ‘class’, namely the level of education. A more detailed examination will be conducted as part of the further analysis.

5.2 How Are Protective Resources Distributed within Interpersonal Networks, and How Does Transnationality Matter at the Intersection with Gender and Class?¹⁰

The central finding of the ego-centric network analysis is that interviewees with a low or moderate degree of transnationality are much more closely involved in the reciprocal distribution of protection than those with a high degree of transnationality. This is because they tend to provide and receive larger amounts of protective resources within and across borders more frequently than interviewees with a high degree of transnationality. Interviewees with a low or moderate degree of transnationality tend to provide protective resources slightly more frequently than they receive them. Does this mean, then, that they are in a better position in terms of informal social protection than the interviewees with a high degree of transnationality in our sample? To answer this question, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the results concerning a) the circulation of financial resources, b) the provision of care, c) the circulation of information and d) the circulation of social activities. In analysing these areas of protection, we consider both a) the provision and reception of resources within the country of immigration (within borders) and b) the provision and reception of resources between the immigration, emigration and third countries (across borders).

Circulation of financial resources. The results of our ego-centric network analysis suggest that the majority of interviewees with a low degree of transnationality benefit from incoming financial resources (many of which are transfers within the immigration country). About 50% of these egos receive financial support (amounts of around €500, either regularly or occasionally). Only 20% of those with a moderate degree of transnationality receive any financial protection at all. Interviewees with a high degree of transnationality are in an even worse position, with only about 10% receiving any financial help.

¹⁰ Though we are aware of the multiple dimensions of the category ‘class’, the following paragraphs focus on degrees of education as the indicator of class. This focus arises from the pragmatic reasons addressed in section 5.1.

Similar dynamics can be observed for outgoing financial resources. About 50% of interviewees with a low degree of transnationality send money to their relatives and friends on a regular basis (usually more than €500 at a time), and about 20% of the egos with a moderate degree of transnationality send smaller amounts of money. However, only a few respondents with a high degree of transnationality send any money at all to their significant others, and if they do, it is only occasionally. When they do, the amount is usually less than €500.

Building on the description of our sample (see Section 5.1) and applying the intersectional perspective, we can clearly identify associations between the degrees of transnationality and other heterogeneities, such as gender and class. It appears that those who benefit from the financial protection are migrants with low and moderate degrees of transnationality, most of whom are female migrants with vocational training.

However, although it is evident that these migrants are closely involved in reciprocal relations, it was also observed that financial resources are more frequently provided by them than received and that the transactions they make usually involve larger sums than the transactions made by male migrants with a high degree of transnationality. The latter category contains more EU migrants and labour migrants (because most of these individuals originate from Poland and Turkey). In addition, these egos tend to have university degrees or be studying for a degree.

Provision of care. With regard to the variety of care strategies, the ego-centric network analysis again shows that it is primarily interviewees with a low or moderate degree of transnationality who benefit from care arrangements. For example, around 40% receive protection in cases of non-serious and serious illness, continuous and occasional child care, and elderly care. A smaller number of egos with a high degree of transnationality (about 10%) benefit from care practices. Incoming protection in terms of help with household chores appears to be less relevant for all interviewees.

With regard to outgoing care resources, we find that migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality tend (at about 50%) to provide such resources more frequently and in larger amounts than migrants with a high degree of transnationality. In particular, they tend to provide more care in cases of serious illness and more help with household chores than they receive.

By building on the intersectional perspective, which seeks to examine the interrelations of various heterogeneities, we can clearly identify the associations between different degrees of transnationality, gender and class as relevant in most cases. This description suggests that female migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality who have at one point received vocational training tend to benefit from care arrangements. However, it must again be noted that in some cases, such as in the categories of ‘serious illness’ and ‘household chores’, female migrants provide more care than they receive. By contrast, migrants with a high degree of transnationality who tend to hold university degrees (and who have the legal status of EU migrant or labour migrant) are rarely involved in care arrangements and rarely receive, but also rarely provide, care resources. Unlike female migrants, male migrants are far from being the ‘caregivers’ in this sample.

Circulation of information. The network chart included a special focus on the various types of information that migrants and their significant others may exchange, such as information related to employment, health care, legal status, legal matters and education. Again, about 50% of egos with a low level of transnationality and about 20% of interviewees with a moderate degree of transnationality benefit from incoming information of various types. Information related to employment, education and legal status appear to be the most relevant categories. However, only very few of the interviewees with a high degree of transnationality benefit from such information.

