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# Revisiting Migrant Networks

Migrants and their Descendants in  
Labour Markets

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Elif Keskiner • Michael Eve • Louise Ryan  
Editors

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Migrants and their Descendants in Labour  
Markets

 Springer

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# IMISCOE



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Revisiting Networks: Setting the Conceptual and Methodological Scene



Louise Ryan, Michael Eve, and Elif Keskiner

### 1.1 Introduction

There is a long tradition of research into the significance of personal networks in finding jobs (Granovetter, 1973). Surveys such as the EU Labour Force Survey regularly confirm the great importance of relatives, friends and acquaintances (including present and former colleagues) in entering the labour market (Kogan & Müller, 2003; Smith, 2005; Bachmann & Baumgarten, 2013). There is also a consolidated body of research on the significance of networks for promotion and careers within organizations (Burt, 2002; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Palgi & Moore, 2004).

Turning to the field of migration studies, references to social networks have been common – almost standard – over the last 50 years, at least from when Charles Tilly (1974) took up the article on ‘chain migration’, ethnic neighbourhood formation and social networks published by John and Leatrice MacDonald (1964) in a journal little read by social scientists. And there have been enormously valuable contributions to our knowledge of how migrants make the decision to migrate, how they manage to locate a job in an unfamiliar labour market, why there are clusters of migrants from particular places of emigration in particular destinations of immigration, including specific occupations and even workplaces. To say this research is important is an understatement: it is at the heart of migration studies.

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Indeed, research on migrant networks has grown considerably in recent years (Bakewell et al., 2016; Bilecen et al., 2018; Lubbers et al., 2020a; Ryan et al., 2015), so at first sight, it might seem there is little need for another volume. However, we argue that research has examined some aspects of networks more than others; and that some of the work on migrants' networks has simplified them. With regard to the first question of partial coverage, there is relatively little on the children or descendants of migrants (Boyd & Nowak, 2012: 88). Although there is evidence to suggest that networks may be a factor in explaining inequalities in the labour market (Crul et al., 2017; Lancee, 2012; Behtoui, 2008), the significance of networks for access to work and occupational trajectories of migrants and their descendants is in many ways unclear (Brinbaum & Lutz, 2017; Behtoui & Olsson, 2014). In addition, there remain gaps in our knowledge of where social ties are formed and the ways in which they are used to find particular kinds of jobs and build careers (Keskiner & Crul, 2017; Eve, 2002; Ryan, 2016). The chapters in this book engage with these issues and add new research and insights.

Furthermore, many questions remain about the dynamism of networks as relationships ebb and flow over time. To what extent do the contents of migrant networks change with years spent in the destination society? There have been calls for more work on the temporal dynamics of migrant networks (Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018; Lubbers et al., 2020a). Questions also remain about the extent to which highly skilled migrants rely on networks to find jobs, advance their careers and build a life in new places (Plöger & Becker, 2015; Povrzanović Frykman & Mozetič, 2020; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). The varied relevance of networks across different occupational sectors also merits further attention (Keskiner & Crul, 2017; Toma, 2016). The extent to which interpersonal networks remain important in the age of the internet, especially in accessing the labour market, also deserves more analysis (Thulin & Vilhelmson, 2016; Dekker et al., 2016). This book, drawing on quantitative and qualitative data from different countries, and across varied employment sectors, contributes new knowledge to address these questions.

Much existing migration research, especially on migrant networks, tends to focus on specific countries or particular ethnic groups. This book draws on empirical data from different countries; France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and UK, as well as different waves and generations of migrants. In so doing, this collection facilitates conversations about similarities and differences across and between diverse contexts and hence avoids assertions about 'migrants' as a generic category. The research in this book focuses on experiences and strategies, mainly in destination societies, of migrants and their descendants. Of course, following the transnational turn in migration studies in the 1990s, we are mindful that migrants have connections that span national borders. Indeed several chapters in this volume acknowledge the role of transnational ties. Some participants mobilised resources in transnational networks to support their job or business-making prospects. Nevertheless, while being mindful of the relevance of transnational connections, in analysing how migrants and their descendants navigate local labour markets and negotiate specific opportunities and obstacles in accessing employment and building careers, our focus is primarily on the particular contexts where migrants

and their descendants live and work. In so doing, this book offers deeper insights into the content, structure, meaning and dynamism of migrants' networks within destination societies.

Our focus is mainly on migrants who have become long term residents in destination societies, including over several generations. Nonetheless, we do also include research with recently arrived migrants, such as intra-EU migrants, and those with uncertain or temporary migration plans. In these cases, we show how social networks can play a key role in supporting but also changing migration projects over time. Moreover, the book also engages with studies on internal migrants and considers how research on international migration and internal mobility could cross-fertilise.

Of course, we are not implying that networks alone can explain how migrants, and their descendants, navigate opportunities and obstacles within the destination society. Networks of relationships are located within wider structural contexts framed by political agendas, economic policies and social attitudes. Research evidences the prevalence and persistence of racism and anti-immigration policies across Europe (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019; Sayyid, 2017; Nowicka, 2018; De Genova, 2016) framing the particular institutional contexts and everyday encounters that migrants have to negotiate (Harris & Valentine, 2016). Nonetheless, as the chapters in this book demonstrate, networks may be a vehicle through which migrants' act to resist and overcome such obstacles. As discussed by many authors in this collection, mobilising resources through interpersonal ties may enhance the job opportunities of migrants, and their descendants, in ways that overcome structural inequality. However, we do not suggest that networks are necessarily positive, supportive and empowering. This book will also highlight the negative aspects of networks (Portes, 1998; Cranford, 2005; Schapendonk, 2020; D'Angelo, 2021). On the one hand, networks can be potentially limiting, for example by channelling migrants into low paid, dead end jobs. On the other hand, networks may also function as closed, restricted or elitist groups that operate in ways that limit access to valuable resources.

While each chapter presents specific data, this book is more than a collection of chapters, it aims to engage with overarching themes and, in so doing, seeks to make a substantial contribution to our understanding of how migrants, and their descendants, utilise networks to navigate diverse employment sectors across varied countries. In the rest of this introductory chapter we now discuss the key themes of the book and indicate how these are further developed in individual chapters. We highlight the importance of disentangling social capital and social networks by scrutinising the flow of particular resources between social ties. We then discuss the need to look beyond the ethnic lens and to explore how ties to different kinds of actors, in varied social positions, may facilitate labour market access and career progression. Relatedly, we then consider the role of social networks for highly skilled and professional occupations. Finally, we turn our attention to the second generation or descendants of migration and reflect on the opportunities, but also enduring inequalities, encountered in career progression across different sectors. In the concluding section we discuss the need for further cross-fertilisation of conceptual and empirical innovations beyond migration studies to avoid a silo-effect in social network research.

But first, we begin by discussing the benefits of delving into the conceptual and methodological toolbox of social network analysis.

## 1.2 Researching Social Networks

While there is a wide body of literature on migrant social networks, there is a tendency to use the term ‘network’ in broad and rather generalised ways focusing primarily on ties between the place of departure and the place of arrival. It is worth mentioning Douglas Massey’s (1988: 396; 1998: 42) definition of migration networks, since it is cited frequently in the literature: ‘Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin’. But, as the chapters in this volume show, migrants’ networks are far from reducible to persons from the same place of origin, however important such ties may be in some circumstances and, even when such ties are prevalent, the underlying logic needs to be explained. There have been recent calls for migration scholars to probe more deeply into the content, meaning and structure of relationships between ties, as well as providing more scrutiny of the nature and extent of resources circulating between those ties (Ryan et al., 2015). In particular, it has been argued that much could be learned by bringing migration research into conversation with social network analysis (Ryan, 2007; Bilecen et al., 2018; Ryan & Dahinden, 2021).

Social Network research has a long pedigree among anthropologists and sociologists, as exemplified by the Manchester School (Barnes, 1969; Mitchell, 1969). A network lens has been important in enabling social scientists to overcome what James Coleman called ‘methodological individualism’ (1964). In other words, ‘individuals do not act randomly with respect to one another. They form attachments to certain persons, they group together in cliques, they establish institutions’ (Coleman, 1964: 88). This is especially relevant to migration studies. Beyond any simplistic assumptions about a migrant as an atomised ‘rational actor’ whose migration decision-making is informed by an evaluation of individual economic gain, a social networks approach enables researchers to analyse the complex and dynamic web of relationships that shape migration trajectories within prevailing structural contexts. However, in order to fully benefit from the potential offered by social network theories and methods, it is necessary for migration scholars to look beyond broad, generalised and often metaphorical use of the term (for a fuller discussion see Ryan & Dahinden, 2021).

Migration scholars rarely delve into the abundant toolbox of social network analysis (see Bilecen et al., 2018 for a discussion). In fact, despite the rich vein of social network literature, one of the most cited theorists among migrant network researchers is the American political scientist Robert Putnam. Although neither a migration scholar nor a social network analyst, Putnam has proven to be extremely influential among migration researchers (for a discussion see Erel, 2010). His conceptualisation of bonding (ties to people like me) versus bridging capital (ties to people unlike

me) has been taken up by countless migration researchers and depicted as inward looking, co-ethnic ties – bonding – versus outward looking ties with natives – bridging (see for example, Nannestad et al., 2008; Lancee & Hartung, 2012).

However, the extent to which co-ethnic ties are necessarily a source of bonding capital, while ties to non-co-ethnics are a source of bridging capital, cannot be assumed. Such narrow dichotomous constructions limit our understanding of what is actually going on within networks (Geys & Murdoch, 2010). As argued elsewhere (Ryan et al., 2015), it is necessary to examine precisely the kinds of relationships and flow of resources between particular interpersonal ties.

In analysing the exchange of resources between types of ties, the work of Granovetter (1973) is especially important. His pioneering research differentiates between a weak and strong tie on the basis of: ‘a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie’ (Granovetter, 1973: 1361). Strong ties involve more frequency, intensity and intimacy and, hence, include people who may be more motivated to help each other. However, moving in close circles, these strong ties are likely to share similar sorts of knowledge and information, for example about job opportunities. By contrast, ‘those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to information different from that which we receive’ (1973:1371). Thus, weak ties are important for ‘mobility opportunities’ (p. 1373). These individuals are likely to be ‘only marginally included in [our] current network of contacts’ and may include a former colleague or employer with whom we have only ‘sporadic contact’ (1973: 1371).

However, it is important to acknowledge that Granovetter was not writing about migrants and he did not define weak and strong ties through an ethnic lens. As Ryan has argued (2007, 2016), migration scholars should avoid imposing rather dichotomous ethnic constructions on Granovetter’s categories of social ties. As with the bridging/bonding distinction (Putnam, 2000), there is an assumed conflation with ethnicity; ties with co-ethnics assumed to be ‘strong’, generating bonding capital, ties with persons of a different national background being assumed to be ‘weak’ and connecting to a different social ambience, generating bridging capital. However, as the chapters in this book show, adding to previously published evidence (e.g. Ryan, 2011), it certainly cannot be assumed that relationships with co-ethnics are strong, and this kind of conflation between tie strength and ethnicity is often misleading. This point is well illustrated in the chapter by Lang, Pott and Schneider comparing the legal and public administrative sectors in Germany. Because of the particular recruitment strategies and levels of bureaucratisation within these sectors, the chapter shows how strong and weak ties played important but distinct roles. For lawyers, for example, Lang et al. show how building up new clients may mean forging new weak ties that are both ‘cross-ethnic’ and ‘co-ethnic’. For those entering public administration jobs, by contrast, weak ties to co-ethnic role models, ‘trailblazers’, may be especially valuable in encouraging migrants, and their descendants, to apply to a sector where they have been significantly under-represented. Through this kind of detailed research, chapters in this book apply a more critical take on the conceptualizations of networks including ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ ties. Indeed, rather than a

simple dichotomy, Ryan's chapter argues for a continuum of dynamic relationships ranging from strong to weak with many shades in between.

Moreover, through rich qualitative and robust quantitative empirical data, the chapters also offer insights into the specific resources that migrants utilise in order to access particular kinds of jobs. These discussions help to develop nuanced understanding of the different kinds of resources being exchanged within networks beyond any generalised notion of social capital.

### 1.3 Social Networks and Social Capital

Within migrant research there is often an assumed conflation between social networks (relationships) and social capital (resources). The chapters in this book question any such taken-for-granted assumptions about how social capital may be realised through particular types of social ties (see, for example, chapter by Behtoui).

Rather than assuming the kinds of capital available in dense, co-ethnic networks, it is necessary to critically assess how interpersonal relationships may work in practice. As Portes (1998) and Cranford (2005) have observed in the USA, there may be a risk that over-reliance on migrant networks results in exploitation and downward mobility. Similarly, in Britain, research by Anthias and Cederberg (2009) has shown how migrants may turn to low paid ethnic catering businesses partly because of a lack of other job opportunities but also as a result of kinship networks that channel relatives into these areas of employment. While this may be a useful way of overcoming marginality, including discrimination in the labour market, it also risks concentrating migrants within an 'ethnic niche' (Anthias & Cederberg, 2009). Hence, although migrants may rely upon co-ethnic networks to access resources, such networks are not necessarily a source of beneficial social capital (see also Schapendonk, 2020). Accordingly, the link between social networks and social capital merits further discussion (D'Angelo, 2021).

As Reimer et al. (2008) have argued convincingly, social networks do not of themselves equate to social capital. While social capital is 'effectively an asset based on social relations', that is not to suggest that it is identical to networks of relationships (2008: 262). Scholars like Woolcock (2001) have cautioned against the tendency to conflate social networks with access to resources. In other words, it is misleading to assume that simply because we may be acquainted with someone who is resource-rich that he or she will share these resources with us (a point further explored in the chapter by Schaer in this book). According to Reimer et al.:

Most discussions of social capital assume that the concept is of a singular nature. As such, there has been a shortage of theorizing on the possibility that social capital is differentially manifested depending on the types of social relations and normative structures in which it is embedded (2008: 260).

Thus, the kinds of social capital operating within small, family-run ethnic catering businesses in London, described by Anthias and Cederberg (2009), may be very

different from the social capital circulating in the business networks of highly skilled migrants in London's financial sector described by Ryan and Mulholland (2014). We will return to the issue of the highly skilled below.

In attempting to distinguish different kinds of social capital within particular networks, Reimer et al. (2008) draw on empirical data from Japan and a group of female friends who got together to set up a new restaurant business. By analysing how the women mobilised particular resources from across their extended kinship and friendship networks, as well as local officials, Reimer et al. differentiate between what they term 'available' capital and the actual resources that are 'used' by network members. In a similar argument, based on the experiences of Polish migrants, Ryan et al. (2008) have offered the distinction between the 'latent' resources adhering within social networks and those resources that are actually 'realisable' into mobilised forms of capital. The discussion is further developed by several authors in this book such as, for example, Keskiner and Waldring. In their study of lawyers of Turkish background in Paris, Keskiner and Waldring analyse the kinds of resources that their participants were able to mobilise through different kinds of networks. As newcomers to the sector, without any pre-existing professional contacts, law students of Turkish descent had to develop strategies in order to forge connections and access valuable resources such as internships and finding mentors in well-established French legal firms. That chapter raises the question of how cultural capital can be mobilised to generate social capital.

Attempting to conceptualise migrants' resources, many researchers have turned to Bourdieu for a more nuanced understanding of networks and different forms of capital (e.g. Erel, 2010; Nowicka, 2013; Kim, 2019). Bourdieu's theoretical framework has been taken up by researchers to explore how migrants transfer their knowledge and qualifications (cultural capital) from one society to another (Cederberg, 2015; Wahlbeck, 2018). As shown by Kelly and Lusia (2006), in a study of Filipinos in Canada, migrants may experience discrimination, de-skilling and downward labour market mobility as their qualifications and experience are devalued within the destination society (see also the chapter by Behtoui in this book). The role of social networks in enabling migrants to convert or accumulate cultural capital post-migration was a theme explored at length in the edited collection *Migrant Capital* (Ryan et al., 2015).

However, that is not to suggest that migrants can easily access the kinds of networks that enable cultural capital accumulation or conversion. Bourdieu's analysis is useful to understand how networks may also operate as exclusionary mechanisms. His essay on forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) clearly outlines how networks can be used by elite groups to maintain their privilege. While such 'closed networks' (Coleman, 1988) may be high in trust and reciprocity, they are also very difficult for newcomers to penetrate. The chapters in our book examine the efforts that migrants, and their descendants, have exerted to gain entry to resource rich, career enhancing networks. As Behtoui shows in his chapter on migrants in Sweden, the more stigmatised migrants are, the more difficult it will be to build up contacts with the majority population. Behtoui argues that newcomers face particular obstacles to accessing new forms of social capital because they may be living in deprived



neighbourhoods and concentrated in de-valued parts of the labour market, where they have few opportunities to mix with the 'native population'. Moreover, poor, 'non-white' migrants from the Global South may encounter prejudice and find that members of the majority population have little motivation to forge new friendships with them. Behtoui's chapter reminds us that networks are not only sources of social capital but may also serve as exclusionary mechanisms that reduce access to resources. Moreover, as Schaer shows in her chapter on young academics in Switzerland, even when there are occasions to meet and socialise with members of resource-rich networks, there is no guarantee that career enhancing opportunities will be forthcoming. Her chapter shows the continued efforts required to overcome obstacles and build connections within academic networks.

In addressing these issues, attention is needed to which research methods are best suited to examine migrants' social networks and the social capital that can be mobilised. Surveys which ask respondents how they got their current job usually ask them to tick just one on a list of prescribed alternatives. Yet someone who applies directly to a firm (and so ticks that option in a questionnaire) may do so because a friend told them the firm was looking for applicants, and would not have applied without that information; research which overlooks this tends to underestimate the importance of networks. As a related point, many studies focus solely on the moment of recruitment, yet this can be seen as the final stage of an application process. Networks may be crucial in putting a particular profession 'on the map' as something attainable, and in advising candidates how to present themselves. They may also be important in providing information and advice enabling migrants and their descendants to function in an ambience where they do not know the 'rules of the game'.

The painstaking analysis undertaken by Smith (2005) in her study of African-American job seekers clearly shows the varied ways in which information about employment vacancies circulate through local networks including kin, neighbours, friends and casual acquaintances. Informing someone about a job opportunity at one's place of employment involved complex dynamics of trust, obligations, reputation and expectations. As Smith (2005) shows, obligations to recommend relatives and friends to employers had to be carefully weighed against one's own potential reputational damage if those recommended subsequently proved to be unreliable or dishonest workers. This was especially the case for people who were themselves in precarious employment situations where loss of reputation could seriously impact upon their own job security.

Our book contributes to analysing links between networks and employment by widening the concept of how social ties help both access to jobs and careers in the labour market. We show that understanding the intricacies of how job information is circulated between social contacts requires detailed descriptions to generate new insights. Biographical interviews, with relevant probing, may bring out multiple factors lying behind a job application, as discussed by Ryan in her chapter in this volume. Schaer employed network interviews to explore particular social ties using a name generator and name interpreter. In addition to classic social network techniques such as a name generator, Bilecen also used visualisation to depict networks



in diagram formats. In her chapter, Bilecen describes using a network map – sociograms – composed of four concentric circles, to show the range of social ties. Through this visualisation tool, respondents described their relationships in detail and talked about particular ties and the resources exchanged between them. Her chapter includes several examples of these network maps. To supplement these classic social network methods, Bilecen also applied a participant observation technique, over an extended period of time, to enable a better understanding of the relationships between specific research participants.

In presenting such rich and detailed analysis, this book reveals how the extent to which migrants can realise or use social capital within their networks depends on a range of factors including trust and reciprocity (see the chapter by Bilecen), as well as risks and reputation (see chapters by Ryan and Rezai and Keskiner). Moreover, because networks do not exist in a vacuum, we reveal how networks operate within particular sectors of the labour market. For instance, the ways in which jobs are advertised and recruitment procedures are implemented vary enormously not only across sectors but also between countries. For example the chapter by Lang et al. offers an insightful comparison between recruitment processes in the legal and administrative sectors in Germany, as mentioned earlier, while Schaer analyses academic career opportunities and network ties between Switzerland and the USA. In addressing these diverse settings, this book responds to Toma's call (2016) for more research on how social networks may facilitate access to jobs in different labour market contexts.

In drawing on new empirical data and theoretically informed analysis, this book offers critical interrogations of social capital within different kinds of networks across varied contexts. Hence, moving beyond Putnam's dichotomous constructs, the authors in this book are aware of the need to avoid taken for granted assumptions that social capital can be activated through particular types of social ties. These discussions build upon but also complicate our understanding of 'weak' and 'strong' ties and instead show how these social relationships may evolve and change over time.

Underpinning much of the previous discussion has been the issue of ethnicity. To what extent are migrants' networks defined through an ethnic lens? In the following section we begin to critically interrogate that issue more explicitly.

## 1.4 Beyond the Ethnic Lens

Clarifying the social mechanisms underlying the generation of ties with persons of the same, or other ethnicities, our book also makes a contribution to debates on the formation of ethnic boundaries and identities. Although critiques of the 'ethnic lens' (Schiller et al., 2006; Wimmer, 2013; Dahinden, 2016) are frequently cited approvingly, and references to the socially constructed nature of ethnicity are almost obligatory, empirical studies often continue to use ethnic categories unproblematically. Brubaker's complaint of 'complacent constructivism' (2004: 3) is not unjustified.

Wimmer reminds us that ‘members of an ethnic group might not share a specific culture, might not privilege each other in their everyday networking practice and thus not form a “community,” and might not agree on the relevance of ethnic categories and thus not carry a common identity’ (2009: 252). However, acknowledging the social construction of ethnicity, and challenging ‘self-evident’, fixed identity markers, does not mean that migration scholars should ignore the enduring salience of inequality and racism. Ethnic boundaries, as Wimmer argues, are defined within particular national contexts circumscribed by specific power dynamics, including labelling processes and stigmatisation, with real consequences for people’s life chances (2009: 266).

In its presentation of the social ties of migrants and their descendants, our book goes beyond a simplistic assumption of solidarity among co-nationals or co-ethnics. As Dahinden (2016) has suggested, a network approach has great potential as an alternative framework that gets away from the ethnic lens. It is in fact an intrinsic part of a network approach that it tries to go beyond ‘categorical’ explanations. As Wellman and Berkowitz put it:

Reversing the traditional logic of inquiry ... [network analysts] argue that social categories (e.g. classes, ethnic groups) and bounded groups are best discovered and analysed by examining relations between social actors. Rather than beginning with an a priori classification of the observable world into a discrete set of categories, they begin with a set of relations, from which they derive maps and typologies of social structures. (1988: 3)

As mentioned earlier, this volume avoids conflation between ethnicity and social capital, and between ethnicity and strong ties. The detailed accounts of the relationships that migrants and their descendants form in particular contexts provide elements of an approach that genuinely sees ethnic boundaries as constructed, rather than as automatically the basis of social relations. Our qualitative and quantitative data on the social networks of migrants and their descendants, by analysing how these are formed in different circumstances and at different stages of the life course and the migration process, provide material for a more profoundly constructionist framework on how people form ties with others of varied social backgrounds.

Hence, rather than regarding migrant communities as taken for granted entities defined through shared ethnic, religious or migratory experiences, the presence of such ‘communities’ in destination societies needs to be analysed and explained (see the chapter by Eve, in this volume). In this way, assumptions about intra-ethnic solidarity within migrant networks need to be critically assessed. The very frequency of the term ‘ethnic networks’ in the literature is itself significant; the actual ties that are referred to are generally ties with kin, with friends and perhaps with a series of persons known through family and friends, or acquaintances from a specific town or neighbourhood ‘back home’. Of course, some migrants and their descendants may be concerned to promote ties between co-ethnics generally or for specific purposes such as business opportunities (see chapter by Keskiner and Waldring). But it cannot be assumed that migrants choose to form ties with others just because of their shared country of origin. Identities are multi-dimensional and, therefore, foregrounding nationality or ethnicity alone may overlook how other salient characteristics such as gender, age, class or family life stage influence network-making strategies (Ryan et al., 2015).

The term ‘ethnic network’ gives the impression that ethnicity itself is the basis of ties and exchanges – especially when no other explanation is given. It is worth noting in this context that, since few statistical databases have information on networks, many quantitative studies use, as a proxy, the number of persons of the same nationality in a given immigration locality (often at the national level) as an indication of the size of networks (e.g. Patel & Vella, 2013.; Docquier et al., 2014). In some cases, where migration has a strong chain character, this proxy may be acceptable but it is striking that its validity is so rarely discussed or questioned.

In a discussion of internal migrants in France and Italy, Eve’s chapter explores how newcomers may face obstacles in accessing local networks. In the case of internal migrants it is not their ethnicity, language or nationality that shapes their networking opportunities within specific locales but rather their status as outsiders or, to use Simmel’s (1964) term, ‘strangers’. Faced with difficulties in accessing the somewhat closed networks of the local population, the newcomers in Eve’s chapter turn to fellow migrants from their home villages and towns. These insights on internal migrants could prove salient in considering international migrants and why they may be drawn to particular kinds of networks. Hence, Eve’s chapter makes an important contribution to blurring the boundary between migration studies and research on internal mobility.

This book, going beyond simplistic assumptions of solidarity among migrants, shows instead how co-ethnics may be competitors especially in labour market sectors with highly intensive competition for limited and coveted professional positions. Therefore, this book makes a significant contribution to understanding how aspects of solidarity, reciprocity and mutual support may be negotiated by migrants and their descendants, while also paying attention to potential rivalries and competition for scarce resources. Therefore, since we also focus on the ways these ties enable but also limit careers and social mobility, our book offers further important insights into persistent inequalities. For example, in her chapter based on the Trajectories and Origins survey in France, Brinbaum contrasts how young men and women from different migrant backgrounds, including North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey and Portugal, access the labour market and the way in which the different use of networks affects the kinds of jobs they get. Moreover, her chapter also indicates the salience of gender differences in educational outcomes, employment patterns and access to jobs. Thus, looking beyond broad ethnic categories, it is important to consider the gendering of labour market experiences and access to particular kinds of social capital. Brinbaum’s chapter indicates that, because of the gendering of labour market sectors, young men and women may rely on social networks in different ways.

Gender is a theme discussed further in the chapter by Bilecen in her study of Turkish migrants and their descendants in Germany. In exploring the links between social networks and labour market access, she demonstrates the significance not only of information and advice flowing through social ties but also practical hands-on support such as child care. Her research shows how women, in particular, may rely on the proximate support of other women to assist with child care and hence facilitate entry into the labour market. However, this can place pressures on women to fulfil gendered caring roles.

While the focus of this book is on networks and the labour market, it is important, as Maurice Crul reminds us in his Epilogue to this volume, not to view networks as purely instrumental. Indeed chapters in this book also highlight the role of friendship, likeability and care within migrants' social relationships.

While so far we have focused on inter-personal ties as the basis of networks, it is also important to note that networks are not only constituted by informal relations. The role of formal associations, such as faith groups and civic organisations, as forms of sociality, practical support and information to migrants and their families has long been understood (Coleman, 1988). James Coleman showed how Catholic schools and churches working closely together improved the life chances of poor people (including those of migrant background) in the USA. Behtoui's chapter in this book also shows how Iranian migrants in Sweden have similarly benefited from establishing formal associations. But of course formal associations do not need to be ethnically defined. Mario Luis Small (2009), in his study of child care centres in New York, showed how parents (usually mothers) benefitted not only from the practical support of such groups but also from informal friendship making opportunities. These new connections also resulted in sharing useful information that might not otherwise have been easily accessed. The ethnicity of those new friendships may depend in part on the ethnic composition of these groups and associations. However, as noted earlier, migrants are not free to make new friends as they choose but may be limited by the willingness of others to form friendships with them. Chapters in this book by Eve, Behtoui and Ryan advance understanding of how migrants navigate obstacles and opportunities to friendship-making through both formal and informal associations.

Thus, rather than seeing friendship ties as separate from formal associations, as White et al. (1976) have noted, individuals link institutions to other institutions, and institutions link individuals. This is why, when studying networks, this book seeks to go beyond a simplistic discussion of dyads. While dyadic ties (such as between friends) are of immense importance to many people, taking a network approach allows us to locate these relationships within a wider web of relationships, including formal and informal associations. As Eve says in his chapter in this volume, the formation of a relationship between two individuals is not a purely individual affair: what the two persons talk about and do concerns other people, and so their conversations and activities often would not exist without those other people. In the case of the friendships formed by Small's (2009) childcare centres, the parents' children are obviously central. But in all social relationships it is not just the individuals directly involved who are important for the relationship but also others 'in the background'. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, the advantage of a network approach is in revealing the wider web of relationships and its situatedness within particular socio-structural contexts.

While it is often assumed that the low skilled, or de-skilled, migrants are more likely to rely on co-ethnics, there is growing interest in interrogating the ethnic makeup of highly skilled migrants' networks (Harvey, 2008; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014; Kōu & Bailey, 2017; Lo et al., 2019; Povrzanović Frykman & Mozetič, 2020). Many chapters in this book focus on the experiences of highly skilled migrants, and

highly educated descendants of migrants. In this way, our book advances understandings of diversity among migrants and the varied use of networks to access different sectors of labour markets.

## 1.5 Social Networks and the Highly Skilled

It is important to avoid the assumption that highly skilled migrants are all well paid, privileged and elite. Indeed, the term highly skilled includes a diverse range of qualifications and professions and many of these migrants may occupy relatively modest positions in the labour market, for example in health and social care, as well as experiencing downward mobility, discrimination and job insecurity (Parutis, 2014; Thondhlana et al., 2016; Baas, 2017).

Beyond a static snap shot, it is necessary to consider how initial downward mobility may be overcome subsequently through activating forms of social capital. More attention is needed to network dynamism over time. The way social ties change through the life course and in different social situations is understudied in the general literature on social ties (but see Bidart & Lavenu, 2005). Within migration studies, an understanding of changing network composition is especially important because, as Ryan and D'Angelo (2018) pointed out, the networks that migrants access or establish on first arrival in the destination society are not static but rather ebb and flow with passing time.

In taking up this challenge, the chapter by Ryan, in this volume, uses a case study method to explore experiences of de-skilling especially for migrants with limited language fluency or those whose family caring responsibilities reduce opportunities to pursue re-training. Focusing on London, Ryan's rich case studies illustrate how, over time, these migrants mobilise strategies in order to overcome de-skilling, such as developing cultural capital through additional qualifications or building new context-specific social capital through, for example, child-based sociality. Thus, de-skilling may not necessarily be permanent and so it is important to take a longer term view to see what strategies migrants may adopt to bring about change over time.

In her chapter on mobile, early career academics in Switzerland, Schaer explores the diverse networking strategies required to mobilise social capital and obtain new job opportunities. Moreover, her research also reveals the obstacles that these highly educated young people may face in their search for international career building opportunities. Despite their high levels of cultural capital, these academics may encounter precarity and occupational insecurity that can be compounded by gendered hierarchies and persistent gender inequality within academia.

For migrants like those discussed by Schaer, advantageous social connections are rarely defined ethnically. Indeed their ethnicity may be irrelevant. Rather it is their position within occupational hierarchies that is of particular importance. As argued elsewhere, not all weak ties are equally valuable and it is necessary to distinguish between ties that span social distance, vertical ties, and ties that weakly connect those of a similar social positions, horizontal ties, regardless of their ethnic

composition (Ryan, 2011, 2016). As noted earlier in this chapter, while weak ties may play a key role in providing direct access to jobs, the specificities of employment sectors also need to be taken into account. For highly skilled migrants, and their descendants, access to professional occupations may be bound by formal recruitment and appointment procedures. Nonetheless, that is not to imply that social networks are irrelevant in such contexts. Chapters in this book, drawing on a range of empirical data, further our knowledge of how social ties can continue to play important indirect roles in enabling the career progression of the highly skilled across a range of employment sectors.

In Ryan's chapter, drawing on research with migrants from different occupational sectors in London, participants describe the ways in which specific social ties played salient but indirect roles in supporting access to the labour market. For example, for those applying for jobs in the teaching profession, despite its formal, open and transparent recruitment procedures, social connections within the educational sector could provide valuable support such as advice, information and encouragement. Similarly, focusing on rich case studies of corporate lawyers in France, Rezaï and Keskiner discuss the key social ties of the second generation who take up the roles of 'coaches' and 'ambassadors' in helping people function competently in a junior position, which then led to more senior posts, while Lang et al. discuss the importance of role models or 'trailblazers' in providing inspiration to apply for professional, public sector jobs that might otherwise seem out of reach for those of migrant background.

Hence, as the chapters in this book clearly show, the relationship between qualifications, skills, career escalation and social networks is varied and complex. As noted earlier, within the wider migration literature references to networks are often generic and indeed metaphoric (Bilecen et al., 2018; Ryan & Dahinden, 2021), the chapters in this book provide empirical examples of what it is exactly that networks do: for example, pass on information, create credibility, build a clientele, enforce norms, exclude competitors, etc. within particular employment sectors. In the same way as Wellman and Wortley (1990) talk of 'different strokes from different folks', so the various chapters of this volume show how different kinds of ties are useful in differing situations.

As noted earlier, this book aims to pay particular attention to change over time. One way to do that is by looking beyond the initial generation of migrations, and focusing on the experiences of the next generation; the descendants of migrants, also referred to in the literature as the 'second generation'.

## 1.6 The Descendants of Migrants

In recent years, there is growing interest in the changing fortunes of many so-called second generation (Crul et al., 2017). Although coming from positions of socio-economic disadvantage and encounters of discrimination, there is evidence that, despite enduring inequalities, widespread social mobility among descendants of migrants is taking place (Heath et al., 2008). However, as evidenced by contributors



to this book, this experience is quite variegated across particular countries and occupational sectors. Unlike the massive literature on migrants' social networks, little is known about the social ties of second generation or children of migrants in the labour market (Vermeulen and Keskiner, 2017). We present original empirical evidence from Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands to explore this issue. In so doing, this book offers new insights into the opportunities, but also the limits, of social networks in enabling the career progression of migrant descendants. It is necessary to pay attention to persistent equalities and discrimination, as well as the active agency of migrants and their descendants to navigate these on-going challenges. The social networks of these generations have been less systematically researched, especially in the European context (Boyd & Nowak, 2012). There is a need for more understanding of the way 'migration processes' and the social trajectories of migrant parents may shape social ties of their descendants. There is mixed evidence on the effect of ethnic composition in the social networks of second generation. On the one hand social ties within ethnic communities could lead to a source of social capital for the educational success of second generation (Bankston III & Zhou, 1997; Modood, 2004; Shah et al., 2010; Lee & Zhou, 2015). Thus, it may be more fruitful to stay with children of migrant families if, for example, they spend more time on their homework (Eve, 2010). In Zhou's study (2014), the homework organisations within the Chinese community in New York City fostered flows of resources and information for immigrants' descendants. In a Swedish study, Behtoui & Olsson, (2014) showed that making friendships with adolescents from non-immigrant families may lead to 'downward assimilation' if those young people have anti-school attitudes or are involved in deviance.

At the same time, it is known that establishing ties with 'significant others' in the majority population (teachers, mentors, neighbourhoods, etc.) can provide information about education or other opportunity structures connecting the second generation to beneficial resources (Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Keskiner, 2015; Rezai, 2017). This is further explored by Behtoui, in his chapter in this volume. Drawing on research from Sweden, his research shows how 'school-related social capital', associated with well-resourced schools and highly involved parents, has an effect on the educational results of children. However, in many cases, this social capital reinforced existing social inequalities, since pupils from working-class – including migrant – families were less likely to attend these schools. Nonetheless, as Behtoui found, in some cases young, motivated teachers (some of migrant origin), present in the schools attended by poorer families, were able to produce a pro-educational climate which he explains as the 'contra-stratification effect of social capital'.

Hence, when studying network ties of the descendants of migrants, it is necessary once again to critically interrogate the ethnic composition of strong and weak ties. Recent evidence on the labour market experience of the upwardly mobile second generation in Europe suggests that social networks within the occupational sector are crucial irrespective of ethnic composition, but since migrant groups are less represented in these professional sectors, the ties that matter are usually with the majority group (Rezai, 2017; Crul et al., 2017; Keskiner & Crul, 2017). However, paying attention to the temporal nature of networks (Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018), it

becomes apparent that networks in ethnic communities may also become instrumental in career development over time (see chapter by Keskiner and Waldring). By drawing on both quantitative and qualitative research from several different countries, our book shines new light upon the evolving opportunities, and obstacles, encountered by the children of migrants, and the varied roles played by social networks, in educational outcomes and career development.

Of course, that is not to suggest that all migrants, and their descendants, succeed in achieving social mobility. In contexts of enduring structural inequality and racism, Brinbaum's chapter provides important evidence regarding the persistent challenges and inequalities encountered by male and female descendants of North African and sub-Saharan African migrants in France. It is apparent that networks that lack social capital and access to resources may exacerbate the high rates of unemployment among the young people of some migrant background in France. The fact that parents and parents' friends are not able to provide job leads may be of little relevance for highly educated young people, but is important for the less educated since, as Brinbaum shows, many young people obtain their first manual job through this kind of family tie. Such family assistance is facilitated usually through the existence of ethnic niches with labour markets. Keskiner (2019) has shown that the construction sector in Strasbourg, as an ethnic niche, provided job opportunities for the Turkish second generation who dropped out of school without a high school diploma. However, descendants of migrants who attain a vocational diploma, for example to become an accountant, usually cannot rely on the contacts of their family or the ethnic community to find jobs. In her study on second generation youth transitions, Keskiner (2017) has shown that internship experiences, as well as work and study combinations, can assist the second generation to establish social networks during their studies and such resourceful contacts are instrumental in facilitating future labour market entry (as discussed also in this book by Lang et al., Keskiner and Waldring, Rezai and Keskiner).

The data in this book reveal successes but also failures, on-going challenges, discrimination and persistent inequalities. In addition, providing data on the situation in different national and occupational contexts, as well as at different stages in the migration trajectory, presents opportunities for new comparative insights. In this way, we provide material for a new approach towards explaining the social trajectories of migrants, and their descendants, in relation to the social networks that they have access to in the labour market and the social capital that can be mobilised and activated therein.

## 1.7 Conclusion

Like other branches of the social sciences, migration studies have a powerful, if ambivalent, link with social policy and public debates at any particular point in time. Much work deals with aspects of migration seen as socially 'problematic'. Some of the chapters in this volume may seem rather remote from policy issues: the



young academics of Schaer's chapter or the second-generation lawyers discussed by Lang et al., or the corporate managers discussed by Rezai and Keskiner, for example, may seem a long way from the worries about migrants that surface in public debates. However, as students of social mobility have often pointed out, studying people who do manage to achieve a leap in socio-economic status, compared to their parents, or addressing persisting gendered inequalities, can be a good way of understanding why many others do not manage to achieve such mobility (see chapters by Bilecen and Brinbaum). Understanding the network factors that have enabled 'success', but also the enduring obstacles needing to be overcome, or that fix a 'glass ceiling', is in fact a fruitful way of understanding the situation of migrants, and indeed the many children of migrants, who are in a disadvantaged position in the labour market.

Likewise, for first generation migrants, understanding how some educated migrants succeed in constructing networks that enable access to professional jobs (see Ryan's chapter) while others do not (see Behtoui's chapter) helps to understand general trends shaping the lives of millions of labour migrants stuck in 'immigrant jobs' all their lives. We know that over-qualification is common among migrants and that the position of migrants at the bottom of the labour market cannot be explained purely by individual factors (see chapter by Eve). We believe that our evidence regarding the role of networks helps to understand this widespread situation. Underlying all the chapters is an interest in the dynamics of occupational and social mobility, as the crucial ingredient of issues of social integration, against the backdrop of structural inequality and prevalent discrimination.

As well as contributing to understanding migrant integration in local labour markets, our book also aims to contribute more broadly to research on social networks and social capital. Instead of seeing those two concepts as coterminous, the chapters in this book draw on network theories and robust empirical data to explore the content, structure and meaning of social connections and the specific resources realisable therein. Rejecting a simplistic binary of bonding versus bridging or weak versus strong ties, these chapters look beyond the ethnic lens to understand the particular social ties that may support (or hinder) labour market access. As Maurice Crul notes in his Epilogue to this book, the contributors have developed alternative approaches to look at the networks and resources of migrants and their descendants and in so doing provide important new approaches beyond the ethnic lens in the field of migration studies. In so doing, this book adds nuanced understanding of the obstacles and opportunities that migrants, and their descendants, encounter in accessing and forming social ties in the destination society, including how networks may operate as exclusionary mechanisms.

While this book has focused on migrants and their descendants, there are opportunities for the conceptual and empirical innovations and insights within this volume to inform research beyond migration studies. Although, migrant networks are often studied in isolation by scholars who specialise in migration research, there are opportunities for more shared learning across research specialisms. For example, Eve's research in France and Italy, discussed in this volume, highlights similarities in the network content and formations of internal and international migrants.

Lubbers et al. (2020b) have recently applied their expertise on migrants' networks to explore the social ties of the urban poor in Spain. There are many more opportunities for cross-fertilisation between migration studies and other aspects of non-migrant network analysis. Therefore, we hope that this volume will also have appeal to network scholars beyond migration research.

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# Chapter 2

## The Direct and Indirect Role of Migrants' Networks in Accessing Diverse Labour Market Sectors: An Analysis of the Weak/Strong Ties Continuum



Louise Ryan

### 2.1 Introduction

There has long been debate about the different ways in which social networks may be utilised to access labour markets (Portes, 1998; Haug, 2008; Behtoui, 2007; Lancee & Hartung, 2012; Toma, 2016; Keskiner & Crul, 2017). Are networks more relevant for low skilled jobs than for high skilled and professional occupations (Sanders et al., 2002; Harvey, 2008; Gericke et al., 2018)? Are strong ties more useful for certain jobs, while weak ties are more relevant for other kinds of jobs (Granovetter, 1973; Geys & Murdoch, 2010; Patulny, 2015; Ryan, 2011)?

Research on the role of co-ethnic ties in migrants' labour market outcomes has reached 'mixed conclusions' (Toma, 2016: 593). Successful labour market integration can be defined as a permanent, full time job, with pay and conditions commensurate with qualifications (Schmitt 2012 cited by Badwi et al., 2018: 27). With this definition in mind, the extent to which migrant networks are helpful for labour market integration, or merely result in a 'mobility trap', needs to be carefully considered (Kalter & Kogan, 2014). It could be argued that 'inclusion into the ethnic community can stimulate economic integration due to the resources made available through this network' (Lancee & Hartung, 2012: 39). However, there is also the risk of trapping workers in low-quality employment (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993; Badwi et al., 2018; Qureshi et al., 2013). Over-reliance on ethnic networks can lead to what Portes (1998) has called downward levelling norms.

While much academic research focuses on the networks of disadvantaged groups, there are ongoing debates about the extent to which highly skilled migrants rely on networks for career escalation (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). There is some evidence that weak ties may be especially relevant for highly skilled migrants accessing professional occupations (Badwi et al., 2018). However, it is also apparent that a mix

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of strong and weak ties may be utilised by migrants in particular professions (Harvey, 2008). Moreover, even for the highly qualified, access to the labour market can be uneven depending upon the employment sector, familiarity with local contexts, immigration restrictions and prevalence of discrimination (Qureshi et al., 2013; Badwi et al., 2018; Gericke et al., 2018). Thus, although the role of networks is well established in the literature, there remain gaps in our understanding of how skills, education level, language proficiency, among other factors, may influence the relationship between employment and network ties. There have been calls for more research to explore ‘the institutional context of the receiving country, the specific immigrant groups involved, and the particular types of jobs’ (Kalter & Kogan, 2014: 1435), and to examine the evolving impact of new online communication technologies (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014).

Additionally, there have been calls to differentiate the direct and indirect roles of networks in employment (Toma, 2016). Does a dyadic tie lead directly to a new job (Smith, 2005)? Or, do networks play indirect roles as sources of general advice, support and encouragement? As discussed later in this chapter, indirect and direct roles may be equally important in enabling migrants’ initial entry into the labour market in the destination society. But this raises the question of whether or not migrants’ reliance upon network ties for direct job opportunities wanes over time as their familiarity with the local labour market increases.

Understanding change over time matters in our analysis of networks (Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018; Lubbers et al., 2020). The strategies that migrants adopt initially to access the labour market in a new and unfamiliar country, may be different from how employment seeking trajectories develop later on as migrants gain familiarity with the local context and accrue relevant work-experience. Adopting a temporal lens reveals the dynamism of social connections. Far from being static, relationships evolve over time but that is not to suggest a linear progression from dependency upon strong ties to gradually accessing beneficial weak ties. Rather than a simple dichotomy of strong versus weak ties, this chapter uses the notion of a continuum of diverse relationships that are constantly interacting and changing through time.

Drawing on case studies of migrants with different levels of qualifications and language proficiency, this chapter focuses on the specific situation of London’s dynamic labour market. Building upon my conceptual framework (Ryan, 2011, 2016), and informed by a temporal lens, the chapter offers new insights into (1) How migrants’ networks operate, directly and indirectly, in job seeking strategies and career development (2) How the role of networks may differ across varied sectors of the labour market, including public and private sectors and (3) How these observations can inform our understanding of weak and strong ties as a continuum of dynamic relationships.

The paper now develops over four sections. I begin by situating my analysis within the relevant literature on migrant social networks in relation to employment; highlighting the gaps that my work aims to address. I then briefly describe my research methods and qualitative datasets. Through four detailed case studies, I then weave my analysis and address the three aims listed above. In the concluding section, I highlight the ways in which the chapter contributes to understanding the



dynamic processes through which migrants utilise networks, both directly and indirectly, to enhance labour market access and career development over time.

## 2.2 Theorising Social Networks

Putnam's (2007: 143) distinction between *bonding* – 'ties to people who are like me in some important way' – and *bridging* – 'people who are unlike me in some important way' – has been particularly influential among migration researchers (Nannestad et al., 2008; Lancee, 2010). However, within migration research, there is a marked tendency to define 'like' and 'unlike' along ethnic lines. For example: 'We define bridging ties as relations that cut across the ethnic divide and bonding ties as those within the same ethnic group, operationalizing these as inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic friendships, respectively' (Lancee & Hartung, 2012: 41).

Thus, there is often an implied overlap between tie strength (*strong or weak*) and tie content (*intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic*) and direction (*bonding or bridging*). Strong ties are usually defined as intra-ethnic, often to extended family, and generating bonding capital, while weak ties are defined as inter-ethnic, usually with native population and generating bridging capital (Nannestad et al., 2008; Damstra & Tillie, 2016). There is also a tendency to rely on quantitative data, from largescale surveys, to show that ties to 'natives' are beneficial in job searches (Nannestad et al., 2008; Lancee & Hartung, 2012; Kalter & Kogan, 2014).

However, as I have argued at length elsewhere (Ryan, 2011), this conflation of tie strength, content and direction is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it means that the structure of a tie is assumed largely on the basis of its content. So ties to relatives are assumed to be strong, while ties to natives are assumed to be weak. This reductive approach overlooks the complexity and dynamism of inter-personal relationships and simplifies ties into binary categories. Secondly, the resources available within the tie are also assumed. Thus, it is implied that ties to co-ethnics generate a particular set of resources, whereas ties to other ethnic groups, especially the native population, are assumed to generate different, and more valuable, resources. But, I suggest, it is necessary to critically assess and differentiate these ties. Not all ties to natives are the same and neither can they be assumed to offer access to valuable resources (Ryan, 2011). Using German survey data, Kalter and Kogan (2014) acknowledge that the existence of a friendship between actors cannot be seen as evidence of direct causality in finding employment because there may be other, unobserved, factors at play.

As argued elsewhere (Ryan, 2007; Bilecen et al., 2018; and the Introductory chapter to this book), migration researchers can gain deeper insights by utilising the extensive toolbox provided by social network analysis scholarship. For too long, migration studies have tended to use 'network' as a metaphor without paying due attention to the structure, density, content, multiplexity and dynamism of social networks (for a discussion see Ryan & Dahinden, 2021). A narrow application of 'network' is frequently operationalised in surveys to ask migrants about

relationships with individuals from particular ethnic groups (Damstra & Tillie, 2016) or what information sources they use to find jobs (Kalter & Kogan, 2014). However, as I will show later, rich data derived from in-depth interviews enables a more nuanced understanding of the complex, dynamic and multi-layered information and support flowing through diverse social ties. My work has been especially influenced by Mark Granovetter's theorisation of networks and job seeking.

As discussed in the Introduction to this volume, Granovetter distinguished between weak and strong ties on the basis of: 'a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie' (1973: 1361). Strong ties are associated with high levels of frequency, intensity and intimacy (p. 1362). However, as they move in similar circles, people to whom we are strongly connected are likely to know similar sorts of information about opportunities in a social system, e.g. job vacancies. By contrast, 'those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to information different from that which we receive' (1973: 1371). Consequently, such ties are important for 'mobility opportunities' (p. 1373). These individuals are likely to be 'only marginally included in [our] current network of contacts' and may include a former colleague or employer with whom we have only 'sporadic contact' (1973: 1371). In later work, Granovetter (1983) acknowledged that not all weak ties were equally valuable. He emphasised that weak ties are most useful when they bridge 'substantial social distance' (1983: 209). In other words, when the person to whom we are tied weakly is well placed in the 'occupational structure' (1983: 209) and has access to relevant and reliable information about opportunities within that structure.

Of course, since Granovetter's era, we need to acknowledge how job searches have developed through new technologies (Janta & Ladkin, 2013). It is suggested that social media require us to 'rethink' international migration and social networks (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014: 405). 'The online environment enables migrants to have better access and be more in control of their choices in the labour market' (Janta & Ladkin, 2013: 242). However, while acknowledging this changing landscape, Dekker and Engbersen note that online networks do not replace, or make redundant, off line social ties; both sources of information tend to be used simultaneously. Indeed, migrants tend to have greater trust in their off line social ties as sources of information especially about jobs (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014: 415). Later in the chapter, I will consider how my participants have incorporated new technology into their job seeking strategies. But first I review my approach to studying migrant networks.

In my body of work (Ryan, 2011, 2016, 2020; Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018), I use qualitative data to explore meanings, dynamism, presentations and interpretations of social ties. Using this method has enabled me to critically interrogate the nature of relationships within networks, the relative social location of the actors and the actual resources flowing through particular ties. Social capital and social networks are not coterminous and we should not confuse potential sources of capital (networks) with actual capital (resources) (Fine, 2010; Bourdieu, 1986). My work has analysed firstly, how migrants access and maintain various kinds of social

*relationships*, paying due attention to opportunities but also obstacles they may face (Ryan, 2007). Secondly, I have sought to understand different *resources*, not only potentially available (latent) but also willingly shared (realisable) through specific social ties (Ryan et al., 2008). Thirdly, I highlighted the significance of social distance, so that the value of a particular social connection may depend more on the *relative social location* of the actors rather than their ethnic identity (Ryan, 2011). This last observation has led me to develop a distinction between *horizontal and vertical ties*. While horizontal ties connect actors who share a similar social position, vertical ties connect people of different positions on a social hierarchy, or occupational structure, irrespective of their particular migrant or ethnic backgrounds. So, for example, a loose connection to an influential person may be described as a vertical weak tie even if that individual shares the same ethnicity as you (Ryan, 2016).

But that is not to suggest that weak and strong ties can be understood as fixed, distinct categories. Some scholars have suggested that the boundary between strong and weak ties may be blurry (Harvey, 2008; Geys & Murdoch, 2010; Patulny, 2015) and better understood as points along a continuum of social relations (Bagchi, 2001: 37). As I argued elsewhere, adopting a temporal lens to understand the dynamism of social relationships may help us to move beyond simplistic binaries of strong versus weak ties (Ryan, 2011). Fourthly, my recent work has examined the temporal dimensions of social relationships and the dynamics of networks over time (Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018) and through the life course (Erel & Ryan, 2019). The networks that migrants rely upon when they first arrive may differ from the social ties they forge, over time, after years spent in the destination society. However, as discussed later, this is not to imply a simple linear trajectory of network formation.

Building upon my conceptual framework (Ryan, 2011, 2016), summarised above, and informed by a temporal lens, this chapter uses qualitative data from my previous migration studies, to add new insights into remaining gaps in understanding how migrants use networks to access the labour market and build careers over time.

As mentioned earlier, the specificities of context are also relevant to understand how social ties operate in relation to particular employment sectors (Gericke et al., 2018, see also chapters by Behtoui, Lang et al. and Rezaei and Keskiner in this volume). It has been suggested that 'an important limitation' of much migrant network scholarship 'is lack of comparative design' (Toma, 2016: 594). My chapter addresses that limitation by taking a comparative lens across different employment sectors. This enables me to differentiate between how networks may operate across particular areas of the labour market, e.g. public and private sectors. In so doing, this chapter highlights that, rather than a straightforward causality, social ties can operate both directly but also indirectly to support migrants' job searches. Through this analysis I add new insight into weak/strong ties as points along a continuum of dynamic and interacting social relationships. Beyond any assumed simple linearity of migrants' reliance on strong ties being gradually replaced by forging new weak ties over time, the case studies reveal a more complex picture. Before presenting the case studies, I briefly describe my research methods.

## 2.3 Methods

I have been researching migration, with a particular focus on social networks, for almost two decades. During that time I have accumulated a large corpus of qualitative data with migrants from different countries, with varied skill sets, educational backgrounds and languages. Focusing especially on intra-EU mobility, my work includes participants who arrived in Britain at different times, from both old and new EU states, and in varied ways including young single migrants, couples, family units or through family reunification. Although the data presented in this chapter emanates from separate projects, the research questions and overall aims were often similar and thus allow me to pull together themes from across these datasets. As discussed elsewhere (Erel & Ryan, 2019; Kilkey & Ryan, 2020), revisiting one's datasets, from distinct projects, enables comparative analysis and can generate new insights that were not possible within the constraints of each individual project.

In preparation for this chapter, I revisited three past studies. Between 2010 and 2012, my colleague Jon Mulholland and I worked on a study of French highly skilled migrants in London's financial sector.<sup>1</sup> As part of that study 40 participants were interviewed: 19 men and 21 women, mostly aged between 35 and 44. The majority had arrived in the UK in the 2000s, though some had arrived earlier. 26 were married, five co-habiting and nine single, 28 were parents. Networks were a key focus of that study as we sought to understand the different dimensions of French highly skilled migrants' social networks across business and personal life both locally and transnationally (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014).

The second project, used in this chapter, was a mixed methods study carried out in 2013 using an online questionnaire, in-depth interviews, plus one focus group, commissioned by an Irish migrant organisation – *The Irish in Britain*. A total of 114 participants took part in the study which aimed to explore the expectations and experiences of Irish migrants, working in the teaching profession, who had arrived in Britain since the economic recession in 2008/09 (Ryan & Kurdi, 2015). Qualitative interviews were undertaken to obtain deeper insights into issues such as migration trajectories, career progression and social networks. 24 participants (19 women and 5 men) took part in the qualitative part of the study. Their average age was 28 years and most were single and childless. Most participants had arrived in Britain between 2008 and 2010 (Ryan & Kurdi, 2015).

The third study I draw upon here, formed part of my on-going research with Polish migrants. In 2014, on the tenth anniversary of Polish accession to the EU, I undertook a small study with 20 Polish migrants in London, several of whom had been interviewed as part of previous studies (Ryan, 2016). The majority of the participants (17/20) were women. The average age was 36 years. The mean year of arrival was 2005, with the majority of participants moving to the UK between 2004 and 2007. 13 were married, 5 divorced and 2 were currently single. There was an

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<sup>1</sup>French Capital: a study of French Highly Skilled Migrants in London's Financial and Business Sectors (2010–2012) was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, RES-000-22-4240.

even split between those with and without children (10/20). The main aim of that study was to understand changing migration strategies, experiences and plans over time as migrants who had initially arrived with rather short-term plans had gradually extended their stay over 10 years. Social networks, employment, family life and issues of identity and belonging were key themes in the interviews.

These combined qualitative datasets generate an enormous wealth of material. To offer deeper insights into the processes of networking and the dynamism of employment trajectories over time, I have decided to use a case study method. The use of individual case studies to explore broader themes in large datasets is an established part of qualitative research (Thomson, 2007). I have chosen four case studies for this chapter, two male and two female, two who entered highly skilled jobs and two who initially entered low skilled jobs, two from the public sector and two from the private sector. As noted elsewhere, through the use of rich case studies 'macro questions concerning social change can be analytically explored through the small-scale and specific' (Stanley, 2015: 838). Although each one is individual and unique, they reflect wider patterns within the datasets. These four were chosen because they illustrate processes and experiences that are relevant to the discussion in this chapter.

## 2.4 The Case Studies

### 2.4.1 *Dominik*

Dominik arrived in London from Poland, with his girlfriend, in 2004. The move had been initiated by his girlfriend who had previously worked in the USA and spoke good English.

At that time Dominik was working in a friend's restaurant in his home town in Poland and reckoned that he 'didn't have much to lose' in relocating to London. However, he was concerned about language: 'I didn't speak any English... So that was obviously quite difficult because I knew that I would have to start somewhere at the very bottom of a chain'. He was also mindful that his catering experience in Poland would not be recognised in London: 'what we brought from our country then was worthless... no one really was taking it seriously'. Thus, although as an EU citizen he had free movement rights, his job opportunities in the UK were far from certain. Given his precarious situation, networks were fundamental to Dominik's migration story.

We stayed for a few nights with a girl who my girlfriend had met in America, so we had a place to stay. This girl was working on a market stall, but she was leaving and then she told the guys who owned the stall that she had a friend – my girlfriend – who could replace her. She told them about me and that I did not speak English, but they told me to come anyway. So I did all the heavy lifting and stuff. (Dominik)

So, through this initial contact, the couple not only found accommodation, albeit temporary, but also employment. This story reflects a common pattern (Portes &

Sensenbrenner, 1993; Qureshi et al., 2013; Badwi et al., 2018) as co-ethnic networks provide direct access into low skilled, low paid jobs. However, for Dominik, who did not speak English, it is unlikely he would have gained employment in any way except through such networks. Although not co-ethnics, his new employers were of migrant descent:

... they were born here and educated here, but their parents were from Cyprus, so they understood what it was like to come to another country and not speak the language... I was lucky with those guys (Dominik)

These British-Cypriot employers fulfil Granovetter's notion of 'weak ties' and led directly to a job offer. The employment sector is also relevant here as a casual job offer, within a small private business, was available without the need for a formal recruitment and bureaucratic application process. Moreover, this example also demonstrates that tie strength cannot be assumed simply through ethnic composition. Although of migrant background themselves, the employers can be regarded as 'vertical' weak ties (Ryan, 2011) because as business owners they were higher up the occupational structure and bridged social distance. However, we also need to pay attention to the dynamic nature of the relationship between these ties. Over time, the employers became friends and helped Dominik to build his confidence as he was given more responsible roles in their business. Therefore, these weak ties gradually morphed into strong ties highlighting that the distinction between weak and strong ties may not be clear-cut (Harvey, 2008; Ryan, 2016).

When I met Dominik, in 2014, he had been in London for exactly 10 years and had a job as a project manager for a large chain of restaurants: 'It is amazing, when I look back, it is hard to believe actually. Because now we are used to the comfort we have now, to stop and look back where we were, oh, you know, I can't compare it'. Polish migrants tended to experience de-skilling and under-employment in the UK (Trevena, 2014; Janta & Ladkin, 2013). However, as demonstrated by Dominik's case, this is not necessarily a permanent situation and things can improve over time (Parutis, 2014; Ryan, 2016). Hence, the temporal dimension is important when analysing migrant experiences (Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018).

Networks were fundamental to Dominik's career development in London. Through a personal contact, he found a language course: 'someone from Poland recommended to me and it was a really good college'. As his English improved, a new job opportunity came about. Through his market stall employers he got a job working in a café. Over time, as his language skills, local knowledge and employment experience developed, he was able to seek better paid employment. His next move came about through formal recruitment channels when he successfully applied for an advertised post in a well-known restaurant chain.

But that is not to suggest that social networks became irrelevant to his career development. After some years, Dominik's next employment move came about through a weak tie. At 'a party with the people from my wife's work and I met the owner of the company she worked for... And it was just a conversation we had, you know, *'who you are, what you're doing'*, and so on.' Dominik met that company owner a few more times at social events. Then one evening his wife returned from



work and announced that ‘the boss... approached me to ask if you would like to come and join company’. This was a role as production manager. Dominik was delighted: ‘it was a step up for me, because it was more technical job... a massive opportunity to have more input...be more creative’. Thus a vertical weak tie, met socially, opened the door for new career opportunity. As argued elsewhere (Ryan, 2011), making influential connections is not simply about meeting people but also about shared interests and motivation for mutual benefit. As Smith (2005) has shown in her work in the USA, we need to understand why a particular social contact is motivated to help someone get a job. Simply meeting a company director at a party is no guarantee of a job offer (see also the chapter by Schaer in this volume). Dominik met this vertical weak tie several times in social settings but also had the advantage of a personal recommendation from his wife who worked for that company. Thus, the job offer came about through the interplay of a strong tie (wife) and a vertical weak tie (company director). Therefore, rather than entirely separate, weak and strong ties may interact, along a continuum of social relationships, to produce job opportunities.

Overall, Dominik’s story underlines the importance of applying a temporal lens to migrants’ changing job seeking strategies. However, rather than a simple linear development from reliance on networks towards formal recruitment processes, this case study illustrates how networks may continue to play a role in emerging career opportunities over time. While Dominik illustrates the experiences of someone who began in low paid, low skilled jobs, how might the job-seeking experiences of a highly skilled migrant differ?

### 2.4.2 *Damien*

Originally from France, Damien had been living and working in Luxembourg before relocating to London in 2007. Although he had a permanent job offer in Luxembourg he turned that down: ‘as I am working in financial services, and for me it was a logical step to come to London, as it is one of the international capitals of finance’. Damien did not want to migrate until he found the right job within the financial sector. So, from his base in Luxembourg he continued to search for London-based jobs using a range of online sources: ‘sending my CV to firms, sending my CV to agents, looking on different websites.’ As noted, online resources like LinkedIn and sites that host CVs have transformed job searches for potential migrants (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). However, relying on these sites to find a job can be slow and unreliable (Janta & Ladkin, 2013: 245). Securing his ideal job took not only time but also financial resources: ‘I was in touch with agents, I went to different series of interviews to London from Luxembourg so I needed some budgets – I really needed to come here – to pay for plane tickets, sometimes booking hotels’. Eventually he was offered a job. ‘I was contacted by a firm based in London to work on a project’. Although the initial contract was fixed term for 2 months, Damien considered that sufficient to give him a base from which to look for other jobs in London. As an EU

national, he did not need a visa, at that time, so a short term contract was no barrier to migration.

Once in London, Damien began to appreciate the importance of professional networks and so he started to invest time and energy in building business connections ‘to find opportunities’.

Having established a foothold in the financial sector, he was able to make useful connections: ‘they had another client who was looking for somebody with my skills so this is how I managed to get this job’. Hence, insider knowledge and personal contacts were important in Damien’s career progression: ‘I redid a lot from my network here in London more than in Luxembourg, for instance... So I really increased the number of people I knew in my business environment here in London’. He described how networks operate within London’s financial sector:

I’ve noticed here particularly people work on recommendations, it’s very important that people who can back you up and say: “*ok, I know this guy and I worked with him, he always has done a good job there*” and it eases things a lot (Damien).

This quote is revealing and suggests that for highly qualified migrants like Damien, the biggest obstacle to getting a job was the lack of personal connections. Damien was an outsider, people did not know him. Because of his lack of local network ties, he had no personal recommendations from other industry insiders. Thus, despite the use of on-line resources, applying for London-based jobs, whilst still living in Luxembourg, had been a slow and expensive process. But, after moving to London, he got a foot in the door, made new relationships and gained trust, built up recommendations, and so his career began to develop. Thus, despite the salience of online job sites and recruitment agencies, local inter-personal relationships, ‘emplaced capital’ (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014), still matter in accessing employment.

Damien’s experiences prompt a question about the nature of these social contacts; can they be understood as weak ties? The work of Burt (1997) has shown how networks operate in corporate environments. His research demonstrates not only the importance of information flowing through social ties in business networks but also personal recommendations based on trust (Burt, 1997, see also the chapter by Rezaei and Keskiner, in this volume). While Granovetter (1973) has emphasised weak ties as sources of information about new job opportunities, research by Smith (2005) emphasises the importance of trust in making job recommendations. Hence, it is necessary to examine more precisely what is the nature of the relationship between ties and thence the resources being shared (Ryan, 2011). If ties are *too weak* they may lack sufficient trust to lead to job recommendations and offers (Ryan, 2016).

The experience of Damien and Dominik differ in some ways; one worked in finance, the other in catering. Nonetheless, both stories reveal the continued role of networks in career advancement in London, especially in the private sector. Although both had used formal recruitment channels, they also benefited from personal recommendations, knowing the right people in the right places, resulting in new jobs and career escalation. Thus, both stories demonstrate the significance of trust. Although Dominik’s story appears to illustrate a classic, vertically positioned, weak



tie, this individual sought a recommendation from a mutual strong tie (wife/employee). Similarly, Damien needed time to build up new professional networks in London and establish trust so that he could gain recommendations to would-be employers. Therefore, I suggest, rather than looking at individual weak ties (dyads) in isolation we need to see them within wider networks, or as a continuum of relationships.

So far I have focused on the private sector, where it is apparent that networks can lead directly to job opportunities. But does this also hold true in the public sector?

### 2.4.3 *Sorcha*

Sorcha completed her teacher training in Ireland in 2008–09 during the global financial crisis when the economy experienced a major recession and, consequently, public spending was drastically cut by the Irish government. Public sector jobs, including teaching, were negatively impacted resulting in high levels of unemployment among recently qualified teachers (Ryan & Kurdi, 2015). Sorcha struggled to find employment in Ireland: 'I found it really hard to get a job.... It just wasn't happening. I applied speculatively to hundreds of schools, got very little response'. She was aware that some of her university classmates had migrated: 'some of the other teachers had come to England with recruitment agencies and they kind of recommended it to me'. Thus her networks provided encouragement not only to migrate but also advised her on relevant agencies. Hence, although her entry into the British labour market was arranged through formal teacher recruitment services, the indirect role of wider networks in influencing that process should not be overlooked.

Through the agency, Sorcha got a job in a school in Essex, south-east England. However, she found the teaching 'really difficult': 'teaching here is a whole different ball game than teaching in Ireland. The behaviour in that particular school was really quite difficult at the time and I just was overwhelmed'. As noted elsewhere, migrants' reliance on agencies and online recruitment sites, may carry risks (Qureshi et al., 2013; Janta & Ladkin, 2013). For Sorcha, in the absence of local, context-specific knowledge or pre-existing networks within the school, relying on an agency meant that she inadvertently found herself in a very challenging workplace.

Although she completed the school year, Sorcha began to question her suitability for teaching and decided to pursue a new course of study. She moved to London and completed a diploma in graphic design and then returned to Dublin where she got a job in a graphic design studio. However, she discovered graphic design was not the career for her: 'I just didn't enjoy sitting at desk all day and I realised that, even though teaching was really stressful, I was so much happier being a teacher.' Sorcha knew that in order to pursue her dream of being a teacher she would have to leave Ireland again and return to Britain. She again applied to teacher recruitment agencies. This time, however, she had more local knowledge and was careful about her choice of schools. Deciding to combine her qualifications in teaching and graphic design, she got a job teaching design in a large college in south London. At the time

of our interview she was very happy with the job: ‘It’s so nice to interact with the kids and I feel like I actually can help them to get somewhere in life and you know, give them practical help when they need it.’ She had no plans to return to Ireland.

Sorcha reflected on the different opportunities and career possibilities available to her in both countries. Although teaching jobs were formally advertised in Ireland, Sorcha had the impression that many of these were not ‘genuine’ jobs. In other words, there were favoured candidates who were likely to get the job because they already had some connection with the school, such as being related to a member of staff. In Ireland this kind of nepotism is known as ‘pull’ – i.e. someone who can pull you into a job. Sorcha suspected this had worked against her in many job applications: ‘definitely in Ireland there’s *‘pull’*’. She perceived the British labour market as meritocratic: ‘you probably would get further on your merit here, than you would in Ireland.’

This observation is worthy of further discussion especially as it seems to be contrary to the experiences of Dominik and Damien, described above. Within the private sector, Damien and Dominik found network connections and personal recommendations particularly influential. Teachers in my study suggested that the job application process in Britain was meritocratic with open and transparent appointment processes. Jobs were allocated based on qualifications and experience not on nepotism. Of course, within the public sector, recruitment processes have to conform to equal opportunity procedures. Nonetheless, it would be simplistic to conclude that networks and influential connections did not matter in accessing the teaching profession. Later in the case study of Klaudia, below, we see how networks can play a direct role in facilitating access to a teaching career.

Moreover, based upon my data, there is evidence that networks can also play important indirect roles within the teaching profession. Networks can play a profound role in establishing and maintaining a professional identity (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2007). Like many participants in the teacher study, Sorcha had relatives who were also teachers: ‘my dad was a teacher, my cousin was a teacher so, you know, it just feels right. It feels like I’m doing what I should be doing.’ Furthermore, thinking about her friendship networks, Sorcha remarked that ‘the majority of my friends are teachers.’ This was partly about opportunity. Teachers spend a lot of time training and working together and so have opportunities to form friendships (Ryan, 2015). In addition, as Sorcha also observed, teachers understand and support each other: ‘I think teachers just get it.’ Sorcha was drawn to teacher friends because:

... there’s camaraderie in teaching, there has to be, because sometimes you have a horrendous class, and, you know, they are having the same issues as you. And then also obviously with the holidays, like you’re more inclined to go travelling with other teachers. (Sorcha)

Hence, although in Sorcha’s case, networks did not appear to be directly related to accessing teaching jobs, it is apparent that teacher friendship groups continued to play an important indirect role as sources of bonding capital providing support, advice, information and reinforcing a shared teacher identity (Ryan, 2015). Strong ties, therefore, also have a role to play in migrants’ successful labour market integration, even for the highly skilled. Thus, rather than taking a narrowly instrumental

view of social ties, especially weak ties, as direct sources of jobs, it is important to consider the wider, indirect roles of networks in supporting and enabling migrants to develop their careers. So far all the migrants discussed have been childless and relatively young. But how can family responsibilities impact on migrants' experiences of accessing the labour market and what role might networks play under those circumstances?

#### 2.4.4 *Klaudia*

Like Sorcha, Klaudia was also a teacher. However, Klaudia, a mother of two young boys, had a very different route into the profession and so illustrates the ways in which networks may operate in particular ways for migrants at different stages of the life course (Erel & Ryan, 2019). Klaudia migrated from Poland in 2005, with her young son, to join her husband who was already working in London. Her son took time to adjust to life in London: 'I was a full time mother, and I was trying to settle him down here'. Soon after reuniting, the couple had a second baby. Although she had a Master's degree from Poland and spoke good English, Klaudia felt very distant from the labour market in Britain due to her caring roles. She began to do some education courses: 'e-learning courses to get some experience, in terms of education, so I started that online from home... just to add to my CV'. As her children got a little older she began to think about entering the labour force:

So I started applying for jobs, it wasn't easy because the thing is, that I've got an MA and my expectations were quite high. But I very quickly realised that without experience in UK actually you can have PhD or even more, and that actually means nothing, if you don't have the right experience here (Klaudia).

Eventually Klaudia got a job as a carer for old people: 'I got probably the worst job in the world. I mean the most emotionally really-really challenging and I became a carer.' Although she continued to do that job for about 1 year, it was: 'really-really-really difficult for me.' As note earlier, migrants may experience downward mobility in the UK because of language barriers or because their qualifications are not taken seriously by employers (Qureshi et al., 2013). However, as others have argued (Trevena, 2014; Ryan, 2011; Parutis, 2014), and is apparent in Dominik's case, de-skilling need not be permanent. As researchers in Norway have also observed, networks may be crucial in how highly qualified migrants overcome de-skilling to improve their labour market position (Badwi et al., 2018).

After her son entered full time education, Klaudia began to volunteer in activities at the school. She started by helping out with school events and fund raising activities. As Barry Wellman's (1984) research in Canada has shown, child-based sociality can have particular significance for women's networking (see also the Introductory chapter to this book). Through the school, Klaudia met other parents and began to build up a local network. When an opportunity arose to stand for election to the governing body of the school, Klaudia was encouraged to apply. She was

duly elected and became a parent-governor. This was a turning point for her and reflected the efforts she had made to build up connections and relationships with other parents. Klaudia felt a huge sense of achievement in being elected to this role:

That was a first big step for me. Really! And the fact that people voted was a big... it's a small scale, it's just the local primary school, but in my opinion it felt like a big, big step in terms of where are you within the society (Klaudia).

Through her network at the school, Klaudia began to establish ties to British people and gained a better understanding of British sociality. Like many participants across my studies, Klaudia had initially found it hard to connect with British people. She observed it was difficult to read the 'cultural codes' (see also Cederberg, 2015). Klaudia observed: 'like all this politeness and not saying certain things... I'm looking for a message, for the information they want to tell me, and not always getting it... So that's difficult for me.' But the school network provided an opportunity for getting to know British people on a one-to-one basis. These were the kinds of people that Klaudia would not have the opportunity to meet in her everyday life: 'I met knowledgeable and experienced people, you know, like lawyers, solicitors, these kind of people'. Thus, she was able to stretch her network reach to people who occupied a very different social position from herself. Although these new connections bridged social distance and can be described as vertical weak ties, there is no evidence that they helped Klaudia directly to enhance her labour market position. Nonetheless, they definitely played an indirect role by helping to increase her confidence and understanding of British society.

Through her involvement in the school and her work on the board of governors, Klaudia began to think about pursuing a career in teaching. Unlike Sorcha, who seemed to have been drawn to teaching from a young age through her family connections, Klaudia had not previously considered a teaching career. After 8 years in London, much of it as a full time mother, teaching seemed an opportunity for Klaudia to get a professional occupation. Without formal teaching qualifications, the first step was to get a placement as a class-room assistant: 'So, I signed with an agency, and actually I got a placement with my son's school so that was extremely convenient'. So, here we see a mix of formal agencies and personal networks as Klaudia utilised contacts at her sons' school to obtain her work-placement.

She then completed the Higher Level Teaching Assistant course and, when I first met her in 2014, was working as a teaching assistant. The school encouraged her to gain a full teaching qualification and she had just begun the process by applying to the 'Schools Direct Scheme': 'So I would be an unqualified teacher from September and I've got a year to obtain my qualification.' As a graduate, the Schools Direct programme allowed Klaudia to gain a teaching qualification through a 1 year conversion course. When I re-contacted Klaudia, in 2016, she was working as a teacher in a London school. Although her direct route into a professional job was facilitated through a formal agency, it is apparent that informal networks, especially her voluntary role at her sons' school, played a key role in her trajectory towards a professional career.

Klaudia's experience offers insight into how networks may operate to facilitate access to jobs even within the public sector (see also Lang et al. chapter in this book). Personal connections, reputation and trust, built up through her volunteering, led directly to a placement opportunity in her son's school. This case study suggests some caution in any simplistic dichotomy between how networks may facilitate labour market access in the public versus the private spheres.

## 2.5 Concluding Discussion

Using rich qualitative data from four case studies, I have built upon my analytical framework (Ryan, 2011, 2016) to examine the content, structure, meaning and dynamism of social ties. Beyond a simple binary of strong versus weak ties, I have explored the relationships within ties, the flow of resources and the relative social location of the actors vertically and horizontally. In so doing I sought to address three key questions: (1) How migrants' networks may operate, directly and indirectly, in job seeking strategies and career development (2) How the role of networks may differ across varied sectors of the labour market, including public and private sectors and (3) How these observations can inform our understanding of weak and strong ties as a continuum of dynamic relationships.

Firstly, my rich qualitative data reveal the diverse roles that networks can play in accessing labour markets. Despite the rise in new technology and the proliferation of online job sites, it is apparent that personal contacts still matter for employment searches in the twenty-first century. For migrants, arriving in a new country and confronting an unfamiliar labour market, network contacts can be valuable as direct routes into employment. Moreover, beyond such direct roles, social ties can also play more indirect roles by providing context-specific information and know-how, as well as personal recommendations and general advice. Personal connections in the destination society can be invaluable in interpreting cultural codes, signposting towards useful agencies or passing on knowledge about training opportunities. While such resources are not the same as direct job offers, nonetheless, they can be extremely valuable as stepping stones towards employment.

Secondly, because of the diversity of my research participants, my analysis reveals varied patterns in how social networks are utilised in different employment sectors. In the private sector, it is apparent that social connections and personal recommendations continue to be highly advantageous whether in the world of financial services and banking or in entry level retail jobs in small businesses. By contrast, within the public sector, such as teaching, formal recruitment processes, with transparent appointment procedures are the norm. Thus, in countries like the UK (see Lang et al., in this volume for the German case), social connections do not appear to be relevant for public sector jobs. However, as the case studies here show, that is not to suggest that social networks are completely irrelevant for those seeking public sector employment. Social ties, including close bonds of friends and colleagues, may be invaluable as sources of emotional support and in fostering a professional

identity that can help to sustain and build a career as well as encouragement to overcome challenges and obstacles. Hence, although networks may not work in precisely the same way in the public and private sectors, that is not to suggest that social ties are irrelevant in accessing public sector jobs.

Thirdly, the case studies discussed in this chapter reveal change over time. Networks are dynamic and the ties that migrants rely upon when they first arrive may change quite markedly as years pass by (Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018; Lubbers et al., 2020). But that does not imply a simple linearity with migrants gradually shifting away from dependency on strong ties to forging new weak ties, or that reliance on networks is replaced by turning to formal recruitment channels. The findings from this chapter suggest a more nuanced picture. The participants discussed here continued to use a mix of social networks including strong and weak ties, playing direct and indirect roles, many years after arriving in London. This finding illustrates the need to avoid a simple binary of strong versus weak ties. Instead, my analysis shows the dynamic interplay between different social connections within wider networks. A single weak tie may lack sufficient trust to lead to a direct job offer. Rather my analysis suggests that weak and strong ties may interact in complex and dynamic ways. Moreover, my data also suggest that some weak ties may develop over time into stronger, friendship ties or enduring employer/employee relationships. Thus, my work provides evidence for the need to see weak and strong ties as points along a dynamic continuum of social ties that evolve and change over time.

Clearly, the qualitative findings in this chapter relate to particular kinds of jobs within the large and dynamic London labour market. I make no claims for generalisability. Nonetheless, the rich case study method presented here offers insights into the complex, varied and dynamic relationship between migrants' networks and employment.

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# Chapter 3

## Are “Weak Ties” Really Weak? Social Capital Reliance Among Second Generation Turkish Lawyers in Paris



Elif Keskiner and Ismintha Waldring

### 3.1 Introduction

There is an extended literature on the significance of migrants’ social networks in assisting their labour market incorporation (Portes, 1998; Zhou, 2005; Behtoui, 2007, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011; Lancee, 2010; Kalter & Kogan, 2014). There is evidence that migrants can benefit from the existing networks of their ethnic communities as new-comers to the societies since they may lack certain resources such as language proficiency or educational qualifications which may not be recognized or valued upon arrival (Ryan, 2011; Kalter & Kogan, 2014). Yet such networks are also criticized for impeding upward mobility due to the ethnic group’s pressure to control the migrants’ activities (Portes, 1998) or they may not connect the migrants to high level jobs (Kalter & Kogan, 2014) leading to lower wage returns (Behtoui, 2008). On the other hand social networks with the majority population is often seen as leading to positive labour market outcomes in terms of employment and income (Lancee, 2010; Kalter & Kogan, 2014).

The function and usage of social networks of the second generation in reaching successful labour market outcomes is less integrated in this literature. As descendants of migrants, the second generation occupies a unique position in terms of access to various forms of networks, both within the ethnic group from which they hail, as well as from the society in which they were born and raised. There is evidence that the ethnic community could form a source of social capital for second generation educational success (Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Modood, 2004; Zhou, 2005; Shah et al., 2010; Lee & Zhou, 2015). These studies are mostly concentrated on certain groups such as South Asian and Chinese ethnic communities in the US and in the U.K. Social networks with the majority group, usually termed as “significant others” are also considered positively crucial for second generation mobility

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(Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Rezai, 2017). The role of social networks regarding labor market outcomes of the second generation is more mixed. Van Tran et al. (2019) show that the educational success of Asians and Chinese in the U.S. do not really translate into similar outcomes in the labour market. Chin (2016) talks about a bamboo ceiling and states that the Asian-Americans have the educational credentials but lack the significant social contacts in reaching senior positions. These findings point to the exclusionary working environment that second generation professionals find themselves in. Waldring et al. (2015) illustrated how subtle forms of discrimination in organizations continue to be a reality for second-generation professionals, even for those who are in leadership positions. Hence social network activities could be one way in which descendants of migrants try to overcome such barriers in their jobs. Yet, institutional racism and exclusion already can impede access to these social networks for the second generation, hindering them in mobilizing social capital, as shown by the example of Chin (2016).

All in all the evidence of second generation social capital is mixed and shows variation across ethnic groups and their class and resource composition (Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008; Lee & Zhou, 2015; Van Tran et al., 2019) but also across institutional contexts and employment sectors across different countries (Crul et al., 2017) as well as the status of employment that the second generation wants to attain (Shah et al., 2010).

In this chapter, we focus on highly-educated second-generation professionals working in the law sector in the Paris region. We use the data from the ELITES project where upwardly mobile Turkish second generation with low educated migrant parents were researched in four different countries (Crul et al., 2017). The ELITES study underlined the significance of institutional and sectoral conditions in the upward mobility patterns of the second generation and disclosed the forms of capital that employment sectors require for the occupational success second-generation high achievers (Keskiner & Crul, 2017). Rezai and her colleagues (2015) show how second-generation professionals rely on their low-educated parents' emotional rather instrumental support both in their educational and labour market careers (see also Rezai and Keskiner in this volume). Waldring and her colleagues (2015) illustrate that despite achieving higher education degrees and leadership positions, second generation professionals still suffer from exclusion and subtle forms of discrimination. Konyali (2017) underlined how the highly educated second generation is able to "capitalize" on their ethnicity for their labour market success. Vermeulen and Keskiner (2017) have shown how ethnic organizations set up by the second generation in France and the Netherlands serve the purpose of bringing "like-minded" people together in creating bonding ties (p. 318). All these findings are in fact crucial to understand how the second generation can activate and access their social networks in their labour market pathways. In this chapter we study second generation lawyers who are newcomers in the law sector. During their journey, second-generation professionals' usage of social networks appears to be intertwined with certain characteristics within their professional field (Keskiner & Crul, 2017; Waldring, 2017), hence we start by explaining the structure of the law sector as institutional structures are found to be crucial in defining the role of networks

(Kalter & Kogan, 2014). Next we will look into how second generation law professionals alternate between strong and weak ties throughout their careers (Granovetter, 1973), hence pointing at the importance of temporality (Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011; Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018) in accessing different resources in the course of one’s career and life. There we bring a critique into the ethnic lens often used in classifying the social networks of migrants (Lancee, 2010), we question what is a weak and what is a strong tie based on the trust and resource embedded in these network ties. Furthermore we find “developing social capital as a resource” (Bourdieu, 1986; Keskiner & Crul, 2017; Keskiner, 2019), a useful approach in understanding the social capital of second generation lawyers.

### 3.2 Social Networks of Second Generation; Strong and/or Weak Ties and Temporality

The dichotomy between social networks with co-ethnics and the majority society has long dominated the discussion of migrants’ social networks. Putnam’s famous concepts of bridging and bonding capital have been popular in usage to understand social capital, where bridging capital is studied as connecting migrants outside of their migrant community and bonding capital as tying migrants within the ethnic community (Lancee, 2010; Kalter & Kogan, 2014). This approach also leads to comparing the uses of these networks, where bridging ties are often seen as more resourceful for labour market outcomes (Lancee, 2010), while bonding ties are seen to risk social control and closure (Portes, 1998). Yet this bonding versus bridging ties binary has been heavily criticized for generating a form of reductionism and forging a simplification of social ties. While individuals might simultaneously be members of different kind of networks, such network ties can encompass and lead to different forms of resources irrespective of their ethnic nature (Ryan, 2011; Geys & Murdoch, 2010, see the introduction chapter by Ryan et al.).

A similar dichotomy can also be traced in the second generation studies but it is less strict since the second generation, by their condition of being born and raised in host countries, are also embedded in complex networks compared to migrants. Studies of the South Asian and Chinese communities in the U.S. emphasized the resources and the culture of the ethnic community in assisting the educational trajectories of the second generation (Zhou, 2005). In her work on Chinatown in New York, Zhou (2005) talks about ‘interlocking network of ethnic relations’ within the Chinese community which encompasses both lower educated and higher educated migrants. Through involvement in various ethnic institutions, such as day-care, homework centers and religious organizations, migrant parents build, what Zhou (2005) calls “weak ties” within the ethnic community that bridges them to other co-ethnics from higher social strata allowing the flow of resources and information. Interestingly Zhou names ties with co-ethnics here not as strong but weak ties, since she points to a cross-class bridging role of networks. Based on their

second-generation study in U.S., Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2008) talk about a “*really* significant other” that “possesses the knowledge and experience to guide” the educational or occupational decisions of the second generation. In their definition, this real significant other can be outside the ethnic community, such as a teacher or a counselor, but can also be a family member, like a cousin who has had experience in the education system before (Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008).

These studies by Zhou (2005), Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2008) applied a more nuanced understanding of strong and weak ties where they underline the significance of resources embedded in the social networks of the second generation rather than the “ethnic” nature of such networks. In his famous discussion of weak and strong ties, Granovetter (1973) underscores the importance of the nature of ties and the social distance they bind rather than the type of contact. He stresses the importance of weak ties bridging people across social strata. Hence if the tie connects someone with another person within their own social strata, the tie does not yield significant returns be it within or outside the ethnic community. Ryan (2011) developed Granovetter’s argument further by posing a distinction between vertical and horizontal ties. She shows that among highly skilled migrants weak ties that connect people to higher social strata, hence vertically, lead to flows of information and other resources, whereas weak ties present within the same social strata, hence horizontal, do not yield many returns (Ryan, 2011, p. 721).

Social ties are also dynamic and they may differ over time, hence *temporally*, but also *spatially* in the life course of individuals (Ryan et al., 2008). Ryan and her colleagues (2008) illustrate how networks with other migrants may be of use upon arrival but how different networks gain importance in the life course of the migrants. Van Tran and his colleagues (2019) have shown that the educational success of second generation Asian-Americans is not directly translated to their labour market outcomes and Chin (2016) argues that the ethnic networks that were of use in the educational success of the Chinese-American second generation are not instrumental later in their careers and they lack “social networks that would provide information about important projects, initiatives, opportunities and hidden rules of work” (p. 72). Studying the case of Sweden, Behtoui (see Behtoui in this book) suggests that newcomers to the labor market face certain barriers to enter significant networks. These examples underline the fact that social networks are not only “enablers” of social mobility but they are also exclusionary mechanisms, especially when they act like the “old boys’ club”, blocking those with a different ethnic or class background. In order to deal with such difficulties, second generation may turn to the networks in the ethnic community. Agius Vallejo (2012) illustrated the significance of ethnic business organizations in assisting middle class Mexican-Americans’ labour market success. Agius Vallejo’s (2012) study is also striking as it shows how middle-class Mexican-Americans are concerned with giving back to their community and continue to connect with them and consequently such business organizations become hubs of a “middle-class minority culture of mobility”.

Vallejo’s (2012) study but also other studies on second generation people’s experience refer to an ongoing effort of developing of forms of capital throughout their trajectories, which also includes social capital (Keskiner, 2017, 2019; Keskiner &

Crul, 2017). Rezai (2017) has refined this building of social capital by making a distinction between social contacts that familiarize the second generation already in high school with majority cultural capital, for instance through classmates with or without a migration background, and those who become acquainted later in university and in their work environment. The act of developing social capital parallels Bourdieu’s (1986) definition of social capital which also requires active effort and investment, and can be deemed a resource when it results in returns. In Bourdieu’s take the convertibility aspect of (social) capital is crucial; this can be a beneficial way to judge whether social networks are converted to a form of resource such as economic or cultural capital. Keskiner (2017) for example shows how the internship experience of the second generation helps build social networks which in turn could be converted to actual future labour market positions.

Building on this literature we will study the social networks of Turkish second generation lawyers in Paris. We will illustrate the exclusionary structures and the kind of old (boys’) networks that most lawyers were expected to function in. Going beyond the ethnic dichotomy, we will look into which networks they build and what kind of resources they were able to extract from these resources. We will pay special attention to the concept of temporality as the second generation alternates skillfully between networks and resources for their career advancement.

### 3.3 Method

#### 3.3.1 *The ELITES Study*

The interviews in this chapter are part of the ELITES project. The ELITES project was conducted from 2012 until 2017 and focused on second-generation professionals with parents from Turkey (Crul et al., 2017). The Turkish second generation shows significant variation with respect to their level of education, their access to the labour market, and their actual positions in the labour market across different institutional settings (Heath et al., 2008). Keskiner and Crul (2017) have compared the experiences of upwardly mobile second generation in different sectors in France and have shown how the forms of capital in which they invested show variation, uncovering the importance of social capital for the law sector. The varied usage of different forms of social networks deserved further scrutiny which we aim to do in this chapter. In this chapter, we discuss second-generation professionals with parents from Turkey working in the law sector in the Paris region in France. The lawyers presented are either trained or later specialized in corporate law. All eight respondents have passed the bar exam and possessed at the time of the interview at least 5 years of work experience.

### 3.3.2 *Data Collection and Participants*

We present 8 second-generation lawyers in this chapter. They all live and work in the Paris region and interviews were conducted during the spring and fall of 2013. The respondents were found through intensive mapping, searching for Turkish-sounding names in online databases, using professional networking sites such as LinkedIn as well as the Paris Bar where law graduates who pass the bar exam and practice law registers resulting in the following composition of second-generation lawyers (Table 3.1).

After the respondents were contacted, the lead author and a research assistant conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews that each lasted around an hour. The interviews focused predominantly on how the respondents had come to their current labour market position, what the role of significant others had been, and what had been valuable resources throughout their upward trajectory. The interviews were audio-recorded with written consent from the respondents and subsequently transcribed verbatim and anonymized. A second research assistant translated the transcripts from French to English before they were uploaded in Atlas.ti.

### 3.3.3 *Analysis*

For this chapter we used an issue-focused analysis which “describe[s] what has been learned from all respondents about people in their situation” (Weiss, 1994, p. 151). As an issue-focused analysis runs through four stages, we will briefly describe how we approached the data in each of the stages. During the first stage of ‘coding’ (Weiss, 1994, p. 154–156), we used Atlas.ti. We coded inductively, meaning that we created codes based on what the interviewees were telling us (Weiss, 1994; Saunders et al., 2018). For example, we created a code called ‘Law sector’, as interviewees mentioned that characteristics of the sector had an effect on how they had to organize and plan their career. The second stage of an issue-focused analysis revolves around ‘sorting’ (Weiss, 1994, p. 156–158). In Atlas.ti sorting can be done by creating so-called code groups under which we sorted the inductive codes made

**Table 3.1** Overview of our second-generation lawyers in the Paris region

Name	Gender	Year of birth	Occupation
Cagla	Female	1986	Lawyer, small firm
Adem	Male	1969	Independent lawyer
Orhan	Male	1977	Independent lawyer
Zehra	Female	1979	Lawyer, small firm
Fehime	Female	1979	Independent lawyer
Dilay	Female	1978	Independent lawyer
Meryem	Female	1966	Independent lawyer
Melek	Female	1981	Lawyer, medium-sized firm



during the first stage. One of the code groups we created was called ‘Features of Law sector’. Under this group we for instance sorted the code ‘Law sector’. But we also created code groups with a more theoretical angle, such as ‘Social ties/memberships’, under which we sorted a variety of codes that ranged from ‘Role models’ to ‘Extra-curricular activities’. The third stage is ‘local integration’ (Weiss, 1994, p. 158–160). During this stage we made an overview of what the respondents were saying when we looked into the bigger picture of what we coded. We developed a main line of analysis and we checked the material which did not fit this main line. An example of a main line, revolving around resources, would be that most of the respondents talked about the fact that for their career they capitalized on their ability to speak and understand Turkish. An exception to this main line was one respondent who in her career also heavily capitalized on her ability to fluently speak multiple foreign languages, yet these languages did not include Turkish. ‘Inclusive integration’ is the final stage of an issue-focused analysis and it “knits into a single coherent story the otherwise isolated areas of analysis that result from local integration” (Weiss, 1994, p. 160). In other words, during this final stage we further developed the empirical framework to integrate how the characteristics of the law sector are intertwined with the temporal pattern of which social ties become relevant at what point in second-generation lawyers’ careers in the Paris region.

### 3.4 Results

In the results we present four sections. We begin with presenting the social capital of family and parents in the trajectories of second-generation lawyers. We then describe the law sector and the rules of the game in the law field which informs the social networks of our respondents. The last two sections are the trust based relationships that our respondents developed with their mentors and how they use their social networks in the Turkish community to build clientele. In presenting our analysis we have selected three respondents who have followed different career pathways; Cagla who works part-time at a law firm and has her clientele, Fehime who is an independent lawyer and Melek who works at a corporate law firm. All three of them specialize in corporate and business law. In each section their quotes will be presented. This way we aim to show, how their social networks varied and their strategies changed over time.

### 3.5 Turkish Second-Generation Lawyers in Paris: Parental Support at Work

All of our respondents came from families where the migrant parents had lower educational background. Some parents started their own business such as in construction or as tailors, as a result achieving better financial conditions, but no parents

held professional jobs. This limited their role in assisting their children's education and later work careers. In her research on social capital of low educated parents and their assistance for their upwardly mobile children, Rezai (2017) talks about the crucial emotional support provided by the parents while they could not provide instrumental support for home-work or significant educational or occupational decisions. Below we provide some case studies to illustrate the role of parents when making educational or occupational choices.

Cagla is a female lawyer of Turkish origin who works part-time in a law firm run by a French female lawyer, and part-time with her own clients. Her grandfather came to work in the manufacturing sector of France in the 1970s, soon to be joined by her grandmother and mother. Her mother was 18 when she came to France and later met her father in Turkey and they got married, which brought him to France. He was a tailor in Turkey and he continued this profession in Paris, Cagla's mother soon after joined him in the business. Cagla has two brothers; her older brother has a degree in biology but never did anything in the field. He worked with his parents and later launched his cleaning company. Her younger brother is studying law, following Cagla's guidance and in the future she hopes to start a law firm together with him. When talking about her parents, she mentions the limited resources yet the emotional support she felt;

Actually, my father's company was in the same street as our apartment block and I studied in our kitchen and he would come in his break to see if I was working and when he saw that I was demotivated he would motivate me. All the time, we were a team.

Interviewer: And did he help you with your homework ?

No, no.

Also when talking about finding internships later in the law field she underlined that her parents could not be of help;

They had no means to help me more. They couldn't find an internship for me because they didn't know (how). (This meant) I had more freedom. When you initiate (things) yourself it's easier to find an internship, yes I think that (is the case) really.

When such support was not present in the family, significant others became crucial (Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008). For example Cagla talks about a friend who informed her about her choice of study, as an important turning moment in her career. That friend was Algerian-French.

First of all, there was a friend of mine that told me about the double Masters degree, I didn't know him very well, he was at my lycée, but he learned that I did the BAC, and he knew I was going to university so he asked me what I had applied for and he asked me why I didn't I apply for the double degree.

This double degree allowed her to combine finance and law studies, which she valued for the flexibility it provided her with. Later she decided to take the path of law, and studied for the bar exam. But thanks to her degree in finance, she specialized in the field of corporate and business law. Fehime was an independent lawyer working in Paris specialized in corporate and business law at the time of the interview.

Fehime’s parents arrived in France in 1978 after getting married. Her mother was very conservative: she didn’t want her to study or work and tried to raise her traditionally. Yet her father had dropped out of school and regretted his decision, so he supported Fehime’s studies. After working in different jobs, her father soon started launching his own entrepreneurial endeavors, these ventures were also useful for Fehime’s learning process;

He (Fehime’s father) tried many areas: textiles, food, catering, he tried many things, he had two bankruptcies at the time. When I was young I always helped him. In the companies where I did my internship, people always said that I already seemed like a professional: this was because I used to help my father with his commercial documents. I helped my father to prepare his papers from 14 years old and still do it.