With regard to outgoing information (i.e., information provided to significant others), it was again found that migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality tend to provide information more frequently than they receive information. This applies in particular to information about employment, education and legal status. Migrants with a high degree of transnationality provide much less information than others.

The results concerning the circulation of information are therefore similar to those described under 'Provision of care'. Again, the associations between transnationality, gender and class are obvious. Female migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality who are involved in reciprocal ties also tend to provide slightly larger amounts of protective resources than they receive.

Circulation of social activities. Looking at the circulation of social activities reveals a different picture. Migrants with a high degree of transnationality provide and receive larger amounts of social activity resources than interviewees with a moderate or low degree of transnationality. Some 50% of interviewees with a low or moderate degree of transnationality provide and receive social activity resources, whereas approximately 67% of migrants with a high degree of transnationality exchange social activity resources on a regular basis.

Using the intersectional lens, we can conclude that an obvious association exists between transnationality, gender and class. It appears that the primary beneficiaries of the circulation of incoming and outgoing social activities are male migrants (EU or labour migrants) who have a university degree or are still studying, and while female migrants with a low or moderate level of transnationality exchange social activity resources as well, male migrants with a high degree of transnationality appear to be even more intensively involved in this type of social protection.

Brief Summary. Interpreting these results from an intersectional perspective, it becomes clear that gender and class (the latter operationalized here via the measures of education) are relevant markers of heterogeneity and are strongly associated with the direction – incoming or outgoing – in which protective resources are circulated (both within and across borders). The evidence shows that for the areas of financial resources, provision of care and circulation of information, female migrants with vocational training are more closely involved in the exchange of protective resources within their networks than migrants with a high degree of transnationality, most of whom are male and most of whom have or are pursuing a university degree. At first glance, it appears that the former tend to benefit from reciprocal care arrangements. However, there is also evidence that, to a degree, these female migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality provide slightly more resources than they receive (except in the area of social activities) and that they could be described as being in an asymmetrical relationship – a dynamic that was not observed for the male migrants with a high degree of transnationality. This suggests that male migrants at the upper end of the transnationality continuum have an advantage over other migrants in this continuum because they do not have to participate in closely knit protective arrangements and, therefore, are not exposed to a situation in which they give more than they receive (see the summary in Table 2).

Table 2. Interplay of relevant heterogeneities in the particular areas of informal social protection

Heterogeneities			Areas of social protection											
Transnationality	Gender	Class (education)	Financial Protection			Various types of care			Information exchange			Social activities		
			incoming	outgoing	Low	incoming	outgoing	Low	incoming	outgoing	Low	incoming	outgoing	
High	Male	University	Low	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	High	High	High
Moderate	Female	Vocational training	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High	High
Low	Female	Vocational training	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	High	High	High	High	High	High

Source: Own research , 2011-2012.

5.3 Reconstructing Differences in Protection by Using the Concept of Network Density

In the previous section, we reconstructed the distribution of protective resources according to different degrees of transnationality. We also discussed how the interplay between heterogeneities such as transnationality, gender and class (operationalized as levels of education) shapes the formation of advantaged and disadvantaged positions in four areas of informal protection. In particular, we found that there is a difference in terms of resource provision between the highly transnational respondents and those with moderate and low degrees of transnationality. Does this finding suggest an emerging hierarchy between the highly transnational egos and the moderately and less transnational egos? To answer this question, we will use the concept of density, which allows us to examine more closely a variation in a pattern discovered in the previous section.

In network analysis, density refers to the cohesiveness of relationships in a given network. It “is defined as the sum of the ties divided by the number of possible ties” (Scott and Carrington, 2011: 341). In ego-centric network analysis, the ego names the alteri and describes the relationships among them. The density of an ego-centric network provides insights into the structure of the network. The density value of persons who are part of a closely knit network where everyone knows everyone else is 1, while the density value of those who are part of a detached network where only the ego knows the alteri and the alteri do not know each other is close to 0. In closely knit networks, each actor knows all the other actors, so information is shared and potential resources are quickly exploited, with the result that the information quickly becomes redundant. A high network density level is associated with a high degree of social protection and solidarity, in the form of steady and long-term relationships and stricter constraints and pressure to conform to the group rules and expectations (Fischer, 1982; Burt, 1992). Low-density networks are also regarded as advantageous because the ego connects otherwise unconnected individuals who can then tap

into a greater variety of other networks and, thus, available resources (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 1992). Hence, both high- and low-density networks have their advantages: “High-density networks (predominantly kin) tend to be associated with the provision of extensive services, such as emergency or chronic health care. Low-density networks (predominantly friends) provide companionship” (El Bassel, Chen and Cooper, 1998: 381–2, see also Bilecen, 2012).