This quote shows how helping her father indirectly led to the development of resources for doing business which she benefited from later in her work. Nevertheless she didn’t receive any instrumental support for her education and sometimes even lacked emotional support from her mother. When asked for the role that her family played in her professional career, such as choice of profession or finding of internships, she said:

None. Because they don’t understand what I am doing. When they have problems I will always protect them, I do, but they don’t understand (what I do) because they haven’t studied.

The third profile we present is Melek, who was working in a medium sized corporate French law firm for 7 years at the time of the interview. Melek was born in Turkey and she was 2 years old when her parents migrated to France. She talks about having difficulties in the first years of her education. Her parents emotionally supported her education and her decision to become a lawyer but again fell short of providing instrumental assistance. Talking about the assistance she received she says:

The difficulty was that I didn’t have any support for school at home. No one that could help me with my homework or that could understand my homework, but the positive side was that compared to other families with Turkish origins, that push their children to work with them in the manufacture, my parents asked me for help sometimes, but they wanted me to do my homework. And my education was important. Even if they couldn’t help me they would ask me if I did my homework. So they pushed us to study.

The three case studies exemplify the conditions for all of our respondents; our respondents entered the field of law lacking fathers or mothers who are also lawyers or who could provide any form of social networks or information regarding the choice of the profession or finding internships. However, all of our respondents received emotional support at least from one of their parents, who would stress the importance of studying, check if they are doing their homework and, in some cases, pay for extra courses. Interestingly even involving second generation people in their own business with language related or administrative tasks, helped our respondents develop skills for their business careers.

### 3.6 The Law Sector: Rules of the Game

The characteristics of the law sector and the institutional structure are important to understand how second generation lawyers access their social networks throughout their careers (Keskiner & Crul, 2017). The characteristics of the employment sectors have a great impact on the nature of how social ties function. In the current book Louise Ryan compares the strategies of migrants across employment sectors in the UK and Lang, Schneider and Pott examine the experience of second-generation in the public and law sectors in Germany.

The manner in which the law sector in France is perceived and described by the second-generation lawyers we interviewed is broad but also remarkably identical. The respondents talked about both negative and positive characteristics of the sector such as competitiveness and long and irregular working hours, but also flexibility and independence, a good income, as well as “brotherhood” and loyalty.

In theory, we have to be respectful to each other. But politeness doesn't exist between lawyers. The lawyer world is more competitive than anything else. There is real competition, maybe that is something that belongs to our career, it is true that people in the lawyer world try to put down other lawyers, to take cases, to have something for themselves, a competitive mindset is always present. This profession is very individualistic.

The gap between what our respondents had learned in law school regarding some of the rules of the game, and their actual experience in the field, points to their newcomer position in the field as second-generation lawyers. For all of the second-generation lawyers in our study, their acquaintance with the sector was a completely new one. None of the respondents knew of any lawyers in their families and so their entrance in a law firm, either when doing an internship or when obtaining their first paid position, was always for the very first time in their lives:

It's not that things were strange but it was more that I didn't know how to behave towards an associate, how to behave towards other employees, how to behave towards other interns, with secretaries. Everyone has their own place.

What is interesting about the quote above is that Melek refers to cultural capital in terms of manners and behavior, and not to the content of the work she was supposed to do as an intern. Melek further explains her experience by stating that during her time in law school, characteristics of the sector were mentioned, but the topic of “how to behave” in a prestigious firm had never been covered. Therefore, some of the (usually unwritten) rules of the game had remained hidden for her until she actually entered the field. Of course we can argue that this will also be the case for French lawyers without a migration background, especially for those who also do not have lawyers in their families. However, the second-generation lawyers not only had to adjust to the actual practices and ways of being in the sector, they also had to adjust to being and working in a predominantly, and sometimes exclusively, French environment:

Well actually in your family you talk Turkish, then you are at school with French people for several years etc. so you get used to it but, to really enter into an active life with French

people that was really (different), I was not really prepared for that. I don't know if you understand what I am saying but... (...) Well examples are little things, for example how to present yourself in a French working environment for example with French people. We don't know because we are coming from a Turkish background.

Despite the doubt that the above respondent refers to, second-generation lawyers learn the rules of the game in the law sector by observing, adjusting and anticipating. Obligatory internships and practicing law with senior lawyers were important components of their training as lawyers. In this process of learning, their relations with the senior lawyers and associates play a crucial role. Our respondents underlined that theory and practice is very different and you learn the job by doing and you learn it from other lawyers on the job. Another important characteristic of the sector, in which our respondents apply observing, adjusting and anticipating, is the principle in large law firms of “up or out”. This principle applies to all lawyers in a firm and it means that once someone is taken on as a lawyer in a firm, there remains a certain period of time in which that person can establish him/herself, build and expand their clientele within the firm, and either move up to become a partner within the firm or move out, usually to set up their own small firm. In achieving the pathway to become a partner most of our respondent felt blocked. One of our respondents, a female lawyer, explains this in the following quotation:

I decided to quit for several reasons. After 5 years of working in my firm, I had to make a decision about where I want to be on a professional level. Do I wish to become a partner one day? The partner positions are truly limited in my company... People told me that it is really difficult, especially for a woman to become a partner in this type of structure. You need to have a typical profile, so being a woman, I would say is already a little handicap and I don't say that because I am a feminist. I claim that because if I look around in my firm 80% of the partners are male.... So voila, I told myself either I continue to fight myself through this structure with the risk that I would never become a partner or I would leave and create my own firm. This way I could have the independence that I currently do. In contrast to my previous firm, I would be in direct contact with my clients since in my previous company it was more difficult as there was a hierarchy that needed to be respected.

All of our respondents had similar remarks about the closed and exclusionary nature of social networks at the top in the law sector and that the partners and seniors in such law firms are still composed of old boys' networks. In this quote our respondent underlines the gender aspect of this exclusion (please see the chapter of Schaefer for a discussion of gendered social networks). While we have no general statistics about the ethnic background of the lawyers who start their own companies, in our sample four of our eight second-generation lawyers had made the move out of a large or medium sized law firm. Positions as a partner are few, so this trajectory into self-employment appears to be a regular one for many lawyers. As independent lawyers, networking is especially important, if not crucial, for survival in the sector. The importance of developing a network is therefore an important characteristic of the sector that all of the second-generation lawyers acknowledge as vital. How the characteristics of “up or out” and the connected characteristic of developing and establishing a network and a client base relates to the trajectory and the use of social ties by second-generation lawyers, will be outlined in the coming sections.

### 3.7 Social Ties with Mentors and Senior Lawyers

As we discussed in the previous section on the law sector, all of our respondents had to conduct a series of internships where they became acquainted with practicing law. Hence all of our respondents learned the profession through working with senior lawyers or associates in the big law companies. Out of the 8 respondents we spoke to, 6 (females) mentioned having a mentor or a role model figure either in their previous education, internship or work experience or in the current firm where they worked. None of our respondents mentioned being “allocated” a mentor hence this was not a formal role but something that organically happened in the companies as the juniors couple with and assist senior lawyers. Below we present the cases of Cagla, Fehime and Melek to exemplify this social network to a high(er)-status lawyer.

When respondents referred to a mentor, they defined the relationship in relation to **trust** and **knowledge transmission**. This was a person who was hierarchically higher and resourceful. They looked up to and learned from this person. Comparing herself to others who quickly start their own companies, Cagla decided to combine working in a law-firm with building a clientele;

There are very few firms where you can work part-time. And this was one of the few. I applied for all of them and it's funny when I got this interview it was the first time that I really wanted the job. Because Chantal<sup>1</sup> is someone that I immediately, recognised myself in. I wanted to become this lady and now we have worked together for 2 years and I still want be this woman. I like her a lot, I like the way she presents herself, I like her way of working, her human side...I don't know what I would have done if I had set myself up on my own like the others. That would have been a pity, I have learned a lot in the past two years and I am still learning a lot from her and I am advantaged regarding this.

Cagla values what she has learned from her boss and she thinks she would have missed out on this experience and knowledge if she went ahead with starting her own company 2 years ago. She openly defines her boss as a mentor;

She is my mentor, she ensures that I won't make the same mistakes, she shares her experiences with me, she is very generous, she corrects my mistakes, she gets angry when she has to get angry, she congratulates me when I need to be congratulated, she supports me when it doesn't go that well.

This mentorship relationship grants knowledge transmission but also helps the respondents build the **self-confidence** which is crucial for their success. Fehime has interned in various law firms in Paris. After passing the Bar Exam, she worked in an Anglo-American corporate law firm for 3 years. Having accumulated, according to her, sufficient experience she started her own law firm. Throughout her previous internship and job experiences she accessed a lot of resourceful networks who according to her taught her the profession and provided her with confidence:

I learned a lot. I was an intern, but at the same time they gave me work as a lawyer-employee so I really managed reaching conclusions and managing contracts. I was really involved

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<sup>1</sup>All names in the interview are anonymized.

with the work of the firm, despite my intern status. The oldest associate... was a member of the bar council. He taught me a lot, when I had difficulties he would help me without a problem, he was always available to explain to me things that I didn't understand...and that gave me confidence.

Fehime also accessed other senior lawyers in her previous working career. She names many French male senior lawyers from previous jobs and internship experiences with whom she sustained her relationships and sometimes re-contacted these people for case-based information or important career decisions. She calls these senior lawyers “mentors”; though they were not formal mentors that were appointed this role but people with whom she built a trust relationship over the years. Illustrating the degree of trust embedded in their relationship, she underlines that later one of these mentors asked her to recommend them.

Pierre from my previous company is one of my mentors and when I have some important questions regarding my career I still call him. The second one (mentor) is Leo who has become a partner now in my previous company (but at the time I was there he was a senior lawyer) and there is also Patrick who was formerly responsible for the banking and finance in Europe. So these men are in fact the ones that I call when I have huge decisions to make in my own work, if one day I have a big file and I have to ask them how can I do this or something like that they will answer. One of these men wanted to change profession, and he called me. He said “I need your help” and I said “OK what can I do for you?”, he said “someone will call you and you will have to recommend me”. I was so happy because I was his trainee and now I would get to recommend him.

This quote from Fehime also shows that the relationship with these social networks become mutual as Fehime also advanced in her career and became a resource for one of these senior lawyers. One important distinction in understanding the role of social networks is whether they lead to direct job opportunities (see the chapter by Ryan and also the introduction chapter by Ryan et al.). The majority of our respondents used these mentorship ties as resources in learning the profession and connecting to more people. Yet whether they lead to the actual creation of job opportunities and whether such mentors also helped respondents attain a position as a partner was open to discussion as most of our respondents did not attain that role. Most of our respondents talked about finding internship places during their studies, through open application, and then stayed with the same employer for their first jobs. Lang, Schneider and Pott (Lange et al.'s chapter in this book) illustrate how the grades from the bar exam are important to find a job in a corporate law firm in Germany, a similar pattern was not observed in France. Yet going to prestigious universities increased the likelihood of finding internship placements in big firms. Of the three profiles we picked, Melek was still working in the same company for 7 years. She hoped to become an associate in the company where she worked and she referred to her current boss as her mentor;

Well the fact that I am still here after 7 years is because the director of this firm, with whom I work, has supported me very much and it goes well and I didn't get bored. He has a lot of experience and my first interview went well and after some years he became my friend, he trusted me and he trained me a lot, I learned the profession through him.



During the writing of this chapter we have checked Melek's profile on LinkedIn and found that she was still working for the same law firm as a senior lawyer and has not yet become a partner. Perhaps she might have changed her goal of which we have no knowledge at the moment. When we study the tie that our respondents describe in relation to the senior lawyers or colleagues when they started working or they conducted their internships; we see that they talk about a resourceful relationship based on information and knowledge transmission. These networks can be interpreted as social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as they required an investment and were converted into other resources such as symbolic and cultural capital around which the law field revolves. Moreover, without exception, all the seniors that our respondents refer to are from the ethnic majority group. Applying Granovetter's theory (1973) they can be seen as weak ties that bridge across social status and deliver resources yet the "weakness" aspect is questionable since they were based on almost mutual trust and enduring relations hence were also "strong". In line with Ryan (2011), they are also vertical ties connecting the second generation lawyers to higher-ranking seniors or partners.

It is also crucial to underline that our respondents did not assess these networks using an ethnic lens but concentrated more on the resources and the trust relationship embedded in them. We identify two conditions for this "lack of ethnic lens". The first one is the structure of the law field that necessitates learning the profession on the job from other colleagues and seniors. For the second-generation lawyers who entered the law field; this condition could only be fulfilled with senior lawyers, colleagues and associates of French origin. Secondly, they did not necessarily prefer senior lawyers with a French origin: it was simply the case that senior lawyers with Turkish or other migration origins were not present in the field, and interviewees' parents were also not equipped to assist them in the law sector.

### **3.8 Social Ties Related to the Ethnic Community: Temporality, Convertibility of Weak Ties**

Even though our respondents did not see their ties with mentors and other associates through an ethnic lens, later in their career when they begin their own firms, or wanted to build their own clientele they turned their focus to the Turkish community and started activating their language and cultural capital related to Turkey (Rezai and Keskiner in the book; Keskiner & Crul, 2017). At that stage in their career, ethnic community and resources were sought and valued.

Temporality of social ties is a useful concept to understand this pattern. 'Going beyond the snapshot' Ryan and D'Angelo (2018) illustrate the significance of encapsulating dynamism and complexity of networks over time (p. 157). These studies further reaffirmed the temporality and contextuality of networks as certain social ties may become important in different phases of a migrant's trajectory (Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan & D'Angelo, 2018). This was also true for the second-generation Turkish lawyers in France; when making their educational or occupational choices,

during their training in the university or when they were looking for an internship, or in the beginning of their law career when they had to learn the profession from senior experienced lawyers, the resources in their family or in the ethnic community were not of assistance. Hence in the beginning they turned to their classmates or friends of French origin and later also to senior lawyers of French origin to learn the profession. However later, when they needed clients, their Turkish networks were discerned as a crucial source. Reciting Cagla’s case who combines both activities of working for a lawyer and building her clientele;

The work of a lawyer is generally a liberal job, this implies that, even if I work for another lawyer I have the liberty to develop my own client databases. Ehm, because of my Turkish origins, I have developed a personal clients database quite quickly, because the Turkish people from here, that don’t necessarily talk French. They look for a lawyer that speaks Turkish, that permits them to not have communication barriers, so very quickly I developed my own clientele. , With other clients that I had, it augmented quickly till the moment that I couldn’t work on my own cases anymore, whilst working for another lawyer full time. So I looked for a new job part-time. Two days I would work for myself and Wednesday Thursday Friday I would work for the company.

In doing so they activated certain forms of capital they already embodied. First of all language capital. The second-generation lawyers we interviewed were proficient in Turkish, French and some in English or German. In order to expand their clientele, they invested in their Turkish language skills. Again Cagla conducted one of her internships in Istanbul both in order to enhance her language skills but also to broaden her social networks;

I have a second manner of working with Turkey: with Turkish people in Turkey. Turkish companies that need a lawyer from here... And accordingly I worked for 6 months in Turkey, I did my last internship in Istanbul at (anonymized name of a Turkish company) so I got to know people and the first way in which a lawyer can get clients is through word of mouth, and this gave me clients. And after that it was my environment that consulted me when there was something... There are several things, my name appears on all lawyer lists that states lawyers that talk Turkish in France.

Here it is important to underline that it is not only the “ethnic resource” that they capitalize on but also their French cultural capital. *The intersection of different forms of capital are converted into social networks.* The quote shows how Cagla actively invested in building her social networks and resources in Turkey. Her effort is very much in line with Bourdieu’s definition of social capital and convertibility; her language and cultural capital related to Turkey allowed her to conduct an internship in Istanbul and generated social networks in Turkey. This way she extended her clientele to Turkish people doing business in France but also French firms wanting to do business in Turkey. This resource even expands beyond the borders of France and Turkey and connects her to job opportunities in other countries, such as Germany;

There are connections with all countries where there are Turkish people actually. For example I have a specialty in driving offences. These are lorry drivers and it is a company managed by Turkish people in Germany, they do many projects in Europe etc. When these drivers have an issue in France they call me, Voilà, actually I won a case, for one company in Germany. Since then I have contacts through that, so yes I work with different countries

in which there are Turkish people in general. But in the end I am a lawyer concerning French law, so in France. Even if I have a client from a different country I still work in France and in French.

At the end she makes an emphasis on where her expertise lies, being a French lawyer in France, while she capitalizes on her ethnicity. Furthermore this also illustrates how the existence of Turkish migrants and their descendants in several EU countries could create business for the second generation lawyers and professionals in other EU countries. Fehime followed a very comparable strategy as an independent lawyer. The majority of her clients were of Turkish origin and she also invested in her social networks in Turkey. She achieved this by working in a partnership with a Turkish firm when she started her own office:

In 2009 when I opened my own office for the first time, I spent my first months in Istanbul. Why in Istanbul? Because if you want to work for Turkey and France you have to have a foot in both camps. And I was in Istanbul from September 2009 until March 2010. And I put into place a partnership with a local firm, we worked together. I went to the different commercial chambers in order to introduce myself as a lawyer etc.

At the time of the interview she grouped her clientele into three categories; French companies doing business in France, French companies doing business in Turkey and Turkish companies doing business in France. The ventures of Turkish-French people were grouped under the French companies. Among the three respondents the one who relied least on Turkish clients was Melek. Her clientele came from the French company where she worked. Nevertheless she underlined that she also uses the Turkish clientele as a resource;

We have the right to have files personally, so the files that I have come from my Turkish network, it's through connections for example through my dad about someone that wants to open a shop, or commerce, or firm and he says my daughter is a lawyer if you want... so thanks to that I have personal clients but it is not really a structured network, its knowing people through knowing people because I am Turkish. There are some connections but it is not really a network.

It is interesting that Melek, calls these contacts “not really a network”. This has to do with the fact that she invested in these social networks much less than the other respondents who have their own businesses. Furthermore her commentary also shows how the family can serve as a source of clientele like the ethnic community, when a lawyer gets his or her clients. Studying ethnic entrepreneurship and social capital, Anthias and Cederberg (2009) see ethnic bonds as useful in the context of exclusion and discrimination, nevertheless the context also determines when such ties are resourceful. It is questionable whether we can call our lawyers “ethnic-entrepreneurs” yet there are parallels. Their businesses do capitalize on ethnicity as a resource, be it through contacts in the community or cultural capital related to Turkey. There is mostly a co-ethnic clientele base yet they also serve clients from France.

It is important to underline that contacts with their clients are rather “weak ties” than being based on bonding or trust relationships. These weak ties do have a bridging function for the migrant community; we see that our respondents as highly educated lawyers form a vertical weak tie for the co-ethnics. Hence the

second-generation lawyers switch to a role of being the higher status resource for the ethnic community (Anthias & Cederberg, 2009) or the vertical tie in the community (Ryan, 2011).

### 3.9 Conclusion: Bridging of Resources

In this chapter we have tried to integrate the literature on second generation people social networks in the labour market with the discussion of migrants’ social networks. There is an extended literature on the social network ties of migrants and how these networks play a role in their labour market experience (Portes, 1998; Behtoui, 2007, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011; Lancee, 2010; Kalter & Kogan, 2014). The experience of the second generation with building, activating and using social networks is both similar to and different from migrants’.

The first difference is the newcomer status of the second generation. While migrants may need to rely on their ethnic community as newcomers to the country (Ryan, 2011), the people who make up the second generation are not newcomers to the country. They are born and raised in the host countries. However, looking at the second generation experience, for example, in the context of the education system, we see that they actually can be understood as newcomers in the institutions that they enter. As they went through the school system, their parents were oftentimes unfamiliar with both the language and the rules of the game within the school system, leaving many of the second generation to discover these rules by themselves (Keskiner, 2015; Rezaei et al., 2015). The same applies for their labour market experience; we note that the second generation, and especially those with a higher education who establish themselves in a professional position, are newcomers in the field (Keskiner, 2019; Keskiner & Crul, 2017). Not only are many professional organizations unfamiliar with the presence of second-generation professionals (Waldring, 2018), second-generation professionals themselves usually lack, for example, parents or family members who possess the necessary information or relevant social networks that might function as enablers in the field (Keskiner & Crul, 2017). This required second generation to actively invest in building forms of capital, especially social capital in their social trajectories (Keskiner, 2019).

Regarding the temporality of social networks, the second generation had a similar experience to migrants. Focusing on the case of Turkish second generation lawyers in France, first of all we were able to illustrate how they actively accessed and mobilized different forms of social capital throughout their trajectories starting from their education onwards. Hence, temporality of social networks is crucial to understand (Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan & D’Angelo, 2018) the network choices of the second-generation lawyers. In the beginning of their law careers, thanks to the structure of the law sector, they had to conduct internships, and they learned the profession from senior lawyers of the majority group. These networks can be called “weak ties” based on Granovetter’s definition (1973), as they were resourceful and bridging them to individuals who occupy vertically higher position. Yet the concept

of weak ties is also tricky- as most of these relationships were based on trust and they were durable and reliable, sometimes even mutual as they second-generation gained more standing in the sector. Hence the so-called “weak ties” of second generation with their mentors were rather “strong”. Ryan (2016) argued tie strength can also change in time, that social ties that began as weak can become strong over time (p. 965). This argument also applies here; in the beginning the mentors were bridging weak ties that connected the respondents to work related cultural capital and over time they built trust relationships with these ties.

Regarding their relationship with the ethnic community, the highly educated second generation has a rather instrumental approach. Despite the lack of assistance of the co-ethnics during their education and in the beginning of their careers, later in their careers most second generation lawyers invested in building a clientele relying on their cultural capital in the Turkish community. Here they actively relied on their language and cultural capital related to Turkey and combined it with their professional knowledge and competency in French law. While this social tie can be called “strong” because of its ethnic connotation, compared to the nature of ties with the mentors they are quiet weak and lack a trust base. Here the contacts with the ethnic community, resemble the clientele of ethnic entrepreneurs (Anthias & Cederberg, 2009). Hence the professional contacts with the Turkish community is rather “weak”. Regarding the vertical or horizontal nature of these social ties (Ryan, 2011) instead of the community being a horizontal resource, it is the second-generation lawyers who are in a more socially advantaged position that provide a vertical resource for the community.

The experience of second-generation lawyers shows one more time that strong and weak ties should not be evaluated on the basis of ethnicity but based on the nature of resources they provide and the trust embodied in the contact. In the case of second generation lawyers we interviewed in Paris, we have seen that they develop strong “vertical” ties with their mentors of French background and weak ties in connecting to their community as clientele. This way they have a “bridging of resources function”; on the one hand they connect with co-ethnics and on the other hand they easily refer to their ties in a vertically higher location in the legal profession.

This bridging of resources is enabled through the convertibility of forms of capital across cultures. Bourdieu (1986) talks about how social capital requires investment and that it is convertible to other forms of capital. Yet in the case of second generation, which has a unique condition of being connected to two worlds, we see a complex constellation of cross-cultural capitals (Keskiner, 2019). For example, their Turkish language capital enables them to connect to ethnic clientele while their French language capital assists them to serve their Turkish speaking clients in the French legal system. It is their cultural capital (including linguistic capital) in France, as French lawyers, that allows them to also activate forms of capitals related to their ethnic origin. Hence the current chapter shows how strong and weak ties of second generation is also strongly related with their both types of cultural capital (Turkish and French), allowing them to bridge different worlds.

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# Chapter 4

## Context Matters: The Varying Roles of Social Ties for Professional Careers of Immigrants' Descendants



Christine Lang, Andreas Pott, and Jens Schneider

### 4.1 Introduction: Social Ties and Professional Careers of Immigrants' Descendants

While the body of research on social mobility and professional trajectories of immigrants' descendants has been growing considerably in the past years, our knowledge about the role of social ties for successful entries in the labour market is still patchy. Quite some research on the social networks of immigrants and their descendants has been focusing on the old question whether 'co-ethnicity' leads to a "mobility trap" (Wiley, 1967) or to which degree it can help compensating disadvantages and provide 'alternative' pathways to upward social mobility – this is, not least, one of the main pillars of Segmented Assimilation Theory (cf. Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou et al., 2008).

The distinction between 'ethnic' and 'non-ethnic' or 'cross-ethnic ties' is also prominent in migration research that takes up Mark Granovetter's distinction between 'weak' and 'strong ties'. Granovetter himself did not use ethnic categories in his definition of social ties (cf. Granovetter, 1973, 1371–73), and it is certainly questionable whether his distinction of weak vs. strong ties should conceptually be paralleled to the distinction 'ethnic' vs. 'non-ethnic' (or 'cross-ethnic') ties (see introductory chapter). 'Ethnic ties' can both be stronger and weaker, and the same goes for 'cross-ethnic ties' – even more so in a diversifying 'post-migration' society. Accordingly, some scholars have been clearly critical of the simplistic dichotomy of strong versus weak ties along ethnic lines (Ryan, 2011, 2016; Moroşanu, 2016). Ryan (2016), in particular, proposes to rather distinguish between 'horizontal' and 'vertical ties' and emphasizes that relevant ties connecting individuals to people in more advantageous social positions ('vertical ties') are not necessarily

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with ‘natives’, but may also be with ‘co-ethnics’. She also questions Granovetter’s suggestion that predominantly weak ties are at play in upward social mobility and argues that a certain strength is needed for ties to be useful (Ryan, 2016). Following Ryan, even ‘strong ethnic ties’ may thus be relevant for finding jobs that allow social mobility. There are thus still many unresolved questions regarding the kind of social ties that matter for professional careers of migrants and their children, which calls for further empirical research.

This chapter builds upon the criticism of the often too one-sided application of Granovetter’s concept of social ties in migration research and aims at moving beyond the dichotomies described above by using empirical evidence from two qualitative research projects on the professional trajectories of immigrants’ descendants. We argue that the relevance of different forms of social ties for their professional trajectories depends on the specific professional *contexts*, they (want to) enter – an aspect that up to date has received surprisingly little empirical attention (but see Keskiner & Crul, 2017). By comparing the role of social ties for the access to jobs in different professional sectors, we will demonstrate that the respective contexts shape whether and to which degree the strength or weakness of ties and the ‘ethnic dimension’ matter – and that this affects *in a particular way* the possibilities and trajectories of children from immigrant working-class families.

Further, we argue that it is necessary to conceive the relation between individual social ties and occupational contexts as a dynamic interplay in the sense that both undergo changes over time. These *dynamics of change* work in two directions: first, the relevance of different forms of social ties changes in the course of individual careers, and this also applies to the role of ‘ethnic’ or ‘cross-ethnic’ ties (cf. Ryan, 2016); second, also the contexts undergo historical changes through increasing global mobility and connections as well as demographic changes produced by immigration and children of immigrants’ coming of age. The more the latter enter higher status jobs, the more likely the flows of resources and information via social networks foster ‘self-propelling processes’ of upward social mobility among individuals of immigrant and working-class background (Crul et al., 2017, 335; see also the chapters by Keskiner and Waldring and Rezai and Keskiner in this book). Observing these processes does not mean to deny the continued significance of exclusionary and discriminatory practices towards children of immigrants and anyone labelled as ‘Other’ at all stages of education and in the access to the labour market (see for the German context, which we focus on in this chapter Kaas & Manger, 2010; Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2017). Regarding the persistent risk of discrimination in the access to jobs, social networks play an ambivalent role for immigrants’ descendants: while lacking contacts to potential employers may contribute to exclusion from jobs given that recruitment practices often draw on networks and recommendations (e.g. Jenkins, 1986; Bommers, 1996), opportunities to gather contacts in the professional field may allow to bypass potential discrimination in the regular hiring process.

We will show the contextual significance of specific social ties and its temporal dynamics by looking at the trajectories of immigrants’ descendants in two occupational sectors in Germany: law and public administration. These two sectors were

chosen because, beyond their differences, they show some relevant similarities: They are both characterized by a strongly formally structured and organised transition from education to occupation. In both cases this transition is accompanied by a meritocratic discourse that states the importance of individual qualification, while background aspects such as family background allegedly only play a minor role. As we will show in our analysis, social ties related to the social and ‘ethnic’ background matter quite considerably. But they matter in different ways in both sectors – an observation which we strive to explain.

## 4.2 The Role of Context – A Brief Look into the Literature

Since Granovetter’s seminal work, a considerable number of studies has demonstrated the importance of social ties for finding a job and further developed the original hypotheses (Lin, 1999; Marsden & Gorman, 2001). But so far, there is only limited knowledge about the influence of *occupational contexts* on the type of social ties and their overall relevance for job access and mobility trajectories. Variations in the use of social ties are often attributed to socio-economic and occupational status (Marsden & Gorman, 2001, 467ff.), while less research has systematically investigated the role of institutional contexts (see also Gerber & Mayorova, 2010; Sharone, 2014). Yet, there are some empirical indications that they play an important role.

Particularly studies on the Chinese context have challenged Granovetter’s argument of the ‘strength of weak ties’ arguing that due to the specific Chinese cultural and institutional context, strong ties would be more important for job seeking (e.g. Bian, 1997; Xiao & Tsui, 2007; Obukhova & Zhang, 2017). Further, a number of comparative studies find cross-national differences between the US (where the majority of research has been conducted) and other national contexts regarding the relevance of networks (De Graaf & Flap, 1988; McDonald et al., 2012) and the strength of useful social ties for job seeking (Sharone, 2014). These are explained by institutional differences in labour markets and hiring processes, such as the degree of bureaucratization.

In migration research, some empirical studies on the role of social networks for labour market integration address the relevance of receiving contexts (Kalter & Kogan, 2014; Toma, 2016), yet they focus on migrants, not on immigrant children whose conditions for labour market entry differ. For children of immigrants, Crul and Schneider (2010) emphasize the role of institutional contexts for individual trajectories. In their *Integration Context Theory*, they show this particularly in the field of education: national school systems in Europe produce very different educational outcomes for children of immigrants who entered these systems with very similar starting positions. This obviously has effects also on the transition to the labour market and the options for different professional pathways. But pathways also differ because occupational fields react in different ways to newcomers of working-class and/or immigrant background and provide different mobility opportunities – even when there are no differences in the formally necessary educational

credentials to fellow newcomers of non-immigrant and middle-class background (Lang et al., 2018; Keskiner & Crul, 2017; Crul et al., 2017).

More generally, social theory supports the assumption that social contexts shape the relevance of social ties for professional mobility. Granovetter (1985) himself emphasized the embeddedness of (economic) actions in social structures. Giddens (1984) conceived the continuous interrelationship of social structures, producing and framing actions which in turn reproduce or challenge given structures. In similar ways, Luhmann's systems theory models the co-constitutive interdependence of social systems, forms of inclusion and social identities, whereas Bourdieu would distinguish field-specific as well as field-generating forms of capital, habitus and (formal and informal) modes of access or 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu, 1979; Nassehi & Nollmann, 2004).

Both theoretical and empirical studies thus suggest that the analysis of social ties should consider the respective social contexts they connect or are embedded into. We can assume that for social mobility and professional trajectories of immigrants' descendants, apart from their family and educational settings, especially the occupational context matters. However, up to date there is only little knowledge about how exactly institutional or organisational conditions of occupational fields exert an influence and what kind of ties play which role for the access to jobs or the professional advancement – especially for 'social climbers' whose participation in certain sectors of the labour market is anything but the rule. This question requires closer examination. Since the context-specific form and relevance of ties call for a comparative perspective, we will now take a more detailed look at two contrasting cases in order to identify similarities and differences of the contextual influence.

## **4.3 Two Case Studies: Making a Career in Law and Public Administration in Germany**

### ***4.3.1 The Empirical Material***

The two case studies that we want to present work with empirical material that comes from two research projects in Germany. In the *Pathways to Success* project we studied upward social mobility trajectories of children from working-class families into professional positions in four sectors: law, business, teaching, and public administration. These trajectories were collected in the form of 70 in-depth interviews with offspring from working-class families who had immigrated from Turkey and 20 interviews with children from non-immigrant working-class families (see Lang et al., 2018). The interviews focused particularly on the childhood and school

experiences, the educational trajectories and transition into work, and finally the professional careers until the moment of the interview.<sup>1</sup>

The second database this article builds on derives from a PhD project, which had an institutional starting point: it examined the employment of immigrants' descendants in public administration, specifically at the local level – in three district administrations in Berlin (see Lang, 2019). The project produced interviews with staff members of immigrant background, but also with training supervisors, HR officers, integration commissioners, heads of administrative departments as well as political actors and NGO representatives. It focused mainly on the access to the middle grade of the local civil service via vocational training which is one of the major regular recruitment channels of public administrations in Germany. Since the project's main interest was on organisational recruitment practices and their effects, no specific 'ethnic focus' was pre-set. The family origins of the interviewees comprised single respondents of Lebanese, Iranian, Kazakh, and Polish background, two respondents respectively of Ukrainian and Vietnamese background, and 13 interviewees from families that had immigrated from Turkey. The predominance of respondents with a Turkish background reflects their larger share among the administrative personnel (Lang, 2019, 109).<sup>2</sup> Although the project sampling did not rest on ethno-national differentiations, the analysis investigated if and how such categories became relevant in organisational practices. However, for the focus of this chapter on social ties, we can exclude the specific ethnic background as a relevant variable, since in both law and public administration persons of any immigrant background are strongly underrepresented, so that the 'second generation experiences' described by our respondents in both research projects are very similar.

In this chapter, we focus on descendants of immigrant working-class families who are working in law and public administration. For the analysis of the law sector, we included 18 interviews with respondents from the *Pathways to Success* project working in three subsectors: in the judiciary as judges or state attorneys (four respondents), in law firms as employed lawyers (four respondents), and as independent lawyers with their own law firms (ten respondents).<sup>3</sup> Our public administration sample includes 34 interviews of respondents working mainly at the municipal level, but also in regional and federal administrative institutions (13 from the *Pathways to Success* project and 21 from the dissertation project). The age of the respondents at the time of the interviews ranged between mid-20 and 50 years;

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<sup>1</sup>As regards the sectors, the study comprised interviews with 27 lawyers, 19 teachers, 29 managers and entrepreneurs, and 15 employees in public administration. Another sampling criterion was place: the interviews were realised in Frankfurt/Main (31 respondents), the metropolitan area *Ruhrgebiet* (27 respondents) and Berlin (32 respondents).

<sup>2</sup>Individuals of Turkish origin also compose the largest group among Berlin's population with a migration background (Amt für Statistik Berlin Brandenburg, 2020).

<sup>3</sup>Some respondents had also worked in different subsectors in the course of their career.

some had just begun their careers, others were already professionally established.<sup>4</sup> As for gender composition: of the law respondents 11 were male and seven female; of the public administration respondents seven were male and 27 female, the latter reflecting the general overrepresentation of women in public administration professions.

The empirical analysis investigated what kind of social ties became relevant for our respondents' professional trajectories and how they became relevant, especially for the access to jobs and – in the case of independent lawyers – for establishing their law firms. We did not focus on our respondents' general social networks but only on those contacts which offered relevant resources, i.e. social capital (Lin & Erickson, 2010, 4). For each interviewee we coded the function of social ties for the trajectory, the types of ties (e.g. friends, family, professional contacts, institutional contacts), and their ethnic composition.

### ***4.3.2 Comparing Professional Fields: Law and Public Administration***

The basic structure of the public administration in Germany as well as of most of the law professions goes back to the Prussian state – which was exemplary for the aspired rationality of its bureaucracy and institutions. Despite being a monarchy, it became a model for how a 'modern state' can and should be effectively organised and, ideally, serve not only the rulers, but also the population. Some of its basic principles are still in place which especially includes a strong state influence on those professions that Prussia considered to be of particular importance for the state functioning and its provision of basic welfare aspects: teaching, jurisprudence, medicine, and administration. Germany's educational system is still basically public from primary to higher education, and also private or denominational schools have to follow the public curriculum. In the above mentioned professional fields, the German state still not only regulates, but also *organises* the pathway until becoming a full professional, including the transition from higher education into professional activity by taking the final exams and by providing a structured period of compulsory traineeship programs – even though, in the end, most doctors and lawyers will not become part of the civil service or work in public institutions.

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<sup>4</sup>It is a particularity of the German case that due to the early beginning of labour force recruitment in the so-called 'guest workers'-regime in the mid-1950s and the agreement with the Turkish government dating to 1961 (cf. Rass, 2010), the first native-born children of Turkish immigrants are currently approaching the age of 60. Due to the later start of the recruitment, the same group is considerably younger in other European countries. However, the older respondents and their careers are even much more exceptional in their professional fields than the main group within our sample. For the analysis, we focus on the group of respondents that had already made the access, but was still in the process of making a career – i.e. between the early 30s and early 40s in the law sector, and the early 20s and early 30s in the field of public administration (for generational differences within the second generation of Turkish background see Schneider, 2010).

Besides the strong role of the state in the organisation of access to law professions and public administration, both occupational fields are characterised by a meritocratic discourse that states the importance of individual qualifications, while asserting that the social or ethnic background would not play a role (or only a minor one) for access to occupational positions.

For each of the two fields we will subsequently first briefly sketch the main context characteristics before presenting what kind of social ties mattered for our respondents' professional trajectories and how they mattered.

## 4.4 Law

### 4.4.1 Educational and Occupational Context

In Germany, law professions require completed university studies, which end with the first of two state exams. This exam is quite demanding, so in order to pass or to get good grades, most students opt for repetition courses (*Repetitorium*) that are mostly not part of the tuition-free university program, but offered by private bureaus or coaches at corresponding costs (Kilian, 2016). The successfully passed first exam is followed by a mandatory 2-year traineeship period (*Referendariat*) that is organised by the administration of justice of the respective state (*Bundesland*). The *Referendariat* familiarizes graduates with the most important professional subsectors, such as the court system, public administration, or law firms, thus providing a good opportunity to establish contacts there.<sup>5</sup> At the end, there is a second state exam, also organised by the states (*Bundesländer*).

The grades of the two exams play a significant role for the transition to work. Obtaining a so-called 'exam with distinction' (*Prädikatsexamen*) serves as the most important dividing line for the access to the judiciary, i.e. to become a judge or state attorney, for high-level civil servant positions in public administration, or for entering one of the large prestigious corporate law firms. These subsectors also offer the highest social prestige within the law field, in combination with either the highest possible income (law firms) or complete job security in combination with a very good salary (civil service). Achieving a *Prädikatsexamen* has a strong positive effect on the later income (Freier et al., 2016).

Less than 20% of a graduate cohort obtain a 'distinction' in one of the two exams.<sup>6</sup> Those with grades below this line basically have three options: to start their own law firm, to become part of an existing shared office of independent lawyers, or

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<sup>5</sup>See for the concrete organisation in the 16 German states: <https://www.lto.de/jura/rechtsreferendariat/>

<sup>6</sup>See the statistics of Legal Tribune Online: <https://www.lto.de/jura/studium-zahlen/erste-juristische-staatspruefung/>; <https://www.lto.de/jura/referendariat-zahlen/zweite-juristische-staatspruefung>



to enter the legal department of some company or association.<sup>7</sup> The ‘distinction’ precludes but also creates professional opportunities. As one respondent told us, it was only when he – unexpectedly – obtained a ‘distinction’ in his first exam, that he started considering other professional options than becoming ‘just some lawyer’:

I always just wanted to pass, right? And then it was an exam ‘with distinction’. And, of course, that awakened some things, especially perspectives for working as a (corporate) lawyer or start a career in the judiciary. So, since the first exam went very well, I applied for the large law firms, because the grades were so good, right? I had never thought that I could end up in one of these big law firms, but then with the good exam I got hooked and realised that I could definitely work there. So, for my *Referendariat* I applied and worked in an American corporate law firm. (Ferhat Oktay, 37, independent lawyer in Frankfurt/Main)<sup>8</sup>

The law field strongly emphasises formal meritocracy for accessing its most prestigious subsectors. This held true for our respondents in the sense that ‘merit’, defined as having obtained a ‘distinction’ in the final exams, proved to be more important than family background or other non-professional criteria and thus a good starting point for a career in these sectors. At the same time, our research revealed a number of blind spots in this meritocracy: Our respondents, as offspring from working-class families, could usually not draw on family support in study-related issues and had limited financial means. Working in student jobs to afford the money for rent and living, however, can go at the cost of study success. In law studies, specifically, successfully passing the exam can be a financial question, since it is difficult to obtain good grades without attending repetition courses. But these courses can be quite expensive, especially the better ones. Further, in many parts of the law field, a certain upper middle-class *habitus* is taken for granted. This begins in university and frequently leads to rather separated social networks among students. However, the right *habitus* can then be more or less implicitly expected later from applicants for positions (Lang et al., 2018, 126f.; Schneider & Lang, 2014; cf. Hartmann & Kopp, 2001).<sup>9</sup> Against the background of these potential disadvantages for the offspring from working-class and immigrant families entering the law field, we will

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<sup>7</sup>It should be noted though that the judiciary over the past years has seen decreasing numbers of applicants which in some cases has led to less strict applications of the ‘distinction’-grade threshold for applications (see <https://www.lto.de/recht/studium-referendariat/s/nachwuchs-mangel-personal-justiz-kein-praedikat/>)

<sup>8</sup>All interview quotes were translated from German by the authors; all names of respondents are pseudonyms.

<sup>9</sup>Particularly interesting in this regard were the experiences of our respondents of working-class, but not immigrant background. One respondent illustrated the point with his expressed aversion to the so-called “Pearl Paulas” at the law faculty, i.e. bourgeois girls who were infamous for their arrogance and exclusionary attitudes towards everyone whom they considered to be “not worthy” of studying law. Another respondent mentioned an elderly lawyer who acted as his mentor during an internship stay in England. According to the respondent, this lawyer was important for him not so much because of his legal expertise, but because he taught him table manners and to develop “taste” (in the Bourdieusian sense) which was not only new to him as a child of farmers, but proved to be very valuable soft skills when applying for positions in prestigious law firms.

now investigate how social ties and what kind of social ties became resources for the professional trajectory.

#### 4.4.2 *The Role of Social Ties*

For the majority of our respondents, social ties mattered for entering the law field. Often, respondents got their first job in a law firm or in a shared office of independent lawyers where they had already worked before in part-time jobs and internships during studies or, more often, during their *Referendariat* (the 2-year traineeship). The relevant social ties were thus mainly ‘weak ties’ within the professional field. Acquaintances and former fellow students who they met at university, however, played a role, too. Depending on frequency, intensity, intimacy and reciprocity, those ties can be both weaker or stronger (cf. Granovetter, 1973, 1361). In contrast, only very few respondents could make use of social ties that were connected to their families or the social environment of their childhood and youth.

For building up social capital, the traineeship functions similarly well for all subsectors within the law field. Social ties established during this period facilitated the transition into the labour market also for those of our respondents whose exam grades were below the ‘magic threshold’ of a ‘distinction’ (*Prädikatsexamen*). The above cited Ferhat Oktay, for instance, got his first job after graduation in a renowned international auditing company, despite the fact that he had not achieved a ‘distinction’ in his second exam – but he had spent a part of his traineeship there:

I did my elective part at [this company], therefore they already knew me. And there I must have made a good impression, I don’t know. They said: “Okay, Mr Oktay, if you want to start here, you can start right away.” Perhaps I had the advantage that they already got to know me during my *Referendariat*.

However, we also find differences in the role of social ties across the subsectors we investigated – the judiciary, large law firms and independent lawyers – and depending on the exam grades. For those of our respondents working in corporate law firms and the judiciary, the good exam grades as a form of institutionalised cultural capital were more important for obtaining their job. All four respondents who worked as judges or state attorneys had obtained their positions without having had a previous connection to the employer; this was also the case for several of the respondents with a ‘distinction’ who had been employed in law firms at some point in their career.

But also for respondents with good exam grades, social ties to former fellow students, colleagues or former superiors in their *Referendariat* became relevant to be recommended for or informed about open positions or for receiving professional advice at the right time. For example, one of the judges we interviewed, who worked the first years of his career in the corporate law sector, applied for the judiciary only after a colleague advised him about entry modalities and motivated him to apply.

The social ties that became resources for trajectories in large law firms or the judiciary were ties exclusively to members of the non-immigrant middle-class which still dominates the law sector in terms of numbers and habitus.

The type and role of social ties differed for those of our respondents who became independent lawyers. To start one's own small law firm requires building up a clientele that allows to 'survive' in the competition with all the other independent lawyers in the respective city (see also the chapter of Keskiner and Waldring in this book). A Turkish name on a lawyer's office plate is still likely to 'put off' potential clients of non-immigrant background, but it can also work as a 'unique selling point' towards potential clients of Turkish or other immigrant backgrounds. Ties into the 'ethnic community' mattered for seven out of the ten independent lawyers of Turkish or Kurdish immigrant background in our sample. For a newly starting independent lawyer it might be a rational or effective strategy to build up a broad network of connections within the local 'ethnic community':

You have to be realistic: as a Turkish lawyer you only get Turkish clients. There is no Hans Müller going to pass by and ring my bell. No non-Turk will ever go to a Turkish lawyer. (Eray Dogruel, 40, independent lawyer in Berlin)

On the long run, we want to represent entrepreneurs and also do business criminal law, and you cannot do this, if you specialise on Turkish clients. At the same time, we knew that if we start a new office, there is a lot of potential because of the (high number) of Turkish population here, so that we would have some basic income in any case. This means that you cannot start with business criminal law, you have to have some experience. Entrepreneurs will not simply go to a freshman and say: "Take my tax offense case." [...] And the plan worked out, in the sense that a lot of Turkish citizens came to us. (Akin Tekin, 31, independent lawyer in the Ruhr Area)

However, the relevant 'co-ethnic' ties had mostly not been 'automatically there', in the sense that e.g. family connections within the respective communities would provide a solid starting point for the law firm. Three of our ten independent lawyers made use of pre-university 'strong ties' to establish their business by starting the firm together with a school friend or moving back to their hometown. Another respondent took advantage of a left-wing political 'co-ethnic' network in university whose members, in parallel to his career, became successful entrepreneurs and business people, and then chose him as their 'trusted lawyer'. In all other cases, in which a significant share of the clientele was of Turkish or immigrant background, the relevant ties were no 'strong ties', but had to be strategically developed by our respondents upon starting the law firm. This is described, for instance, by the following interviewee, a male independent lawyer in a mixed lawyers' office in Berlin:

Networking is incredibly important. [...] In business law [...] you always have to go to meetings, to dinners, to associations, to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and here or there, whatever plays a role in business. There are always events. Being present, behaving reasonably and building up an image as if you were perhaps a good lawyer (laughs). [...] It was only after I actually became a lawyer that I opened up to the Turkish community here at all, before I had nothing to do with it in Berlin. (Eray Dogruel, 40, independent lawyer in Berlin)

Another respondent established his law firm in front of the Turkish consulate of his city and became the consulate's official 'lawyer of confidence'. Having a Turkish

background and speaking the language was, of course, a precondition, but *decisive* for gaining this special role was that employees at the consulate knew him from an internship he had done during his studies. ‘Co-ethnicity’ worked as a door opener as much for him to the Turkish consulate as it might help creating a basic form of ‘trust’ for potential clients of Turkish background. While the commonality of the ethnic or immigrant background in Germany may serve as basis for a certain level of trust, these professional social ties to ‘co-ethnics’ can be qualified as ‘weak’, according to Granovetter’s definition, regarding the frequency, emotional intensity and reciprocal services characterizing them (cf. Granovetter, 1973, 1361; Ryan, 2011).

As regards building up a clientele, our respondents employed in large law firms applied similar strategies of establishing professional ties to ‘co-ethnics’, for example to Turkish business associations. They took advantage of the fact that increased global connections and the cost-efficiency logic of the corporate sector has led to a growing demand in skills that facilitate contacts and customer relations around the globe, be it language skills or so-called ‘intercultural competences’. In this context, the ‘ethnic background’ can become a resource that allows developing the own specialisation (or ‘desk’) within the law firm. A female associate in a middle-sized corporate law firm explained for instance:

I have now started to do a bit of acquisition [...] with regard to Turkish mandates. I’m still quite new, but, I mean, the partners here are all entrepreneurs and have to make acquisitions [...] so I’m just looking around and attend events, as far as possible. I get to know Turkish entrepreneurs or German entrepreneurs who have relations to Turkey, and try to build up something for myself. (Rezzan Altundas, 30, associate lawyer in the Ruhr Area)

Our interviews show that developing and using ties to ‘co-ethnics’ is a dynamic process which depends on the career trajectory. For some of the independent lawyers, building up clientele of Turkish or immigrant background was only the entrance point from which they strove to expand their scope, but then on the basis of professional expertise – as it was clearly stated in the interview quote by Akin Tekin above. For those having entered larger law firms, specialising on clients from Turkey or of Turkish origin can be a strategic choice at a later stage of the career after having proved their general professional skills – like in the case of Rezzan Altundas above (see also the chapter of Keskiner and Waldring in this book).