The network density values obtained from the sample of 57 egos and their alteri can be grouped along a scale ranging from low to moderate to high. What do we learn about the structure of protective networks at hand by analysing the network density, and what implications do these findings have for understanding the differences in egos’ access to informal protection that were observed?

Our main finding is that an association exists between low network density and a higher degree of transnationality. These networks act as hubs which connect contacts in Germany with contacts in the countries of origin or other countries. Conversely, higher-density networks of participants appear to be associated with a lower degree of transnationality. Respondents with a lower degree of transnationality tend to be socially confined to Germany, where their contacts know each other. An analysis of these respondents’ contacts in Germany clearly shows that family ties play an important role in social protection.

To provide evidence for this assertion, three variants of the association between density and transnationality are presented. A combined analysis of the data from the network charts and SPSS indicates three significant variants in the sample:

1. A high degree of transnationality and a low network density
2. A moderate degree of transnationality and a moderate network density
3. A low degree of transnationality and a moderate network density.

These variations indicate a significant difference in how protective resources are exchanged within the networks of highly transnational interviewees, on the one hand, and within the networks of moderately and less transnational respondents, on the other, because network density indicates the structure of network, which in turn impacts on resource circulation. Could this finding even be interpreted as an emerging hierarchy of positions in the field of informal social protection?

The following paragraphs analyse all three of these variants, with a special focus on the interplay between transnationality, gender and class. The analysis is complemented by some accounts from the fieldwork we conducted in 2011 and 2012.

Variant One: A High Degree of Transnationality and Low Network Density

Faruk migrated to Germany from Turkey in the first decade of the 21st century, when he was in his twenties. Soon after, he tried to pick up his university studies in Germany, but his previous studies in Turkey were not recognized. Later he met his future wife, a German citizen, and opened a small business in his city of settlement. Now in his thirties, he is still in frequent contact with his friends and relatives in Turkey. He calls them every day to exchange information, and travels to his hometown in Turkey three times a year to meet his family and friends. In addition to these cross-border activities, he occasionally sends small amounts of money to his two brothers, who live in Turkey. In Turkey, people refer to him as *almanci* (“German-like”), but he identifies Turkey as his “real homeland” and Germany as his “second home”.

Faruk’s story is an example of the first variant, combining a high degree of transnationality with low network density. Figure 3¹¹ shows that in this variant, the ego has a low-density network and more cross-border contacts who provide social protection than he has contacts in Germany. A closer look at the multi-level category of transnationality shows that the ego has

¹¹ The colour and dashing guide in the Appendix explains how the VennMaker diagrams should be read.

a high level of transnationality, while a closer examination of the contacts shows that some of the ego's family members, such as siblings and cousins (marked in purple in Fig. 3), still live in Turkey and that one family member (in this case, his wife) lives in Germany. Similarly, some friendship relations based on social activities (marked in orange) are maintained with the country of origin, while other friendship relations in Germany are more developed in other areas of protection, such as help with household chores (marked with a purple arrow) and information on legal status (marked with a grey arrow). However, as Section 5.2 has shown, these highly transnational egos (mostly men with university degrees or students of Polish and Turkish origin) tend to be less closely involved in the field of reciprocal protection than those with a moderate or low degree of transnationality, except in the area of social activities (marked with an orange arrow). In this case, the extent of density indicates that in the context of their networks, the egos in question may not benefit from protective arrangements, but at least they avoid providing protective resources to others.

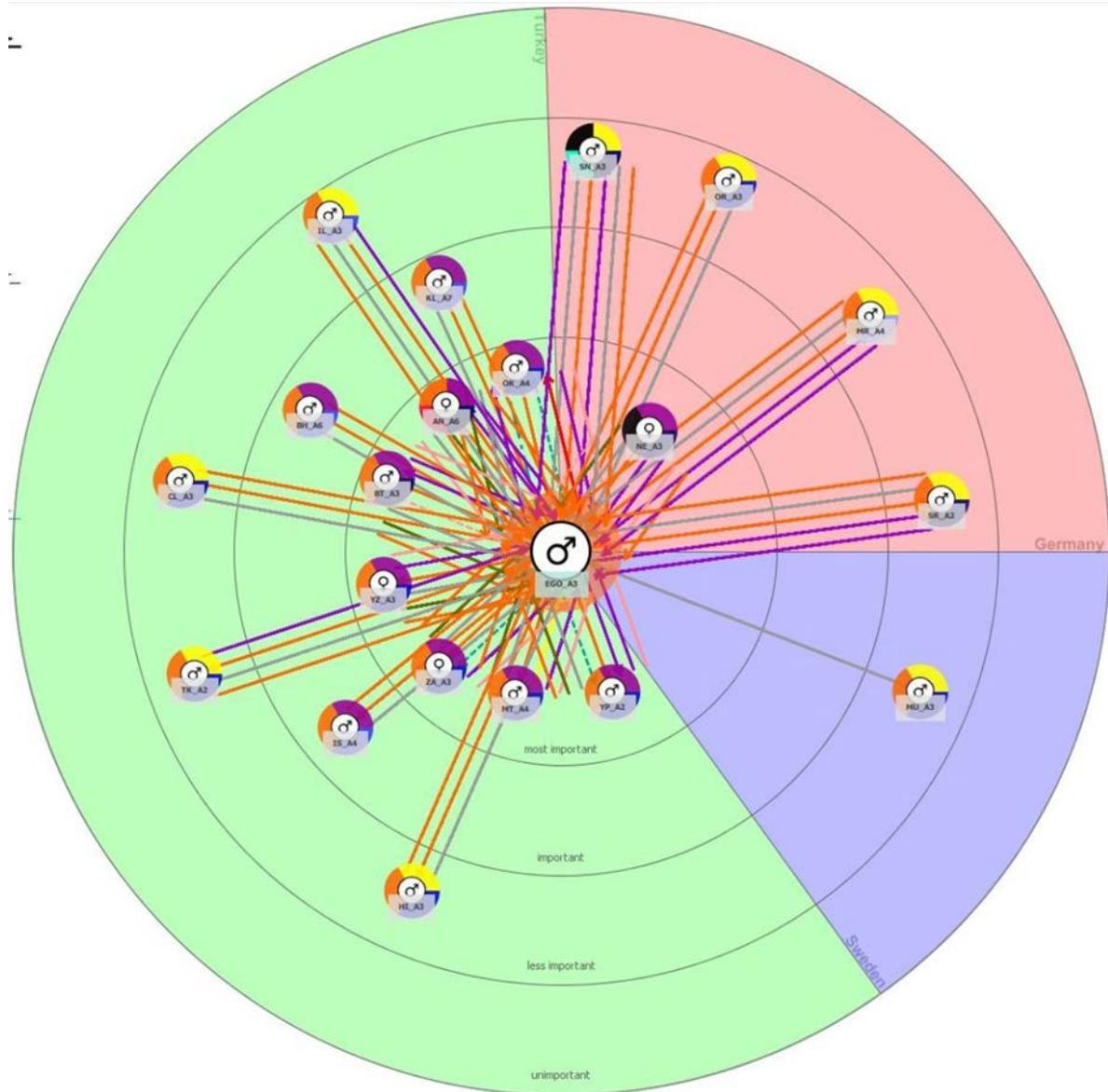
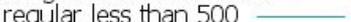


Figure 3: The association between a high degree of transnationality and low network density

(Source: Own research, 2011-2012)

Legend 1. Reading the VennMaker for Figure 3

Social protection ties	Actor features and frequency of contact
<p>social activities yes </p> <p>childcare irregular  regular </p> <p>elderly care yes </p> <p>household tasks yes </p> <p>education yes </p> <p>legal matters yes </p> <p>job yes </p> <p>financial irregular more than 500  regular less than 500 </p>	<p> Male</p> <p> Female</p> <p> weekly: yes</p> <p> parent: yes</p> <p> yearly: yes</p> <p> prior turkish: yes</p> <p> german: yes</p> <p> daily: yes</p> <p> turkish: yes</p> <p> friend: yes</p> <p> monthly: yes</p> <p> family: yes</p>

Variant Two: A Moderate Degree of Transnationality and Moderate Network Density

Marta is a married woman in her thirties who has two children. Her husband worked on various construction sites in Germany and the Netherlands for five years and occasionally visited his family in Poland. In 2011 the couple decided to settle down in a middle-sized town in Germany. It was not easy for Marta to decide to migrate, because she had a satisfying life in Poland with her family around and a good middle-management job at a large international retail store. Once she came to Germany, she and her family struggled due to their rudimentary German language skills, which made it difficult for them to find regular and secure employment, a school for their children and a healthcare provider. The household's economic

situation changed for the worse after migration, but Marta still sends money to her parents in Poland and thus contributes to their livelihood.