These strategic decisions for career development are not necessarily connected to a particular sense of belonging to the ‘ethnic community’. We find no direct relationship between being a lawyer for the ‘Turkish community’ and expressing ‘strong (ethnic) ties’ and identities in our respondents’ private lives: Maintaining professional networks that are based on a definition of ‘shared ethnicity’ – in the sense of a resource for building up ‘trust’ and facilitating communication (in linguistic terms, but also in terms of habitus or ‘socio-cultural familiarity’) – can go smoothly along with private relationships mainly to people from other backgrounds.

In sum, we can see that in the field of law in Germany different types of especially ‘weak ties’ became useful resources for the professional trajectories of our respondents. Social ties helped concretely to obtain a position or served more

generally as information channel about open positions; further, social ties were crucial for building up a clientele in the case of independent lawyers. By far most of this social capital was built up in a profession-related context: at university to fellow students, during student jobs or internships, or – which proved to be most relevant – during the compulsory 2-year traineeship *Referendariat*. We cannot say to which degree offspring of non-immigrant middle-class families make use of ‘strong’ social ties to relatives or parents’ friends in their access to jobs. But especially for the offspring from working-class and immigrant families the ties built up during studies and traineeship serve as important social capital and, at least partially, compensate the lack of previous connections in this predominantly non-immigrant professional field.

As our interviews show, these ‘weak ties’ can be both ‘cross-ethnic’ (especially in cases of access to the judiciary and to the field of corporate law) and ‘co-ethnic’ (partially in corporate law firms, but centrally for independent lawyers). Further, the significance of the ‘ethnic’ dimension of ties can change in the course of a career. This depends on the specific career path and specialisation, but also on contextual factors, such as the demand for specific linguistic skills and ‘cultural intimacy’ and the background of those holding relevant positions in the field. Vice versa, the narratives of our respondents demonstrate that professionally relevant ‘co-ethnic’ ties are not automatically ‘strong ties’ as also Ryan has argued for the case of first-generation migrants (Ryan, 2011); these ‘co-ethnic ties’ can also be career-enhancing ‘weak ties’.

## 4.5 Public Administration

### 4.5.1 Educational and Occupational Context

Public administration professions in Germany are structured according to two main dividing principles: (a) between civil servants (*Beamte*) who have full job (and pension) security and those with normal employment contracts (*Angestellte*); and (b) between different service class groups, which go along with different salary levels: ‘lower grade’, ‘middle grade’, ‘upper grade’ and ‘higher grade’ (*einfacher, mittlerer, gehobener, höherer Dienst*) (Bogumil & Jann, 2009). Access to administrative professions takes place primarily via internally organised qualification programs, and this is also true for career advancement to higher grades. Formal requirement for the middle grade is a 3-year vocational training (e.g. as administrative clerk) which combines training on the job in different departments of an administrative body with vocational school. For the upper and higher grades, a higher education degree is required, either from a specialised institution for vocational higher education (*Fachhochschule für öffentliche Verwaltung*) or from university, but then usually in combination with an additional preparation program. But, many

candidates for positions at higher managerial levels also access via internal qualification programs (Reichard & Röber, 2012, 14–17).

Immigrants and immigrant descendants are still strongly underrepresented in public administration. The German microcensus estimates for 2013 that less than 7% of the staff has a ‘migration background’<sup>10</sup> (Ette et al., 2016, 32) versus a share in the total German population of about 25%. Voluntary surveys in the administrations of the cities Hamburg (in 2009) and Bremen (in 2014) came to estimate the share of staff members ‘with a migration background’ at 9% in Hamburg and 13% in Bremen, with a total share of about one third of the population in both cities (Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2009; Die Senatorin für Finanzen, 2014). Also international comparison shows a particularly pronounced underrepresentation of children of immigrants in the overall civil service in Germany (OECD, 2015, 267). Since the ‘migration background’ is not included in civil service statistics, available data is limited, but it can be assumed that staff with a ‘migration background’ mainly works in lower positions (see also the recent study by Ette et al., 2021).

Since the mid-2000s, increasing the share of staff members with a ‘migration background’ in public administration has become a key objective of integration policies at all levels (Gesemann et al., 2012; Die Bundesregierung, 2012). Concrete programmes have been set up mainly on the local level, mostly targeting the access to vocational training within the administration, i.e. the access to the middle grade of the civil service (Gesemann et al., 2012, 54–55). In some administrations, the share of young staff members from immigrant families has indeed increased in recent years, but the lack of data makes it difficult to systematically measure long-term changes (Lang, 2019). Access to higher positions has so far hardly been an issue of concrete policies.

### 4.5.2 *The Role of Social Ties*

The trajectories of our respondents into employment in public administration show that social ties played a crucial role, particularly for the dissemination of information about professional options or open positions and for the motivation to apply. The lack of information appears as an important barrier for the access to this occupational sector. For most of our respondents who were working in public administration at the time of the interviews, public administration professions, and the civil service more generally, had been a ‘black box’ before. Hardly anyone had originally planned to enter this field, partly because of the mixed image, more often because they simply neither knew about the range of jobs and professions or the career

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Migration background’ (*Migrationshintergrund*) is the official statistical category in Germany for immigrants and individuals of immigrant descent: “A person has a migration background, if he or she or at least one parent does not have German nationality by birth” (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018, 4).

opportunities, nor did they know how to access the sector. Only very few of our respondents had seen a job advertisement or heard about public administration professions in the job orientation programmes in secondary school, at least not in a way that had made an impact.

Parents and other older relatives could not serve as role models either, since the parental generation of our respondents was largely formally excluded from administrative jobs for not having the required formal qualifications, or, in many cases, a German or EU-citizenship which is needed for civil servant positions.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, for many immigrants and their children, the main experience with the administration had been the rather formal or frequently even unpleasant contact at the local ‘Office for Foreigners’ (*Ausländerbehörde*). Our respondents ‘inherited’ the perceived and actual barriers their parent’s generation faced – in form of negative experiences, distrust or a lack of relations to persons working in the sector who could motivate applications.

In the large majority of the cases investigated (24 out of 34 respondents), the application in public administration was more or less directly related to social contacts who had passed on information about job or vocational training opportunities or given the advice to give it a try. In some cases, the information concerned specific programmes preparing young people with a migration background for the vocational training in public administration, which had been set up e.g. in Berlin (where the majority of the interviews were conducted), following the political objective to increase the share of staff members with a migration background.

In contrast to the law field, the relevant social ties were overwhelmingly private ‘strong ties’ (21 cases) and usually ties to ‘co-ethnics’ (15 cases): mostly friends, occasionally family members or neighbours, typically someone of their own generation who had recently started working in some public administration department or had shared information s/he had rather coincidentally come across e.g. in the media or in school. By contrast, institutional sources of information about job opportunities – e.g. teachers, job advisors, and counselling organisations – only played a role in six cases in our sample, partly also backed up by the advice of friends or family members. Quite typical trajectories are described, for instance, in the following two quotes. The first is by a young woman of Turkish descent who, after having finished her university studies, applied for a job at the employment agency. This job became the starting point of a career within public administration that led to her current position as a project officer in a regional state authority. The second example comes from a young woman of Turkish descent who had accessed public administration via the vocational training and received a position as school secretary after completion of the training:

A friend of mine who worked at the employment agency as job placement officer told me to apply at the employment agency: “They are looking for young women with a migration

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<sup>11</sup> This legal exclusion concerns non-EU immigrants, thus also those of Turkish origin, the largest immigrant group in Germany, as well as their children. Under the restrictive German citizenship law until its reforms in the early 2000s, also the Germany-born children of immigrants had to undergo long and demanding naturalisation procedures to be granted German citizenship.



background, you have good chances.” I was like, “no way” – the employment agency was out of question for me, and then I just did it, [...] more out of desperation, I must say. Then I had a job interview which I found quite good [...], because they did not ask so much for knowledge, but rather looked for social competences, and then I thought, well, you will do that for a while and keep on looking, and then I got in there. (Aysun Ulucan, 33, project officer in the state administration in Berlin)

My friend said: Look, I found something that looks interesting. And she said: Let’s apply together. Actually, that was really how it happened. I personally had not looked for the position because I had no idea. I didn’t know that you could do your vocational training in the civil service. (Ebru Öztaş, 22, school secretary in Berlin)

The importance of strong ties to friends and family members can be related to the specific significance of social ties for the access to public administration. As these examples show, the mere information about positions might not be sufficient for the decision to apply, it needs to come from a ‘trustful’ source, and possibly also some persuasion, to perceive it as an option for the personal trajectory. A certain level of trust seems necessary to overcome the above-mentioned barriers and distrust inherited from the parental generation. This is also demonstrated in the case of the following respondent of Lebanese background who entered the field via a preparation programme for young people with a migration background which her sister had told her about; after that she started the vocational training and became administrative clerk:

That didn’t interest me at all. Of course, I know where I have to apply for my identity card or that my parents had stress with the job center, you obviously see this at home. [...] When my sister came to me and said “Try it out, do it, it’s better than nothing”, I didn’t want to [...] until she really convinced me. (Iman Hussein, 24, administrative clerk in Berlin)

The importance of strong ties for the access to public administration leads to an interesting change of the field. Most of our respondents were still the first staff members of immigrant background in their departments. Some had reported from friends or cousins who had recently started working in public administration and motivated their own application. Now, having entered this sector, they became important network contacts themselves who regularly passed on information about employment opportunities to friends and relatives, and advised them to apply. This is exemplified in the following quote by a young woman who, at the time of the interview, had recently started working in a local administration:

Since I completed my vocational training, I’ve heard from several friends: Send me the address, I also want to apply there. Only then has it somehow become a topic. I think, before it was... maybe it should be promoted a bit more and also more shown to the immigrants that there is such a possibility. [...] My friends and acquaintances didn’t think too much about it. But when they now hear “public administration”, they think it’s good and that it’s a safe job, and many of them ask. (Handan Doğan, 23, administrative clerk in a district administration in Berlin)

In this regard, a common ethnic or immigrant background in Germany, can fulfil a similar function as strong ties to friends and family members: It may also create a basic form of trust and feeling of ‘likeness’, which may support that searching for a job in public administration becomes a serious option. A respondent who worked in the social services department reported for instance:

Recently, I had the daughter of a welfare recipient here, also with a Turkish migration background, [...] she saw my name [...] she asked me immediately in Turkish whether I was Turkish. [...] and then she said “ah, that’s cool” and then she asked me how I did my vocational training, and that’s really great, and how you can apply and this and that... (Sevim Güner, 30, administrative clerk in a district administration in Berlin)

The information and motivation disseminated via, in this case, strong ‘co-ethnic’ ties are important factors leading to growing numbers of young staff members of immigrant descent at least in some administrations. They positively influence the entry via vocational training to the middle grade of the civil service (Lang, 2019). This change happens in a particular historical moment in which rising political claims for more diversity in the civil service are leading to more interest in candidates of immigrant background. Higher positions, however, are still largely exempted from this dynamic.

In sum and in contrast to the law sector, we find clear indications of the importance of ‘strong ties’ and ties to ‘co-ethnics’ for the trajectories of immigrants’ descendants into public administration. This is also due to the fact that, differently from the law sector, the most important resource here are not previous contacts to future employers but ‘trustworthy’ information about professional opportunities – given the generally limited transparency of careers in public administration for outsiders and the particular barriers and ‘sceptical distance’ towards state authorities that children of immigrants may have learned from their parents. For creating a sufficient level of trust, social ties must not be too weak (see also Ryan, 2016), which in our cases involved some probability that the relevant strong ties were to ‘co-ethnics’. But, the ‘ethnic dimension’ in social relationships is an aspect that is currently changing in German society: family networks as much as friendship relations are becoming more and more diverse and thus ‘cross-ethnic’ (cf. Schneider, 2018). On the other hand, ‘co-ethnic’ ties are not automatically ‘strong ties’ – a finding that similarly applies to the field of law, as shown above. ‘Co-ethnicity’ may fulfil a similar function as strong ties by providing a certain credit of trust to individuals that do not belong to one’s close personal and ‘lived’ mutual relationships.

The case of public administration further demonstrates how changes in professional contexts and in individual trajectories are mutually interdependent, with social networks as the ‘mediator’. Contexts shape careers, but they are also shaped by them in the sense that, as the number of immigrants’ descendants in public employment increases, these individuals represent an increasingly relevant resource for following cohorts of similar backgrounds to consider working in public administration a realistic professional option. In this dynamic process, ‘co-ethnic’ ties can be a bridge between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’, into an occupational field in which migrants and their descendants have been strongly underrepresented. For a certain period, ‘co-ethnic’ ties are likely to become even more relevant for the access to this field than before. The case of public administration in Germany thus represents a good example for what was called ‘self-propelling processes’ above: The successful careers of the descendants of immigrants bring about a multiplication process that actively contributes to growing changes in the staff composition.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to add two dimensions to the discussion about the role of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’, ‘ethnic’ and ‘non-ethnic’ ties in professional trajectories of immigrants’ descendants. The *first dimension* is the interplay of individual social ties and occupational contexts. The ‘logic’ of how access is organised differs across different occupational fields, each field has its specific recruitment channels and modalities. They are more or less formally institutionalised and they can have facilitating or hampering effects particularly for young people of immigrant and of working-class origin.

As we could exemplarily show for the two fields of law and public administration in Germany, these contextual factors include formal aspects – e.g. required educational degrees, grades, compulsory training phases – as much as informal aspects, such as idiosyncratic and habitual elements and network connections for the access to student jobs, internships and information that can turn out to be the starting point for entering the field as a professional. As assumed, these contextual factors also shape how and what type of social ties matter for the successful transition into the professional career. In the case of law professions in Germany, the central role of the exam grade (above or below a ‘distinction’) in the definition of which subsectors are at all accessible is a limiting factor for those who lack the support and economic capital necessary to achieve very good grades, but it also opens up possibilities for those who manage it. The ‘meritocratic belief’ behind the grades – with all its blindness for the effects of social inequality on the chances to obtain them – is an argument for *not* taking into account social and ‘ethnic’ backgrounds when aiming at recruiting ‘the best’ for the most prestigious jobs. At the same time, the compulsory 2-year traineeship, organised by the state, offers each graduate a paid opportunity for not only gaining practical experience but also making relevant contacts in different subsectors, i.e. creating or strengthening ties which can prove helpful later on. Our data shows that particularly the weak ties established during the traineeship became valuable resources for a smooth transition in the job, partly compensating exam grades below a ‘distinction’. Social ties mattered even more for those who became independent lawyers, i.e. who entered a subsector in which successful transition does not depend on exam grades but on the ability to build up a clientele and develop a network. To do so, also ties to ‘co-ethnics’ became relevant since they allowed to strengthen the ‘unique selling point’ of an immigrant background in the competitive field of independent lawyers or in an internationally oriented corporate law sector.

The role of social ties clearly differs regarding the access to public administration. While the formal academic requirements are lower than in the law field – a vocational higher education diploma is sufficient even for many positions high up in the hierarchy of ministries –, the recruitment modalities are much more diverse and not always transparent for outsiders. Despite career advice provision in schools or at job centres they seem to be little known to young people in search for a professional perspective. For immigrants’ descendants, negative experiences with public

authorities may create additional barriers. In this context, information which is passed on via the social networks of those already inside the civil service becomes highly important. Our analysis shows that mainly strong ties and ‘co-ethnic’ ties play a crucial role for immigrants’ descendants since they provide the necessary amount of trust to seriously consider the information about entry and career options in the own professional decisions.

The *second dimension* is the dynamic of change both in the course of the individual career and as ‘historical change’ of a given field. With regard to the first aspect, we can see that the role of different types of social ties is changing, depending on whether it is about finding an entry point for making a career or about the development of a career over the years and opening up new fields of activity. Depending on the context, ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ ties can be relevant, as we have shown above with several examples from both professional fields. The second aspect is that the contextual premises are subject to historical change as the fields evolve in reaction to changes in society and even at a global scale. This change includes that people of immigrant descent gradually achieve higher positions and by this become ‘pioneers’ or ‘trailblazers’ for other ‘non-traditional’ groups. As it became clear especially for the field of public administration, it is the ‘pioneers’ in the professional fields themselves who contribute to this dynamic of change by distributing information about open positions within their social networks, or even putting a special emphasis on promoting careers of young people from immigrant backgrounds in their professional contexts.

Revisiting Granovetter’s theory of the ‘strength of weak ties’ (1973), we also argued that both strong ties and ties to ‘co-ethnics’ can be productive for the trajectories of individuals of immigrant descent. They do not necessarily hamper career opportunities in the mainstream labour market. At the same time, however, ‘co-ethnic ties’ are not necessarily strong, they can also be productive weak ties that open up opportunities for professional mobility. While we indeed find that contacts to persons outside of the ethnic or immigrant community are important to successfully access the labour market, our interviews indicate that the establishment of new networks between ‘co-ethnics’ in the course of the career may be useful. In these networks, the ‘ethnic’ and the ‘social’ closely intersect: Perceived similarities in family background and culture as well as common experiences as socially mobile children of immigrants in Germany allow trust and thereby add a certain strength which is needed for ties to be useful (cf. Ryan, 2016). Perceived similarities and shared experiences serve as a ‘bridging’ resource which, for example, facilitates the establishment of (weak) ties between highly-educated professionals of immigrant background or between them and other groups which make up (potential) clients. We can expect an increasing importance of such new ‘co-ethnic’ ties, the more socially mobile children of immigrants achieve high status positions in the labour market.

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# Chapter 5

## Access to Employment of the Second Generations in France: Unequal Role of Family and Personal Networks by Origins and Gender



Yaël Brinbaum

### 5.1 Introduction

In France, research on access to employment for second-generation young people has increased in recent decades, showing that descendants of immigrants experience more difficulties in finding employment than youth of French origin. Their transition-to-work varies, however, depending on their migratory origin, with certain groups such as young people of North African or Sub-Saharan African origin facing greater unemployment, while those of South European origins do not differ from the majority population (Silberman & Fournier, 1999; Brinbaum & Werquin, 1997, 2004; Frickey & Primon, 2006; Meurs et al., 2006; Silberman et al., 2007; Brinbaum & Guégnard, 2013; Brinbaum & Primon, 2013b). The difficulties of these groups are partly due to their class origins, their level of education and the fact that they more often reside in highly socially-segregated neighbourhoods, but they persist once these characteristics are controlled for. These remaining gaps, obtained over time and from different sources, indicate “ethnic penalties” (Heath & Cheung, 2007). They suggest discrimination in hiring, which has been confirmed by studies using correspondence testing (Duguet et al., 2009; Petit et al., 2013). These results are also consistent with perceptions of having suffered discrimination in hiring, mainly based on their names, ethnic and racial grounds (Silberman & Fournier, 1999; Brinbaum & Guégnard, 2012; Brinbaum et al., 2015, 2018).

However, other mechanisms have to be explored, in particular the way young people have found jobs, the channels used and the role of networks for accessing the labour market. In the French context, with a high rate of youth unemployment and the importance of a diploma in the labour market, the role of social networks has been shown, in particular for the less qualified (e.g. Degenne et al., 1991; Joseph

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et al., 2008). Lack of resources and social networks and selection of some channels may reinforce difficulties in the early career and so contribute to explaining ethnic penalties in the labour market.

While this subject is at the heart of social and political debates, and studies have increased to better understand the obstacles faced by these young people in the labour market, little attention has been paid to the ways in which descendants of immigrants have found employment. This chapter, therefore, proposes to analyse recruitment channels used, and particularly the role of networks, which has so far been under-explored for the second generations in France *a fortiori* with national and quantitative surveys.

So what about the descendants of immigrants who were born and socialised in France and for whom the question of language or recognition of educational qualifications is no longer an issue? Have they found employment through the same channels as their native French peers? What is the role of networks – and networks of particular types – compared to other channels (such as direct applications, institutional employment agencies, etc.)? Do we observe differences according to migratory and geographical origin? How does gender matter? What are the determinants of recruitment through networks as against more formal or institutional methods? Can social networks help descendants of migrants navigate persistent structural inequality and contexts of discrimination in hiring? What are the consequences in terms of the type of job held, for example whether it is permanent or fixed-term job, and whether it leads to social mobility compared to parents or not? In answering these questions, the chapter engages with themes also discussed by the editors in the introductory chapter to this book and by Lang et al., and Keskiner and Waldring in their chapters.

Using national data from the Trajectories and Origins survey, I focus on the second generations taking into account their diversity, and analyze the channels and social networks that led to their current job. I first compare the outcomes between the second generation minorities and the majority group by specific origins and then I analyse the determinants of being employed through personal or family networks rather than other channels in the French labour market, disentangling origin effects from other individual characteristics (such as gender, education, class background etc.) and job characteristics.

Analysis of the ways in which these young people access employment can help shed light on how the labour market functions, in particular the professional situation of descendants of immigrants, and the ethnic segregation of jobs in certain sectors. This contributes to a better understanding of ethnic inequalities in the labour market and of the social trajectories of the second generations.

### ***5.1.1 The Role of Networks and Migratory Origins: Little-Explored Links in France***

Sociologists have focused on the role of social networks in access to employment. Granovetter's (1974) pioneering work in the United States highlighted the role of social networks as important resources in access to employment, functioning as channels of information on employment opportunities (see also Lin, 1999). Granovetter developed the theory of the "strength of weak ties" (1973, 1974), which argues that weak ties (professional relations, acquaintances, etc.) are more important in the labour market for finding a job than strong ties (family and personal relations) and lead to better jobs. However, subsequent work has also shown in some circumstances "the strength of strong ties" (Degenne et al., 1991 for France; Granovetter, 2017; see also Ryan's chapter in this book): in particular, the importance of the family in access to employment of young people starting out on the labour market, and those who are low-skilled. This theory has been tested, but much less so for descendants of migrants.

Labour economists have also been interested in the role of networks in finding employment (Simonnet & Margolis, 2004). Research in the economics of conventions analyses how the labour market functions by looking at the ways and conditions in which candidates and employers are brought together (Marchal & Rieucou, 2010). This stream of research has highlighted the role of different channels in recruitment processes, the importance of direct applications in France, the role of networks and the market (through an "intermediary", whether it be personal networks/intermediaries or the job recruitment market)<sup>1</sup> and has shown the selectivity of channels in matching employers and candidates and their specialisation according to the characteristics of the employees recruited and the types of companies (Bessy & Marchal, 2009; Marchal & Rieucou, 2010). Although this trend has developed in France and has contributed to knowledge of the functioning of the labour market, neither migrants nor their descendants have been covered in this stream of research. Nonetheless, these approaches can contribute to the analysis of the labour market integration of migrants and their descendants.

As discussed in the introduction to this book, research has shown the role of social networks for helping migrants to integrate into the labour market (Portes, 1998; Zhou, 2005; Amuedo-Dorantes & Mundra, 2007; Behtoui, 2007, 2015; Ryan, 2011, 2016; Lancee, 2010; Lancee & Hartung, 2012; Kalter & Kogan, 2014); networks of their ethnic communities help migrants to compensate the lack of language skills, human capital or recognition of diploma (Ryan, 2011; Chiswick & Miller, 2014; Kalter & Kogan, 2014; Brinbaum, 2018b).

The impact on immigrants' labour market integration is however mitigated by the fact that networks may lead to a 'mobility trap' (Portes, 1998; Kalter & Kogan,

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<sup>1</sup>The recruitment market, which includes temporary employment agencies, public agencies, etc., is a highly complex one. Personal intermediaries are networks of relationships: family, friends, colleagues etc.

2014), lower wages or overqualification (Behtoui, 2008 and in this volume; Ryan in this volume; Bechichi et al., 2016). And in some cases there may be no association between the use of social ties and salary or job status. These networks contribute to an ethnic segmentation of the labour market and the development of “ethnic niches” in certain sectors with low paid jobs (e.g. Waldinger, 1994 for Mexicans). While studies initially emphasised the isolation of minorities from the networks necessary to find employment, they gradually highlighted their propensity to find their jobs more than others through ethnic networks (Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo, 2006) and also the effects of this “homophily”<sup>2</sup> in the ethnic segregation of jobs (see also Reingold, 1999 and Behtoui in this volume).

Effects may be different according to the nature of social ties. For instance, bridging social capital (access to job information outside of one’s community) may have a positive effect on men’s employment, occupational status and income, while bonding social capital (within ethnic networks) may not be effective (Lancee, 2012). Social networks with the majority population is often seen as leading to positive labour market outcomes in terms of employment and income (Lancee, 2010; Kalter & Kogan, 2014). However, Ryan (2011, 2016) questions these dichotomies as used in the migration literature. In fact data on ties with co-ethnics are often interpreted as Granovetter’s (1973) “strong ties” or Putnam’s (2000) “bonding”, and ties with the majority population seen as “weak ties” or “bridging” social capital. Yet much evidence (including that presented in this volume, e.g. chapters by Ryan, Rezai and Keskiner, Lang, Schneider and Pott) shows this conflation is unjustified.

We also question these dichotomies for second generation youth and wonder whether social contacts and particularly, intergenerational ties – and which type – still play a role in access to employment and professional career (e.g. Brinbaum & Rieucau, 2012; Crul et al., 2017). In France, the importance of networks of relationships for accessing employment has been particularly highlighted within the Portuguese (Cordeiro, 1997; Domingues Dos Santos, 2005) and Turkish communities (de Tapia, 2009), or among Senegalese migrants across national contexts (Toma, 2016). Recent studies show the high employment rate of immigrants, and the importance of jobs found through relatives, especially for immigrants with a poor knowledge of French (Bechichi et al., 2016). Research has also shown notable differences in the use of networks in access to employment between job-searchers of different origins, generations – first vs second generation – and gender (Brinbaum et al., 2015; Brinbaum, 2018b). In addition to discrimination, unequal access to networks has contributed to explaining the differences in employment between the descendants of Portuguese, whose access to employment is as good as, or even better than, the majority population, and North African second generations, who encounter more difficulties and higher unemployment (Silberman & Fournier, 1999; Brinbaum & Werquin, 1997, 2004; Meurs et al., 2006; Brinbaum & Guégnard, 2013).

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<sup>2</sup> Understood as a tendency to recruit people with a similar background, in this case, from the same migrant origin.

Another explanation refers to the different educational and occupational aspirations and relationship to social mobility these groups have, and their effective educational pathways. North-African families express high aspirations – higher than those of the majority population of similar social class – for academic studies in higher education, leading to social mobility, whereas Portuguese families prefer apprenticeships and short, mainly vocational or technical studies, for a rapid entry to the labour market (Brinbaum, 1999; Brinbaum & Kieffer, 2005; Brinbaum & Cebolla Boado, 2007). Hence, descendants of Portuguese may rely on family and community networks, while this is not in the case for Maghreb children. This is a problem particularly for boys who are more likely than girls to have school difficulties, be oriented against their will into vocational tracks and to drop out of school (Brinbaum & Kieffer, 2009; Brinbaum & Guégnard, 2012). Their school experiences are therefore lived as ethnic and racial discrimination (Brinbaum & Primon, 2013a) and may lead them to the labour market, without either a diploma or social capital, plus having to face discrimination in hiring.

Using the TeO survey, Brinbaum and Rieucan (2012) investigated the ways descendants of immigrants seek work and get jobs according to their origin (and other factors). We found that those looking for a job at the time of the survey used a variety of methods, and once education, social class background and place of residence were controlled, there were not significant differences between young people of different origins, except for the Turkish second generation. However, the recruitment channels by which employed respondents found their current job show more variation across origin groups. These results indicate the role of social and territorial segregation and of discrimination, but also access to social ties as a source of ethnic inequality on the labour market.

This chapter investigates the role of networks, and the kind of networks, in descendants of immigrants' access to employment, according to their geographical origin, using data from the Trajectories and Origins survey. I analyse the determinants of being employed through personal or family networks rather than other channels in the French labour market, disentangling origin effects from other individual characteristics (such as gender, education, class background etc.) and job characteristics, and their effects as far as possible with our data.

With regard to networks, it is assumed that, on average, young descendants of immigrants are less likely to be recruited through networks, as their families are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive. Some are unqualified, and are more often exposed to unemployment, and thus more dependent on the networks they can mobilise (e.g. Degenne et al., 1991; Joseph et al., 2008). A sub hypothesis concerns differences in recruitment and the different role of networks according to the country of origin, but also within origin groups; reflecting the heterogeneity among descendants of migrants in terms of education and social capital. As TeO data brings out female overachievement in education, for all origins except for the Turkish second generation (Brinbaum & Primon, 2013a), we also expect gender differences. A complementary hypothesis concerns the importance of the family for certain groups, who draw resources from community and family. From this perspective, “co-ethnic” ties facilitate recruitment, with the possible consequence of job

segregation linked to origin. Another consequence concerns the type of job held and its quality (in terms of stability).

A final hypothesis concerns the role of formal intermediaries in the recruitment of descendants of immigrants, in connection with public policies; intermediaries such as public placement or employment agencies and temporary work agencies, which could compensate for the lack of networks among certain groups in addition to discrimination they face.

The analysis therefore compares the ways young people access employment according to their migratory origins in the first part, then in the second part analyses the determinants of the recruitment channels and impact.

## 5.2 Data and Methodology

The analysis is based on the *Trajectoires et Origines* survey (*Trajectories and Origins. The diversity of populations in France – known as TeO*) coordinated by the Institut national d'études démographiques (Ined) and the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (Insee). The survey, which is representative of the general population, was carried out by questionnaire between September 2008 and February 2009 among 22,000 people aged between 18 and 60 living in an ordinary household in metropolitan France. It aims to analyse the living conditions and social trajectories of individuals according to their social origins and their link to migration. It focuses on populations from varied migrations, some relatively recent, others less so, examines their access to goods and to services (education, work, housing, etc.) as well as the discrimination that may hinder them in different spheres.

### 5.2.1 *The Second Generations and Origin Groups in TeO*

**Definitions:** according to the definition of the High Council for Integration, an immigrant is a foreign-person born abroad and residing in France. A **descendant of an immigrant** is born in metropolitan France with at least one immigrant parent. We distinguish here between **descendants of two immigrant parents** (for the sake of readability, we will write descendants of immigrants) and those from mixed couples (one immigrant parent). Persons belonging to the **majority population** are neither immigrants nor descendants of immigrants.

'Origin' is defined as parents' place of birth. We retain the most numerous origin groups in France, young people whose immigrant parents were born in Portugal, North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), Sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), other countries, or mixed couples (one immigrant parent, one of French origin).

The field includes young workers aged 18 to 35 in 2008–2009, descendants of immigrants of the majority population, who have completed their initial education.

The analysis of how people obtained their current job focuses on employees, but excludes apprentices and trainees (3661 persons). The percentages are calculated on weighted data.

The TeO survey has the advantage of providing data on populations from more recent migration, less well-studied in France – from Turkey, South-East Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa – which can be compared with older migration waves from North Africa and Portugal. To analyse the role of networks, there is a question on how people found their jobs (see below) and a specification of the nature of ties, which is rare in quantitative surveys.<sup>3</sup>

### ***5.2.2 Identifying Networks in the TeO Survey: Interests and Limitations***

#### Means of Access to Employment in the TeO Survey

The means of obtaining the job held at the time of the survey are gathered from the question “How did you find your job?” and the following responses:

1. By direct application
- 2. Through your family**
- 3. Through personal relations**
4. Through a competition or examination
5. By answering an advertisement or placing one
6. Through a temporary work agency
7. Through the ANPE\* (government employment agency)
8. Through another placement organization
9. Through a school or training organization
10. By being contacted by an employer
11. Through community associations, a local program or another administrative service (local council, town hall, etc.)
12. By other means

Note: \* ANPE ceased to exist in 2008 and became Pôle Emploi after merging with Assedic.

For the descriptive results, I present the channels in details (Table 5.2), while the most frequent channels have been retained for the regressions: direct applications, networks – both family and personal ties – and employment “intermediaries”. For the latter category, temporary work agencies and public employment agencies, as well as associations, were grouped together (channels 6 to 8 and 11); this channel category is quite heterogeneous and have different target groups, but we gathered it

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<sup>3</sup>We use the data from 2008 to 2009, because the data from the new TeO survey are not available yet.



for methodological reasons linked to their share in the repartition of the channels and the sample size. The other channels have been grouped into the category “other”.

For analysing networks through relations in this chapter, I focus on “family” and “personal” ties. Other channels, like “school and training” contacts may be seen as another form of network channel. This is also true for those who were contacted by an employer, since that channel implies that the employer – or colleagues – already know them, perhaps because the individual has already worked in the firm. However, this category is marginal.

Although it is interesting to analyse networks/job search with a large, representative dataset, there are some limitations, common to other quantitative surveys.

- First, the respondent can only give one answer as to how the job was obtained, although the job may have been found through a combination of channels.

In addition, we don’t know all the resources and networks which individuals who found a job possess, and mobilized for their job search, only the channel which led to the (current) job. Nevertheless, TeO asked people who did *not* have a job at the time of the survey what job search methods they used, and I give these in Box 5.1 in the annex.

- While the TeO survey has a category for “family ties”, which may be considered “strong ties”, the category “personal ties” is a little more ambiguous since it may group together both “strong ties” (such as friendships) and “weak ties” (such as distant work relations or acquaintances). It seems that the category has been understood by respondents as friends but this is not precised. I will discuss this dichotomy later.

- Another limitation is the absence of information on the ethnicity of ties. It would have been interesting to know whether ties are co-ethnic or national (or *intra-ethnic/inter-ethnic*), or even ties with second generation members from similar origin or not (see Ryan, 2011 and 2016 on the importance of this information on understanding the content of ties).

However, in the case of family ties, where both parents are immigrants and were born in the same nation, there is a strong likelihood that family ties are of the same ethnic origin as the respondent.<sup>4</sup> But we cannot know whether “personal ties” are with co-ethnics or not.

Another question is asked about the *perceived* origin of colleagues in the current job. This is a proxy for the ethnic composition of the workplace to measure segregated work environments: “Among your colleagues, would you say that...” 1. Almost all are of immigrant origin, 2. More than half are of immigrant origin. 3. Half are of immigrant origin, 4. Less than half are of immigrant origin, 5. Almost none or none are of immigrant origin. Responses 1 and 2 are classified as high segregation, 3 as medium, and 4 and 5 as low. This question, although imperfect, gives interesting results.

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<sup>4</sup>In previous work, where the category of descendants of immigrants was defined “with at least one immigrant parent” and “family” and “personal” ties were gathered, we didn’t find any significant association between origin and ties (Brinbaum & Rieucau, 2012).

Finally, we do not have longitudinal data so we cannot measure the impact of use of networks on job characteristics. We only measure correlations between recruitment channels and types of jobs.

### **5.2.3 Methodology – Models**

In order to disentangle the effects of the different factors on channels of recruitment, polytomous models<sup>5</sup> were estimated, with the most frequent means “direct applications” as the reference category. These models make it possible to define profiles of young people recruited through a particular channel – rather than through direct applications – and to gauge the specific effects of origins on channel of recruitment.

A first model (M1) takes into account only the detailed geographical origin. Other sociodemographic variables (sex, age, education level, class origins, mother’s participation in the labour force, place of residence) are added to the second model (M2). A third model (M3) takes into account characteristics of the job (sector of activity, firm size, type of contract – permanent or fixed time, full-time or part-time – and socio-occupational category) insofar as the channels and characteristics of the job held can be correlated. A variable indicating the year of recruitment was added – not all were recruited at the same time, so economic conditions may influence employment patterns – as well as previous unemployment. A last model looks at the eventual relationship between recruitment channels and experience of discrimination.<sup>6</sup> The results of the models are given in Table 5.10 in the Annex.

## **5.3 Unequal Access to Employment According to Origin and Gender**

According to the TeO survey, in 2008, the employment rate of 18–35-year-olds varied according to migration origin. On average, 84% of descendants of immigrants were employed compared to 87% of the majority population. This gap rises to 5% for descendants of two immigrant parents, while descendants of mixed couples come closer to the majority population (86%). So descendants with two immigrant parents are less well integrated into the labour market than descendants of mixed couples or the majority population.

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<sup>5</sup>Non-ordered polytomous models were used since the variable to be explained is of a qualitative nature and respondents had to choose between a series of channels by which they obtained their job.

<sup>6</sup>We do not measure causalities but correlations. Perceived discrimination is measured when individuals answered yes to the question “During the past five years, were you ever unjustly refused employment?” and explain it by a discriminatory ground. This supplementary model can be sent under request.

**Table 5.1** Employment by origin and gender (in %)

<i>Link to migration</i> ***	Men	Women	Total	N
Descendants of immigrants (both parents)	80	83	82	1128
Descendants of mixed ancestry	86	86	86	1453
Majority	88	86	87	2162
<i>Descendants of two immigrant parents by country/area of origin</i> ***				
Maghreb	72.5	77	74	829
Sub-Saharan Africa	67	81	74	301
SE Asia	77	90	82	182
Turkey	75	62	70	262
Portugal	93	98	95	345
Other EU27	93	92	92	150
Other countries	93	90	92	107

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee. Field: Economically active persons aged 18–35, who have completed their initial education. N = 4743

Note: the number of asterisks indicate the significance in the X2 test \*\*\* = significant at the 0.01 level; \*\* 0.05; \* = 0.10

How to read table: 82% of descendants of two immigrant parents were employed in 2008–2009, 87% among the Majority population

The differences appear even larger if we look at the specific geographical origin (Table 5.1): descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb and Turkey have the lowest employment rates, while descendants of immigrants from Portugal and other EU27 origins have the highest rates, with marked gender differences within certain origins. In particular, female descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia are more often employed than males of the same origin. This is the opposite among the Turkish second generation, where women have the lowest employment rate.

These employment gaps are mostly linked to level of education, social background and place of residence, which differ considerably according to geographical origins. Based on the TeO data, we previously showed large differences in the educational careers and attainment of the second generations, according to both origins and gender (Brinbaum & Primon, 2013a); and significant differences compared to the majority population with similar characteristics between the descendants of immigrants from South-East Asia, the most successful, particularly the girls, and descendants of Turkish immigrants, rather less successful and more likely to lack a diploma, among boys and girls.

When socio-demographic characteristics and educational attainment are controlled for, gaps between second generations and the majority population remain for those of North African and Sub-Saharan African origins, men of South-East Asian origin and women of Turkish origin (Table 5.5 in Annex). These discrepancies may be attributed to discrimination against them. In fact, these groups are also most likely to say they suffered discrimination in hiring: among those seeking a job at the

time of the TeO survey, this is the case for 34% of the descendants of North Africa and 28% of Sub-saharan origins, as against 23% of the majority population.

The differences between groups could also be explained by unequal access to networks according to migratory and geographical origin, and according to gender, a factor explored in this chapter.

### ***5.3.1 The Role of Social Networks in the French Labour Market***

#### **5.3.1.1 Variations Between and Within Origin Groups**

The TeO survey asks how respondents obtained their current job. On average, young people of immigrant descent and those from the majority group obtained their jobs through the same types of channels (Table 5.2): direct applications constitute the main recruitment channel, more than a third of all jobs obtained, followed by networks of relations, a quarter of jobs. Employment intermediaries are the third recruitment channel.

Descendants of two immigrant parents obtain their jobs less through direct applications than those from mixed couples (+5%), but are hired slightly more through relations or intermediaries than the majority population (+3%). Temporary work agencies and public institutions recruit the descendants of two immigrant parents more (+5%) than descendants of the majority population; the descendants of mixed ancestry are in an intermediate position. We may wonder whether these results – particularly the fact that direct contacts to employers lead to employment less for descendants of migrants – is related to discrimination.

A minority of TeO interviewees got their job via a competitive examination (concours) (5%) or via school or a training organization (5%). Finally, it should be noted that few young people, of any origin, got their job through job advertisements (5 to 6%), even though many young people do use this means when they are looking for a job (See Box 5.1 in Annex). It is worth noting that correspondence testing usually focuses on this channel, whereas few people actually got their jobs through advertisements. So they were grouped together with the ‘other’ category in the analysis.

The differences are small – though significant – when we compare young people of the majority population with descendants of migrants in general. However, they are more visible if we disaggregate descendants of immigrants by geographic origin (Table 5.2 and Model 1 in Table 5.9). The proportion of those gaining their job by direct applications is relatively high, and close to that of the majority population among descendants of immigrants from the Maghreb (37%) and particularly low among descendants of Turkish immigrants (22%), who are more likely than others to be recruited through networks of relations (39%).

Descendants of migrants from several groups obtained their jobs through employment intermediaries: via temporary work agencies for South East Asian,

**Table 5.2** Recruitment channels for the current job by origin (%)

	Direct		Networks		Employment Intermediaries			Other means			Total
	Applications	Through relations	Temporary work	Public agencies	Ads	School, training	Concours	Employer	Others		
<i>Link to migration***</i>	33	27	10	10	5	5	5	5	5	100	
Descendants of two immigrants	38	24	9	9	6	3	6	3	3	100	
Descendants of mixed ancestry	36	24	9	7	6	4	7	4	2	100	
Majority	<b>Descendant of two immigrant parents by country/area of origin***</b>										
Maghreb	37	25	11	10	6	3	4	2	2	100	
Sub-Saharan Africa	34	24	8	15	4	5	4	1	5	100	
SE Asia	34	27	18	5	5	5	2	4	1	100	
Turkey	22	39	11	8	3	5	7	4	2	100	
Portugal	32	27	8	9	5	6	6	5	2	100	
Other EU27	28	27	15	12	9	3	4	2	1	100	

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee

Field: Descendants of immigrants and majority population, ages 18–35, who have completed their initial education, employees in 2008

The number of stars indicate the significant results in the X2 test \*\*\* = 0.01; \*\* = 0.05; \* = 0.10. Note: concours = competitive examinations

*Lecture*: Among the descendants of immigrants, 33% have found their job through direct applications, 27% through their networks of relations

Turkish and Maghreb second generations, through a public institution for Sub-Saharan African descendants.

We observe the importance of networks in access to employment of young descendants of immigrants, but this role varies considerably according to origin, from 24% among the descendants of migrants from the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa, up to 39% among descendants of Turkish immigrants.

### 5.3.1.2 Personal and Family Ties: Different Share According to Origin Groups and Gender

The distinction in the TeO survey between family and personal ties provides new results.<sup>7</sup> While networks through relations play a role in about a quarter of the jobs obtained, on average they are twice as often personal ties rather than family ties (Table 5.3). There are two exceptions: the descendants of South-East Asian immigrants who were recruited equally by both types of ties, and the descendants of Turkish immigrants, for whom the importance of family networks predominates (24% out of 39%).

Gender also matters (Table 5.8). While women, in general, are less likely than men to obtain their jobs through ties (27% as against 21%), they are more likely to get them through direct applications (44% compared to 30%). This trend is confirmed irrespective of origin, with gender differences, particularly evident for certain groups: especially young people of North African origin, where men are twice as likely to be recruited through relations than women are (32.5% vs 18%), and to a lesser extent, descendants of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (29% vs. 20%). While young men of Portuguese origin are still often recruited through relations,

**Table 5.3** Proportion of jobs got through networks and nature of the ties, by origin (in %)

Parents' country of birth	Networks		
	Family ties	Personal ties	Total
Maghreb	7	18	25
Sub-Saharan Africa	9	15	24
SE Asia	12	15	27
Turkey	24	15	39
Portugal	9	18	27
Other EU27	10	17	27
Descendants of mixed ancestry	9	15	24
Majority	8	16	24

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee

How to read table: 25% of the descendants of North-Africa were recruited by networks (7% via family ties and 18% via personal ties)

<sup>7</sup>The distinction between the nature of the ties brings new evidence and larger differences across groups. The role of family ties is more important for children whose both parents are immigrants.

this is much less the case for women (36% versus 18% respectively) and for men it is mainly “personal ties” that are involved (25% versus 10% among women) rather than “family ties”. In contrast, among Turkish descendants, both men and women (40% and 36%) access their jobs through networks, and slightly more thanks to family ties (23% and 24% respectively).<sup>8</sup> In the other groups, men, more than women, are recruited through ties, and more often through personal ties.

### ***5.3.2 Determinants of Family and Personal Networks: The Role of Origins and Other Factors***

Do these differences between origins in terms of how people got their jobs reflect specific behaviours of certain groups, and/or employers towards these groups, or do they reflect differences in the characteristics of these groups, for example, in educational attainment, age, work experience, class background, or the economic sectors where they are employed? Do the patterns hold for men and women within each group? For the lower and the higher educated? Are the determinants of family ties similar to those of personal ties?

The descendants of Turkish immigrants are characterised by the fact that both men and women are often recruited by the family, while among the descendants of Portuguese, men are more recruited through personal ties. The differences between these two groups can also be explained by the fact that Turkish migration is much more recent in France than Portuguese migration. Family and relatives are mobilised to find a job, and friends more among the second group (see Box 5.1).

Moreover, given the importance of the family in the recruitment of the unskilled (Degenne et al., 1991; Kramarz & Skans, 2014), the predominance of recruitment via networks among young descendants of Turkish immigrants may be linked to their lower level of education: since the proportion of those without qualifications is high among boys and girls in this group (23% and 27% respectively), these networks are all the more necessary for them; whereas many men of Portuguese immigrant descent have just a secondary vocational diploma (BEP or CAP) while women have higher qualifications. Among those without a diploma (Table 5.8), indeed, family ties appear to be particularly important in the recruitment of young people of Turkish origin, exceeding the rates of the majority population (even though the numbers are small) and of other groups; this trend, although less marked, is also seen for men of Sub-Saharan origin.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The Turkish, North African and South-East Asian descendants are also more frequently recruited by temporary work agencies, particularly among men. Schools and training bodies play a role mainly for young men of Asian origin (14%), who are also the most highly qualified, and a little for Turkish and Portuguese second generations with low vocational diplomas.

In addition, Portuguese and Turkish second generation men are more likely to be self-employed in building, like their fathers. However, TeO did not ask the self-employed how they got their job.

<sup>9</sup>Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the results between recruitment channels and detailed origins for each level of qualification.



These trends are related to lack of diplomas and to the sectors they work, in building and industry, rather male sectors, that recruit more through relations, while women make less use of their networks than men and work more in public sectors, which recruit less through relations (Table 5.3 and see chapter by Ryan in this volume for a similar observation).

On the other hand, young people of North African origin are recruited very little through family ties (only 7%). This finding points to the need for other (non-family) personal ties among this group, in the absence of family networks. This is particularly true for men, who are less qualified than North African women (25% without a diploma compared to 14%) and who will not be able to rely on networks and will be doubly penalised, by their lack of qualifications and scarce family networks. In addition, they face discrimination in recruitment on the basis of their name, origin, skin color or religion (see Brinbaum et al., 2018).

The lack of family networks is also noticeable among women of North African and Sub-Saharan African origin. Rarely recruited in this way, they find it more difficult to find work, insofar as their parents, who are more often unemployed or inactive (unemployment of fathers and inactivity of mothers), cannot help their children access the labour market.<sup>10</sup> And when parents do work, the concentration in sex-segregated low-skill jobs are not attractive to young women with educational qualifications.

Among the highest qualified, family ties appear marginal. Personal ties are also less important, whatever young people's geographical origin, but they do play a role for some – about 10 to 15%. The higher educated are more likely to be recruited through other means, such as competitive examinations and advertisements (respectively 15% and 9% of the most qualified, see Table 5.9; see also chapters by Lang et al., and Keshiner and Waldring, in this volume), linked to the selectivity of advertisements. These proportions are even higher for women of the majority population (Table 5.4). It is possible however that the survey is poor at capturing the *indirect* personal and work ties used by the higher educated.

Moreover, the second generation women, more educated than their parents, are looking for different kinds of jobs and sectors beyond the reach of their ethnic and family networks. Educational aspirations are very high, even higher than those of the majority population with similar background, particularly among North-African descendants who aspire to social mobility (Brinbaum & Kieffer, 2005, 2009), while lacking networks and social capital to access the desired professions. In addition, they encounter a “glass ceiling”, as women and as descendants of immigrants, particularly when they are racialized. This is also true for men of this origin who are little attracted by the difficult working conditions and high risk of unemployment associated with their fathers' jobs in industry, and thus tend to work in other jobs. So the networks that get them jobs are more often personal ties.