To overcome this difficult situation, Marta registered on a website of the Polish community in Germany and met a woman from Poland who now works as a teacher at a German high school (*Gymnasium*). She helped Marta with the paperwork in Germany and managed to get health insurance for Marta and her children. She also found a language course for Marta, helped her to apply for unemployment benefits and gave her advice on educational opportunities for her children.

In return, Marta helps her friend in Germany with her children. Because they live close by and Marta has no job obligations at the moment, she is able to help her spontaneously and regularly with her children and her household. She picks up her friend's daughter from kindergarten or takes her to her own home when her friend is sick. She also supports her in the household by cooking, cleaning and purchasing groceries.

Marta's story is an example of the second variant in the protective networks. Figure 4 illustrates the ego-centric network of this interviewee with a moderate degree of transnationality and moderate network density. As can be seen from the chart, the ego has a roughly equal number of contacts in terms of location. A closer look at the protection strategies shows different types of protection that the ego provides to and receives from her contacts. Most of her contacts are family members (marked in purple), and a smaller number are friends (marked in yellow) in both countries. Her parents (marked in red) still live in Poland.

Figure 4 also shows that participants with moderate-density networks are more closely involved in reciprocal protection strategies than respondents with low-density networks. At first glance, the first category (mostly women with vocational training from Poland,

Kazakhstan and Turkey) appears to be better off because its networks show some degree of variance (involving contacts who are not related and who live in different locations).

However, a closer examination of the direction of actual protection relations reveals that these participants provide slightly more resources in the areas of financial protection, care and information exchange than they receive. Apparently, a differentiated network structure allows ego to be much more deeply embedded in the protective arrangements. At the same time, however, increasing demands are placed on these egos for outgoing protective resources.

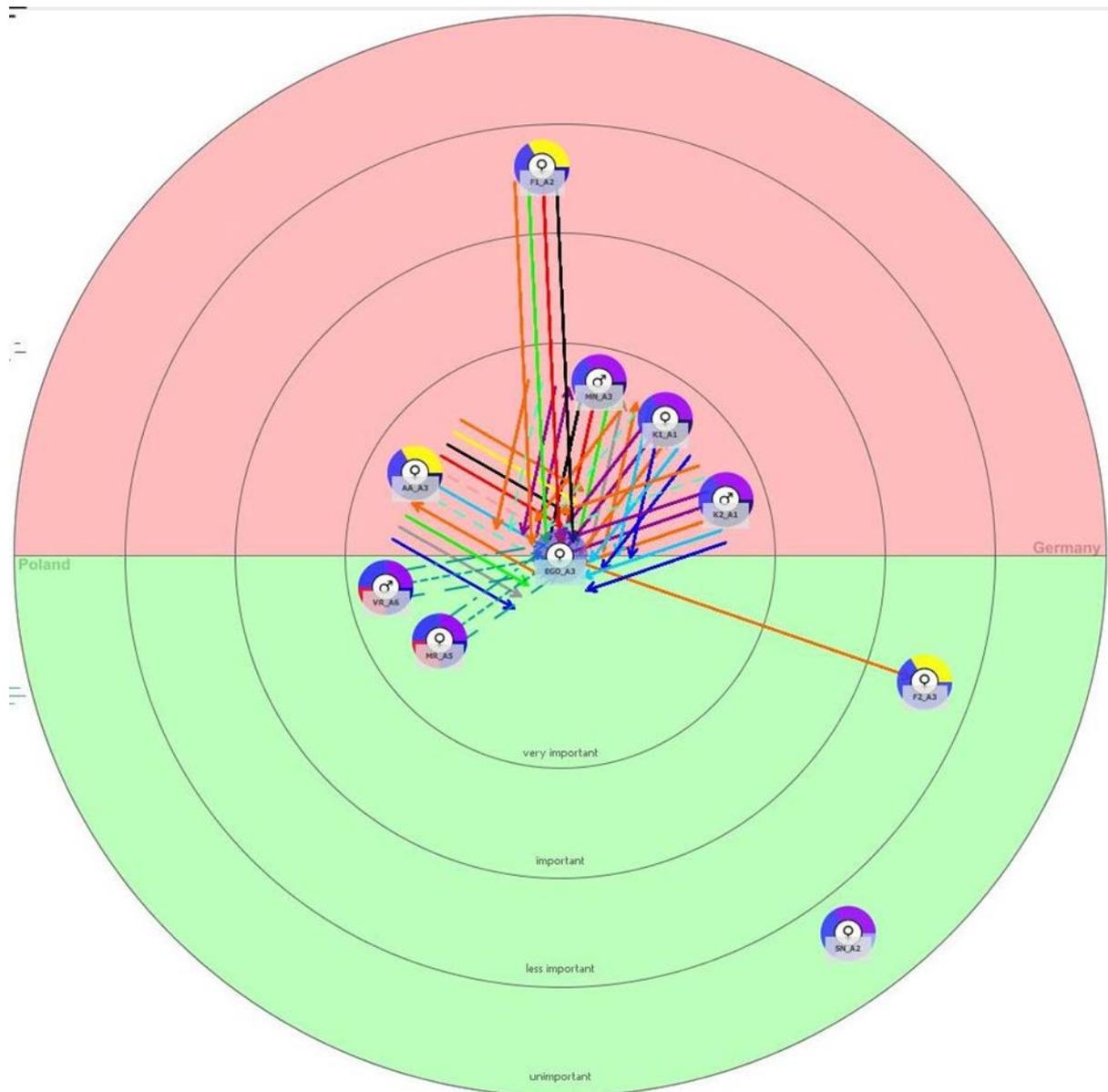
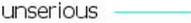
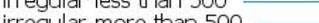
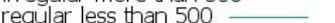


Figure 4: The association between a moderate degree of transnationality and moderate network density

(Source: Own research, 2011-2012)

Legend 2. Reading the VennMaker for Figure 4

Social protection ties	Actor features and frequency of contact
social activities yes  emergency yes  childcare irregular  health care unserious  moving yes  household tasks yes  education yes  legal matters yes  legal status yes  health info yes  job yes  financial irregular less than 500  irregular more than 500  regular less than 500 	 Male  Female  weekly: yes  parent: yes  yearly: yes  daily: yes  polish: yes  friend: yes  monthly: yes  family: yes

Variant Three: A Low Degree of Transnationality and Moderate Network Density

Natalya is a middle-aged woman who, with her husband and their two adult children, resettled from Kazakhstan to Germany in the late 1990s. Due to her legal status as a resettler, she and her family were naturalized as German citizens upon their arrival in Germany. At the time of her resettlement most of her friends and her wider family circle were already living in Germany. Natalya had received vocational training in Kazakhstan, and after retraining in Germany she found a job in a bakery. Her children had completed vocational training in Kazakhstan as well. Her husband had been receiving retirement benefits. Natalya is much less in contact with her significant others in Kazakhstan than are Faruk and Marta, because the only relatives she has in Kazakhstan are her two elderly aunts. Natalya calls them once a

month, and once a year she sends them parcels with home-grown herbs and small amounts of money. She is also in contact with her cousin in Ukraine, who moved there from Kazakhstan after the breakup of the Soviet Union. Natalya has not been back to her city of origin since she came to Germany, and says she is glad to have very close relatives and friends in the city she lives in now. They exchange information, help one another in times of illness and have fun together. She also states that she will never go back to Kazakhstan; nevertheless, she and her friends refer to themselves as *rusaki* (“Russian-like”).

Natalya’s story is an example of the third variant, namely the association between a low degree of transnationality and moderate network density. Figure 5 illustrates this case. The network chart clearly shows that the protection network of the ego is composed primarily of family members in Germany, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, with whom the ego exchanges various types of social protection such as financial resources (marked with a dark turquoise arrow), various types of care (e.g., help with household chores, marked with a purple arrow) and information about employment (marked with a red arrow), education (marked with a yellow arrow) and health (marked with a light green arrow). As shown earlier, egos with a low degree of transnationality (primarily women from Poland and Kazakhstan) are deeply embedded in protective arrangements, but also tend to provide a larger amount of protective resources in the fields of financial protection, various types of care and information exchange to their significant others. In addition, this finding shows that the network structure and, consequently, the circulation of resources are similar for egos with low and moderate degrees of transnationality.