So let me stress the role of family and personal ties in finding a job for those without diplomas, of family ties for the children of the self-employed; while

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<sup>10</sup>They don't have the networks to access to internship during their studies and then to employment.

personal relationships play a role for those without diplomas and holders of vocational diplomas. Non-family personal relations also lead holders of vocational or higher education qualifications to employment.

These results show a different role of family and personal ties across origin groups as well as internal differences, according to gender, level of education, social and economic sectors.

“Once controlled for these characteristics”, some factors still play a role in access to employment. The means of getting a job differ according to gender, in connection with the gendered segmentation of the labour market (Ioannides & Datcher Loury, 2004). Young women, in general, are less likely than men to have found a job through personal ties, and more likely to have found one through direct applications (still significant when education and type of job are controlled) and through public employment intermediaries. In contrast, men were more likely to find their jobs through family ties or temporary work agencies, where jobs tend to be in male sectors and occupations.

Which channels led to jobs were also closely linked to age, education and social class: the youngest (under 25), and children of the self-employed, obtained their jobs more often through family relations. This is also true for those without a diploma, who were less likely to have found a job through direct applications or advertisements, while this is the opposite for higher education graduates.

Interestingly, although there is no significant association between origin groups and recruitment through personal relations, it is also possible that this result hides the heterogeneity of “personal” ties.

### **5.3.2.1 Strength of Family Ties in Access to Employment for Some Groups of Descendants**

Family ties are still significant for access to employment of the Turkish second generation group, followed by the Portuguese (model M2) and South-East Asians to a lesser extent (M3), once we control for education, socio-demographic characteristics and characteristics of the job obtained (Table 5.9). This is important particularly for men of groups where the first generation was in building or industry, and in small family businesses. The Portuguese previously, and the Turkish more recently, use their co-ethnic networks and contribute to form ethnic niches.

#### **The Importance of Family Networks Among Descendants of Turkish Immigrants**

Compared to the majority population, descendants of Turkish immigrants found employment five times more through their family networks than through direct applications (Model 1 in Table 5.4); the effect of Turkish origin decreases but remains strong with controls for individual and job characteristics (OR = 3.6, M2; OR = 3.4, M3). So while the propensity to be recruited more by the family is partly

explained by their low level of education and by their socio-demographic characteristics (they are younger on average), this kind of recruitment channel is still specific to this group.

TeO data on people who were unemployed and looking for a job at the time of the survey show the same pattern: Turkish-origin young people mobilise their family networks more than the majority population and are twice as likely to seek self-employment (See Box 5.1).

This result corroborates field research that has highlighted the strong mobilisation of resources and networks of ethnic and family relations in the access to salaried employment of young Turks recruited in “Turkish” companies (Öztürk, 2006; de Tapia, 2009). They benefit from “trust and solidarity based on shared ethnicity” (Öztürk, 2006), resources that lead them to employment despite low or medium levels of education and low socio-economic status. However, integration strategies can vary among young people depending on their level of qualification; for some, the use of Turkish – or rather family – companies is a springboard for moving on to more lucrative sectors. For others, it allows them to have a job despite their low qualifications – employers being less demanding in terms of hiring criteria (ibid.). Finally, employment can be seen as a way to accumulate sufficient capital before starting their own business and/or succeeding their parents (de Tapia, 2009). Second generations replicate the socio-economic status of their parents, who are involved in entrepreneurship in certain niche activities, such as construction.

While recruitment through relations enables them to access employment despite low qualifications and offers an opportunity for some, this also locks them into small companies in certain sectors. The economic crisis having affected the building sector badly, this leads to job insecurity and difficulties in leaving this “ethnic construction enclave” (Guillou & Wadbled, 2006). Moreover, in sectors of this kind, they are more often recruited in temporary work. In addition, women of this origin have more difficulties to find work when they are not attracted to the maternal model where inactivity predominates.

#### Recruitment via Family Ties for the Portuguese Decreases Over Time, Across Generations, as Educational and Occupational Aspirations Increase

The results are similar, to a lesser extent, for descendants of Portuguese immigrants (OR = 1.6 in M2 then 1.7 in M3). We therefore show that family/ethnic networks of children born in France are still significant for access to employment, even if the role of these networks is less predominant than before. Family ties play less of a role in access to work of the Portuguese second generation, although personal ties (community ties?) are still important among men.

These trends depend on different sectors of entrepreneurial employment for first-generation migrants, e.g. construction among Portuguese, and later, Turkish, migrants. So networks are still important for young men of the second generations, but less so than they were among the first generation (Domingues Dos Santos, 2005; Brinbaum, 2018b) and in previous decades. For others, particularly women, the

pattern has changed, as educational and occupational aspirations and attainment have increased over the decades (see the distribution of diplomas in Table 5.6). While families used to opt for apprenticeships and short vocational studies for their children – boys and girls –, as in their countries of origin, rather in line with the traditional model of worker reproduction (Baudelot & Establet, 1971), they have translated their aspirations to baccalauréat diplomas, or even to vocational studies in higher education, leading to high-skilled jobs (Brinbaum & Kieffer, 2005; Brinbaum, 2019). The self-employment model remains in some Portuguese families, as well as in Turkish families, where a model of social mobility and emancipation for girls is also emerging. We may assume that this trend will change again over time, as the level of education has increased among the Turkish second generation girls, who now surpass boys.<sup>11</sup>

So the differences between these two groups can be explained partly by the fact that Turkish migration is much more recent in France than Portuguese migration. In both cases, second generations follow the trend of the first generation, working in ethnic niches, but over time, occupations become more diverse. Turkish Second Generation youth, who belong to newer waves of migration, rarely come from families of mixed couples, and they were brought up in families where the language of origin dominated and French was rarely spoken at home. Besides, the help and social capital provided by the Turkish families at labor market entry is noticeable and contrasts with the lack of help during the school career, linked to parental resources.<sup>12</sup> They may be less familiar with the codes and institutions of the French labour market. This trend is also linked to their low presence in salariat jobs, while entrepreneurship in certain niches of activity, such as construction, is prevalent, as it was in the Portuguese migration previously.

In sum, we highlight that jobs found by family ties are still important in the second generation among the descendants of Turks, Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, South-East Asians. These young people, rather low qualified, both of whose parents are immigrants, seem to use more ethnic ties which might be defined as “bonding capital” in ethnic niches. Turkish men are also more numerous among the self-employed in ethnic niches, and this contributes to their high employment. However, we observe a decrease of the share of employment obtained through these means over time – comparing the Portuguese and Turkish migrations- and between the first and second generations. In contrast, some groups rarely obtain their jobs through family ties; young people of North-African and Subsaharan African origins, especially the women, lack personal ties that can help them reach jobs and *a fortiori* high skilled jobs.

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<sup>11</sup> See Brinbaum (2019) on recent data.

<sup>12</sup> While family educational involvement was very low – little parental help with schoolwork, due to low educational capital and little knowledge of French – they are heavily involved in their children’s entry into the labour market. While some families focus on school as the means to social mobility, others prefer a model of working-class reproduction through jobs. Family resources are thus implemented at different points in children’s trajectories (Brinbaum, 2012).

### 5.3.2.2 Lack of Networks and Reliance on Formal Intermediaries

Analysis shows that 20% of descendants of immigrants found their job via an employment agency (Table 5.2). Percentages are particularly high for some groups such as the least qualified women. While among the majority population, men are more likely to be recruited than women via this channel,<sup>13</sup> among North-African descendants, women are more likely to get a job through a public employment agency (26% compared with 16% of men). The same is true for descendants of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (26% compared with 20%) and Portugal (21% compared with 13%). Being less recruited by networks than men in these origin groups, women are more likely to have obtained their job in this way.

Employment agencies target certain social groups. They make it easier for the unskilled to find a job: those without diplomas are thus recruited more by employment agencies, whatever their origin (Table 5.7). This is how a quarter of young people in the majority population and descendants of immigrants from Portugal got their current job, and 22% of descendants of immigrants from the Maghreb (the figures do not allow us to isolate those without diplomas from other groups). It is mostly young people of working-class origin who get their jobs through agencies: many low-educated men in these groups get posts through temporary work agencies, while women find work through public employment agencies.

Statistical models confirm the determinants of being recruited by these channels (Table 5.9). Public employment agencies find jobs for certain profiles: women are more likely than men to get a job via this channel, as are young people over 25. Holders of a university degree, or a vocational baccalaureate, being more in demand on the labour market, are less likely to have got their job via a public employment agency. Formerly unemployed persons, on the other hand, are more likely to find their jobs through these intermediaries; as in most countries, public employment agencies are usually the last resort for both job seekers and employers; the same applies to residents outside Paris and 'disadvantaged' social categories.<sup>14</sup>

Compared to the majority population, descendants of immigrants from the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, Portugal and Turkey have a higher probability of having been recruited through these intermediaries rather than direct applications (M1 Table 5.9). These origin effects persist when we control for educational attainment, socio-demographic characteristics and similar types of jobs, for descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, Portugal and other EU27 countries (M2 and M3), but are no longer statistically significant for descendants of North-Africans when employment sectors are controlled.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, women of Sub-Saharan African origins are more often recruited through a public employment agency, in particular community associations and *mission locale*

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<sup>13</sup>This result reflects recruitment through temporary work agencies, which are used more by males.

<sup>14</sup>A more detailed exploratory analysis of the TeO survey data shows that employment agencies, which are more or less specialised, recruit different profiles.

<sup>15</sup>Men, mostly no or little qualified, are more recruited in male sectors through temporary work agencies.

whereas descendants of European immigrants are recruited more by the national employment agency “Pôle Emploi”.<sup>16</sup> Turkish descendants, both men and women, however, are more recruited by temporary work agencies.

These results underline the need for descendants of immigrants to fall back on employment intermediaries, having few direct contacts with employers. Being less recruited through personal or family networks, women in these groups rely on these intermediaries more than men. Second generation women – except in Portuguese families where mother’s activity and employment is very high – are often the first generation to be economically active. They lack effective networks to access the type of jobs they seek, and sometimes also the codes. Discrimination may occur in hiring, and they may be blocked by the “glass ceiling” associated with ethnic, racial and gender discrimination.

It is also worth noting here that perceptions of discrimination are significantly correlated with recruitment by employment intermediaries (both temporary work agencies and public employment agencies). With the available data, it is not possible to know whether the use of these channels is an individual choice or whether it constitutes the only way these people had to get a job. But in any case, even when we control for a number of variables the association remains. The young people who are most likely to say they have experienced discrimination are those of North African origin and sub-Saharan Africa, many of whom get a job through employment agencies.

To explore this question further, we may look at the young people who do not have a job and are looking for one (see Box 5.1). Young people who say they have experienced ethnic and racial discrimination are more likely than others to want to be self-employed, or to mobilize their family or friendly networks. We assume that they use these channels to avoid discrimination and difficulties encountered in hiring. These job searchers also live in more segregated areas with high rates of unemployment, a fact which may mean that many of their social relationships will not be able to provide leads to employment.

### ***5.3.3 What Relationship Between Recruitment Channels, Network Ties and Types of Employment?***

We do not have longitudinal data to estimate the impact of recruitment channels over time, but we can cross the channel by which a respondent obtained their current job with the job’s characteristics.

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<sup>16</sup>*Mission locale*: is a local public agency whose aim is to promote the social and occupational integration of young people (16–25). Pole Emploi is a public administrative establishment responsible for employment in France.

### 5.3.3.1 Networks, Sectors and Job Segregation

Recruitment through family or personal relationships has an effect on the likelihood that these young people work in a workplace where most other workers are of immigrant origin.<sup>17</sup>

We observe a high concentration of colleagues of immigrant origin in the occupational environment of young people of Turkish origin (41%, see Table 5.4). In other words, recruitment via networks has an impact on the composition of their work environment and the constitution of “ethnic niches” (Wilson & Portes, 1980) or even “ethnic enclaves” (Guillou & Wadbled, 2006) in certain sectors. Many young people of Turkish origin work in small firms in the construction and industrial sectors (Table 5.6), sectors that recruit through networks (see also chapters by Lang et al. and Ryan in this volume). So Turkish-origin men are quite likely to work in an ethnically segregated work environment. Our study highlights a certain “ethnic homophily” on the part of Turkish employers towards young people of the same origin, in line with qualitative work on the subject (e.g. Öztürk, 2006; de Tapia, 2009).

**Table 5.4** Composition of occupational environment by origin, gender and economic sector (in %)

	Composition of workplace « ethnic segregation » <sup>a</sup>				
	Total			Men	Women
<b>Parents' country of birth</b>	High	Medium	Low	High or medium (%)	
Maghreb	19	18	63	40	32
Sub-Saharan Africa	39	18	42	71	45
SE Asia	27	9	64	<i>ns</i>	<i>Ns</i>
Turkey	41	12	47	62	<i>Ns</i>
Portugal	24	16	60	49	24
Other EU27	28	10	62	<i>ns</i>	<i>Ns</i>
Descendants of mixed ancestry	12	15	73	28	24
Majority	5	6	89	9	11
<b>Economic sector</b>					
Industry- Energy	3	7	90	10	11
Construction	11	6	83	16	18
Trade – Transport	10	10	80	20	19
Services	6	6	88	10	12
Administration Health Education	6	5	89	8	12

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee

Note: <sup>a</sup>This is the perception of the respondents, estimated on the basis of the following question: “Among your colleagues, you would say that...”. Responses “More than half or almost all are of immigrant origin” are coded “High”; “Half are of immigrant origin” “Medium” and “Less than half are of immigrant origin or Almost none”

<sup>17</sup>The TeO question which measures segregated work environment is based on respondent’s perception, but is still interesting. There is a significant relationship between recruitment patterns and the indicator of ethnic segregation (based on chi-square statistics).



A high “ethnic” concentration is also visible among descendants of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa (Table 5.4), particularly among men in this group. This also reflects the importance of networks in their access to employment (29% found employment through their networks: 13% via family ties, 16% via other personal ties, as against only 20% of women (5% family ties, 15% personal ties)). It may also be linked to the sectors where they find employment: descendants of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are over-represented in the “trade and transport” sectors, but above all in “collective and personal services”, which also recruit through personal relations (Tables 5.7 and 5.8).

Conversely, descendants of North African migrants, who, as we have seen, are less likely to be recruited through family relations, are less likely to be in a workplace where most workers are of migrant origin. This is also true for descendants of mixed couples and even more so for the majority population (89% of whom work in a low segregated workplace).

While the construction, trade and transport sectors are highly segregated, other sectors are less so. Sectors which have more female employees have a low score (Table 5.5). These results reflect work environments segmented by geographical origin and gender.

This analysis shows the importance of family ties in access to employment of descendants of immigrants from several origins. But it also shows that this has effects on ethnic segmentation of jobs. This leads on to my last section where I explore the association between recruitment channel used and the social characteristics of the job obtained.

### 5.3.3.2 Recruitment Channels and Consequences: Precarity, Social Reproduction or Social Mobility?

Correlations are shown between the recruitment channels and types of jobs, in terms of precarity, occupations and sectors (Table 5.10 M3). The channels select types of jobs in different occupations, industries and firm sizes.

Family networks lead young people three times more often to jobs in the construction sector, and to small companies where there are many descendants of Turkish and Portuguese immigrants. Temporary work agencies lead twice as often to the industrial and construction sectors (rather than trade and transport), and often to large companies. Moreover, “all other things being equal”, unqualified manual workers and skilled workers are recruited more through family and personal relations than unskilled white-collar workers.

On the other hand, jobs in administration, health and education, often in the public sector, where women are over-represented, are often obtained through public competitions (*concours*) or advertisements rather than through direct applications; and jobs in this sector are less likely to have been obtained through personal relations, or through public or private employment agencies. The latter – included in “other means” – lead more to permanent jobs as managers and professionals, while public employment agencies as well as temporary work agencies, lead more frequently to precarious jobs.

So in the TeO data, those who are recruited by family and community networks tend to be blocked in certain jobs and sectors and do not experience marked social mobility. So while this channel may provide security for the less qualified, and opportunities for those who become entrepreneurs and obtain good incomes, in some cases it may confine to labour market segments. Turkish men are indeed more numerous among the self-employed in ethnic niches, and this contributes to their high rate of employment despite their low education (Tables 5.1 and 5.2); but they are also less likely to hold skilled jobs.

Finally, young people who obtained their jobs through formal intermediaries are twice as likely to be on fixed-term contracts than those who were recruited through direct applications. Public and private intermediaries thus lead to more precarious, fixed-term jobs. While a quarter of women of Sub-Saharan African origin are recruited through these channels, about 39% of women in this group are on fixed-term contracts. They also are in public and service sectors where precarity has increased. So those who lack efficient networks and face discrimination are helped by public intermediaries, but these lead more often to short-term contracts. This is also the case for men hired in temporary work (numerous among the North African, Portuguese and Turkish second generations in some sectors).

## 5.4 Conclusion

Drawing on the Trajectories and Origins survey, this chapter provides new empirical results on access to employment of descendants of immigrants and in particular, on the role of networks in access to the French labour market. It demonstrates links between channels of recruitment and migratory origins, their determinants and their effects. It thus contributes to understanding employment differentials across groups, the quality of the jobs obtained, and ethnic inequalities in the labour market more generally.

The study highlights large differences in channel of recruitment by parents' country of origin and by gender, and also differences in the specific kind of ties which led to jobs, viz. family ties rather than personal ties. Differences appear across origin groups, but also within groups, according to individual factors such as gender, education, social background, place of residence, and across sectors.

Revisiting the theory of strong/weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) in relation to descendants of immigrants, the study shows the "strength of family ties" in the recruitment of several groups, particularly for the descendants of Turkish, Portuguese and, to a lesser extent, South-East Asian immigrants, following in the footsteps of the first generation into an ethnic niche. They are "strong" insofar as they are family ties<sup>18</sup> and lead them to employment despite their low education. However, these networks have some implications for the quality of the jobs obtained, and for their ethnic segregation.

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<sup>18</sup>If the dichotomies hold for part of some origin groups, this is not the case for all.

In addition, this chapter shows that for some groups (e.g. Portuguese and South-East Asian second generations) both family and personal ties are important, for others only personal ties, and for some groups neither type of tie provide much access to employment. In some groups family and personal ties are more important than in others, and their determinants appear different. Personal ties, important to find a job whatever the origin, are not significantly associated with the country of origin, contrary to family ties. These results invite us to distinguish between family and personal ties; personal ties seem to be rather friends here, although we would need further precisions between friends, acquaintances, work relationships to avoid any ambiguity, as well as the country of origin of the different ties.

The consequences of finding jobs through family ties are mixed. These networks give access to employment for young people, especially those who have low educational qualifications, and children of parents running a small business. While these networks favour the occupational integration of a certain number of young people, they also fuel the ethnic and gender segmentation of jobs, as these young people find themselves confined to certain sectors and segments of the labour market. For some, these networks lead to social reproduction, rather than social mobility between generations; in other words, to a “mobility trap” (Portes, 1998; Kalter & Kogan, 2014; Brinbaum, 2018a). This is true in particular for some Portuguese and Turkish second generation men, who are also more numerous among the self-employed in ethnic niches like construction (cf. Waldinger, 2005).

If we compare Portuguese migration with the more recent Turkish migration, we can also see how the role of family ties in access to employment changes over time and waves of migration. The second generations of these groups follow in the footsteps of the first generations, using the resources and networks of their families and co-ethnics, working in ethnic niches. However, the share of family ties decreases between the first and second generation and over time, as educational and occupational aspirations have increased with the democratization of education. Educational attainment increases across generations, particularly among women; and occupations become correspondingly more diverse. So work ties and personal ties become more important paths into employment than family ties.

The results also bring out the lack of networks, whether of family or personal ties, among the North-African and Sub-Saharan second generations, particularly women. Since many fathers in these groups are unemployed and many mothers economically inactive, they are less likely to have useful network links for their children. And if the parents work they are mostly in manual jobs unlikely to attract their children, whose aspirations (and often, educational attainment) are high. Some compensate for this lack of networks by using more formal methods: in fact, they are more likely to find a job through employment agencies.

The study also highlights the role of employment agencies in access to employment of descendants of immigrants from some backgrounds. Young people who are more exposed to unemployment because of their low social class background, because they live in segregated and stigmatized area, and moreover face discrimination, are more likely than others to be hired through employment intermediaries rather than through spontaneous applications.

Lack of networks disadvantage many of the least qualified, but also the educated, who are numerous among second generations. Women with a racialised background are the most affected. The study does not allow us to ascertain whether these results are the consequence of – ethnic and gender – discrimination from employers and a “glass ceiling” for the most qualified, but our data do show the need for these groups to rely on employment agencies to get a job. More than others, they need intermediaries and support measures to help them find employment. These results make the case for public policies that follow this logic. However, they are more likely to obtain precarious jobs through these channels and these trends are reinforced with the economic crisis. They need additional networks or intermediaries (professionals, associations, mentoring, etc) particularly to establish bonds of trust and reduce discrimination. This also involves direct actions to fight against direct and indirect discrimination and racism.

While this study opens up some avenues of research it has limitations that need to be overcome in future quantitative surveys. These surveys need to take into account both the search techniques unemployed job-seekers use and which channels are actually successful for the same individuals. They also need information to make it possible to distinguish between the various types of ties (family/personal/professional ties and also co-ethnic vs. non-co-ethnic ones) and to understand the consequences use of a particular recruitment channel have on the workplace environment (ethnic composition of the workplace), and on social mobility. Longitudinal data would be useful to explore further the links between recruitment channels and professional careers, and to analyse social mobility of the second generation. Other mechanisms and larger-scale surveys should be considered, both among employers and young people, with large samples and over-representation of particular origin groups. We also lack large datasets in a comparative perspective. This book will however make an important contribution across countries.

## Annex

### **Box 5.1: Job Search Methods by Origin Groups**

How are second-generation youth of different origins seeking work? The TeO survey asked the job seekers, who were unemployed at the time of the survey, about their methods, with a list of items and multiple choices. Unfortunately, we don't know the job search methods of those who are employed, but it's interesting to know whether there are similarities or differences in the job search by origin groups and link it with the means of finding a job. Results are presented below:

(continued)

**Box 5.1** (continued)

Job-search methods by origin (in %)

Country of birth of parents	Direct application	Informal methods: Networks of relations			Formal/institutional methods						Toward self-employment
		Family	Friends	All	Ads	ANPE <sup>a</sup>	Temporary work	Mission locale Associations	Exam-ination		
Majority	70	45	70	74	70	77	48	28	10	5	
All descendants of migrants	67	46	63.5	69	72	71	52	32	12.5	9	
Maghreb	67*	46	62	66	71.5	73.5	55	31	14	8	
Sub-Saharan Africa	69	43	69	72	67	67	47	41	11.5	13	
SE Asia	61	56	73	76	74	64	46	36	5.5	7.5	
Turkey	47	56	46	75	45	72	57	34	2	10.5	
Portugal	68	54	78	86	81	75	59	41	12	7	

Source • Trajectories and Origins survey (TeO), INED-INSEE, 2008

Population • Persons aged 18–35 who have completed their initial education, unemployed in 2008 and searching for a job  
 Lecture: 47% of the descendants of immigrants from Turkey declare to have made direct applications

Note: Several answers being possible, the sum is higher than 100. <sup>a</sup>They register to ANPE, the national employment agency

(continued)

**Box 5.1** (continued)***An important job-search effort for all with different use of networks across origin groups***

Overall, the descendants of immigrants who are searching for a job use as many methods as the majority population, i.e. almost five on average. Whatever their origin, young people are making an important research effort. The main methods are: direct applications to employers, use of networks, and answers to advertisements; most young people declare they have contacted the public employment agency (ANPE at the time of the survey). However, all the origin groups do not use the same methods.

The majority of the descendants of immigrants mobilize their networks, as much as the majority population (around 75%), with however less use of family ties and rather more friendship ties, except for the Turkish descendants where family ties are more frequent. South-East Asian and Portuguese second generations use their friends' networks a lot in addition to their family's networks, while those of North African origin use these relational networks less compared to other groups.

Compared to the majority population, descendants of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa contact more public institutions such as "local missions" or community associations, and, like the descendants of South-East Asians, contact public agencies for employment (ANPE) less.

In contrast, the descendants of Turkish origin respond less to advertisements and do less direct applications, but they are more likely to try to be self-employed or entrepreneurs. North Africans use their personal networks less to get a job and try more to pass through temporary work agencies.

***Job-search methods are more linked to education and social background than origins, except for the descendants of Turks***

Do these differences reflect different behaviors linked to ethnic origin or do they reflect unequal resources (in terms of diplomas, social origin, place of residence etc.) young people have to look for a job, through any channel, given the particularity of each of these channels? To answer this question, statistical models were built to explain each of these job-search practices "other things being equal", taking into account the demographic, social, family, school and residential characteristics, as well as the feeling of discrimination in employment expressed by the respondents. This feeling is more pronounced among certain groups, such as the descendants of immigrants from North-Africa, Sub-Sahara and Turkey, that can interact with the channels used.

Statistical models suggest that job-search depend more on diploma, social origin and, to a lesser extent, on the labour market experience or place of residence, than to the migratory origin (see Table below).

(continued)

**Box 5.1** (continued)

Job-search methods by origin: probability to search a job by a method												
Gross and net effects of origins on different job search methods (odds ratios)												
Majority (ref.)	Direct applications		Ads		Networks (Family & Friends)		Temporary work		ANPE <sup>a</sup>		Toward self-employment	
	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2
Maghreb	0.94	0.85	1.02	0.81	0.95	0.98	1.20	1.17	0.90	0.68	0.94	1.05
Sub-Saharan	0.84	0.76	0.98	1.13	0.92	1.14	0.87	1.34	<b>0.54</b>	0.65	1.40	1.63
SE Asia	0.84	0.77	1.03	0.99	0.95	1.09	0.85	1.06	<b>0.53</b>	0.66	0.91	1.06
Turkey	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.46</b>	1.15	1.03	1.24	1.25	0.68	<b>0.48</b>	1.97	<b>2.24</b>
South of Europe	0.89	0.87	1.49	1.38	1.22	1.40	1.06	1.05	1.07	0.91	0.68	0.62

Source: Trajectories and Origins survey (TeO), INED-INSEE, 2008. Persons aged 18–35 who have completed their initial education, are unemployed and declare looking for a job in 2008

Notes: <sup>a</sup>ANPE: National Employment Agency. For each job search method, the first column (M1) corresponds to the odds ratio of origin from the logistic regression (with the variable of origin only); M2 corresponds to model with additional explanatory variables: gender, highest diploma, social background, mother's relationship to employment, place of residence, family situation. Significant results are in bold

Lecture: The descendants of Turkey are less likely to search a job via direct applications compared to the majority population with similar characteristics, but they are more likely to try to be self-employed

Compared to the majority population with similar characteristics, *origin is not significant, except for the Turkish descendants*: children of migrants are less likely to make direct applications, formal or institutional methods – such as advertisements or contacting the public employment agency – but are more likely to be self-employed (OR = 2.2).

Young people of Turkish origin differ from the majority population: they do less direct applications and respond to advertisements less. It is possible that there is a self-selection process due to their modest social origins and their lower level of education: they are more likely to be without a diploma or with just a short vocational one and they may feel less comfortable when selection is based on writing. They also use less institutional and formal methods in general, and more frequently their family networks. They are more likely to want to be self-employed (odds = 2.2); they are, moreover, over-represented among independents when they are employed like their fathers. Hence, the effect of origin persists, once education and socio-economic characteristics are controlled for (see M2, Table 5.2), suggesting a specific pattern for the Turkish group.

Job search methods depend more on education, social background (and social capital) and to a lesser extent the place of residence. Use of formal

(continued)



**Box 5.1** (continued)

methods, such as registration at the state unemployment employment agency (ANPE) decreases when interviewees live outside Paris or their mothers are inactive. Networks can be mobilized less in segregated areas (ZUS), where unemployment is higher and there are fewer relationships that can lead to employment.

Conversely, having independent parents, executives or professional increases the probability of using personal networks. This specialization of channels is not in favor of second-generation youth, especially those of African or North African origins: because they live more often than the majority population in segregated and deprived neighborhoods and receive less parental occupational support (their parents and peers are more often unemployed), therefore they have fewer networks to mobilize. On the other hand, they will use more often the public agencies such as « missions locales » or take examinations.

Young people who express ethnic *discrimination* – based on their origin or their skin color – are more likely than others to try to be self-employed or to mobilize their family or friendship networks. We can assume that they try to avoid discrimination and access to stable employment.

**Table 5.5** Regressions on unemployment by origin and gender (Odds ratios)

Origin	Men		Women	
	M1: Origin only	M2: Sociodemographic characteristics	M1: Origin only	M2: Sociodemographic characteristics
Ref. Majority				
Maghreb	2.30***	1.9***	1.92***	1.7***
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.98***	1.7**	1.45*	1.3
SE Asia	2.14***	1.7*	0.92	0.8
Turkey	1.47	0.8	3.7***	1.97**
Portugal	0.59**	0.5***	0.42***	0.5**
Other Europe	0.58**	0.7*	0.66*	0.7

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee. *Field*: Descendant of immigrants and majority population, aged 18–35, having finished their initial education. \*\*\* = significant at 0.01; \*\* = significant at 0.05; \* = significant at 0.10. M2: Controls are age, diplôme, social background, place of residence, labour market experience. Lecture: Compared to the majority population, the risk of unemployment is 2.3 times higher for North-Africa second generation men, and 1.9 higher, with similar characteristics

Table 5.6 Characteristics of the employed population by origin (% column)

Detailed origins	Maghreb	Sub-Saharan Africa	SE Asia	Turkey	Portugal	Other EU27	Mixed
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>							
Without diploma	9	20	14	24	14	16	13
BEP-CAP	22	25	28	34	28	28	23
<i>Baccalauréat</i>	24	27	17	16	20	21	22
Degree: Bac + 2 years	20	17	18	8	21	21	20
Degree: >Bac + 2 years	25	16	24	17	17	15	22
Living in zus*	4	33	16	25	7	6	8
<b>Place of residence</b>							
Independants	19	10	18	23	10	15	16
<b>Social background</b>							
Professional, Managers	33	4	18	7	9	21	31
Skilled Worker Clerk	37	47	27	39	55	46	41
Unskilled Worker Clerk	11	39	37	31	25	18	11
<b>Economic sector</b>							
Agriculture – Fishing	4	1	2	2	4	4	4
Industry- Energy	18	13	31	25	14	19	16
Construction	10	4	4	28	14	12	9
Trades-Transport	23	26	23	22	29	26	28
Services	19	21	26	10	16	21	19
Adm. Social Educ.	26	32	14	15	24	18	24
<b>Occupation</b>							
Professional Managers	13	9	20	6	11	12	14
Intermediary	28	28	20	16	25	31	28
Ref. ENQ.	19	18	9	10	18	13	19
Skilled Worker Clerk	14	19	16	17	17	18	13
Unskilled Worker	18	19	22	37	21	19	19
Skilled Worker	7	7	14	14	7	7	6
Fixed contract	18	24	21	24	11	11	21

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey, 2008, Ined-Insee*. Field: Descendants of immigrants and majority population, ages 18–35, who have completed their initial education, employees in 2008. \*Living in segregated area  
 The number of stars indicate the significant results in the X2 test \*\*\* = 0.01; \*\* 0.05; \* = 0.10. &: concours = competitive examinations  
 Lecture: Among the majority population, 33% have found their job through direct applications, 27% through their networks of relations

Table 5.7 Recruitment channels for the current job by socio-economic characteristics (%)

	Direct		Employment Intermediaries			Other means			Total
	Applications	Relations	Temporary work	Other intermediaries	Ads	School training	Concours	Others	
<b>Gender</b>									
Men	30	27	14	6	7	3	6	8	100
Women	43	21	5	9	6	5	6	5	100
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>									
Without diploma	26	39	14	10	1	6	1	2	100
BEP-CAP	44	30	9	4	5	2	2	5	100
<i>Baccalauréat</i>	38	24	10	10	6	4	7	3	100
Degree: Bac + 2 years	38	21	10	11	7	5	3	6	100
Degree: >Bac + 2 years	30	16	8	4	9	5	15	13	100
Independants	34	27	5	7	8	4	7	7	100
Professional, Managers	34	20	10	7	6	4	9	10	100
Skilled Worker Clerk	39	25	12	6	6	3	5	4	100
Unskilled Worker Clerk	35	29	10	10	4	8	1	4	100
Agriculture – Fishing	35	25	8	5	13	2	5	7	100
Industry- Energy	27	22	25	9	8	5	2	3	100
Construction	21	40	20	5	3	5	0	5	100
Trade-Transport	37	28	9	9	6	2	1	8	100
Services	40	26	3	9	6	6	0	10	100
Administration, Social Education	45	14	1	6	5	3	22	6	100

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee. Field: Descendants of immigrants and majority population, ages 18–35, who have completed their initial education, employees in 2008. The number of stars indicate the significant results in the X2 test \*\*\* = 0.01; \*\* = 0.05; \* = 0.10. &: concours = competitive examinations

Lecture: Among the majority population, 33% have found their job through direct applications, 27% through their networks of relations

**Table 5.8** Recruitment channels for the current job by origin, gender, educational attainment (in %)

		Direct applications	Networks		Employment intermediaries	Other means	Total
			Family ties	Personalities			
Majority	Men	29	8	18	20	25	100
	Women	44	7	14	13	22	100
Maghreb	Men	37	8.5	24	16	14.5	100
	Women	37	5	13	26	19	100
Sub-Saharan Africa	Men	35	13	16	20	16	100
	Women	33	5	15	26	21	100
SE Asia	Men	23	<i>10</i>	<i>16.5</i>	29	<i>21.5</i>	<i>100</i>
	Women	46	<i>15</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>100</i>
Turkey	Men	15	23	17	19	26	100
	Women	36	24	12	18	10	100
Portugal	Men	26	11	25	13	25	100
	Women	39	8	10	21	22	100
Majority	Low <sup>a</sup>	25	22	17	25	10	100
	High	33	4	14	16	33	100
Maghreb	Low	33.5	8	26	22	10.5	100
	High	44	3	11	15	27	100
Portugal	Low	25	<i>11</i>	28	25	<i>11</i>	100
	High	40	1	13	16	31	100
Turkey <sup>b</sup>	Low	25	<i>36</i>	9	<i>11</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee. In italics, the row when the Ns are “quite small” (less than 100)

<sup>a</sup>Low means without diploma; High: those with a postsecondary degree

<sup>b</sup>The number of the higher educated among the Turkish Second Generation is too low to appear in the table

**Table 5.9** Regressions on recruitment channels for the current job (Ref. category: Direct applications)

	M1: Origin only				M2: Sociodemographic characteristics				M3: Job characteristics			
	Family	Personal ties	Interm.	Other	Family	Personal ties	Interm.	Other	Family	Personal ties	Interm.	Other
Origin (Ref. Majority)	1.0	1.0	1.3*	0.8*	1.0	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.0
Maghreb	1.0	1.2	1.7**	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.9**	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.8**	1.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.6	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.5	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.9*	0.9	1.0	1.0
SE Asia	5.0***	1.1	2.1***	0.9	3.6***	1.0	1.8**	1.2	3.4***	0.9	1.5	1.2
Turkey	1.6*	1.3	1.5**	1.2	1.7*	1.2	1.6**	1.3	1.6*	1.2	1.7**	1.3
Portugal	1.7	0.9	1.7**	1.0	1.8	0.9	1.7**	1.1	1.7	0.9	1.6*	1.1
Other EU27	1.4	1.8**	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.7*	1.2	1.1	1.8	1.7	1.0	1.2
Other countries	1.2	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.1	0.8*	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.8*	1.1	1.0
Mixed					0.6	0.7***	0.9	0.8	0.7**	0.7**	1.2*	0.8**
<b>Sex: Women (/Men)</b>												
<b>Level of education</b>												
No diploma					2.2***	1.2	1.1	0.8	1.8***	1.0	0.9	0.9
Low voc. diploma					1.3	0.9	0.8	0.8***	1.0	0.8	0.7**	0.9
Ref. Baccalaureat												
Bac + 2 years					0.6*	0.7**	0.9	1.3*	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.1
> Bac + 2 years					0.5***	0.7***	0.6***	2.5***	0.8	0.8	0.7*	1.8***
<b>Social background</b>												
Professional, Managers					1.2	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.0
Ref. Unskilled manual Worker or white-collar												
Skilled manual Worker or white-collar					1.3	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.1
Independent					2.5***	0.9	0.9	1.2	2.4***	0.9	0.9	1.1
Mother economically active					0.9	0.9	1.0	0.8**	0.8*	0.9	0.9	0.8*

(continued)

Table 5.9 (continued)

	M1: Origin only			M2: Sociodemographic characteristics			M3: Job characteristics					
	Family	Personal ties	Intern.	Other	Family	Personal ties	Intern.	Other	Family	Personal ties	Intern.	Other
Origin (Ref. Majority)												
<b>Place of residence</b>												
In zus: Segregated area					1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0
In Paris					1.2	0.9	1.4***	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.1
<b>Age</b>												
18–25					1.7	1.1	0.8***	1.1	1.8***	0.9	0.6***	1.2*
26–30 (ref.)												
31–35					1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8**	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.9
<b>Economic sector</b>												
Ref. Trade -Transport												
Agriculture									1.3	1.2	1.5	1.2
Industry- Energy									1.4	0.8	2.4***	0.9
Construction									3.3***	1.3	2.1***	1.1
Services									1.3	1.0	0.9	1.0
Adm. Educ. Social									0.8	0.6***	0.5***	1.9***
<b>Firm size</b>												
Ref. < 10 employees												
10–49 employees									0.8	0.7***	1.1	0.9
>= 50 employees									0.6***	0.5***	1.3*	0.8
<b>Type of job</b>												
Fixed contract (Ref. Permanent)									0.8	1.2	2.4***	0.6***
Full time contract									1.2	1.0	0.9	0.6***

Professional-Managers										0.4	1.0	0.4***	2.1***
Intermediaries										0.7	1.0	0.8	1.2
Ref. Unskilled white-collar													
Skilled white-collar										1.2	1.6**	0.8	1.0
Unskilled worker										1.1	1.4**	1.2	0.9
Skilled worker										1.7*	1.7**	1.1	1.1

Source: *Trajectories and Origins Survey*, 2008, Ined-Insee. *Field*: Descendant of immigrants, and majority population, aged 18–35, having finished their initial education and who are employees in 2008 (N = 3661). *Odds ratio* from the polytomic model

\*\*\* = significant at 0.01; \*\* = significant at 0.05; \* = significant at 0.10

Note: Model 3 also controls for recruitment year and unemployment experience

How to read table: a descendant of Turkish immigrant is more likely to find a job (OR = 3.4) through family ties than through direct applications, compared to the majority population with similar characteristics



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# Chapter 6

## Social Capital, Immigrants and Their Descendants – The Case of Sweden



Alireza Behtoui

### 6.1 Introduction

Summarising his empirical findings 21 years after publication of his seminal work (*Getting a Job* from 1974), Granovetter (1995: 151) confirmed that the results of these studies show *no consistent correlation* between using *social networks* and the *quality* of jobs obtained, as measured by higher wages or higher prestige. He consequently underlined that ‘It is not adequate to look only at the nature of the tie between job finder and her contact ... the various characteristics of the entire network affect outcomes’. In other words, it is not enough to take into account merely the networks of relations between individuals; more important is the volume of capital (economic, cultural and symbolic) which these social networks possess. Further empirical development in this field, relying on Bourdieu’s theoretical approach, also maintained that social networks by themselves are not the same as ‘social resources’ (Lin, 2001, see below for more on this). Lin later equated ‘social resources’ with ‘social capital’ and, in agreement with Bourdieu, argued that we should not only take into account ‘the networks of relations’ but also ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of’ these social networks (Bourdieu, 2001: 102).

Corresponding to Bourdieu’s conceptualisation, this chapter defines social capital as the ‘totality of resources...activated through a more or less extended, more or less mobilizable network of relations’ (Bourdieu, 2005: 194). This, in turn, includes membership in a group, ‘which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word’ (Bourdieu, 2001: 102). For Bourdieu, social capital is one of three forms of capital (economic, cultural and social) which,

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taken together, ‘explain the structure and dynamic of differentiated societies’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 119). Access to social capital gives people connections to individuals in their network who, because of their possession of greater amounts of economic and cultural capital, might help them with advice, further connections, information, loans and so on. In this view, the profitability of accumulating and maintaining social capital increases in proportion to the amount of the economic and cultural capital in one’s network (Bourdieu, 1998). Accordingly, for Bourdieu (2001: 103), ‘the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent...depends on the *size* of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the *volume* of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected’. In this way, when a member of the group obtains a better position in the hierarchical social space, the social capital of all the others in the group improves and, as the saying goes, ‘their stocks go up’ (1998: 286). For Bourdieu, social capital, like other forms of capital, is synonymous with *power*. Thus, the social background or initial position of an individual (gender, class and ethnic background, etc.) – in short, his/her history – plays a crucial role in providing access to social capital (just as in the case of economic and cultural capital); the higher the position of the individual in the social hierarchy, the more social capital that individual possesses.

Studying migration through a social capital approach goes beyond an individualistic perspective on migration in which the focus is explicitly on the individual immigrant’s assimilation into the new society. Multilevel processes of developing relationships in different contexts, including people in the migrant community, members of the majority group, family and friends in the country of origin or co-nationals settled in third countries, are among the subjects of those studies that make use of the notion of the concept of social capital in migration processes (Zhou, 2013).

I have studied migration and migrants in Sweden since 2000, focusing particularly on social capital. During this period, I have used Swedish register data (the full population database compiled by Statistics Sweden) and also a large body of quantitative (survey) and qualitative data from studies conducted over these years. Focusing mainly on immigrants from the Global South, I have compared their positions with those of the majority population and other immigrants. These works include both newcomers and those who have lived in Sweden for a longer period of time – the first generation and the children of immigrants – and cover fields such as the labour and marriage markets as well as education, extra-curricular activities and identity formation.

The aforementioned conceptual framework of social capital has been confronted with empirical findings from several studies in which I have been involved, a short summary of which is presented here. The findings offer insights into how social capital operates for various groups of immigrants, during different phases of their life and across fields such as education and the labour market. Taking the specific context of Sweden and the position of immigrants in this country, this chapter contrasts and synthesises these results with other research in this field.

The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows: in the next section I argue how migration affects the social relations and ties that the individual held earlier. The following section's claim is that, like individuals from the majority population, it is not the immigrants' social networks *per se* but the resources embedded in them which define the migrants' social capital. The next section is about heterogeneity between the different groups of immigrants. Resources in immigrant communities as sources of social capital is the subject of the following section. The subsequent two sections are about the 'contra stratification' aspect of social capital for immigrants and the 'contextuality' of social capital, before the final part summarises the arguments and limitations of this chapter.

## 6.2 Access to Social Capital Among Individuals with a Migration Background

As I have argued elsewhere (Behtoui, 2017), a comprehensive study on individuals with a migrant background, their incorporation and outcomes in the new country of residence requires the implementation of a multilevel approach:

1. At the *individual level*, the most frequently highlighted factors in these studies are the individual characteristics of immigrants and their own resources (e.g. education) related to their socio-economic background.
2. *Macro-level* factors or the context of migration involves the socio-historical environments into which immigrants and their children arrive and settle. Empirical indicators at this level, as Portes (1995) maintains, can be found in various aspects of the reception of immigrants – e.g. what is the government's policy toward this group of immigrants and what is the reaction of civil society, the media and public opinion to them. As Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 47) put it, the darker an immigrant's skin, 'the more difficult it is to make his or her personal qualifications count'. Thus, the macro-level factors interact with and affect the individual ones.
3. Between the *macro* and the *micro* levels, writes Field (2005: 328), 'there is a tangled web of social relationships, which are focused around the family, neighbourhood and voluntary organisations'. Social capital, as the main concept at the *meso* level, is to be regarded as the aggregate of resources that are beyond the individual ones. These are accessible and arise from individuals' social relations and participation in formal and informal settings – i.e. their connections with others through social networks and membership in different kinds of organisation.

The general consequence of displacement, by and large, is the loss of an individual's previous social ties. To build up other networks in the new place of residence is a demanding and time-consuming process. In the case of migrants, Zhou (2013: 253) writes that 'former social relations in families, friendship, or kinship groups, and other social networks are often disrupted through the migration process' and that the majority of newcomers encounter problems in making contacts with majority population due to their lesser familiarity with the lan-



guage, traditions and customs of the new society of residence. This process tends to be more challenging if the immigrant belongs to a stigmatised group and is, accordingly, unpopular among the population of their new country residence.

However, as Anthias (2007) reminds us, immigrants' social ties are not restricted to their relations with others in the new country of residence. Multi-stranded social relations and interactions link together immigrants across the borders of national states. Migrants are also members of a larger whole that extends beyond geographical boundaries. Transnational ties, as Faist (2000: 189) defines them, are 'ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms'. These transnational ties continue to operate even 'after the migration process as well as being used for new goals' (Anthias, 2007: 795).

As Erickson (2004: 40) puts it, newcomer non-white stigmatised immigrant groups, 'face a double handicap in forming social capital' in their new country of residence. They are living, in many cases, in deprived neighbourhoods and are concentrated in inferior parts of the labour market, consequently 'prejudiced people do not find them attractive as potential acquaintances'. Evidence from the Swedish labour market confirms this suggestion and shows that newcomer immigrants from the Global South tend to be embedded in social networks that constrain their ability to gain social resources (Behtoui, 2007). According to the results of this study (Behtoui, 2007), the inferior position of this category of immigrants in the Swedish labour market is in part due to this deficit in social capital (fewer resources in their local social capital). Such a capital deficit offers fewer opportunities to mobilise better social resources and improve immigrants' labour-market outcomes.

The process of incorporation and the construction of new social networks can become more demanding if a community of fellow nationals does not exist in the new settlement area since, in general, the first encounters with the new homeland happen through contacts with other immigrants of the same background. If there are many others from the same group in the new place of residence, then newcomers are primarily involved in tight interpersonal links with them at first hand. They are the people who may offer them help to start a new life in the new country. These fellow nationals can be concentrated on the margins of the society or be well-integrated in the mainstream society, with a well-organised community. Contacts with others in migrant communities and those from the majority population are crucial for the process of incorporation under the new circumstances. These connections provide newcomers with information, support, resources and a sense of familiarity in an otherwise unknown setting. Studying the social capital of migrants is accordingly about their relations with other people in the new country of residence together with the revitalisation of transnational ties, as well as about how these connections affect the immigrant's life.

As Miles (1993) puts it, the imagined 'problematic' immigrants in today's North-West European societies do not include all immigrants but *certain groups* of them. To make the outcomes of the process of stigmatisation against immigrants from the Global South for their access to social capital more transparent, we can use Loury's (2009: 95) distinction between two kinds of discrimination. First, discrimination in



*contract*, which denotes the unequal treatment of individuals in these groups by the majority population on the basis of their ‘race/ethnicity’ in *formal* transactions (for example, on the labour market). Second, discrimination in *contact*, which means the unequal treatment of immigrants and their descendants on the basis of their ‘race/ethnicity’ in the context of more-*informal* private spheres of life (for example, friendship or partnership). Discrimination in contact, according to Loury, has extremely destructive consequences for racially/ethnically stigmatised groups. Stigmatisation negatively affects their access to networks with valuable resources (social capital) and thereby hampers their ‘individual social mobility and intergenerational status transmission’ (2009: 99). This is because ‘opportunity travels along the synapses of these social networks’ (2009: 102). Behtoui (2010), as an example of discrimination in contact, examines the probability of out-marriage to natives for immigrants from the Global South. Findings show that these immigrants and their offspring have a significantly lower probability of having a native partner because of their image as ‘outsiders’.

Other characteristics of a migrant group which have an effect on their access to social capital are the *resources* that this group brings with them and the *time* of their arrival. Lee and Zhou (2015) and Behtoui (2022) explain the successful mobility outcomes of Asians in the United States and Iranians in Sweden partly as a consequence of the educational selectivity (above-average educational attainment) of individuals in these groups and partly by their access to more resourceful networks (social capital). They have the background preconditions for having feasible and frequent interactions with people from the majority population with similar resources and lifestyles, which provides them with access to more social capital (See also Erel and Ryan 2019). Interactions between immigrants from these groups and those from the majority population occur according to the ‘*homophily principle*’, which means that individuals in a social network tend to resemble each other in several ways (Lin, 2001).