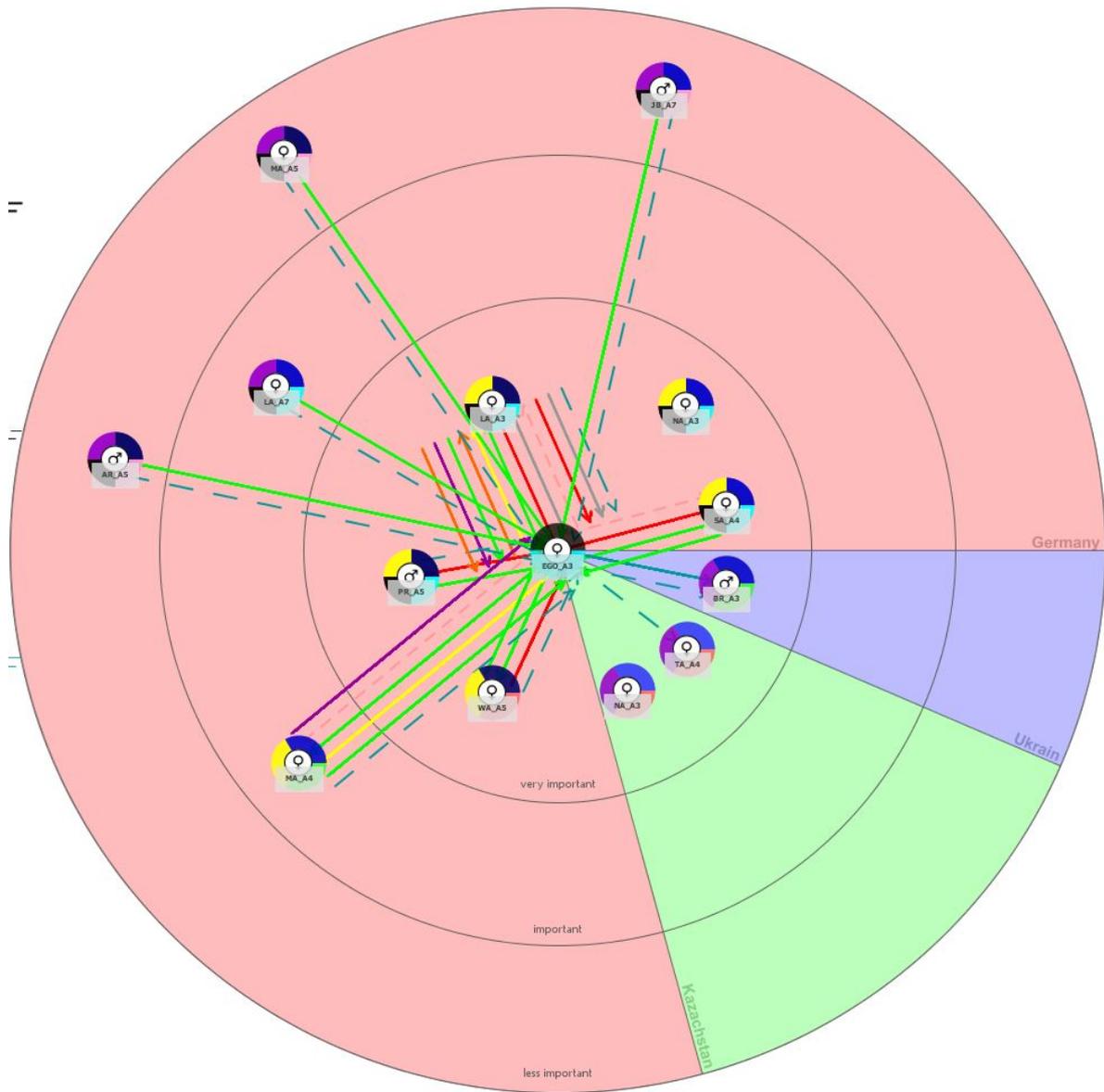
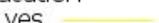
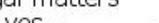
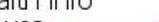


Figure 5: The association between a low degree of transnationality and moderate network density

(Source: Own research, 2011-2012)

Legend 3. Reading the VennMaker for Figure 5

Social protection ties	Actor features and frequency of contact
social activities yes  childcare irregular  household tasks yes  education yes  legal matters yes  health info yes  job yes  financial irregular more than 500  regular more than 500 	 Male  Female  weekly: yes  prior soviet union: yes  other: yes  german: yes  kazakh: yes  daily: yes  friend: yes  monthly: yes  prior kazakh: yes  family: yes

Brief Summary. The analysis of network structures provides detailed evidence of the differences in the access to and distribution of protective resources between two (and not three) categories of egos. The analysis of the association between degrees of transnationality and network density indicates different positions in protective arrangements (which they obtain within their networks) for highly transnational egos and the respondents with a moderate or low degree of transnationality. There is also a clear association between the degree of transnationality and heterogeneity markers such as gender and class. This difference could be interpreted as an indicator of a hierarchical divide between the highly transnational newcomers and the migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality in the overall context of the social field of protection.