Steinberg (1989: 103) wrote about Jewish success in the United States as a matter of the time of their arrival: ‘[T]here was a fortuitous match between the experience and skills of Jewish immigrants, on the one hand, and the manpower needs and opportunity structures, on the other’. These Jewish immigrants were individuals with a higher level of literacy, better industrial skills and greater familiarity with urban living, commerce, craft and manufacturing. These conditions make it possible to construct a well-organised and network-dense community (a source of social capital), which followed their business success and better academic achievements of their children (Steinberg, 1989).

### 6.3 Beyond Social Ties: Social Capital

As Louise Ryan (Chap. 2 in this volume) argues: ‘For too long, migration studies have tended to use “network” as a metaphor without paying due attention to the structure, density, content, multiplexity and dynamism of social networks’. Ryan points out, in fact, the shortages of the previous stage of research in this field, with

its focus on networks (also cf. Brinbaum, Chap. 5). This remark is in line with Bourdieu's (2005: 198) idea that 'social network analysis' overlooks the fact that the very potency of a person's networks depends, above all, on the position that an individual included in his or her networks occupies in the social hierarchy and the individual's 'access to different kinds of capital'. Moreover, we should consider the structural constraints, noted by Lin et al. (2001), on network development among people in subordinate positions. The composition of an individual's network is largely shaped by the '*homophily principle*', which means that interactions usually occur among actors with similar resources and lifestyles. As a result, women, stigmatised minority groups or those who belong to the lower classes are embedded in social networks with less-valuable resources (Lin & Erickson, 2008).

Access to more social capital denotes being connected to well-placed, influential and high-status people in a society, states Lin et al. (2001). These influential individuals in a person's social network have control over greater resources, can provide better *information* because of their advantageous view of the structure and can have better social *credentials* when, for example, they recommend an applicant for a position. Moreover, being integrated in better-placed social groups' networks elevates a person's 'acceptability', since (s)he learns these groups' speech style, manners, aesthetic preferences and 'taste'. Hence, Bourdieu (2001: 109) suggests that 'Manners (bearing, pronunciation, etc.) may be included in social capital insofar as, through the mode of acquisition they point to, they indicate membership of a more or less prestigious group'.

On this point, as the results of my study on finding a job on the Swedish labour market (Behtoui, 2015) demonstrate, the use of social networks (*informal methods*) varies according to the educational level of the job applicants. Those with the *lowest* and *highest* educational qualifications tend to find jobs more often via their social networks. However, there is no significant association between the use of social ties (informal methods) and the attainment of a higher salary or job status; that is, using social networks to find a job is not the same as having access to more social resources. In other words, using social ties *per se* provides no relative advantage in the competition for better jobs. On the other hand, resources in one's social networks (social capital) are associated with better labour-market outcomes, whether or not a person reported getting his or her current job with someone's help (Behtoui, 2015). Furthermore, the migrant background of an individual (alongside his/her class background and gender) plays an important role in providing access to social capital. Thus, social networks with various resources provide different outcomes. For example, as Behtoui (2008) demonstrates, contrary to natives, finding jobs through social networks generates lower wage returns than formal job-search methods when it comes to immigrants from the Global South, since they find their jobs via their (often) segregated social networks. Thus, 'Finding jobs through contacts may be one's best option, yet the jobs found may still be of poor quality by general standards if this is all the group can provide. You cannot get blood from a stone' (Granovetter, 1995: 151).

## 6.4 The Homogenised Construction of the Migratory Status

Is it accurate to write about the social capital of immigrants in general terms? Among studies on the access to or mobilisation of social capital, we are sometimes confronted with statements about the gaps between the majority population and immigrants, as two separate and homogeneous categories in these regards (See e.g. Yong et al., 2019; Behtoui et al., 2019). However, the paths to the accumulation of social capital are shaped by the complex ways in which individuals' migration backgrounds interact with the logic of other types of categorisation and positioning of these people – for instance, their class background or sexual orientation. These intersectional relationships, in turn, affect immigrants' access to social capital in the new country of residence.

Intersectional theories of inequality challenge the mono-dimensional view of identity – i.e. those paradigms that separate discourses on race, class, gender, sexual orientation and immigration status – by showing how they intersect. Along with this perspective, there is no such a category as 'immigrants' as a concrete, homogeneous and separate social category (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). People who have been labelled as immigrants are always simultaneously positioned in many different categories and in relation to a whole range of social divisions such as class, gender, age etc.

As the findings in Behtoui (2007) demonstrate, access to social capital is different for individuals with a native background and immigrants from the Global North and South; however, for each category, access to social capital is positively associated with their educational background, their labour-market experiences, whether or not they have a partner and if they are active members of voluntary associations.

Consequently, as Rattansi and Phoenix (2005) remind us, individuals have a range of identities (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.). All these categorisations/classifications shape a person's life chances through locating him or her within certain networks of power relations with various resources. Put another way, estimating immigrants' access to and mobilisation of social capital, one should consider that these socially constructed categories are multiple, potentially contradictory and situationally variable, which generates enormous heterogeneity between different groups of immigrants.

## 6.5 Resources in the Migrant Community as a Source of Social Capital

As Portes (1998: 7) has maintained, 'bounded solidarity' is an essential source of social capital. It happens when members of a group – 'by being thrown together in a common situation' – learn to identify with their own group and support each other. Such identification and solidarity (the emergent product of a *common fate*) has been a strong motivational force, for example, for an industrial worker to take part in

sympathy strikes or protest marches in support of other workers, for members of an ethnic minority group to fight together for their rights or for religious groups to provide support and help for others in their religious community (Portes, 1998). The same mechanism is involved when, in a tight immigrant community network, parents, teachers, social workers and other adults in positions of authority seek to support, control, maintain discipline and promote educational mobility among children (Zhou & Kim, 2006). Portes (2010) writes about the pool of resources in a 'diasporic' community (a co-national social network) as follows. Each migrant group develops specific types of strategies to cope with problems in the new society of residence. The web of connections between them as part of their regular interaction – based on a common language or history and/or shared fate – generates loyalties and mutual obligations among them. These relationships may lead to the establishment of formal organisations or the development of informal social networks which then transmit and perpetuate of social capital further. Two crucial factors are involved in determining the level of social capital available to an immigrant community. *First*, the reception of immigrants – that is, the government's policy towards them (rapid legal entry to the new country, a long waiting period before the issuing of residence permits or undocumented status and the *requirements for becoming a citizen*). *Second*, the various types of resource which are available, accessible and meaningful when constructing a network-dense community for each particular immigrant group (the amount and quality of the financial, educational and other cultural capital of fellow community members). Social capital generated in immigrants' communities may increase opportunities for members with fewer resources and for newcomers through increasing their likelihood of finding a job consistent with their education and skills as well as providing entrepreneurial assistance or training. In addition, a tightly connected community can reinforce parental educational aspirations for their children (Portes, 2010).

Note that a geographically concentrated and united immigrant enclave is not a necessary precondition for the generation of social capital by an immigrant community. In a European context, it is seldom the case that an immigrant group is geographically concentrated, thus there are no equivalents to a 'China Town' or 'Little Italy'. Nevertheless, we can observe that solidarities appear through networks even if not concentrated in an enclave.

As findings in my recent study demonstrate (Behtoui, 2022), individuals with an immigrant background from the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America) in Sweden are under-represented in the high-ranking strata of the three spheres of political, academic and economic life. However, after individuals with a native background (born in Sweden with two Swedish-born parents), those who were born in or who had (two) parents from Finland (from the Global North) and Iran (from the Global South) had the highest number of representatives in these fields. Moreover, the ratio of the Iranian group among the elites in these three spheres is equal to or even higher than that among the population as a whole (which is lower for those from Finland). This in spite of the fact that immigrants from Iran have lived a significantly shorter time in Sweden and had no previous knowledge of the Swedish language or contact with Swedes. There is, in addition, a high degree of

social acceptability of immigrants from Nordic countries (including Finland) in Sweden, whereas there is a more exclusionary attitude towards immigrants from ‘Middle-Eastern’ countries, including Iran. What can explain the post-migration career achievements of the Iranian group? First, *the more positive selectivity of individuals* in this group regarding their access to educational, cultural and political capital. For instance, about 53 per cent of people in this group have post-secondary or tertiary education, compared to 44 per cent in the total population of Sweden. Second, *the contextual factors* – when there was an increasing demand for candidates with an immigrant background on the political market, people in this group could provide an appropriate supply of resourceful candidates; and when the deregulation and privatisation of Swedish welfare services (such as public health care and schools) opened up new potential money-making markets and individuals in this group had (in addition to the appropriate education and work experience), the knowledge and the skills needed to run a private enterprise in these sectors. Third, *Iranian community organisations as sources of social capital*. The social, cultural and political associations of this group flourish nearly a decade after the arrival of the first groups of Iranian immigrants and offer, for example, the teaching of the Persian language, the celebration of Iranian national festivals and the organisation of cultural activities. Descendants of these immigrants have continued the maintenance and further development of these associations in a more sophisticated way. Even though members of the Iranian community in Sweden are highly differentiated, in terms of both ethnicity (e.g. Kurds), religion (e.g. Armenian Christians and Bahai’s) and political affiliation (e.g. leftist, Mujahedin and Monarchists), nonetheless their common fate, life history and like-mindedness intensified the solidarity between each specific group’s members in each of these sub-groups. Consequently, although individuals with an Iranian background are not living in enclaves, are not geographically concentrated and are divided into various subgroups, the common background and loyalty between the various subgroups in this community have worked for the creation of tightly interpersonal links (informal social networks) and the construction of formal organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Another feature of the immigrant community as a source of social capital is the transnational nature of these collectives. Contemporary international migration studies highlight the concept of *transnationalism* or, to be precise, the various networks and links (cultural, economic and familial) that connect individuals to several locations (Faist, 2013). In the contemporary world, immigrants are transnationally located and engaged in multiple settings. Immigrant families are spread out over several countries and continents, with the continuous exchange of resources across borders. Through new media developments, immigrants and their descendants exploit the electronically freed-up resources of global diasporic networks in order to contact their family members, friends and acquaintances. In this way transnationalism (social interconnectedness that crosses national boundaries and produces extended

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<sup>1</sup>This creates an interesting contrast to American research, where scholars, sometimes using the concept of ‘ethnic capital’, point to geographically clustered, single-ethnic communities as sources for constraints and possibilities.

social networks) should be seen as a resource in immigrants' communities (see also Keskiner and Waldring, Chap. 3 in this book).

As Nygård and Behtoui (2020) state, the difference in access to social capital between young people with a migrant and those with a native background is partly due to a higher presence of transnational ties among the former's family members. These transnational contacts operate instrumentally in promoting aspirations among the descendants of immigrants and providing them with useful advice, support and information about their education choices.

## 6.6 The 'Counter Stratification' Effect of Social Capital

Although the stratification effect of social capital is the predominant pattern, some groups or individuals from the unprivileged stratum of society (the working class) and other low-status groups (e.g. LGBTQ people, women or ethnic minorities) have been able to gain access to resources beyond their own immediate social networks. The mechanisms that are involved in this process are as follows.

*First* there is the counter stratification of association activities initiated by subordinate groups. This happens when marginalised or stigmatised groups join together, organise themselves, construct a common identity and pool collective resources (Portes, 1998). When subordinate groups begin to organise themselves and become agents in the field of civic associations, they can (through, among other things, social-capital building) challenge the basic premises of the current balance of power. As Young (2000) states, when disadvantaged groups of people find each other and create associations, then they can improve their lives through resisting domination, telling their own stories, putting across their arguments and other expressive interventions to present their own perspective to the dominant public. These self-organising activities can (i) articulate group consciousness and struggle against the dominant stigmatising discourses of class, gender and race/ethnicity, (ii) express new experiences and social perspectives and (iii) provide mutual practical aid, social solidarity and cultural support. The history of the Swedish labour and feminist movement is a wonderful narrative of the creation of *structures of opportunities* to enhance the social and political rights of these groups.

Ålund and Schierup (1991) have critically reviewed immigrant organisations in Sweden during their golden age (1970–1990) which, according to them, were structured and monitored 'from above' by the welfare bureaucracy, corresponding to the 'national or ethnic identities' of different immigrant groups such as Finns, Yugoslavs or Turks. Mulinari and Neergaard (2004), described another form of immigrant-worker organisation in Sweden during 1990s. The FAI network (a group of immigrant union activists) demanded an equal participation and representation of immigrants in the Swedish trade-union confederation. Ålund and Rosales (2017) depict current youth-led networks, associations and organisations in Sweden. Young people with an immigrant background and from the most socio-economically



deprived metropolitan neighbourhoods, are the main actors and activists of these new forms of organisation.

*Second* is the counter-stratification effect of the already-existing mainstream civil society organisation. These organisations can sometimes be a support to people from subordinate groups. One example is the religious, political or non-profit organisations that help children in marginalised neighbourhoods with their homework or offer other types of financial or emotional support. With this type of intervention, the individual who receives support may achieve upward social mobility in the hierarchical status system of the society. Note that the counter-stratification effect of social capital in this case is limited only to certain individuals and has no effect on the de-stigmatisation of the marginalised group as a collective.

As I have written elsewhere (Behtoui, 2019), through relationships with adult leaders and other participants, young people who are involved in extra-curricular activities (e.g., athletic, cultural and religious organisations) gain access to social networks which afford them valuable resources and important and useful advice, support and information about their educational choices and career prospects. In Sweden, these activities are traditionally initiated and organised by adults who are active members of civil-society organisations and deep-rooted in the local environment. Some of the adults who are leaders of these activities act as mentors for the young people (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds) and play an important role in their educational success. The empirical results of this study show that (after control for class background) the rate of participation of young people with an immigrant background in athletic and cultural extra-curricular activities is the same as that of the offspring of natives in Sweden. Nevertheless, they are relatively *more* involved in the activities of religious organisations and youth recreation centres (*fritidsgård*), even after controlling for class background. The results demonstrate that participation in organised extra-curricular programmes (athletic, cultural and religious) was associated with positive educational outcomes. Participation in less-structured activities (youth recreation centres) was associated with negative effects. However, the worst results were shown by the group of those with ‘no extra-curricular activity at all’. Those who do not participate in any kind of extra-curricular activity had lowest final grades and educational expectations, compared with those who had structured or less-structured activities. Furthermore, when the benefits of participation in athletic and cultural activities have similar effects and were equally important for young individuals from different class backgrounds, the benefits of involvement in religious organisations (more accessible for those with an immigrant background) were more positive for pupils from the lower strata of the social hierarchy.

Finally, the findings show that the class background and family resources of young people are crucial factors explaining the disparity in youngsters’ opportunities to participate in organised leisure activities. Young people from more-privileged social-class backgrounds (with and without a migrant origin) were much more likely to attend these programmes. After controlling for respondents’ class background, the results demonstrated that cultural and athletic programmes are more available to students attending schools with the best academic results – often located



in affluent areas – than those who attend under-achieving schools in cities and towns. The only exceptions were the higher rate of participation in activities put on by religious organisations in marginalised areas of big cities and the youth recreation centres existing in the less-privileged neighbourhoods of small towns, which are likely to be more available to young people with a migrant background living in these districts.

*Third* we have the interventions of *committed institutional agents*. According to Stanton-Salazar (2011), committed teachers, social workers, youth workers and job-centre personnel are among those institutional agents who can provide assistance for individuals within the lower strata of society (e.g., youth from working-class and ethnic-minority communities). They can embed these people in the networks that connect them to the services and resources oriented toward their empowerment. The ‘redistribution’ of resources through institutional agents has a possible *counter-stratification effect* for low-status individuals in need (including those with a migrant background) and can alter the lots of these people. Stanton-Salazar (2011) labels this type of social capital as ‘*empowerment social capital*’ and defines it as ‘those resources and forms of institutional support which are embedded in “connections” or relationships with high-status, resourceful, institutional agents oriented to go counter to the *system*’ (2011: 1086, emphasises in the original). Counter-stratification social capital operates principally as a buffer against the full burden of, for example, class or racial oppression, maintains Stanton-Salazar.

One empirical example in the Swedish context is my finding (Behtoui, 2008) on getting a job. At the time, Sweden had a nationwide system of public employment agencies,<sup>2</sup> with at least one office in each municipality. The results of that study demonstrate that, firstly, immigrants from the Global South are less likely to be able to find their jobs through informal methods (social networks). However, they tend to secure employment through formal methods, like public employment offices, to a significantly greater extent than natives. Secondly, the results show that, after controlling for education, labour-market experiences, union membership and family situation, the wage gap between natives and immigrants from the Global South – who obtained their jobs through formal methods like public employment offices – was significantly narrower compared with those who used informal job-finding methods.

Interpreting empirical results like those mentioned above, Granovetter (1995: 163) wrote that newcomers like young people or immigrants with ‘no network of contacts from previous jobs’ in a specific labour market gain more benefit from formal matching like public employment services. Job-centre personnel (who have well-established ‘network relations with firms, unions and schools that would repay further study’) can act for these groups with poor contact networks as their *quasi-network* and be a link between them and employers or further-education/training officials.

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<sup>2</sup>With a political agreement in 2019, some activities of the Swedish public employment service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) are to be replaced by a number of small private companies.

Another empirical example of the role of committed institutional agents is our recent finding in the field of education (Behtoui & Strömberg, 2020). The results of our ethnographic studies indicated that there is a significant association between school-based social capital and school composition (the class and migrant background of students in a school). In a school with students from a higher socio-economic background, we observed more-qualified and motivated teachers, intensive parental involvement and, consequently, less conflict and a more friendly relationship among students while, in a school located in a disadvantaged area, the social relations exhibited quite a reverse character.

At the same time, we find a third category. In a school with children from lower social-class backgrounds placed in an immigrant-dense area, highly committed school staff (young teachers mainly with an immigrant background) have been able to create an emotional closeness and level of trust between staff, pupils and parents. School-based social capital, in this third category, brought a sense of solidarity and created a pro-educational climate. School-based social capital in this context operated in line with the *contra-stratification effect of social capital*.

## 6.7 Contextuality of Social Capital

Coleman (1990: 302) underlines the variability, contextuality, conditionality and limited fungibility of social capital when he writes: 'A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others'. Lin and Erickson (2008: 13) emphasise, in the same way, that 'the value of potential resources depends on the social context and is quite variable from one social setting to another'. According to them, this demands that researchers know in advance about the specific type of social capital for the field they are studying and ask about the relevance and worth of the kinds of social relations and resources produced there, in that specific context, for that specific group. Zhou (2013: 253) accentuates the same point for immigrants' networks and writes, 'social relations that can produce social capital with desirable outcomes for one ethnic group or in one situation may not translate to another ethnic group or situation' (see also Ryan's Chap. 2 in this volume).

Such a contextualised understanding of the social capital concept warns us to consider each specific group and context when we define and measure the impact of the resources embedded in social relations as a source of social capital. Two examples from empirical studies in Sweden can illustrate the weight of the contextuality and conditionality of social capital.

As mentioned above, our empirical findings indicate that the higher educational aspirations of the children of immigrants in Sweden (compared to their peers with Swedish-born parents) are the result partly because of their tendency to have access to more social capital (Behtoui, 2017). The latter is explained, firstly, because of the heterogeneity (regarding class boundaries) of the social networks of immigrant families compared with others, when the parents of young people with low-status

jobs socialise with others in the same group with a higher status, probably due to the former's downward social mobility in spite of their previous qualifications or thanks to the tight social ties in their communities. Secondly, it is a result of the transnational ties of immigrant parents. These ties, in any case, are sources of information, aspiration and support for the educational progress of the next generation. However, the social capital generated by these ties, beneficial for the educational field, is not necessarily helpful in other contexts. For instance, this type of social capital does not have the same impact during the transition from education to work for the descendants of immigrants compared to the children of natives. As the findings in Behtoui and Olsson (2014) demonstrate, this would be the case even if early-age young immigrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina were significantly more educated than the children of natives but their educational capital did not generate a higher annual income when they entered the labour market.

Another example arose when we examined the workplace inequality between native- and foreign-born employees in Swedish elderly-care work. The 'position generator method' (Lin et al., 2001) used to assess employees' access to social capital appeared not to be a suitable measurement for highlighting the gap in occupational status and salaries between these groups (by this method, researchers provide identical lists of well-known occupations and respondents answered whether anyone among their family members, friends or acquaintances held this occupation). So why was the measurement created by the 'position generator method' not an appropriate device in this case for explaining the salary gaps between these two groups? The reason was that social capital, as a form of power, does not operate autonomously and independent from each field's particular rules of the game. The resources to which immigrant workers had access through their contacts outside their workplace did not have the same value as their specific contacts at their workplace.

Hence, we constructed another measurement to assess the access of a firm's personnel to specific 'workplace social capital' (WPSC). This measurement, as a variant of the 'name generator' method, determined social capital generated through the respondents' close ties in their workplace. We asked each employee to think about 'the people who are important for her/him at work' – i.e., those whom our respondents 'feel the greatest confidence in at the workplace and can rely on their advice when a problem arises there' (Behtoui et al., 2020). We asked them, firstly, how many such persons there are at their workplace and, secondly, to specify the gender, country of birth, highest educational level and job of their two closest contacts at work. The number of all contacts plus the prestige scores of the occupational status of these two contacts constitute the main basis for measuring the WPSC of the employees.

Our results revealed: (a) that those with more workplace social capital (WPSC) had higher positions and a bigger salary, after control for all other control variables (e.g. education, labour-market experiences etc.), (b) that workers from the Global South had less access to WPSC compared to natives and (c) that their lower positions and lower wages could be explained partly because of their lower access to WPSC and fewer benefits from it. As stated by workers from the Global South in our qualitative data in the same study, they had experienced 'contact discrimination',

that is, they did not have the same friendship relations and closeness with their native-born co-workers and bosses (consequently they had networks with fewer resources), since they are regarded as ‘the others’.

To sum up, social capital is not a universal and fungible asset – like financial capital – that one can easily convert to different currencies in various contexts and uses. The degree to which social capital is useful and recognised is related to a specific group in a specific field, a resource to be accumulated or deployed in a particular context.

## 6.8 Summary and Discussion

To build up new networks and reactivate existing transnational ties in the new country of residence is a challenging and time-consuming process for new immigrants, particularly for those who are subject to racial/ethnic discrimination. For this reason, as mentioned above, finding jobs through social networks generates lower wage returns than formal job-search methods when stigmatised immigrant groups find their jobs via their segregated social networks.

Further, I argue that we should avoid lumping all immigrants together and defining them all as a single group. The socio-historical environments into which a group arrives and settles in, the differences between the various immigrant groups’ resources (their education, familiarity with urban living, etc.), their time of arrival, their legal status and the extent to which their communities are well-organised all require consideration of the heterogeneity between the different groups of immigrants and their access to social capital.

In addition, based on the argument that ‘bounded solidarity’ is an essential source of social capital, so immigrant communities were described as a source of social capital. The web of connections between individuals in an immigrant group – based on a common language or history and/or shared fate – generate loyalties and mutual obligations between them and may lead to the establishment of formal organisations or the development of informal social networks which then transmit and perpetuate further these connections. The level of resources in an immigrant community depends, firstly, on the government’s policy towards them (rapid legal entry to the new country and a long time before residency permits are issued – or undocumented status – and the *requirements for becoming a citizen are fulfilled*). Secondly, the level depends on the amount and quality of the financial, educational and other cultural capital of fellow community members.

As emphasised, although the stratification effect of social capital is the predominant pattern, some groups or individuals from the unprivileged strata of society (among them, stigmatised immigrants with lower class positions) have been able to gain access to resources beyond their own immediate social networks. Social capital, in these cases, either generated by civil society organisations or assistance provided by institutional agents, operates in line with the *contra-stratification effect of social capital*.

A final point made was about the contextuality of social capital, in which the emphasis was on our being very aware of the specific type of social capital for each field. We should determine whether the kinds of social relations and resources that are produced in a specific context are relevant and of value to the immigrant group that we are studying. This, since social relations that can produce social capital with desirable consequences for one group of immigrants have not always had the same effect for another group in other situation.

Studying social capital, as the arguments in this chapter demonstrate, moves us beyond models in this field that focus only on the individual resources of immigrants in order to explain the variability of outcomes and achievements. Analysing migrants existence and outcomes in their new society through a social-capital approach can transform our understanding of an immigrant as an isolated island into a multilevel process of developing relations with a variety of groups, organisations and institutions. This includes fellow migrants, members of the host society, family and friends in the country of origin or other associates/friends/acquaintances settled in third countries (transnational ties). Migrant communities and mainstream civil-society organisations as well as governmental and public organisations, interact and affect the process of construction of the social ties of these individuals. The main question in such studies concerns who individuals with an immigrant background are connected with and which resources are available in their networks.

An important limitation of this chapter is that it has concentrated only on the *positive* consequences and constructive and goal-oriented outcomes of social capital as the product of social relations and networks/organisational memberships. However, as previous research has demonstrated, social relations between individuals may produce non-desirable outcomes (sometimes labelled as ‘negative social capital’ or the ‘dark side of social capital’). Moreover, the positive consequences of social capital for immigrants in some significant fields (as in the functioning of small-scale enterprises) was not included.

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# Chapter 7

## Activating Social Capital: Steep Mobility of Descendants of Turkish Immigrants at the Top of the Corporate Business Sector



Sara Rezai and Elif Keskiner

### 7.1 Introduction

Recently more scholars are seeking to illuminate the mechanisms of the intergenerational upward mobility of descendants of guest-worker migrants in Europe. What often triggers scholars' attention is the question how they made it against all odds. Their parents have a migrant background, low-levels of education and low socio-economic status. They grew up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and attended schools with high numbers of pupils with educational difficulties. How have they been able to achieve upward mobility from this disadvantaged position? The majority of these studies have focused on educational careers, concentrating on individual characteristics (see e.g. Andriessen et al., 2006; Van Praag et al., 2016), intra- and extra-family resources (see e.g. Keskiner, 2015; Legewie, 2015; Rezai et al., 2015) and contextual factors (see e.g. Crul & Schneider, 2010; Schnell et al., 2013). Now that the descendants of guest-worker migrants in Europe are becoming older, besides their educational careers, we can observe their gradual advancement on the labour market. Though they lag behind the majority group, compared to the immigrant generation the second generation is making substantial advances. For example highly-skilled second generation professionals are beginning to occupy well-paid and socially prestigious occupations in the US (Alba & Foner, 2015) and in Europe (Crul et al., 2017; Schneider & Lang, 2014; Keskiner & Crul, 2017).

The current chapter focuses on descendants of Turkish migrants who occupy top positions in the field of professional business services in the Netherlands. Due to

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their senior positions in corporate business sector, such as being CEOs or CFOs of multinational corporations, we name this group business elites (Harvey & Maclean, 2008). The chapter centres on how they made use of their social networks to advance their careers. Hence, the focus does not lie on labour market entry, but on career mobility. The literature on career mobility of highly-skilled professionals often emphasizes the importance of social networks for professional advancement (Harvey & Maclean, 2008; Lin, 1999; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Raider & Burt, 1996; Seibert et al., 2001). Scholars observe that social networks provide benefits such as access to information and financial or material resources (Lin, 1999; Harvey & Maclean, 2008; Raider & Burt, 1996; Ryan, 2011, 2016). The importance of mentoring and more specifically of career sponsorship for occupational mobility has also been demonstrated (Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert et al., 2001). Among the corporate business elite, social networks have been historically studied as corporate board interlocks, where directors or managers sit on multiple boards and form an enclosed old boys' network (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009). Hence reaching the top positions can be extremely difficult for the upwardly mobile. In fact, studies on upward career mobility focusing on highly-skilled ethnic minorities stress that compared to the dominant group they are less able to use social relations for enhancing their careers (Friedman & Krackhardt, 1997; Light & Gold, 2000), particularly if they have been raised in poor households and communities (Agius Vallejo, 2012; see also Neckerman et al., 1999). Other scholars have tried to unravel how descendants of migrants succeeded at putting their social networks to good use (Rezai, 2017; Keskiner & Crul, 2017). Rezai (2017) showed how professionally successful descendants of migrants in Europe had significant others within their social networks who positively influenced their occupational careers (see also Morando, 2013). Keskiner and Crul (2017) uncovered how developing forms of capital, such as cultural and social capital, assisted descendants of migrants in accessing leadership positions.

Possessing a social network, even one consisting of ties that can be instrumental for labour market success, does not guarantee the mobilization of social capital (Smith, 2005). One needs to also activate social capital. Lin (1999) and Smith (2005) make the distinction between access to social capital and activation of social capital. Smith (2005) observes how (non)activation of social capital occurs for the African-American working class. Inspired by her approach, in the current article we aim to show how the successful second generation activates their social capital to enhance their upward mobility. We pose the central question: *What mechanisms of social capital activation do we identify in the professional careers of Turkish-Dutch highly distinguished professionals?* This chapter draws the link between professional characteristics and social capital activation. It illustrates how the professional characteristics of the descendants of migrants led their network contacts to appropriate their resources in the benefit of the careers of the social climbers. By gaining insight in the social capital activation of social climbers, this study sheds light on the mechanisms of their social mobility.

## 7.2 Theoretical Framework

In his seminal review of the concept of social capital Portes (1998) considers Bourdieu's analysis to be theoretically the most refined. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 11). In the current chapter we follow Bourdieu's description, since it underlines "the facilitation of [social capital] activation" (Smith, 2005, p. 5), and our principal interest lies in how one can activate these 'actual or potential resources' via possessing durable networks. Lin (1999) makes a convincing distinction between the access to and the mobilization of social capital. The access to social capital entails the resources an individual has access to through social connections. Such studies focus on network structure and composition (Smith, 2005; see e.g. Boxman et al., 1991; Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1985, see the introduction chapter by Ryan et al. for a detailed discussion). The mobilization of social capital refers to the use of social contacts' status and resources provided by contacts (Lin, 1999). Smith (2005) too makes a distinction between the access and mobilization of social capital, which she calls the activation of social capital. She defines social capital activation as "the point at which [the] resources are shared – when one or more actors provides instrumental or expressive aid to others, beginning or continuing a series of nonnegotiated or reciprocal exchanges" (p. 5). Studies on the activation of social capital focus on network contacts' resources being used in an instrumental manner, such as for intra-organizational mobility (Smith, 2005; see e.g. De Graaf & Flap, 1988; Marsden & Hurlbert, 1988; Podolny & Baron, 1997). In her detailed US study on the factors that influence decisions of black urban poor to access job-seeking ties, such as friends and relatives, Smith (2005) constructs a multilevel conceptual framework based on social capital theories. Her framework explains social capital activation as a function of individual-level properties such as reputation and status, dyadic properties such as the strength of relationships based on trust and trustworthiness, and properties of the network and community. Smith's analysis on the urban black poor shows that functioning in an extremely discriminatory labour market, the job seekers' reputation was of overwhelming importance for network contacts' decisions on providing assistance. Also significant, though secondary, was the influence of the strength of relationships. Both properties were important because they provided the network contacts knowledge for assessing the influence the job seekers could have on their own reputation and employment prospects, if for example they were going to be employed by the same employer. Even though Smith's (2005) work concentrated on urban poor, her insight on the role of individual-level properties such as reputation and status inspired the current study. Furthermore, other studies have also documented how the nature of a relationship, be it strong or weak ties (Granovetter, 1985) or the horizontal or vertical ties (Ryan, 2011, 2016) influence the social capital activation. Inspired by Smith's (2005) approach, we focus on corporate professionals in prestigious positions, and examine which mechanisms played an important role in

activating social capital. Clearly those in high-skilled professions find themselves in social networks that have aided them to advance in their careers by giving them access to information and material resources (Harvey & Maclean, 2008; Lin, 1999; Kadushin, 1995; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Raider & Burt, 1996; Seibert et al., 2001). Yet considering the discriminatory and closed nature of social networks at the top, the question remains how do the newcomers to the field mobilize their social networks and turn them into actual or potential resources, hence how do they activate their social capital.

Many studies have pointed to the changing nature of the composition of 'the elite' or the high-skilled professionals. Based on her long-term study of the Canadian managerial elite Carroll (2008) argues that the Canadian elite is no longer formed by the old-boys' networks but that it is diversified with women and ethnic minority groups. Comparing the networking activities among the business elite in France and the UK, Harvey and Maclean (2008) point to a similar diversification as they talk about the "newcomers" who are of non-elite background. Heemskerk and Fennema (2009) attribute the change of the corporate elite in the Netherlands to educational reforms. The aristocracy dominated the boards of large business corporations until well after the Second World War. The majority of this Dutch corporate elite was related through kinship ties and had a strong sense of "we-ness" (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009, p. 813). Due to education reforms aimed at stimulating social equity in the 1960s and 1970s, higher education became accessible to all social classes (Boekholt & De Booy, 1987). Since the quality and recognition of Dutch pre-university tracks and universities are very comparable, they do not serve as social selection tools in the distinct way of the French *grandes écoles*, or the British top male-only public schools (Heemskerk & Fennema, 2009; see also Bourdieu, 1996; Hartmann, 2000; Harvey & Maclean, 2008; Keskiner & Crul, 2017). Heemskerk and Fennema (2009) claim that while the old elite was a status group with a high degree of endogamy and internal traditional linkages, the new corporate elite is 'a socioeconomic class consisting of successful individuals'. Despite this strong claim, this new elite remains largely white and male as women are much under-represented in top functions (Merens et al., 2011), a fact also true for ethnic minorities (Crul et al., 2017).

While the white old boys' networks are thinning, discrimination and exclusion in reaching top position persists and social capital continues to be crucial for achieving upward mobility. Hence it becomes a pressing question to scholars how the social climbers activate the social capital in their networks for their career mobility. Looking at social-capital and social-network studies that focus on corporate professionals in prestigious positions, we find that Harvey and Maclean (2008) argue that the networks of the business elite in the UK largely depend on individuals' social ambition and networking skills. Hartmann (2000) showed that candidates for top executive positions in large enterprises in Germany must meet certain skills. They should know and have internalized dress and behaviour codes, appear self-confident and have a sound general education (see also Friedman, 2013), and have an optimistic attitude and an entrepreneurial way of thinking. Hartmann (2000) also discusses the role of 'trust' in recruiting corporate executives, referring to being able to rely

on an individual's absolute discretion and support. The sense of mutual trust, the feeling of communicating on the same wavelength, and having the same frame of reference, makes it possible to view and accept the newcomer as one of their own. 'Trust' has also been approached in a different manner by sociologists who theorize on social capital. In his seminal work, Coleman (1988) explains that the trustworthiness of a social structure "means that obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held" (p. S102). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) use the concept of 'enforceable trust' in a similar vein. Individual members comply with group expectations to gain or sustain the reputation that they are reliable, and through this they gain credits to reciprocity. The reciprocal credits will consist either of the donor anticipating utilities from the recipient, or of the donor yielding "status, honor or approval" (Portes, 1998, p. 9) from the collectivity (see also Portes, 1998; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). These are the two consequences of 'enforceable trust' which apply when both the recipient and the donor are embedded in a common social structure.

To conclude, certain factors come to the fore in understanding the link between network connections and career mobility. Specific individual characteristics are attributed to the corporate elites, such as reputation, self-assurance, optimism, networking skills and entrepreneurial thinking. Also factors attributable to relationships such as compliance with group expectations trust and reliability shed light on the activation of social capital.

### 7.3 Research Process

For the current study we made use of interviews conducted within the international ELITES, Pathways to Success project which aimed to gain insight into how the descendants of immigrants accomplish upward mobility in Europe. For the selection of interviewees, we applied an objective way of defining success by using job status as criterion (Crul et al., 2017). Applying the EGP class schema the research team aimed at people working in the top two classes of the 11-class EGP scheme (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002).<sup>1</sup> This means that the participants belong to the most successful group of above-average successful people in society (Crul et al., 2017).

The current article focuses on steep social climbers within the field of professional business services in the Netherlands. The research team conducted 16 interviews with higher-grade professionals, and managers of corporate businesses in the Netherlands (Konyali, 2014, 2017). To be able to scrutinize the steep upward mobility of social climbers who are descendants of immigrants from Turkey we selected the participants who were particularly successful in their career. This

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<sup>1</sup> The Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero (EGP, also known as Goldthorpe or CASMIN) class schema consists of 11 classes. It aims to capture differences in employment relations by using employment status and occupation as indicators. This schema, and versions of it, has become widely adopted in social mobility studies since the 1980s (Erikson & Goldthorpe, 2002).

resulted in a sub-sample of eight senior managers and executives who encompass the focus of the present article. Five are salaried and work for large enterprises, and three are self-employed. Their ages, at the time of interview, range between 33 and 47 years. Only one of the participants is female, which corresponds with the over-representation of men in high-ranking positions in the field of professional business services in the Netherlands (Crul et al., 2017). They all have obtained a Masters' degree, which is in great contrast to their parents' educational level. Compared to their parents they show a steep social mobility (see Table 7.1) (Crul et al., 2017).

The research group developed semi-structured interview protocols consisting of open-ended questions aiming at gaining insight into their educational and professional pathways. Subsequently, the questions were piloted with a small number of participants who were similar to those who would be interviewed as research participants. Based on the pilot interviews the interview protocols were revised. We transferred the open-ended questions of the interview protocol for the business professionals in the Netherlands into a topic list, since using a topic list creates more flexibility in during the interview.

While our initial aim was to only interview second-generation people, we also interviewed professionals who migrated in their childhood (see Table 7.1). The research team realized soon in the fieldwork that age would make it difficult to find who are in leading positions. Most of the second-generation of Turkish heritage are still quite young which means that they are still in the early stages of their careers. We started the fieldwork in 2013 by making use of our networks and continued with snowball sampling. LinkedIn, a major active business and professional networking website, proved to be especially helpful for snowball methods, and for preparing for interviews since many professionals have detailed CVs on their LinkedIn page. Interviewing higher-educated business professionals in prestigious positions about their occupational careers was hardly a difficult task. They were perceptive, eloquent and sociable. They were very conscious of their "against the odds success" and hence very verbal about their pathway, a common characteristic among elites (Harvey & Maclean, 2008). The interviews took between 1 and 4 hours. Most of the interviews were conducted at the participants' offices.

After a short introduction, the in-depth interviews with participants were conducted using a topic list. At the end of each interview a form with background information was filled in. When time was lacking the form was sent to the participant by e-mail with the request to fill it in. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The interviews were voice recorded and transcribed. Interviews were conducted in Dutch. The analysis of the data was conducted in Dutch and during the writing phase the quotations were translated to English. For the analysis Atlas.ti software was used.

We applied the issue-focused analysis method of Robert S. Weiss (1994) to analyse the pathways of the participants and to comprehend the mechanisms of upward career mobility in which social capital played a role. The mechanisms of social capital activation that emerged from the data have been inductively conceptualized.

**Table 7.1** Background information of respondents

Name <sup>a</sup>	Highest education level	Executive career sector	Job description	Size enterprise <sup>b</sup>	Income <sup>c</sup>	Gender	Age <sup>d</sup>	Country of birth	Age at migration	Partner's highest education level	Partner's job	Mother's highest education level	Mother's last job	Father's highest education level	Father's last job
Serhat	Master	Information Technology and Services	CEO, self-employed	Large	>10.000	Male	44	Turkey	3	Post-secondary vocational	Financial manager at husband's company	Secondary, not finished	Cleaning lady	Illiterate	Gardener at gardening company
Kudret	Master	Computer Software	CEO, self-employed	Large	8.000–10.000	Male	44	Turkey	3	Master	CEO of foundation, self-employed	Illiterate	Seamstress at factory	Secondary, not finished	Owner garage
Omer	Master	Energy	Senior Manager	Large	>10.000	Male	35	Netherlands	n/a	Master	Actuary	Secondary	Childcare	Secondary	Administrative job
Cagri	Master	Energy	Senior executive	Large	>10.000	Female	46	Turkey	2	Master	Entrepreneur	Illiterate	Unpaid House work	Primary	Scaffolder
Tabib	Master	Energy	Chief Financial Officer	Large	8.000–10.000	Male	46	Turkey	6	Master	Unpaid House work	Primary	Unpaid House work	Secondary	Factory worker
Onur	Master	Management Consulting	CEO, self-employed	Micro	6.000–8.000	Male	33	Netherlands	n/a	n/a	n/a	Secondary	Cashier in a bakery	Secondary	Salesman in European industry
Erdem	Master	Financial Services	Senior Manager	Large	4.000–6.000	Male	42	Netherlands	n/a	Post-secondary vocational	Unpaid House work	Illiterate	Unpaid House work	Illiterate	Carpet maker at factory
Selim	Master	Banking	Senior executive	Large	8.000–10.000	Male	47	Turkey	11	Bachelor	Unpaid House work	Illiterate	Unpaid House work	Secondary	Factory worker

<sup>a</sup>Names have been anonymized

<sup>b</sup>The classification of size of enterprise is conducted by estimation, and according to EU classification which is based on number of persons employed

<sup>c</sup>Monthly income in EUR

<sup>d</sup>Age at time of interview



## 7.4 Mechanisms of Social Capital Activation

Interviewer: And what would you say is the biggest barrier for professional, successful people with a migrant background?

Selim: I think probably the lack of network, most probably. Look, we are always talking about that it's all about sending job applications – you might find a job opening in *de Volkskrant* [Dutch national newspaper], and you send in an application - but in my experience, if you don't have access to certain contacts, it gets complicated.

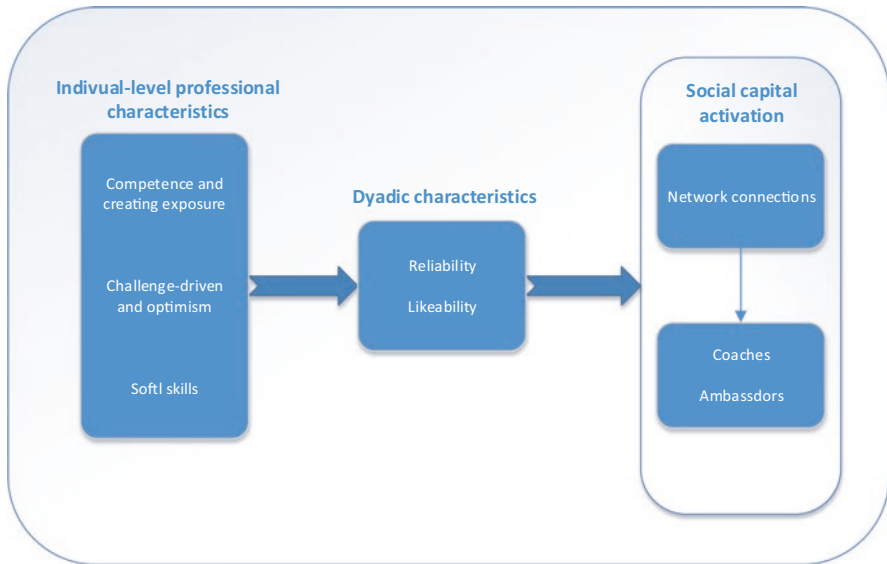
Onur:[I]it can be utterly important that you move outside your own circles and that you move in the circles that society cares about, so instead of being active at the local mosque - that's nice - but then you should also be active at the Cancer Foundation or something similar, so it can be that simple. So if you do volunteer work, don't do it just in your own corner. And that is a way of thinking, and that should be your approach to life. In this way you make [new] friends and you go to [new] places [...] and you don't just go to your friends and drink tea, no, you go to the pub with your colleagues and have a drink there. On Saturdays you go to [...] trade meetings, where people who have leading positions come together.

As the above quotes underline and as previous research has illustrated (see e.g. Harvey & Maclean, 2008; Kadushin, 1995; Lin, 1999) network contacts are crucial for accessing top positions. The quotes also point at the exclusionary nature of social networks, hence having “certain contacts” matter as Selim underlines. The participants have reached prestigious positions and have been able to build and maintain a network of valuable connections throughout the years, which only a minority of descendants of migrants manage to do. Nevertheless, having access to a network of influential individuals per se is insufficient for reaping its fruits. It is also important to activate the potential resources linked to a social network (Lin, 1999; Smith, 2005).

In this section the participants' mechanisms of social capital activation will be unravelled. In the following, we illustrate the individual-level professional characteristics (competence and self-promotion; challenge-driven and optimism; and, soft skills) the participants have in common, which in their perception have helped them to build and maintain a network of valuable connections who acted in the benefit of their professional careers.

## 7.5 Reliability and Likeability

Based on the analysis we argue that the participants' individual-level professional characteristics helped them to activate social capital (see Fig. 7.1). The steep social climbers have in common the combination of specific professional characteristics (competence and self-promotion; challenge-driven and optimism; and, soft skills) which together bring about the dyadic characteristics ‘reliability’ and ‘likeability’. Likeability has already been documented as a significant feature in network relations (Ibarra & Deshpande 2004; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014; Shwed & Kalev, 2014). Ibarra and Deshpande (2004) make a distinction between instrumental and psychosocial resources in networks, where instrumental resources refer to “information, influence, and sponsorship” and psychosocial resources include “socialization, mentoring, friendship and identity formation” (p. 4). Clearly a social network



**Fig. 7.1** Mechanisms of social capital activation

tie can have a dyadic function where a mentoring and friendship relation could also result in instrumental outcomes. As Eve (2002) has significantly shown how friendships can serve to link networks of relationships between varying people. Hence in addition to examining resources embedded in the social networks, Ryan and Mulholland (2014) underline the importance of studying the nature of relationships between social network ties as they can embody “friendship, companionship, likeability and identity affirmation” (p. 149).

According to our respondents, recognition of their relevant professional characteristics generates in the perception of the network connections a sense of belief in their qualities, and trust that they will be able to comply with expectations (see also Hartmann, 2000; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). This leads to the characteristic of reliability. The soft skills of the participants result in a form of likeability, which is a sense of congeniality. Both concepts of reliability and likeability have been used previously in the social networks literature (Shwed & Kalev, 2014). In this article we argue that the characteristics of likeability and reliability together pave the ground for converting network connections of our respondents into ambassadors and coaches. These mechanisms are needed for network contacts to be motivated to act as ‘donors’ (Portes, 1998). Hence, in this way the social climbers’ professional characteristics can help to activate social capital.

In the following we have a closer look at what the professional characteristics consist of. While the characteristics of the participants were classified in three categories (competence and self-promotion; challenge-driven and optimism; and, soft skills), they are related to each other, and their strength of activating social capital lies in their combination. The participants possess all categories discussed in this paragraph, however not all participants have all the aspects of the professional characteristics which we explain below.

### 7.5.1 *Competence and Self-Promotion*

Having achieved high status positions, the participants have become experts in their field. They stated that they achieved this with their diligence and hard work. Erdem, a senior manager in the field of financial services, explains that he always tries to work longer hours and do his work better than his colleagues. He emphasizes that he puts effort in developing himself, for example by reading in his spare time instead of watching TV.

The participants are not modest (see also Friedman, 2013; Hartmann, 2000). Onur, a senior manager in the energy sector, calls himself “self-assured”. Omer, also a senior manager in the energy sector, describes himself as “a bit presumptuous”. Serhat, who runs his own company in the IT and services field, uses the introduction “[t]hat sounds very arrogant”, and continues by explaining how he possesses the right mentality for becoming successful in any given business. Self-assurance, in some more pronounced than in others, is a characteristic observed in all the participants. And this assists them in promoting their competence, since competence alone is not enough (see Hartmann, 2000). As Erdem says, you need to “show the people around you that you’re the best”. Omer states that it is important to work hard, but it has no use if it goes unnoticed. One needs to “self-promote”, “you work hard, but you also advertise it. You make transparent what you’ve done [...] you need to enforce things in life”. Also Cagri, the only female participant and a senior executive in the energy sector, emphasizes the relevance of making one’s capabilities noticed:

Cagri: In my experience, if you are good at what you do, so if you focus in the settings in which you work, if you are confident, if people think ‘wow, she really has something interesting to say!’, then you build credibility and credits amongst the people whom you work with. That interaction is crucial but it really begins with just being good at what you do. [...] I have always worked hard for it, whenever I was on a supervisory board, I had something important to say, I would read all the documents, so that is...I think people build respect for you.

In this quote, Cagri draws links between one’s expertise, diligence, hard work, self-assurance, self-promotion, and generating respect, credits and credibility amongst network connections.

### 7.5.2 *Challenge-Driven and Optimism*

Being challenge-driven is an aspect that comes to the fore very strongly with the entrepreneurs who were interviewed. Kudret, active in the field of computer software, expresses his “eager[ness]” for challenge and success and states that he “always need to feel: Yes! This is a challenge!”. Onur enjoys diving into solving complex problems for companies, and Serhat’s hands start itching when he finds organisations that function inefficiently. While less pronounced than in the case of

the entrepreneurs, the other business professionals also demonstrate being challenge-driven, or as Hartmann (2000, p. 252) explains it for the top executives he studied, they “display a high degree of entrepreneurial thinking”. A need for challenge was the instigator for Cagri’s big career change which entailed parting from the impressive career she had built and its promising prospects: “I am too young to flatline and sponge off what I already know. I still want to learn new things, spread my wings, meet new people.” As we can also see with Erdem, seeking challenges is connected to their ambition for personal development. Erdem explains that he has always had the drive to be the best. When as a young professional Erdem had his first job interview at his current firm, he was asked what position he aspired in 5 years, he replied: “I will become your first Turkish executive in the country!”. The interviewers were very much amused, to which he responded: “Why are you laughing? I am making a very serious statement”. It took him a couple of years longer than the 5 years he had prophesized to make it to a high managerial position. While this shows Erdem’s challenge-driven attitude, it also underlines the discriminatory environment at work and the prejudice professionals of minority background encounter.

Being challenge-driven is related to being optimistic, another characteristic the participants have in common (see also Hartmann, 2000; Kaniel et al., 2010). Grabbing an opportunity when they see it, as Onur explains his career mentality. One of the ways in which Serhat tries to gain clients’ confidence is by taking evident business risks for them, trusting in that it will be reciprocated in the future. This has resulted in several loyal clients. He gives an example of helping out a client who had a shutdown of the billing system during the weekend. Serhat got a team together and made sure the system was up and running by Monday.

Serhat: Do you think that when that person needs something, and I have taken all the risk upon me, to incorporate those people, without contract and without self-interest, that when that person needs something, that he will phone me or someone else? Obvious, right? Seems to me. I could have also said: ‘I need to have financial security first. Flying those people out there, that’s a couple of thousand euros. The risks you take for each day...’ But those people worked two days and everything was fixed. Well, he still tells me: ‘if you hadn’t helped me, I wouldn’t be here anymore’.

Their optimism is marked by buoyancy and perseverance. We can observe Kudret’s resilience in how, after a bankruptcy which resulted into a mental depression, he got back on his feet and built a very successful company. We also observe his perseverance in finding solutions for problems. “It is possible. You just haven’t found the solution yet”, he often tells his employees, urging them to continue looking for a solution. He continues seeking possibilities when others give up.

Kudret:[A]lso in my business life, whenever something negative happens...I just inherited it as stock-in-trade. It’s such a great stock-in-trade! I see it with entrepreneurs when they are confronted with a setback, then they’re destroyed, all is bad, they fall apart, then I say: ‘guys!’ - the strange thing is that when I have to deal with a setback I just get more energy -, and then I say: ‘guys, we’re going to be positive now’. So, I can turn negativity into positivity, and this actually is a really beautiful stock-in-trade that I inherited from my youth.

What Kudret explains as the ability to turn negative experiences into positive energy, could also be interpreted as the urge to prove oneself, which is apparent in the accounts of other participants.<sup>2</sup>

### 7.5.3 Soft Skills

Several participants talk about the importance of what participants name “soft skills” (Onur) or “EQ” (*Emotional Intelligence*) (Omer) for accessing distinguished positions such as having the ability to easily establish contacts and to comprehend how to behave with whom (see also Hartmann, 2000; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Raider & Burt, 1996; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). Omer:

Omer: But perhaps also my *Fingerspitzengefühl* (*gut feelin*), that I know when I speak to people, how I should speak to that person, and what that person wants to hear. I am pretty good at that. That’s creepy, but...that also plays a role, you need to have a certain EQ next to your IQ.

Omer believes this is a beneficial capacity people with a migrant background often possess. Onur links these soft skills to accessing and activating social capital:

Onur: Well, you definitely need to have good social skills. It’s not necessarily about being smart [...], well, that’s useful and of course it has benefits, but that’s not the decisive part, the decisive part is that you’re able to establish contacts easily, that people like you and have your best interest at heart. [...] you just need to have people who introduce you and push you to the front, and once you are there, that they allow you..., that they’re not begrudged about you being there, so to say, that they allow you to stay there. Or even better, that they support you in that position, that they’ve got your back.

Cagri explains how her soft skills and other professional characteristics have played a role in building her network and in activating social capital. She uses the Dutch term “*gunfactor*”, here translated as ‘grant factor’, which is also referred to by other participants. An individual’s grant factor is best described as a set of factors or conditions that cause actors to sense a combination of congeniality and trust concerning the individual, and to wish her/him well and even to actively support her/him. Transferred to the current study it would be the combination of likeability and reliability the participants bring about amongst their influential network connections which motivates them to support the social climbers in their professional careers, and by doing so to take on the roles of ambassadors and coaches.

Cagri: So I have a feeling that the way in which I relate to people - approachable, open-minded, transparent - and if possible appear as very well-informed, and therefore hard-working - that, I think, has played a role in how my network has developed itself. I think I can say, that I have quite a lot of people who would just take the time to help me with something. A high grant factor. And grant factor you develop by demonstrating expertise and through transparency. Yeah, getting into people’s networks, and that people simply find you pleasant and nice, and competent, and are willing to do something for you.

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<sup>2</sup>We should be cautious that all the accounts of optimism shared by our respondents is reminiscent of elite professionals, who are inclined to reject a victimisation discourse and present all the obstacles they experienced as “negativities” they turned into “positivities” (Keskiner & Crul, 2017).

The ambassadors and coaches apply their informational, material and social resources to contribute to the upward mobility of the business professionals. Hence, in this way the professional characteristics of the social climbers are transferred into social capital.

## 7.6 Ambassadors and Coaches

Erdem: So now I even have several ambassadors at the level of the Board, and I am very economical with them. Last year, for example, I had a very good offer from the competition and I declined it. You simply cannot compare salary with the network you have, and I especially have that inside the company. I know people at the Board of Directors, whom I visit for a coffee, who want to know how I am, and I must cherish that.

The emphasis on the importance of social capital for professional careers recurs in all the interviews with the business professionals. Such network consciousness among highly skilled professionals has already been documented in previous studies (Ryan & Mulholland, 154). Influential network contacts of the respondents yielded “potential or actual resources” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 11) by playing an important role in intra-firm upward mobility, when changing company, and when making important decisions such as becoming independent or making a career change and sometimes they “opened doors” (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014, p. 155). The qualitative analysis shows that network connections were primarily important in two roles which we define as ambassadors and coaches. Network contacts can take on the role of an ambassador or the role of a coach, or both roles. Below we illustrate ambassadors and coaches as influential network connections who recognize the potential of the social climbers (see also Rezai, 2017; Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008). These ‘donors’ (Portes, 1998) have valuable professional knowledge and social resources, and are willing to apply these in the benefit of the career paths of the high achievers (see also De Graaf & Flap, 1988). Selim, a senior executive in the banking sector, introduced the term of ambassador during the interview. When asked what he means with it, he replies: “[t]hat s/he(an ambassador) says that I’m a good lad”. As Selim indicates, the main characteristic of ambassadors is that they recognize the potential of the business professionals and promote them within their networks and thereby are able to open doors for them. Hence, they function as their ambassadors. Like Selim, Erdem, whom we quoted above, has several ambassadors who are influential actors in his firm and promote him within their network. They have proven to be instrumental for his mobility within the firm. Erdem illustrates this with an example. One of his first bosses at the firm didn’t find Erdem to be leadership material. Disagreeing, Erdem left to a different department and became the senior executive of one of the provincial branches. Later on, by chance he became acquainted with one of the Board members at the gym and they hit it off. Erdem:

Erdem: [W]hat happens next? I had left him [former boss], because he didn’t want me. [...] He [the Board member from the gym] was just doing a regional visit, he would do that once in a while, so I told him: ‘I heard you’ll be in the neighbourhood, come and visit

me'. So he came [...], we went to see a client together, I gave a presentation [for him] at my office on how I do things, how I see things, what else I wanted to do. That gave him a really good impression. Next, he [the Board member] talks to him [former boss], and he sends me a text message the next day: 'I've heard great things about you from Charles. You can always come back and work for me'. That's how it works!

Interviewer: And ten years later he offers you [your current] job?

Erdem: Yeah, funny, right?

Erdem's professional characteristics of soft skills and self-promotion of his competence are markedly detectable here. Also his optimism is apparent in how despite the setback with his former boss, he continues to accomplish intra-firm mobility. Erdem's professional characteristics impressed the Board member and generated likeability and reliability. Recognizing Erdem's talents he promoted him within his network, eventually contributing to his upward mobility.

An ambassador could promote someone out of self-interest, for example to underline his own foresight, as Erdem illustrates: "This man, for example, promoted me very often amongst other people. But it also works the other way around. [...] going like: 'and I knew back then that he was good'". Since Erdem and the ambassador are embedded in a common social structure, the ambassador is able to profit from Erdem's success, being reciprocated for his efforts with "status, honor and approval" (Portes, 1998, p. 9) by their common network connections.

Looking at the nature of the relationship, coaches are network connections who over time have become reliable confidants. That is their main attribute. Generally, the professionals have built a personal relationship with them and a relationship of trust (see also Podolny & Baron, 1997; Raider & Burt, 1996; Ryan, 2016). In the relationship with coaches the line between professional contacts and friends becomes blurred, and conversations become typically more about personal things and less about work-related matters. The professionals perceive coaches as reliable and trustworthy, and approach them for advice on matters such as important career decisions. Tabib, a CFO in the energy sector, illustrates:

Tabib: I do notice that for example in certain phases of your life, of your career, it is useful to brainstorm together once in a while about: what kind of job do I want next? What direction do I want to take? [...] And I still have people like that. A half of dozen people whom you trust, and whom you can ask for advice and guidance without having to immediately... You also really need that, I believe. A number of people who like you and support you. [...] who mean well [...] if you don't have that, you have a bit too little reflection. You shouldn't get a big head, neither underestimate yourself, and... Find the right balance. And if you have someone who says: 'well, that's realistic, or well....' That helps to put it in a certain context, to validate your thoughts. A small network of confidants, that is really very important.

Tabib explains that it is important that the relationship a coach has with one is not primarily "about self-interest, it is about making time and energy for someone without immediately wanting something in return" (Tabib). For approaching someone for career advice it is fundamental to have built "a relation of trust" (Tabib) in order to be able to rely on honesty and discretion (see also Hartmann, 2000). The social climbers rely on the coaches' judgement because they believe that the coaches have their interest at heart. What is also important for being able to rely on the coaches'



judgement is that they know both the professional field and the social climbers well, which allows them to match the professionals' properties with the requirements of the field. When Cagri was contemplating on making a big career change, and found herself not being sure what direction to take, she decided to talk to several coaches.

Cagri: I then started to approach people in my network very specifically: 'hey, I am quitting, what I really would like is this but how do I go about it, and how does one get there, and whom should I be talking to? So, I had some really good talks with people who brainstormed with me also to focus my own ideas more precisely... 'the private sector is very large. What do you want? Financial Services? Do you want Aviation? Do you want Services? Do you want Shipping? So which one is it?' So, while talking, I came up with Energy.

Interviewer: were those people who worked in the private sector?

Cagri: also, but in any case, people with whom I had built a relationship of trust. So I didn't just go around talking to people I didn't know: 'hey, can I ask you a question?'. But really people from my own network whom throughout the years I had learned to appreciate and whose judgement...of whom I really thought 'they know me well, they know, perhaps better than myself...they can assess what type of professions would be appropriate for me.

Cagri's likeability and reliability have helped her to convert influential contacts into coaches who are willing to put time and effort into enhancing her career. In this way she activated her social capital for her own benefit.

The major distinction between the roles of ambassadors and coaches is that while the ambassadors' actions are limited to promoting the professionals within their networks, the relationship with coaches is more personal and is based on trust. Such trust relationship is also something respondent built over time rather than emerging as trust relations (Ryan, 2016). Ambassadors and coaches also have similarities; they both recognize the potential of the business professionals, and are willing to apply their influential network position in their benefit.

## 7.7 Conclusion

This article focused on the steep social mobility of descendants of migrants from Turkey who have acquired distinguished positions in the field of professional business services in the Netherlands. It aimed at unravelling their mechanisms of social capital activation, in order to deepen our understanding of the conditions that have to be met for network connections to provide career-mobility assistance. Following Lin (1999) and Smith (2005), it emphasized the importance of distinguishing between the access and the activation of social capital. For attaining career advancement the access to social capital is not enough, but one also needs to activate social capital. The current study contributes to the strand of literature on social capital activation on several levels.

The analysis has shown that the mechanisms of social capital activation consist of individual-level professional characteristics, dyadic characteristics and of the conversion of network connections into donors. We have identified three groups of

professional characteristics: competence and self-promotion; challenge-driven and optimism; and, soft skills. The combination of these individual-level professional characteristics generates the characteristics 'likeability' and 'reliability'. We have conceptualized reliability as a sense of belief in the professionals' capacities, and trust that they will be able to comply with expectations. The soft skills of the participants in particular effectuate 'likeability'. When influential network connections perceive both likeability and reliability concerning the business professionals, they are motivated to assist them and take on the role of donor, and as a consequence social capital is activated. We observed two types of donors: 'ambassadors', who promote the professionals in their networks, and 'coaches', with whom the professionals have a relationship of trust and can turn to for advice. In this way the professional characteristics of the social climbers helped them to achieve social capital activation. This article showed the importance of professional characteristics in network connections' motivation to act as donors and enhance other individuals' career mobility.

While Smith (2005) has shown how individual-level properties and dyadic characteristics separately influence social capital activation, the current study has observed the relation between such characteristics. It has given insight into the process of the mechanisms of social capital activation. It argued that individual-level characteristics lead to reliability and likeability, which again effectuate network connections to become coaches and ambassadors. Another crucial aspect of the network connections of our respondents is the feature of "reciprocity", the influential network connections of the participants seem to be motivated more by the prospect of enhancing their own reputation and position. Donors act because they have instrumental expectations, which can be status or approval of the collectivity, such "give and take" behaviour is also previously documented in Ryan and Mulholland (2014, p.156), Donors can also be motivated by the anticipation of utilities from the recipient, which implies the necessity for a higher level of trust and resonates with the conceptualization of the role of coaches in the current article. The question remains, what influences actors to take on one of these roles and not the other. Previous studies have shown how "trust and mutual benefit" were crucial aspects that activated networks (Ryan, 2016); in a similar vein, mutual opportunities could be one explanation for taking up such mentoring roles. Future research should focus on deepening our insight in the motivations of network connections to take on the roles of coaches and ambassadors. A second recommendation for future research is to deepen our understanding of to what extent professional characteristics are applied intentionally in the activation of social capital. Therefore, further studies should not only include the recipients of resources, as in the present study, but also the providers of resources. In another study we have seen that second generation also provide back to the community and become a source of vertical resource (Rezai, 2017; see the chapter by Keskiner and Waldring in this book). Moreover, the current study encompassed a small number of participants. Further qualitative research on the mechanisms of social capital activation as found in the present article, can strengthen the reliability of such findings.

The current chapter deepened our insight into the relation between social capital and career mobility. It shed light on social capital activation by examining the mechanisms of social capital activation and by demonstrating the connections between them. It showed the importance of professional characteristics in network connections' motivation to act as donors and enhance other individuals' career mobility.

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# Chapter 8

## Reciprocity Within Migrant Networks: The Role of Social Support for Employment



Başak Bilecen

### 8.1 Introduction

It is well-acknowledged that personal relationships have a fundamental effect on individuals' labour market participation through providing useful job-related information (Granovetter, 1995; Montgomery, 1991; Mouw, 2003). Scholars interested in migrants' labour market incorporation have also paid ample attention to the ways in which personal relationships matter, closely following the works of Granovetter (1973) and Putnam (2000). Granovetter (1973) asserts that weak ties are 'better' conduits of job-related information because such ties are contacted occasionally by the job seekers and more importantly, they also belong to other networks, so that the information provided is non-redundant. In contrast, 'strong' ties are characterized as those persons with intimate emotional closeness, reciprocal exchanges, and frequent contacts. Thus, they possess similar information regarding the labour market and considered not as useful as the weak ties. Similarly, Putnam (2000) defines bridging and bonding ties based on similarities and differences between social groups. While bonding ties are indicative of within group similarities, bridging ties are to those in different social groups. Drawing on these strands of network research, migration scholars have equated strong ties to in-group bonding ties and weak ties to out-group bridging ties, conflating group boundaries mainly based on ethnicity (see introduction chapter of the book). In other words, co-ethnic ties are conceptualized as bonding and strong ties, whereas ties to the native-born population are bridging and weak (e.g. Kanas et al., 2011; Lancee, 2012). The findings of studies defining group boundaries mainly by ethnicity, indicate that on the one hand, bridging ties to the native population are the most important to establish for migrants because they might have useful insider information on the labour market and know the rules of the game (e.g. how to write a CV, how to dress for a job interview). On

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the other hand, bonding strong co-ethnic ties are usually considered to have redundant information about the labour market opportunities. However, the critiques of this simplistic dichotomization of personal ties based on ethnicity, argue that social positions, and therefore, resources that can be drawn from such ties are more relevant for the labour market than the ethnicity of ties (Bilecen, 2021; Ryan, 2011). Furthermore, personal networks might operate differently leading to different consequences for male and female migrants in the labour market (Bilecen & Seibel, 2021; Curran et al., 2005). Previous studies show that women's disproportionate involvement in household work and having less paid employment positions result in networks with more kin relations and less colleagues compared to men's (Marsden, 1987). Moreover, ample evidence pinpoints to the gendered nature of the labour markets mainly based on segregation of educational and occupational trajectories together with cultural and normative understandings of work and family life constellations (e.g. Charles, 2011; Duncan & Pfau-Effinger, 2002) leading especially migrant women to have smaller and more homogeneous networks in terms of socio-economic and ethnic background. As a result, women usually are acknowledged to have less diverse job information and lack influential ties in terms of social positions (Trimble & Kmec, 2011). This is concerning especially given the evidence that migrants tend to rely on their personal ties to find jobs.

Despite the much excellent previous work, two issues remain partially unanswered in migration scholarship. First, I argue that the general supportive network migrants are embedded in is decisive for their employment, not only those who receive useful job information. Several studies emphasize the importance of social networks for job-related information transmission (Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973, 1995) and its impact for migrant labour market adaptation (Griesshaber & Seibel, 2015; Kanas et al., 2011; Seibel & van Tubergen, 2013). Such studies usually investigate one aspect of networks related to employment by comparing who are already employed and asking them whether and how their personal ties were helpful in doing so. However, being embedded in a socially supportive network has also benefits that might be important in finding a job. For instance, if an individual is surrounded by personal ties providing care for children or for sick relatives, she can have time to search for a job or keep the job by being able to carry on the necessary tasks. Particularly for migrant mothers formal childcare is the key for their labour market participation (Boeckmann et al., 2014). In parallel to the formal childcare, being able to rely on someone, female migrants can trust with their children is crucial for their employment. In this case, perhaps not finding a new job but keeping the current one. Therefore, I argue in this chapter that having a supportive network is as equally important as receiving information on possible job openings to find and keep jobs. To this end, asking participants to draw their network maps with all potential supportive ties and later whether they have received any useful job information or social support proved to be useful to assess the importance of ties in relation to the labor market outcomes as I will demonstrate.

Second, usually studies focus on what migrants get from their personal ties in order to have better life chances such as in the realm of employment or education (Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Griesshaber & Seibel,



2015; Kanas et al., 2011; Lancee & Hartung, 2012). Thus, the exchange of resources is largely neglected (Bilecen, 2019, 2020). Nonetheless, studies of social norms show us that once a favour is received, individuals are usually bound by the expectation of its return later, known as reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960; Plickert et al., 2007). Thus, studies on reciprocity as a norm inform the current research which makes imperative not only which resources migrants receive from their personal networks, but also to investigate which ones they provide to have a more nuanced understanding of network properties influencing labour market outcomes for migrants. Recent scholarship on reciprocity as a social mechanism governing a variety of resource exchanges in migrants' lives have pinpointed to mismatches between the givers and receivers that has implications for perceived social inequalities (Bilecen, 2020; Bilecen et al., 2015; Dankyi et al., 2015; Sienkiewicz et al., 2015). To address these two gaps, based on 20 qualitative interviews conducted with Turkish first-generation migrants and migrant descendants in Germany, the role of support exchanges will be examined to understand the patterns of migrants' labour market participation.

## 8.2 Conceptual Framework

### 8.2.1 *Migrants' Social Support Networks and Employment*

Social networks, in which migrants are embedded, have been consistently found to be crucial for the production and persistence of different forms of inequalities – in finding jobs (Crul et al., 2017; Granovetter, 1973, 1985), housing (Van Meeteren & Pereira, 2018), and securing better health conditions (Bilecen et al., 2015; Menjivar, 2002). Knowing diverse people who have resources such as information, brings advantages, while having a closed social circle may cause redundancy of resources, and thus disadvantage, pinpointing the importance of the network structure (Burt, 2005). So is social isolation that makes migrants' more prone to having diverse health problems (Hurtado-de-Mendoza et al., 2014).

In terms of social relationships' content, types of ties have acknowledged to be important in getting such useful resources (Wellman & Wortley, 1990). While people may go to concerts with their partners or friends, they tend to ask for help at the workplace from a colleague. For example, Small (2017), studying confidants, found that type of relationships matters in terms of in whom people confide and receive emotional support from. In other words, not only the tie strength and network structure but also who gives what kind of resources with what consequences matters. This is also the case particularly for migrants whose personal relationships are scattered around a variety of geographical locations which give them plenty of resources to mobilize for personal or professional reasons (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Gold, 2001; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). Linking different individuals across a variety of locales and geographies, migrants can withdraw different resources, however this also comes with disadvantages mainly when hands-on care is needed (Ryan, 2007).

Investigating migrants' social relationships, earlier studies pinpointed to gendered differences especially in finding jobs (Huffman & Torres, 2002). Migrant women generally have fewer ties to the native population than migrant men (Seibel, 2020) and also use their ties for gender-specific resources. For instance, propinquity especially for migrants' childcare arrangements have been found to be decisive (Ryan, 2007). Studying Irish nurses in Britain, Ryan (2007) found that women tend to make strong local friendships in addition to their family ties, who are crucial for emotional and other tangible support. Another example is the study conducted by Bojarczuk and Mühlau (2018) investigating childcare support networks with Polish migrant mothers. They conclude that migrant mothers' in Dublin tend to rely predominantly on their local networks as this type of support usually necessitates physical proximity.

While gender differences of networks and job finding patterns have been a research interest, generational differences have not yet been on the spotlight. However, differences between first-generation migrants and their descendants exist not only with regards to migration decision-making but to also their different socialization, education, and therefore, personal networks and resources inherent in them. After all, migrant descendants witness personal sacrifices their parents might have done in raising them in transnational social spaces – trying to preserve cultural norms and traditions while tackling to overcome institutional and structural disadvantages. Moreover, some of migrants' descendants were raised with higher educational expectations, so that they would have upward social mobility (e.g. Keskiner, 2015; Louie, 2012). Besides, in terms of network differences, based on a nationally representative survey, comparing first-generation migrants with the second generation from Morocco and Turkey in the Netherlands, van Tubergen (2014) found that the second generation have larger networks than the first-generation. However, the same study shows that it does not necessarily translate into more socio-economic resources for the second generation. Therefore, there is a need to look for differences in personal networks in terms of migration generation.

### ***8.2.2 Reciprocity Within Migrants' Social Support Networks***

Sahlins (1972) has specified three types of reciprocity: generalized, balanced and negative. Generalized reciprocity is giving away a resource or a gift without the concrete expectation to receive anything in return. It indicates mainly to a solidary behaviour. However, balanced reciprocity is seen more in economic turns where the giver expects something in return and preferably in a short-term. Negative reciprocity indicates an exploitative relationship between two parties where one would like to get more than s/he gives. According to Gouldner (1960) reciprocity is both a norm and a pattern of exchange between dyads or more persons. Reciprocity as a norm refers to the idea that once a resource is given, it is bound by expectation, and in some cases even by obligation, of return later in time and in some sort of a matching valued resource. So, it mainly refers to the Golden Rule or the balanced

reciprocity by Sahlins (1972) – “Reciprocity – doing for others if they have done for you – is a key way people mobilize resources to deal with daily life and seize opportunities” (Plickert et al., 2007). It implies a social function and plays a larger role going beyond a transaction between just two individuals. Reciprocity as a pattern of mutually contingent exchange refers to the idea of alternating resources in practice which fluctuates over time with (im)balances. As a norm, reciprocity entails a solitary behaviour between individuals or with group members. Therefore, repayment of a favour can be extended over time and directed towards others in a given network, working like an extended credit (Offer, 2012). It is usually observed within families through intergenerational support relationships where the kind of support is not necessarily the same and extended over the lifecourse (Antonucci, 1990).

Reciprocity is a social norm guiding individual behaviour and expectations within social networks (Faist et al., 2015; Hansen, 2004; Plickert et al., 2007). Both parties need to agree on the value of the exchanged resources, because when the perceived values do not match imbalances surface (Bilecen, 2020). Over time or due to international migration, persons’ valuation may change indicating that some resources may become more valuable such as emotional support whereas others may lose their previous importance or simply forgotten such as childcare as the children grow up.

While international migrants have usually been found to send financial remittances to their families back in their countries of origin, there is also evidence that such supportive resources are being reciprocated within local and transnational networks (Barglowski et al. 2015b; Bilecen et al., 2015; Dankyi et al., 2015; Sienkiewicz et al., 2015). For instance, studying migrants’ left-behind children in Ghana, Dankyi et al. (2015) found that they were taken care of by extended family members with limited resources whereas reciprocation of childcare is often done with inadequate or irregular financial remittances by migrants residing in the Netherlands. Sienkiewicz et al. (2015) found that Kazakh migrants in Germany send goods with symbolic value and not necessarily with material value because they cannot afford them. Nonetheless, in order to save their face with their relatives in Kazakhstan they send something of a lesser value highlighting the pressure to reciprocate. Studying left-behind family members in migrant-households in Kerala, India, Ugargol and Bailey (2020) found not only gendered patterns of reciprocity in care relationships, but also frustrations and conflicts due to failing to recognize the needs, imbalanced or non-reciprocation of care.

Phillimore et al. (2018) argued that some of their migrant respondents did not ask for any resources or avoid social contact altogether, so that they would not need to be obligated to return the favours. Similarly, Bilecen (2020) found evidence that nonmigrant friends in Turkey tend to avoid asking for resources from their migrant friends in Germany not only because in the eyes of the stayers, movers have everything they need, but more so, they had the fear of expected reciprocation which might not be evaluated as equal to the initial favour done by the migrants.

### 8.3 Research Design and Sample

The data for this chapter emanates from an international research project that investigates transnational social protection patterns of strategies by migrants and nonmigrants as well as the related social inequalities. The empirical data collected in that project relies on personal network analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews with labour migrants and refugees from Turkey living in Germany and their significant others in Turkey between 2011 and 2013. Document analysis, expert interviews, and participant observations also were collected (for a detailed methodological description, see Barglowski et al. 2015a; Bilecen, 2020). An international team devised the data collection guidelines collectively. Both the qualitative interviews and personal network analysis were collected in Turkish.

Data collection was realized in five steps. First, network maps with concentric circles were presented to the respondents and the following name-generator question was asked to generate the network of the interviewee (ego): “From time to time, most people need assistance, be it in the form of smaller or bigger tasks or favours. Within the past one year who are the people with whom you usually exchange such assistance?”. The interviewees were left free to put as many contacts (called “alters”) as they wanted into the network maps according to their perceived importance of their alters ranging from the most important to unimportant in four concentric circles. It is based on hierarchical network mapping technique of social support (Antonucci, 1986). Because the way name-generator is asked, the networks constructed refer to potential supportive networks (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010).

Second, the respondents were asked to describe their contacts in terms of their age, gender, nationality, geographical location, type and duration of their relationship, frequency of their contact in order to understand their network composition. Third, to analyze network structure, the respondents were asked to report whether their alters know one another one-by-one. Fourth, a 17-item questions about resource exchanges were asked in order to determine their mutuality. Last, but not least, while the network maps were still present in the sight of the respondents, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The network maps made the participants to think about their significant others and made them realize what kind of protection they had exchanged. Later in the interview process, the participants reflected more on their relationships, quality and content of the protective resources while indicating the reasoning behind what happened and the way in which it happened. The interviews revolved around the participants’ assessments of resource exchanges, in addition to their migration biography, education, employment situation, family ties, friendship relationships, and perceived (dis-)advantages. Having the network map with concrete contacts visualized, participants described their relationships in detail and commented on their ties as well as their changing aspects over time due to migration. I have also conducted participant observations through attending family gatherings, such as breakfasts and birthdays, and lending circles organized by women over 2 years (Bilecen, 2019). Despite the fact that it is only a sample of Turkish migrants in Germany, and therefore cannot be generalized to the whole migrant population, the long relationships developed in the fieldwork over

the years, led me to engage in many other migrants' lives who are not in the sample, yet appear in the fieldnotes. Such informal conversations with neighbours, artists, medical personnel, friends of friends and field observations complements the existing ethnographic fieldwork (Bilecen, 2020). All the network analysis and interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. For this chapter, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) was performed for the qualitative material where main themes already existed emanating from previous analyses.

Table 8.1 gives an overview of the sample which is composed of ten male and ten female migrants. When their length of stay is examined further, it is clear that the sample of this study is composed of those migrants who have been in Germany for rather a long time, roughly around 20 years. Migrant status indicates the participants' reasons for migration. While labor migrants and those who came to unite with their families are the first-generation migrants, those who are regarded migrant descendants who were either came as infants or born, socialized and educated in Germany. In the sample, there are also three asylum seekers indicating their reason for entry into Germany, whereas at the time of the interview one of them Sema, had a refugee status and searching for a paid employment position, and the other two were siblings who were naturalized.

## 8.4 Personal Support Networks and Labour Market Participation: Migrants' Perspectives

For the analysis of this chapter three interviews from the same family were selected to illustrate in-depth the supportive resource exchanges in migrants' and their descendants' personal networks. Those three participants are Nilgün, Bora is her son and Berrin is her daughter-in-law, Bora's wife. Moreover, participant observations at different occasions with the extended family of Nilgün and Bora as well as Berrin's family living in another city in the same state are also incorporated in the analysis. Over the years, I had several opportunities to observe the extended family not only during their regular everyday lives but also during special occasions such as family dinners, breakfasts and weddings. While the chosen participants are not representative neither this study's sample nor all the Turkish migrants in Germany, nonetheless they illustrate the content and meaning of personal ties that are important in the labour market participation for migrants and their descendants.

### 8.4.1 *Nilgün*

In 1978 at the age of 31, Nilgün came to Germany within the framework of family reunification following her husband, who was recruited as a guest worker at a car manufacturing plant together with his brother. She did not receive any formal

**Table 8.1** Main characteristics of the respondents

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Marital status	Migrant status	Labor market status	Years spent in Germany
Ali	Male	21–30	Married	Second-generation	Student/ Part-time worker	11–20
Ahmet	Male	21–30	In a relationship	Second-generation	Student	21–30
Ömer	Male	31–40	Married	Second-generation	Part-time worker	21–30
Lale	Female	41–50	Married	First-generation (labor migrant)	Part-time worker	31–40
Faruk	Male	31–40	Married	First-generation (labor migrant)	Self-employed	11–20
Süleyman	Male	61–70	Married	First-generation (labor migrant)	Self-employed	41–50
Adnan	Male	71–80	Married	First-generation (labor migrant)	Pensioner	41–50
Murat	Male	31–40	Married	Second-generation	Employed	31–40
Nilgün	Female	61–70	Married	First-generation (family reunification)	Homemaker	31–40
Berrin	Female	21–30	Married	Second-generation	Unemployed	21–30
Münevver	Female	51–60	Widowed	First-generation (family reunification)	Pensioner	31–40
Hülya	Female	41–50	Single	Migrant descendant	Unemployed	31–40
Mustafa	Male	31–40	Single	First-generation (asylum seeker)	Unemployed	11–20
Aylin	Female	61–70	Married	First-generation (family reunification)	Homemaker	41–50
Bora	Male	31–40	Married	Second-generation	Part-time worker	31–40
Berna	Female	41–50	Married	Second-generation	Part-time worker	21–30
Elif	Female	61–70	Single	First-generation (labor migrant)	Pensioner	41–50
Sema	Female	41–50	Single	First-generation (asylum seeker)	Unemployed	11–20
Selda	Female	41–50	Married	First-generation (asylum seeker)	Homemaker	11–20
Cemil	Male	31–40	In a relationship	Second-generation	Student	21–30

Source: Adapted from Bilecen (2020)

education. She has been a homemaker and dedicated her life to her four children. At the time of the interview her husband was already retired and three sons and one daughter were working in different sectors in Germany which she was very proud of. Her husband's pension was not that much, but she was nevertheless quite content to have many children surrounding and helping her at all times ranging from small daily tasks including help in household chores like cooking or cleaning, to bigger ones including home improvements both in Germany and in Turkey. Being illiterate and having four children, she has never been actively involved in the labour market. Although she had opportunities in the cleaning sector in Germany, she has decided not to work in order to take care of her children. She explained her decision and its consequences on different occasions:

'I didn't dream of money or work, we [with her husband] thought our children should grow up with manners, that was our desire. Our children are our wealth, thank God [...] Of course, working with people you get along with would be nice, for me being a homemaker is something good for me but if I would have worked and then retired it would have been much better, I mean economically. With the children, it was not possible for me [to work] [...] Now because I haven't worked, my husband's pension is not that much for both of us [...] Some months I get [economic] help from my eldest son to make the ends meet, what can I do? He is such a good son, he wouldn't even make me ask for that.'

In the beginning of the interview, Nilgün was squinting at the sociogram I brought, though avoiding my questions to fill that in. When her daughter Fatma came into the room to serve tea and said that Nilgün was illiterate. During that first interview but also later on many occasions Nilgün talked about the importance of education because she always wanted to, but did not have the opportunity. As a result, she always felt very dependent on her husband throughout her life and nowadays more so economically on her children. Hence, she put a lot of effort in her children's education as she perceived it as the key to being independent and success in the labor market, thus, a better life. This might seem a unique case in terms of education and employment as Nilgün sought neither of them in Germany. But because she has never received formal education, she put a lot of emphasis on children's education and told me that she made sure that they have 'good educational degrees'. Her high educational aspirations for her children shaped her descendants' education and employment trajectories closely which will also be discussed in the later subsections. While two of her children obtained higher education degrees, two other had vocational degrees.

In her network map (Fig. 8.1), aligned with the literature showing women's networks mainly composed of kin relationships (e.g. Marsden, 1987), Nilgün listed only her family members mainly living in Germany, one brother and his wife in the Netherlands, and her two sisters in Turkey. Nilgün has never sought information about jobs from her contacts and has never considered herself to be in a place to give information on such matters. She gives her children and husband constant care not only in terms of doing the household chores regularly such as cooking, cleaning, and doing the laundry, but also through minding her two grandchildren after their school hours, so that her daughter Fatma can work. Moreover, Nilgün takes care of her family when they have healthcare issues ranging from minor to major illnesses.





**Fig. 8.1** Nilgün's network map

NOTE: On the network maps, drawn with the software VennMaker (Figs. 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3), information exchange is indicated with a dashed-dotted line, care relations with a dotted line, and financial protection with a straight line. The more types of provision or receipt of protection an actor is involved in, the thicker the arrows. Arrows indicate directionality of the exchange, the absence of arrows in the relation indicate their bidirectionality. In some figures only two importance circles are shown only when there were no respondents in the remaining circles. The aim is to have a close up view of supportive resource exchanges

For example, she makes sure that her husband takes his medication every day on time and organizes family breakfasts or dinners. In addition, she also makes sure every family member gets enough support not only when they are sick but also when they need daily practical help. She acts as an organizer for a smooth support flow in the family that is for her also a prerequisite for her children's educational success. As she explained supportive relations in her family and her role:

'I know it's not like a regular job you go everyday, but home also needs regular maintenance like cleaning, tidying up, thinking what to buy, what is needed, I mean, I cook everyday, for

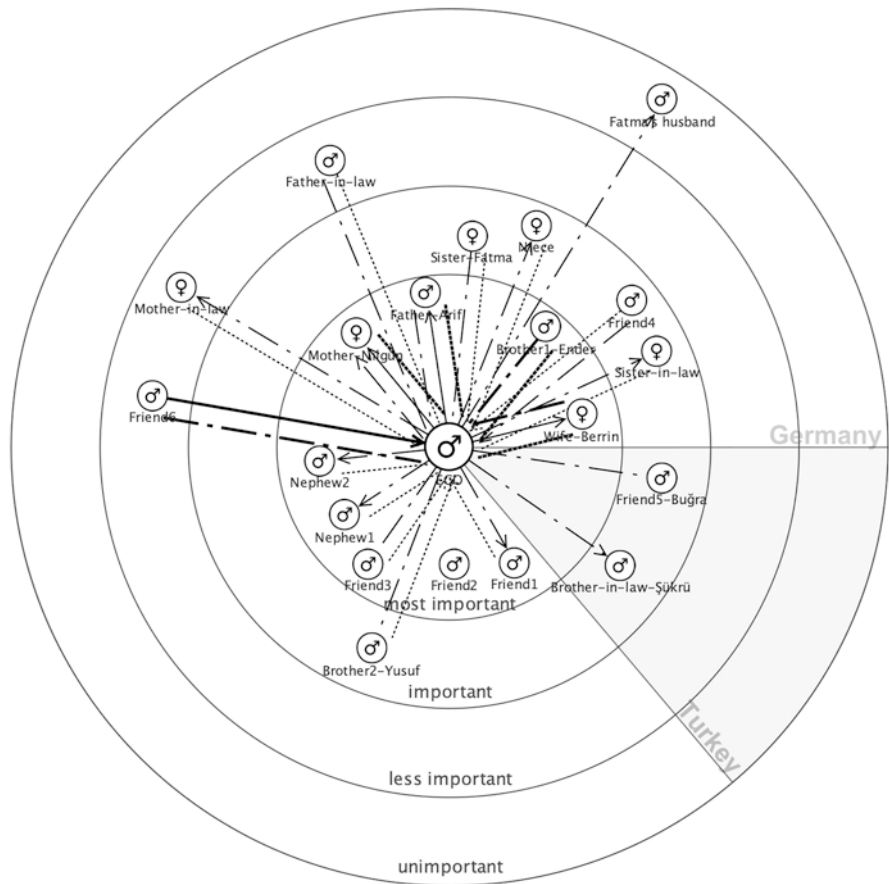


Fig. 8.2 Bora's network map

that I need to be prepared all the time. When my children were younger, they were coming home from school hungry. I needed to feed them and with good meals, so that they can grow up and concentrate on their schools and be successful. Back then my husband was earning good money, we could spend but also save some of it. This requires also a lot of organizing all around, so that children have a regularity [...] Sometimes we hear children who could not keep up with the school here [in Germany], they go out, drink alcohol, use drugs. Who wants these things for their children? Nobody, of course! But for that not to happen you need to work at home hard. A neat family environment is needed, so I made a nice home with good food, clean and safe environment. [...] My husband has never hit my children which is very common in other families I hear. For us, our children's well-being and success is the most important [...] This is how we brought up our children, and it even continues today, when they need any help they come to us and when we need help we go to them. I feel responsible to make sure everyone feels this familyhood and being supported because we live in another country, it is already very difficult but we all have each other's back. [...] Sometimes if they cannot really tell to their sister or brothers what they need, if one of them has more, I make sure that they all share what they have and help the one in need.'

Nilgün mentioned that her daughter Fatma and daughter-in-law Berrin were mostly helpful in household tasks such as cleaning or cooking or taking her to gynecologist, whereas her sons were more helpful in fixing small items at home, moving stuff around, or doing grocery shopping. Her accounts were also well-resonated with other participants of this study, pinpointing to a gendered understanding of care relations (e.g. Bilecen, 2019, 2020; Bilecen et al., 2019). Some resources such as money Nilgün receives was reciprocated in terms of care relations either to the same person like her husband but also other family members such as her grandchildren. While Nilgün stated that she has been taking care of her grandchildren usually at her daughter's home, when she needed help at the doctor's it is usually her daughter accompanying Nilgün mainly for translation. It is in line with previous research that also found generalized reciprocity within intergenerational family relations of migrants (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019; Dankyi et al., 2015; Ugargol & Bailey, 2020). For Nilgün, such exchanges refer to the meaning of familyhood:

'Children are very important to us [her and her husband]. If there were 50 [children], all 50 would have been very important [...] I look after them [children and grandchildren], it's my priority [...] My oldest son calls me regularly and asks if I need anything, he sometimes does shopping for us [...] My daughter and daughter-in-law helps me in the house but they also drive me to doctor's when I need [...] that's life, those things are what makes a family a family.'

While it seems that Nilgün supports only her daughter in terms of childcare, it is not that her other children also need childcare and Nilgün is not available for them, but rather it is about their needs. Nilgün narrated that Bora just got married (has no children yet), Ender has adult children who does not need care, and Yusuf has young children yet lives in another city. For her, being in another city prevents Nilgün to give hands-on childcare when support is needed (e.g. Bojarczuk & Mühlau, 2018; Ryan, 2007) and she was missing her grandchildren very much. Time to time, when they could see each other, Nilgün also made sure that they spend time together. Nonetheless, she perceived that in general she can rely on Yusuf for other types of support, mainly for financial and healthcare emergencies. When she has been in Turkey, she used to spend time with her sisters' children and grandchildren, and she perceived this as a way of socializing opportunity, to get to know extended family members, so that keeping up the familyhood.

#### **8.4.2 Bora: Nilgün's Son**

Bora was Nilgün's third child after Ender and Fatma. He arrived in Germany in 1978 at the age of six after finishing the first year of primary school in their village. Bora told that initially the family lived apart for a while and it was his mother who convinced his father to apply for family reunification. For him, that was a very good decision, so that he could have 'better' life chances. He narrated:

'Actually it was my mother who wanted to come to Germany I think mainly because she wanted us to get a good education [...] We have a lot of relatives across Europe, such as in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Denmark. They are mostly from my mother's side of the family. Over the years, I guess she saw how her own cousins are doing but also how my cousins are doing and also wanted for us a good future. It's not an easy decision of course, given that she is not educated, but I think she is really brave, she took us all here believing in our capacity that we can do much better here like in the school and also later as a job. I think it was a very good decision for us [as a family]. I owe my education today to my parents, they brought us here and they were always there for us as much as they could.'

Inspired and supported by Nilgün, Bora also attributed education as the key for a 'good future' because it is the best way to get a 'good employment position'. In his opinion, he had a well-paying job but it is something he was doing for a transition period to a more prestigious job. Migrating to Germany as a child, he had to endure some difficulties including not always getting selected for teams at school or some unhelpful teachers. Nonetheless, he was enrolled at a university to study law which is acknowledged to be a difficult and highly-selective trajectory (see the chapter by Lang, Pott & Schneider, 2022 in this book, for the educational context of law studies in Germany). At the time of the interview, he was getting ready for his last chance to take the state exam with the aim to become a lawyer, which he found very difficult and time-intensive education. He was not regretful to study law, although he knew 'it would be a difficult road not only to study, but also to pass the final exam, have a two year compulsory internship, then later find a job'. The idea of being able to help to the disadvantaged attracted him the most despite such adversities. In order to sustain his livelihood in the exam preparation period, he had a part-time job as an assistant construction manager which he found through his friend 6 who had also been financially helpful, as shown in Fig. 8.2. He also applied through formal channels to other jobs which were more closely related to his studies, however, none of them worked out.

In Bora's network map, it can be seen that not only he has access to many other ties in comparison to his mother (Fig. 8.1) and wife (Fig. 8.3), but he also activates them much more. In addition to extended family members, Bora named six friends, three of whom in Germany have German nationality (friends 2, 4, and 6), while the other two are Turkish migrant descendants (friends 1 and 3). While he mostly gave financial support to his parents and wife, he was in a reciprocal exchange relationships in terms of care and informational support to a large extent. In terms of job information specifically, he reported to have reciprocal exchanges with his wife Berrin, brother Ender, friends 3 and 6, and father-in-law. Such exchanges were composed of informing one another about new job openings where they know someone hiring or informing about a new sector where Bora might like to work in addition to his studies. Moreover, after finding his job through his friend, Bora also made his brother Ender, a real estate agent, to collaborate with him to find new construction projects. In addition, he received job information from his father, second brother Yusuf, sister Fatma, his friend 5, Buğra in Turkey, while he gave such information to his niece and nephews who were searching for internships or part-time employment as well as to his in-laws, as some of them were self-employed and looking to

expand their business. For instance, Buğra was a lawyer in Turkey and had his own practice. Bora received a lot of information about legal jobs in Turkey as he considered to work in Turkey as a second and another temporary option in case if he would not be able to find a job in Germany and if his wife would also like to live in Turkey for a while. Because of his large network and to some extent his entrepreneurial character Bora was very much engaged in a different business going beyond his realm of study. As Bora knew the German legal system, he has been informing his ties when they needed. From his ties, he received help when he moved in with his wife Berrin as well as when he needed help in unserious sicknesses.

Going beyond his sociogram, Bora also highlighted the importance of family ties in his life, not only in terms of exchanging job opportunities with one another, but also how the familyhood was crucial in his life. At the time of the interview, he was 40 years old and a newly-wed, worried not only 'about' his own but also his wife's career. His education took much longer than he anticipated. Due to his lengthy experience which also yielded not so much economic benefits as expected from such a prestigious sector, he influenced his younger brother Yusuf to have a vocational training like his other siblings, with the idea that he could enter the labor market at an earlier age. Moreover, for his wife they were both actively searching for a paid employment. He said:

'I make the money and Berrin manages the home. The household work is not so of a little business, a person who lives in a house knows that, its cleanliness, the food and shopping. I usually try to do shopping with Berrin so that there is no more work for her and some time left also for her to do some other things for herself [...] She is searching for a job and there are things that I am afraid of too, she might be bored at home soon, we discuss things together, like what she wants to do as a job. It is also not so nice for her to stay at home all the time around 8 to 10 hours and wait for me, it is not so easy for her too.'

Bora's case illustrates that social networks play a role in finding jobs and he activates his ties very often (e.g. Smith, 2005) both for job searching and other supportive activities. Nonetheless, jobs found through social ties might not always be the desired ones as in his case which is a transitional part-time job, related neither to his education level nor the subject (e.g. Griesshaber & Seibel, 2015; van Tubergen, 2014). Bora's undesired transitional job can also be explained by not being connected or at least not reported to being connected to those in relevant or well-positioned individuals related to Bora's education. As previous studies show, a degree in law in Germany is quite difficult to achieve as well as to find a job due to an implicit expectation of an upper middle-class background (e.g. Lang et al., 2022).

#### **8.4.3 Berrin: Nilgün's Daughter-in-Law and Bora's Wife**

Berrin was born and raised in Germany. Similar to Bora, her father worked at a factory, and different from him, her mother had her own boutique. At the time of the interview, she was a recent graduate from a master's program in social sciences and looking for a job. After working in a civil society organization for a while, she has

decided to pursue an advanced degree, so that she could earn more income. Similar to her husband Bora, Berrin also had three siblings: one older sister studying medicine, and two younger brothers, one of whom dropped out of vocational high school and the other was studying in Turkey.

In her sociogram in Fig. 8.3, Berrin named one friend with whom they were in constant exchange of information on education, healthcare such as which doctor to go to, and to some extent jobs as her friend was also searching for one. Besides, Berrin named 12 family members including Bora and Nilgün. Her network is more similar to Nilgün’s in terms of type of ties rather than her husband as her’s is disproportionately composed of family ties, whereas Bora’s network is slightly larger and composed of diverse ties in terms of relationship, ethnicity and exchanged support. Berrin was mainly involved in care exchange relationships with her family and received money from her parents, sister, and husband.