6. Conclusion: Asymmetrical Positions in the Field of Informal Protection and the Significance of the Interplay between Transnationality, Gender and Class

The results of the ego-centric network analysis have provided unexpected and in some cases even surprising findings. In contrast to existing research on transnational families and informal transnational protection, we have illustrated that degrees of transnationality do have an influence on migrants' access to and use of informal protection resources. By using the concept of network density, we have revealed that there is an association between degree of transnationality and resource flows within egos' networks. There is evidently a difference in terms of protection between the highly transnational egos (whose networks are characterized by low density) and egos with a moderate and low degree of transnationality (whose networks are characterized by moderate density). This finding could indicate a possible hierarchy between the two categories in terms of protection. However, to confirm this assumption, more research is required on the nexus between formal and informal arrangements and the actors' access to them. Only through further research will we be able to determine the possible hierarchies in a plausible way.¹²

Because it avoids addressing only one heterogeneity, this study goes beyond cross-border inequality research approaches such as the global care chain approach, which assigns primacy to one particular heterogeneity. Our research therefore sheds new light on the interplay between heterogeneity markers such as transnationality, gender and class (operationalized here, for the time being, as 'level of education') as relevant for unequal access to and use of the informal protection arrangements among migrants. We have shown that the majority of migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality are female migrants with vocational training, and that most of these provide and receive protective resources within their networks more frequently and in larger quantities than do migrants with a high degree of

¹² An analysis of this kind will be carried out in step 2 of the project (see note 4).

transnationality, most of whom are male university graduates or students. The findings presented here also indicate that female migrants provide slightly more resources in the fields of financial protection, care and information exchange than they receive.

These results provide interesting focal points for future research, because the differences in protection could be interpreted in different ways from various other research angles. For example, the fact that those female migrants with a low or moderate degree of transnationality and vocational training tend to be the ‘protection providers’ could be regarded as consistent with transnational motherhood approaches, which emphasize the empowerment of female migrants. According to recent studies on gender and informal protection among migrants (Amelina, 2011), however, this finding could also be interpreted as a ‘double exploitation’ of female migrants, who – to present the point in terms of gendered expectations – are ‘forced’ to become providers of protective resources.

The fact that male migrants (the majority of whom showed a high degree of transnationality and were university graduates/students) are rarely engaged in protective arrangements may be confirmed by current cross-border protection studies, most of which focus on female migrants as the driving force of informal protection arrangements. Yet this finding might also imply that those scoring high on transnationality and education compensate for informal protection through income: they pay for services.

To disentangle these complex constellations in more detail, the next research step of the study includes a detailed analysis of semi-structured interviews focusing on the intersection between the heterogeneity markers that have been identified as meaningful. In doing so, the research project will look not only at the interplay of the relevant heterogeneity markers, but also at the social mechanisms of hierarchization that transform heterogeneities into inequalities in the field of social protection.

Appendix: Guide to reading the VennMaker charts

Type of social protection	Colour	Dashing
Information on job	Red	
Information on health	Green	
Information on legal status	Black	
Information on legal matters	Grey	
Information on education	Yellow	
Help in household tasks	Purple	
Help in moving house	Cyan	
Help in health care – serious	Bright Green	
Help in health care – non-serious	Bright Green	-----
Help in elderly care	Olive Green	
Help in childcare – regular	Light Orange	
Help in childcare – irregular	Light Orange	-----
Help in emergencies	Blue	
Financial remittances – regular, more than €500	Teal	
Financial remittances – regular, less than €500	Teal	-----
Financial remittances – irregular, more than €500	Teal	---
Financial remittances – irregular, less than €500	Teal	----
Social activities	Orange	

Frequency of contact (within the actor pie)	Colour
Daily	Dark Blue
Weekly	Blue
Monthly	Light Blue
Yearly	Very Light Blue

Features of actors (within their pies)	Colour
Kazakh	Orange
Polish	Blue
Turkish	Brown
German	Black
Formerly Soviet	Pink
Formerly Kazakh	Cyan
Formerly Polish	Cyan
Formerly Turkish	Cyan
Dual citizenship	White
Other	Green
Family	Purple
Friend	Yellow
Parent	Red

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