Fig. 8.3 Berrin’s network map

Although she was actively searching for a job, she mainly got job information from Bora. When asked further, she mentioned that she would rather use a job agency to find a paid employment because she perceived that her personal ties might not be the ones who were the most useful for that purpose. She told me during a family breakfast:

'I hope you can understand that what I want to do is not really what my family members' are doing. So, how can they help me? [...] They would of course want to help me in any area if they can because they care about me, but they came here as migrants, as outsiders and tried to learn many things on their own. I was born here, so I know the system much better than my parents and this includes also where to search for jobs. In Germany there are agencies for that and they have all the jobs matching to my skills. I do not want to claim any social security benefits because I am not that kind of migrant and they [the authorities] also want to find me a job. I am not worried, I will find something that I want to do.'

When asked about her other ties who were not mentioned in the network map, she said similarly:

'No one can really help me [in finding a job] because they do not work in my area, they are in catering, cleaning, or have factory jobs that I do not want. My sister will become a medical doctor soon, so she also doesn't know my area of work [...] Also when I think about those who are in Turkey, they have jobs like my cousins, but they have no idea about how things work here [in Germany]'

While Berrin was not relying very much on her network ties in her search for a job, she has been helping to her sister-in-law, Fatma, so that she can keep hers in the catering industry. Berrin not only looks after her nephews after school from time to time, she also assumed some of Fatma's household duties in her mother-in-law's household. For Berrin, Bora's family has a gendered perspective about household task divisions which also resonates in the upbringing of their children compared to her family. Nonetheless, Berrin was helpful to Fatma who during one of the participant observations acknowledged that by stating based on my notes that 'without her [Berrin], I would have splitted into thousand pieces, be there, do that, children on the one hand, my husband and housework at our own house on the other, and on top of everything, sometimes my mom needs me, she is getting old. She [Berrin] is really helping us all [...] Being able to find such a matching family types is not easy.' Here, she refers to Bora, who, in her opinion, has done a marvelous job to find Berrin, who is caring and respectful to their family values, although from Berrin's perspective she has been put under many and sometimes even unrealistic expectations.

Berrin's case is in parallel with previous studies which state that the positions of network members matter the most for finding jobs (Mouw, 2003), especially for women whose networks tend to lack influential ties (Huffman & Torres, 2002; Trimble & Kmec, 2011). Compared to her parents, Berrin experienced an upward social mobility based on her educational credentials. However, as in earlier studies show, Berrin does not belong to those whose personal network turned out to be helpful yet, bringing her a successful labor market position (e.g. Crul et al., 2017; Keskiner & Crul, 2017).



## 8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has two main contributions to the literature. First, it showed the complex exchanges of support which functions on the basis of generalized reciprocity as a norm, where an individual gets information on jobs and reciprocates that by helping in the household of another family member (Gouldner, 1960; Sahlins, 1972). The main argument of this chapter is that in order to understand labor market positions of migrants, there is a need to investigate diverse supportive resources and not only receiving job information. As it can be seen in the illustrated cases, some migrant mothers need such help to keep their jobs, while others are giving different types of support and may only inspire their personal ties (in this case children) to continue their education and later for finding jobs. In so doing, this chapter goes beyond existing studies that use receiving information from ethnically defined ties as the main operationalization or main explanatory source of jobs migrants have by looking only those who have jobs (e.g. Kanas et al., 2011; Lancee, 2012).

Second contribution of this study is its in-depth analysis of cases that are selected from the same family. The examples in this chapter include a first-generation migrant who was never employed, and two migrant descendants, one of whom had a part-time employment, and the other was in the search phase for a job. In selecting such “unusual” cases compared to existing studies, the realities behind the job search and how personal ties can or cannot be mobilized were explained much more in detail. In so doing, this study also responds to the earlier call for understanding migrant parents’ orientations and practices to unearth the educational and labor market outcomes for their descendants (Keskiner, 2015). From a network perspective, the findings show network differences between generations not only in terms of ties’ types, ethnicity, and location, but also the supportive resources being exchanged. Similar to the study of van Tubergen (2014), the current study shows the larger networks for the second generation in comparison to their parents, nonetheless, not always with ‘good’ resources in terms of finding paid employment. The findings of this study also pinpoints to gender differences in networks both in terms of network size and mobilization of ties.

This study is not without any limitations. First, it is not a representative study and cannot speak for all migrants from Turkey living in Germany. Second, those networks depicted here are only one-time snapshots. Although during the interviews, respondents could talk at length about their changing personal relationships and resource exchanges over time, and yet, more longitudinal studies involving personal network components are necessary to capture the underlying social mechanisms that explain the labor market positions of migrants and their descendants. Nevertheless, despite such limitations, this chapter is a pioneering one investigating extensive network explanations for migrants’ labor market positions.

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# Chapter 9

## Networks in Migration Processes



Michael Eve

### 9.1 Introduction: Networks and Migration Trajectories

As discussed in the Introduction to this volume, much of the work on migrants' social networks is on the effects which ethnic identity has on the composition and structure of migrants' networks. In this chapter, in contrast, I discuss the effects which migration itself has on migrants' networks. Even in times of electronic communication, social networks are shaped by space, so the fact that migrants have moved geographically has important effects. In addition, migrants vary in the networks they use to achieve their migration and the various types of migration within and across national borders have structural characteristics liable to affect social ties. In this chapter I draw on examples from international and internal migration, and from labour migration and skilled migration, to illustrate some of the effects of "migration trajectories". I describe these migration trajectories not in terms of the individual traits of the migrants concerned (their human capital) nor in terms of their legal position (as I will show, there are many similarities between international and internal migrants following a labour migration trajectory) but rather in terms of the networks involved. As the examples in the chapter show, these various kinds of trajectories differ in the type of ties used to effect the move itself, but also in the relationships formed in the place of migration, in the work ambience, the neighbourhood and outside work.

I also argue that the migration trajectories of parents have effects on the networks their children form: to take an obvious example, they affect where families live and this often determines the school attended, and the friends formed in the neighbourhood. These networks have effects on education and on the jobs young people obtain (cf. Eve & Ceravolo, 2016).

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I believe it makes sense to differentiate in this way between migration trajectories because the network used to achieve migration itself has important effects on the relationships established in the place of immigration. If I am invited to apply for a skilled job in the place of immigration by a colleague with whom I have worked in the past, that colleague may form an initial basis for the network I establish both inside and outside work, a network which is liable to be different from that I establish if it is my sister who puts me up in her flat and tells me where I can find work. But the ability to form a tie – either with locals or with other migrants – is not a purely individual matter. The re-organization of one's network e.g. around relatives and past acquaintances in the place of emigration, or around work contacts, or around a church or an association, is not just an individual choice: it depends on others in these ambiances being present and available to form new ties. So the reinforcement of a relationship with a sister depends not just on the relationship we had back home and on our individual characters and social trajectories, but also on the presence of a cluster of other people who provide a series of activities, subjects of conversation, interdependencies.

In the first section of this chapter I describe the reorganization of social ties which inevitably accompanies any migration, stressing that the social significance of a move is not just that it changes the forms of interaction with individual persons considered singly, but rather that it changes a whole social configuration. So, for example, a move does not just make it impossible for me to drop round to a friend for a coffee, but also takes away the whole context of local social interactions which made up the stuff of our conversation.

In the next four sections I use this configurational perspective to understand the difficulties internal migrants report in forming relationships with locals, and the strategies they develop to build a network in the new place. Among other things, I describe the social logic whereby some migrants form ties mostly with other migrants from “back home”. This pattern has often been described for international migrants, and is usually conceived in ethnic terms, as a result of preference for persons imagined to be similar culturally, combined with the diffidence of locals. In this chapter, however, I give examples from internal migration which cannot plausibly be interpreted in these terms and I offer an explanation in terms of the networks formed in particular migration trajectories.

This analysis of the specificities of migrants' social networks in the place of immigration is the general framework I use for analysing the role of networks in migrants' situation in the labour market. “Integration in the labour market” is a thoroughly social process, depending on information coming from other people about what jobs are available, conversations about what jobs are feasible or desirable for someone like me, the development of language and attitudes to present oneself as a suitable candidate, knowing someone who has influence over hiring decisions. The possibilities individuals are aware of, and the choices they make, are very much influenced by their local social network. So it is of considerable importance who this network is composed of: a network of other migrants from “back home” provides different opportunities from a network spun around a professional ambiance. More in general, the ties which may be of use in job search, or in

constructing skills, are not divorced from other ties, so understanding the structure of migrants' networks more generally is fundamental for understanding their position in the labour market. Also for this reason, I devote space to the logic underlying the formation of ties with other migrants from the same place of "origin": the construction of a new network around "homeboys" has important effects on the information and opportunities in the labour market a migrant has access to. Whereas the link with the labour market is mostly implicit in the earlier sections of the chapter, it becomes explicit in the section on the link between the networks used to make a move and the ties which lead to a job, and a particular place in the labour market. The ties used to effect a move (e.g. ties with relatives in a classic chain migration, ties with professional colleagues as in many cases of skilled migration) are often *de facto* the ties which are crucial in getting a migrant their first job in the place of immigration. This is often recognized but its implications for how migrants' networks develop are rarely reflected on.

Finally, the last three sections of this chapter deal with the effects of migration trajectories on the networks of children of migrants, and indirectly on the second generation's position in the local labour market and system of social stratification. Here I focus on labour migration and on a number of structural effects associated with labour migration (whether internal or international): the frequent moves in the early stages of the migration cycle, the type of neighbourhood migrant families are liable to settle down in, the kind of jobs labour migrant parents are in, relationships with neighbours. I argue that these features have effects on the relationships children of labour migrants form, and that these in turn have effects on education and on the kinds of jobs they obtain.

## 9.2 Moving to Another Place: What Effects on Social Networks?

First of all, let us consider why space, and moving, should affect social networks. It is worth noting, at this point, that predictions of a space-less sociability have been frequent since the time that the telephone started to become widespread (Flichy, 1991). Yet telephone data from different historical periods and national contexts has always shown that the great majority of telephone calls are made between persons who interact locally and face-to-face, telephone calls forming part of the overall relationship. Research on more recent communication technologies do not seem to show a radical departure from this pattern of communication partners (Mok et al., 2010; Takhteyev et al., 2012; Ellison et al., 2007).<sup>1</sup> Research is, of course,

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<sup>1</sup>As is well-known, Wellman argues, on the basis of his East York studies and other data, that there has been a certain shift from relationships embedded in local neighbourhoods to networked ties, somewhat more spatially dispersed. But this does not affect my argument. As Wellman has also stressed, the actual use of space-independent means of communication like the internet is connected to the overall series of activities and interactions which people engage in. And some of



continuing as communication technologies change, most recently with “social media”, but at present there is little evidence of social relationships becoming free of dependence on space.

It is also interesting to see how *changes* in an individual’s geographical location (i.e. migration of one kind or another) alters the network. If we take telephone calls as an indicator of an individual’s active social network, we see that a move to another town has a radical effect. Ties with kin survive moves rather well, with calls becoming less frequent but also longer, whereas calls to most friends disappear a few months after a move (Mercier et al., 2002).

The fundamental reason, I believe, that many relationships drop away after a move is not that there is anything inherently “less real” about speaking over the phone or via a computer as against “face-to-face” interaction. But rather that the overall configuration which gives meaning to a single relationship, and thus to telephone conversation, is lacking.<sup>2</sup> If I no longer work in the same office as my friend, I will be less concerned by what the boss has said, less amused by the latest office gossip. If the friend who has a child the same age as my daughter no longer lives in the same town, we cannot get together to organize play activities, so there will not be calls to arrange these, but in addition we will not have the joking conversations about the trials of parenthood which sprung out of those exchanges. As I have argued (Eve, 2002b) it is wrong to see friendship as a purely dyadic relationship between two individuals attracted by their personal characteristics or by particular interests: we need to contextualize the speech and the material, emotional and intellectual exchanges which are fundamental to friendships socially. Even outside the ambit of friendship, when we are talking of social ties in general, a purely dyadic focus is rarely sufficient. The fact that telephone calls to kin are more resistant to geographical distance is understandable if we see social relationships as configurational. Certain kinds of interchange with the kin network become impossible when a person moves home, especially if active kin ties are spatially very concentrated in the former location, but other forms of interaction with a whole series of kin are likely to persist. So even after moving away, I will be concerned about my sister’s illness, and the effects this has on who can look after my grandfather. I may feel obliged to send money to help out also because others may “expect” me to do so. The overall structure of the network of ties between various kin means that a series of my relationships are in play (on the importance of reciprocity in networks, see Bilecen in this volume).

These dynamics are of course relevant for migrants and for non-migrants. But thinking in these configurational terms sheds light on the effect migration has on social networks in the place of arrival. In fact the configurational background which

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these – from eating together to childcare or trips to the country – are space-dependent. So the actual use of space-independent means of communication is more common between people who are close geographically.

<sup>2</sup>I realize that social media are less dyadic than some previous media like the telephone. Only future research will show the extent to which diverse forms of interaction sustaining whole configurations of ties pass through the new media.

locals have supporting individual ties is not the same as that which migrants have. As Michel Grossetti (2005) points out in his study of “where relationships come from” few personal relationships grow out of casual contacts. In his study in Toulouse the great majority originated in a small number of contexts: school or university, work, various types of associations, neighbours and flat-shares, plus persons contacted via family and kin. Very similar findings were reported by Claude Fischer in northern California in the 1970s; and by Claire Bidart in her work on friendship. As Bidart (1997: 52) puts it: “One does not make friends on the street, in a crowd, out of nothing. Certain settings, certain places, environments are relatively favourable to the construction of interpersonal ties...”.

It should be clear that many of these standard sources of new relationships – what Grossetti, in Simmelian tradition, calls “circles”, what I have referred to as the “configurational background” of an individual relationship – are not available to an adult migrant, who will not have former school friends, neighbours or members of one’s former scout group or football team in the place of immigration. Or rather, they may have such contacts, but only among other migrants from the same town or village of origin. Likewise with kin. Obvious though this may seem, it is also fundamental when considering the networks migrants form when they arrive in a new place. We need to recognize that a part of the relational specificity of migrants lies in the way networks interweave with the life course (cf. Bidart & Lavenu, 2005; Garip, 2017).

A configurational approach of this kind to the formation of relations helps to understand that feature which has always struck observers about migrants’ social ties, viz. the fact that many migrants “stick with their own kind” and often have relatively few ties with “natives”, even after many years of residence in the place of immigration. This has traditionally been thought of in an ethnic key. Common sense interpretations have hypothesized a preference to live with others who are (supposedly) culturally similar, combined with diffidence on the part of locals impeding the formation of relationships. Scholarly approaches have not been unaffected, and a good deal of the interest of scholars in migrants’ networks has, as I have said, been directed to the ethnic composition of migrants’ networks. Ethnic dynamics are obviously important, but they need to be contextualized in the configurational background in which relationships in general are formed, and when we look at where relationships are formed, homophily no longer appears a purely individual trait (Wimmer & Lewis, 2010; Eve, 2002b).

Citizenship, and the lack of documented status which has become such a common aspect of international migrants’ experience in recent decades, as well as language and other aspects of “culture”, can obviously have very important effects on the ability to form social ties. However, it should be noted that even when such factors linked to “culture”, ethnicity and citizenship are lacking, similar patterns of clustering with persons from the same geographical origin may be present. Interviews I conducted with French young people in Rennes in 1998 (Eve, 1999, 2001) made it clear that many students and workers from outside Rennes clustered with others from their own local “origin”. This was particularly striking in the case of students: university is an organizational context exceptionally propitious for the

formation of new ties since it brings together people, mostly at the same stage of life, with broadly similar future projects, in regular, repeated contact. Taken away from their previous daily round of sociability, students also have time and the desire for new contacts. Yet even in these exceptionally propitious circumstances, many students spent most of their time with others from the same town or village in Brittany. As one male student said “it’s the people of Saint Malo with the people from Saint Malo, Saint Brieuç the same, etcetera”. Several other interviewees made the same point: a young woman who did not entirely approve of this pattern, said “It’s true that we tend to stay in groups ... always in a little micro-society ... it’s easier ... the people you know already ... there are lots of us, so you bump into people you know ... It’s true that we often go out together in a group of people who know each other ... Slightly closed circles ... we have our habits of life, because we’ve known each other for a long time ... you don’t necessarily feel the need for others. I have a friend from Paris who doesn’t like it here because we’re a bit closed in, a bit hermetic”. Numbers are clearly a precondition for this kind of pattern: as the young woman cited earlier said, “There are lots of us here [from the same town]” – a feature I will come back to later.

### 9.3 ‘Home Boy’ Networks

Manchester School<sup>3</sup> anthropologists studying rural-urban migration in Africa (e.g. Epstein, 1958; Harries-Jones, 1969; Little, 1974) used the term “home boys” – an English translation of words present in various local languages in southern and western Africa – to describe groups of rural migrants from the same village or region in urban contexts. Their descriptions of relatively tight knit networks of persons identified as distinctive in terms of their geographical “origin” could be applied to many situations, including that in Rennes.

Brittany is of course known for strong regional identifications, but regionalist ideology might be expected to encourage rather than discourage relationships with students from other towns and villages in Brittany. And in any case, I believe this kind of pattern could be found in other French, Italian or British universities where there are significant numbers of people from the same town, or indeed the same schools or same social circles “back home”, so I do not believe Rennes is specific.

Ethnographic studies of internal migration often provide cases which are interesting because cultural differences, citizenship or foreign-ness cannot be evoked to explain the patterns found. Michel Bozon’s (1984) account of social relations in Villefranche-sur-Saône (a town of around 30,000 inhabitants in east central France) provides interesting accounts of the difficulties of migrants in forming relations with locals (Caladois, as they are called), and the strategies migrants use to adapt to

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<sup>3</sup>On the contribution of the “Manchester School” – somewhat distinct, not just methodologically but also in its substantive and theoretical objectives, from the mainstream idea of what social network analysis consists of – see Eve, 2002a.

this situation. The majority of the migrants – especially among the manual workers who came to work in the town’s textile and engineering industries – had come from the surrounding region, so there were particularly few differences in “culture” between “migrants” and “locals”. Yet many migrants gave an interpretation in cultural terms, accusing the Caladois of being “cold” and “closed” (Bozon, 1984: 50–51). A woman from the Haute-Loire says “The Caladois mentality doesn’t suit me. People live in closed circles, very cool with outsiders ... I have friends in Villefranche but they come from outside, from the Haute-Loire, Bayonne, Grenoble. I have very few contacts with real Caladois”. A man from the nearby Beaujolais country contrasts the superficiality of the conversations he has in Villefranche to those back home: “In the country when you ask how are things you get a real answer. Here if someone asks how you are before you have time to say anything he’s already gone” (ibid., 50–51). This man admits that one reason for the difference is that in his home village he often talks about family matters whereas he cannot enter into those conversations in Villefranche, but he finds the situation unsatisfying anyway.

A teacher from Lyon is also interesting on the micro-interactions in play. This man says he sometimes feels irrevocably a foreigner because people born in Villefranche “often mention a whole lot of people who I’m not sure I know... they talk about what they did, or about things they did together when they were at school... I was having a drink last Wednesday with the [rugby] trainer and two or three men all born in Villefranche, I didn’t join in the conversation much because they were asking themselves what had happened to a group of friends with whom they did masses of things when they were young. So there is a way of relating to people which isn’t the same, you see; there I felt very much an outsider... And yet I’ve lived longer in Villefranche than in Lyon” (ibid., 63–64). Having arrived in Villefranche as an adult this man lacks the background set of ties which is fundamental to participate in some forms of interaction and conversation.

Many local migrants in Villefranche adapted to these difficulties in the same way as many of my interviewees in Rennes by socializing mainly with other “migrants”, or by using Villefranche purely as a work place and going back to their “home” town or village nearly every weekend (ibid., 52). Like many international migrants, many of these very local migrants did up a house in the place of origin, or built a new one (ibid., 65).

It is also interesting to see the ambiances where ties with locals *were* formed in Villefranche. The teacher from Lyon says he knows a lot of people through rugby and his political activity. As Bozon says, there are certain ambiances where it is easier for migrants to make friendships and other social contacts: associations, churches, political parties have an intrinsic need for members and so may constitute a channel for migrants willing to give their time (and perhaps willing to fit in to the existing hierarchy). The biographies of many internal and international migrants would probably bring out the role played by organizations of this kind in the re-organization of their social network. In a well-known article Hirschman (2004) sees religious bodies as offering migrants respect and social recognition as well as resources. Other associational ambiances have a similar role, and I would argue that the significance such ambiances have for migrants has similar configurational roots.

Sports clubs, too, obviously have need of talented members who can help win local competitions, as well as volunteer trainers or helpers. Like Bozon's interviewee, many other migrants, internal and international, could probably trace ties with a number of individuals to the "circle" of sports or cultural clubs.

Work is, of course, another ambiance where migrants form relationships. I will come back to the specificity of the work ambiance as a source of social ties for migrants; here, I will simply point out that interviewees in Villefranche who did not work outside the home particularly stressed their isolation and the "coldness" of local Caladois (Bozon, 1984: 52).

International migrants also sometimes explain the difficulties of forming ties with locals in the same kind of terms as Bozon's teacher, emphasizing the effect of arriving as an adult. An Indian manager in Canada, interviewed by Suhair Deeb and Harald Bauder (2015: 58) says "People who have grown up in Canada have very strong ties to the school they went to and to the summer camps they went to. We do not share those ties (...) access to those natural networks. [Immigrants] have created new networks, but since they are new, they don't run that deep, and they don't have the depth, and people in the network don't have the attachment to you."

In her references to "depth" this interviewee seems to be thinking of personal friendships, but the ease of communication which other interviewees refer to (and which they lack) has consequences in the workplace well beyond close friendship. As Deeb and Bauder point out (2015: 52) "social talk is intertwined with work talk". As I have mentioned, the specificity of migrants' networks has consequences on careers, on absorption of what is seen as the "right language", and even on ability to perform work tasks.

In the comparison with Bozon's material, it is also interesting that some of Deeb and Bauder's (2015: 57) interviewees (foreign managers in Canada) stress the role sports contacts had in "integrating" socially into Canadian offices, and acquiring cultural capital alongside social capital through participation in sport (cultural capital and social capital are of course intertwined).

I hope it is clear that, even independently of ethnic identity, migration has effects on social networks which can be understood reflecting on the configurational logic by which new relationships are formed. Even though many migrants themselves use an ethnic-type framework to explain the over-representation of other migrants and under-representation of locals in their personal networks, the kind of similarities I have referred to in the experience of internal and international migrants suggest that we should also look at factors such as the social temporality of migration and the inability of migrants to draw on a series of relationships made in the past.

This "configurational" logic is clear also when we look at the practices necessary to maintain any social tie – what Wellman (1985) with a play on words called "network". Also in migration studies, many writers (e.g. Schapendonk, 2015) have stressed the importance of such a focus. As I have said, when we do focus on practices of meetings, activities, talking, writing, the subjects of spoken and written discourse, we see how – even when the immediate interaction is between just two individuals – many other people are involved in the background.

## 9.4 Ties with Co-nationals, Ties with Locals

There is obviously a lot of variability in the tendency of migrants to form a “home boy” network in the place of immigration – variability on individual but also social lines. In my attempt to understand how the migration process affects social networks I want to compare skilled migrants and labour migrants. At least since the time of the Chicago School, descriptions of labour migration have stressed the fact that most migrants have relationships prevalently with other migrants, primarily from the same place of origin. This seems true also of internal labour migrants. We may cite some evidence from what is by far the largest migration flow in the world, viz. internal migration in China.<sup>4</sup> Yue et al.’s (2013) study of the social networks of migrants in a city in the province of Fujian found that over 99% of interviewees had ties with other migrants (the average number of such ties documented was 20), whereas only 39% had any significant ties with non-kin locals (Yue et al., 2013: 1715). Yue and colleagues point out (ibid., 1706) that migrants are not different in ethnicity or religion from locals and that “obstacles of language and culture shock” are less than those faced by most international migrants. So the massive predominance of other migrants in these migrants’ networks might seem striking.

Research on skilled migrants, in contrast, often finds people who have relatively few ties with co-nationals. In their interviews with Polish migrants in London, Ryan et al. (2008) found that while those in manual jobs often lived in almost exclusively Polish networks, professionals had much more mixed networks, including substantial numbers of British and in many cases few Poles. Gill and Bialski (2011) found a similar difference in the networks of “lower” as against “higher socio-economic groups”, with the former having very few ties with British locals, and the latter few ties with co-nationals.

Ryan and her colleagues attribute the difference to “cultural capital” (Ryan et al., 2008: 683) and Gill and Bialski stress the importance of fluency in English and of education. Command of the local language is of undeniable importance in the ability to form ties with locals (the professionals mentioned in both studies seem to have had a good command of English before coming to Britain) and no doubt other forms of cultural capital have a role.

However, other factors less linked to pre-migration attributes of individuals, and more linked to the channel of arrival also seem to have been important. Gill and Bialski (2011: 246) refer to the role of “institutional” ties in shaping the networks of their professional interviewees in Britain. Likewise, Ryan et al. (2008: 683), describing the ties of a medical professional who “had contact with several British

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<sup>4</sup>Chinese official statistics (*Statistical Communiqué of the People’s Republic of China on the 2019 National Economic and Social Development*) give the number of migrant workers in 2019 as 290,77 million, a figure larger than the U.N. Department of Social and Economic Affairs estimate of 272 million for all international migrants in the whole world in 2019 (<https://www.unmigration.org>). It is a striking indication of the low level of interest in internal migration that the largest migration in the whole of world history has attracted relatively little attention from migration scholars.

professionals in his specialist area of medicine who advised him to come to London [for further study]” described a network “shaped by employment and the contacts [formed] at work rather than by specifically ethnic or migrant circles”. Numerous other studies of skilled migrants (e.g. Poros, 2001, Harvey, 2008) in various jobs and various countries document similar recruitment paths, and it seems likely that these personal recruitment channels via employees or employers with whom the migrant has already worked or had contacts, serves as an important basis for the construction of the personal network in the place of immigration.

## 9.5 Mobile Occupations

But how does this channel of arrival affect the ties skilled migrants establish in the new context? Clearly, a workplace where the majority are locals makes the formation of relationships with locals easier than a workplace where the majority of employees are other migrants, possibly from the same place of origin. As is well known, many labour migrants work in niches where the majority of the workers are migrants, the migration chains used to effect migration overlapping with chains of recruitment into a specific workplace or set of workplaces (cf. Grieco, 1987 for an exceptionally clear description of the pattern in a case of internal migration to unskilled jobs in a steel company). Although a certain number of skilled migrants are recruited to an organization via friends or even relatives (the literature on skilled migration gives a number of such cases) it is probably exceptional to find themselves in an office where co-nationals are the majority – a situation which is common on many building sites or among seasonal labourers on farms.

As I have argued, the lack of other sources of ties may make work a particularly important ambience for migrants. In another research project, on skilled Irish migrants in Britain, Ryan (2015) found that several of her interviewees did stress the pleasures of associating with other Irish in Britain. However, inquiring into the origin of these friendships, it became clear that cultural similarity and shared nationality was certainly not the only basis of these relationships. Relationships with Irish migrants, like those with British people (which were also numerous), were made at university or at work.

Several interviewees were teachers, and had made many of their friends at work. One woman said “any new friends I make these days are teaching friends”; another “my main social network here [is] with teachers in school. I socialise with them quite a lot, like once a week, twice a week”. A third woman, asked how many of her friends were teachers said “It’s easier to say how many aren’t teachers” (Ryan, 2015: 13–14). Another, similarly, said that “all” her friends were teachers (*ibid.*, 15).

Teaching is a profession associated with geographical mobility (for evidence from Italy, see Collucci & Gallo, 2017): on the one hand, teachers are needed



wherever there are children, on the other hand young teachers at the beginning of their career may have to move in order to find a job. Ryan's interviewees formed friendships with other teachers partly because they provided practical advice and emotional support in what could be a stressful and demanding environment, and reinforced their identity as a teacher (Ryan, 2015: 14–15). But the formation of a friendship presupposes that both parties are prepared to give their time. It seems likely that there may also have been other teachers in the same school, or a nearby school, who were relative newcomers to the area, and thus particularly open towards the formation of new relationships.

It is likely that some work ambiances are more favourable than others to the formation of relationships outside work, and the extension of a migrant's network via the formation of contacts with other people, friends of the colleague, so forming a configuration of ties which is a basis for friendship. It may be that this kind of extension of a work relationship to the leisure sphere is more frequent in occupations where many persons are "migrants".

Careers in certain occupations certainly have an intrinsic relationship to mobility. In his discussion of middle class occupations Watson (1964) made a distinction between "burgesses" and "spiralists". The former were in occupations where it was important to consolidate a local reputation and clientele, perhaps building on the basis of relationships established prior to commencement of the business; Watson saw shopkeepers and artisans, but also professionals such as solicitors as burgesses. Spiralists on the other hand were in occupations where advancement in a career involved moving to another geographical location in the same large organization, but at a higher level, or to another similar organization again in a different place. Many managerial careers in the private sector had this kind of structure, as did many public sector jobs.

Bozon (1984: 48) makes a more general distinction between two very different strategies of *affirmation sociale*, on the one hand affirming an essentially local identity and life-style, on the other hand one predicated on non-local ties. Like Watson, he sees some occupations, such as *cadres*, as necessitating and valuing mobility, others, such as shopkeepers, but also *ouvriers*, as valuing and cultivating relationships with a local ambiance. Bozon does not develop this idea, but it might be fruitful to think of what we normally see as the style of life, family relations, and attitudes characteristic of particular occupations and social classes as the product not only of the education necessary to enter the occupation, and the organizational constraints and conditions of work, but also as a product of trajectories of geographical mobility.

In any case, when considering the difference between the networks which skilled migrants and labour migrants form in the immigration context, I suggest that we need to take into account the mobility trajectories of locals in the occupational ambiance where the migrant finds work.

## 9.6 Not Taking Links with Co-nationals for Granted

I have spent a lot of space analysing the difficulties which migrants of various kinds find in forming ties with locals, and the specific contexts in which ties are formed with locals.<sup>5</sup> But what can we say about the conditions in which migrants form ties with co-nationals? The common sense assumption that nationality per se is a basis for a relationship has been shown to be empirically unjustified by a host of research, including some I have mentioned. Accounts in the literature often describe relations formed before migration “back home”, but are mostly implicit on the way such pre-existing ties form the basis of a wider network established in the place of immigration including co-nationals not known before – almost as though it were natural for relations to be extended to other co-nationals, and therefore not worth explaining. As I have mentioned, I believe that we need to examine the practices which maintain ties, and the configurational context in which such practices are embedded.

Some literature stresses the very instrumental or casual bases of relationships with co-nationals. Gill and Bialski (2011) describe Polish unskilled migrants forming relationships with fellow Poles in Britain simply because they were taken to a house where other Poles lived, and because they worked with these co-nationals; but these relationships were described as superficial and soon dropped out of interviewees’ networks, also because they saw them as competitors who could not be trusted. Many other migrants recount similar turnover in the early months and years of migration, as also conflict-ridden and instrumental relationships (Cvajner, 2019).

The pattern of casual or instrumental ties soon lost is perhaps particularly common when migration chains have not become consolidated. For when there is a certain number of migrants from a particular origin, a new migrant is more likely to be given a bed by a cousin or a friend, who will perhaps also present the new arrival to an employer, or at least give advice as to where to look for a job. This initial contact may then become an important basis for the whole network formed in the immigration context. What is important in this context is not just the fact that the tie may be strong at a dyadic level (after all, relationships between siblings can be conflictual, and many relationships with relatives or acquaintances back in the emigration context may have been superficial). But if there is a certain number of relatives and friends in the local immigration context, and there are also contacts with relatives and friends back home, the relationship is just one part of a wider configuration involving several people and various activities, exchanges and conversations. Thus the kind of practices which are a basis for trust and control, and the creation of shared ideals of behaviour. Hence a more feasible basis for a future network in the immigration context than the ties described in the previous paragraph.

It should be clear that a certain number of relatives and friends or acquaintances is a necessary condition for this kind of pattern. Many skilled migrants probably do

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<sup>5</sup>I do not want to exaggerate the difficulties - obviously, many migrants form richer and larger networks in the migration context than they had before migration; but analysing the difficulties, and where migrant *do* form ties with locals, is useful from an analytic point of view.

not have a sufficient number of kin or others from their pre-migration network to make them the basis of their network in the place of immigration. I suggest this is one of the reasons why unskilled migrants are more likely than skilled migrants to have networks dominated by persons from the same geographical origin. Of course, what is necessary is a certain number of people from one's *network* back home, not the number of persons of the same nationality.<sup>6</sup> A Romanian in the Italian city of Turin not arriving via a migration chain could have no ties at all with co-nationals even though Romanians form nearly 6% of the city's total population. However, since most labour migrants do arrive via a migration chain, there is liable to be a certain number of people who know each other and others back in a specific place of emigration (in the case of Romanians in Turin, and the small town of Marginea, see Cingolani, 2009).

In this chapter I have not wanted to go into questions of ethnic identification. But it should be noted that the kind of rather dense networks I have described as produced by labour migration are also those which tend to be associated with clear ethnic identifications (Lubbers et al., 2007).

## 9.7 Migration Networks and Recruitment Networks

These different patterns of social networks established via different migration trajectories have important effects on the type of access to the labour market migrants have. I say "migration trajectories" not migrants with particular types of skills (skilled migrants vs. unskilled migrants), because we know that many migrants experience downward occupational mobility, so that even well-educated migrants who follow a labour migrant trajectory may remain stuck in "immigrant jobs". I argue that this is a question of networks. As is clear from the examples I have given, and innumerable others in the literature, directly or indirectly, the social ties used to effect the move from a place of emigration to a place of immigration are often the social ties used to obtain a job. Some migrants move to a particular place precisely because they have obtained a job there. Many others do not have a job fixed up but do have information from their contacts that jobs are available in a particular workplace or a particular segment of the local labour market. To generalize, it can be said that "migration networks" in the sense of the ties used to effect change of place, are in one way or another often also "recruitment networks". It is this which makes it sensible to reason in terms of what I have called "migration trajectories". And to argue that migration trajectories structure both the social lives migrants create in the place of immigration (for example, around co-nationals, around kin, or around colleagues) and the jobs they find.

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<sup>6</sup>Quantitative studies of migrants' networks often use data on the number of migrants of the same nationality in the locality under study: if co-nationals are numerous, migrants are assumed to have large networks. Numbers of co-nationals may be an adequate proxy in some circumstances, but it should be clear that it is not a direct measure of social networks, and in some circumstances may be misleading.

Focusing like this on networks rather than on the skills of migrants helps to understand not only the de-skilling and downward mobility which is common in labour migration, but also the fact that even migrants who do not have language barriers, and have marketable skills, may remain in a situation of blocked mobility.

Examples are provided by McGregor (2007) and Thondhlana et al. (2016) in their accounts of Zimbabwean migrants in Britain. The majority of these migrants had worked in professional, semi-professional or managerial jobs in Zimbabwe, or had been university students; but in Britain they worked in poorly-paid, low status jobs, often with inconvenient hours. More specifically, the majority worked in one particular “unskilled” job as carers of the elderly or disabled. As McGregor (2007: 810) says, “The fact that so many Zimbabweans have gone into care partly reflects the availability of work, but also the clustering of Zimbabwean social networks around the industry. As the Zimbabwean community has grown, its members have passed on their experience to newcomers, and many entered care work through personal introductions or efforts on the part of friends and relatives already working as carers”. Thondhlana et al. (2016: 584) note that, on arrival in Britain, most of these highly qualified migrants had “exclusively Zimbabwean” networks. This gave them access to the care niche in the labour market established by earlier migrants (often non-degreed nurses or teachers) but not to other jobs. For some, confinement to this niche was due to being undocumented or having a visa (e.g. as a student) which limited the hours they could work “legally”. But many who were documented, could work full-time, and had the qualifications to do better-paying and more prestigious jobs, were also in the care sector. Thondhlana and her colleagues stress the role that Zimbabwean networks have in lowering the aspirations of new arrivals, convincing them that they would only be able to obtain unskilled work, and offering contacts to jobs in the care sector, and I suspect that many network mechanisms were in play.

The school and university qualifications of these Zimbabwean migrants were usually those of British examination boards, and all interviewees spoke fluent English, so the concentration in work in unskilled niches cannot be explained in terms of human capital. A minority of Thondhlana, Madziva and McGrath’s interviewees had professional ties in Britain even before emigrating and thus took a different “route of migration” (2016: 576) and went straight into professional jobs. But the majority did not have such ties, and thus arrived in Britain via family reunification, as students or asylum seekers, and formed ties with a Zimbabwean network in London or other parts of Britain which provided “no ties to immediate entry into professional jobs”, and indeed had an “immobilizing” effect (2016: 584).

This Zimbabwean case seems a demonstration of the pattern where a certain “mass” of migrants from a particular origin forms “community” networks which channel migrants who have no alternative ties into a niche in the secondary labour market. In this particular case, the protagonists are downwardly-mobile skilled migrants. But it is worth thinking of the implications also for similar patterns among less educated migrants, who, like these skilled Zimbabweans, form a network around co-nationals. It is in fact an important aspect of labour migration that (with the exception of self-employment) there is little occupational mobility to better

jobs, an immobility which is not explicable solely in terms of education or work experience. It seems possible that the mechanisms I have described whereby networks are re-organized in “the migration process” are also the reason why so many labour migrants remain blocked in “immigrant jobs” for all their lives.

This seems to be true of both international labour migration and internal labour migration. In the case of internal migration to Turin in the mid to late twentieth century, Eve and Ceravolo (2016) show the concentration of regional migrants in “typically migrant” sectors, from building to domestic service, even many years after their move to Turin; Ramella’s (2003) qualitative interviews also show the lack of occupational mobility of these migrants. Cases like this from internal migration suggest that there are other factors in play than knowledge of the language or citizenship. I believe it is more likely that the networks formed in this classic kind of chain migration channel information about job opportunities towards very few niches, without giving information about possible alternatives which might be feasible. In fact the kind of network constructed in the place of immigration via chain migration linking together kin and friends from the place of origin in a new pattern of ties creates a very occupationally homogeneous network, which has the benefit of offering numerous links to jobs within a few niches of the labour market, but only those.

It is also interesting to consider migrants who, notwithstanding an initial lack of a network connecting them in any way to a professional job eventually *do* manage to obtain one. Louise Ryan’s chapter in this volume (also Ryan, 2016) gives examples of highly-educated Polish migrants who came to London without any professional ties. In spite of their qualifications, and often good English, the lack of any connection with local professional networks made it impossible to get skilled work in their own field, or indeed any skilled job. However, through ties with other people met at work, in the neighbourhood or at parties, these persons eventually came into contact with people in the professional ambience they were interested in. In other words, the network they gradually built up in London provided information, allowed the interviewees to acquire skills, confidence and appropriate language to be able to present themselves as a plausible candidate, sometimes orienting them to opportunities they would never have thought of. Cases like these seem to show first of all, that networks are essential in one way or another: human capital is not enough on its own. But it is also interesting that migrants who are socially mobile in this way do not seem to come via a classic chain migration or to have a network in London of relatives or friends doing low-skilled work. Lacking the kind of network which the Zimbabweans referred to earlier had, they create a more heterogeneous one, forming ties with persons met at work, through their children’s school, in other words in the type of contexts where some of the internal migrants I referred to earlier in this chapter made ties if there were few people from “back home” in the place of immigration. So educated migrants who have no professional ties in the immigration context may eventually get a qualified job. But a migrant who emigrates via a network which provides no connections with a professional ambience needs to build up ties within that ambience. If kin, friends and acquaintances are inserted in a low-skill niche in the secondary labour market, they will not be able to provide the

information, encouragement, or financial support which may be necessary, nor provide contacts with other persons who might be able to. For migrants, as for other people, “integration into the labour market” is a social process, not something effected totally on one’s own. For this reason, the structure of one’s social network, including the occupational ambiances it gives access to, may be crucial. Someone who arrives via a network which has nothing to do with their skilled profession may take years to construct ties within a professional ambiance – and not all migrants have that time. Hence many educated migrants stay in low-skilled jobs.

Analysing migrants’ careers in the labour markets of the country of immigration in terms of networks thus sheds light on factors known to be common in migration such as blocked mobility and over-qualification. But also on the very nature of labour migration.

## 9.8 How Does the Migration Process Affect the Networks of Children of Migrants?

As Boyd and Nowak (2012: 88) point out in their review of the literature, there is not an enormous amount of work on the networks of children of migrants. It might be added that what exists is mostly on the question of the ties “the second generation” forms with children of locals as against young people of the same national “origins”. The concept of “second generation” has always been unclear. While a few scholars have rejected it *in toto* (Le Bras, 1998), most continue to use it, and the concept does have sense in circumstances where children of migrants are classified by others in ethnic terms, have an ethnic auto-identification, and where this classification is not just an “optional identity” but one which shapes social destiny in important ways. However, in this chapter I am trying to examine the way migration itself, rather than ethnic identification, affects social networks. So what effect could parents’ migratory trajectory have on children’s social networks?

As noted earlier, studies which ask for the origin of social ties find that a considerable number come from family and kin. So to the extent that migrants’ social networks have specific traits this is liable to have effects on the traits which children of migrants “inherit”. In this section I will focus on a few ways in which children of labour migrants have networks shaped by their parents’ migration trajectory. I argue that the specificity of these networks has important effects on educational trajectories, and on contact with particular occupational ambiances. Directly or indirectly, therefore, these networks have important effects on the types of jobs children of labour migrants end up in.

Many of the friendships which children and adolescents form are local, being based on the neighbourhood or a local school. So it is worth noting that the housing trajectory of labour migrants is very specific, even compared with local working-class families. In an early period, many migrant families make several moves within the area of settlement, in an attempt to get out of run-down housing, to get a better

job or to move closer to relatives or friends. This initial period of numerous moves has also been documented for internal labour migration by Ramella (2011). These moves of home naturally often cause changes of school, which may have an effect on educational attainment (most research on the effects of school changes shows that it damages school attainment: see e.g. Gasper et al., 2012). And on friendship networks.

Even apart from this initial period of high mobility, the neighbourhoods where migrant families end up living are specific, even compared to the non-immigrant working class. Once again, this comes out in twentieth century labour migration to Turin, where regional migrants were distributed much less evenly over the various parts of the city, more concentrated than the local working class in new areas in the south and the north of the city (Eve & Ceravolo, 2016). A series of mechanisms connected with mass migration itself probably contributes to this specificity of the neighbourhoods where migrant families settle, and where children of migrants grow up. The local working class, via their network of ties to relatives and to institutions, is liable to have more information about available housing, and more ties to owners of property to let (Badino, 2018). The very fact that, in an initial period, many migrants are in housing which is in poor condition or overcrowded puts them in a good position with regard to the criteria adopted for access to public housing. So it is not surprising that in many countries, and in different historical periods, public housing seems to have gone prevalently to the families of internal or international labour migrants. Mass migration eventually leads to the construction of new housing, and once again, due to their lack of ties with existing property owners, migrant families may move into this new housing built by the private sector – in Europe, on the outskirts of cities, less well-served by services, and by established schools.

## 9.9 Numbers of Children and Young People

Another important effect of labour migration regards numbers. A “wave” of migration in response to a local demand for migrant labour brings a large number of mostly young adults to an immigration destination, and to specific neighbourhoods. After a few years, young migrants have children (or bring children from the place of emigration) creating a “boom” of children, and then of adolescents and young people in certain micro-neighbourhoods and schools. At a certain point in the migration cycle children and adolescents may make up a large part of the neighbourhood: in the huge estate on the outskirts of Paris where Lepoutre (1997: 32) did his research no less than 38% of the total population was under 20.

In his analysis of American inner cities in the 1970s and ‘80s William Julius Wilson (1987: 36) claimed that one “cannot overemphasize” the importance of large numbers of young people. Without suggesting that numbers always have the same effects, it would be wrong to neglect the numerical dimension and the influence it may have on social networks.



Certainly, at least since the time of *Street Corner Society* (Whyte, 1943), accounts of migrant neighbourhoods have noted the intense social life of adolescents and young people (especially males), in spaces around flats inhabited by migrant families. And many accounts of childhood and adolescent sociability (especially that of boys, generally less controlled than girls) stress the pull of groups hanging round outside the flat. Drawing on his interviews with the children of the Algerian-origin Belhoumi family in France, Stéphane Beaud (2018: 143) says of the boys “school was not their priority during childhood and adolescence. The group of friends was more important, and it was not easy for them to subtract themselves from their obligations to the group”, spending time at home doing homework or engaging in educational activities. This was just as true in the case of internal labour migration. Anna Badino’s interviews with children of migrants from the south of Italy, whose parents came up to Turin in the labour migration of the 1960s, make it clear that the pattern was similar, especially for boys: in the words of her interviewees “We were always in the squares in front of the flats” (Badino, 2012: 79) “We lived outside” (ibid.: 82).

Citing teachers from the time, Badino argues that this “street sociability” had a significant effect on commitment to school work, eventually leading to the pattern of early school-leaving which was very common (especially for boys) among children of regional migrants in Turin, net of effects of class as conventionally considered (Eve & Ceravolo, 2016). A similar connection between school achievement and the childhood and adolescent sociability of boys is made by one of the Belhoumi sisters who says: “Like most girls of Maghreb origin in the local neighbourhood, we did much better at school than our brothers... from a young age the boys went out and spent lots of time with their friends without bothering much about studying” (Beaud, 2018: 144). Other children of migrants report a similar conflict of loyalties between neighbourhood friends and the different style of life and commitments connected with high school and university (Amrani & Beaud, 2005; Beaud, 2002).

## 9.10 Relations with Neighbours in the Second Generation

As I have argued in earlier sections of this chapter, if there is not a re-grouping of relatives and friends from the place of emigration in the same neighbourhood in the place of immigration, neighbours will not be former school-mates or relatives. So instead of the multiplex relationship which exists in many places where most inhabitants have lived in the same place for two generations, neighbours will just be the people who live next door.

This has implications for adults (first generation migrants) but also for the relationships which the younger generation has with neighbours. In their analysis of social relationships in a small town in the English Midlands in the 1960s, Elias and

Scotson (1994 [1965]) describe the consequences this has for social control<sup>7</sup> over children and adolescents. In the area inhabited by families who knew each other, the authority of neighbours was recognized, whereas in the neighbourhood where there were few such long-standing ties between neighbours, attempts by adults to intervene in children's or adolescents' behaviour were openly scorned. Using Coleman's (1988) term, in this latter neighbourhood, inhabited by families coming from other parts of England, there was little "intergenerational closure" in the networks outside the family because adults in the various families had few ties with each other. In the neighbourhood inhabited by local families present for two generations, in contrast, ties between the families were strong, and norms were easily enforced over all – in the way Coleman described in his theory of "closure of social networks" (1988: S105–S108). The autonomy and relative freedom of groups of adolescents (at least boys) which emerges from many accounts of children of migrants can be understood also in this relative lack of close adult control.

As is well known, Coleman argues that such closure has important effects on parents' ability to control children's behaviour, on their ability to impose adult norms such as the value of schooling, and thus effects on children's educational attainment.

To take another influential theory in educational sociology, the relatively autonomous peer-group sociability I have described as common in many neighbourhoods of internal or international migration is certainly a long way from what Annette Lareau (2011) calls "concerted cultivation". In this latter style of upbringing, children spend a lot of time in home-based activities with adults present, or in organizational contexts, from swimming lessons to theatre, once again adult-supervised. This mode of upbringing is contrasted with a style of "natural growth" where children are given more autonomy and spend much of their free time with other children in activities organized spontaneously. Lareau argues that the close interaction with adults characteristic of concerted cultivation develops the kind of attitudes and language skills which schools reward.

Of course, Lareau's distinction between styles of upbringing concerned class divisions not migration. But a series of conditions in many migrant families and migrant neighbourhoods make concerted cultivation difficult to put into practice. Many organized sports and cultural activities require money and perhaps a car, and time, to ferry children from one activity and event to another. The style also requires the collaboration of other parents willing to organize their time in similar ways, and many migrant families do not have that kind of relationship with neighbours. Home-based activities with friends invited home may require more space than the cramped flats many migrant families live in. On all these dimensions, labour migrants are

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<sup>7</sup>Some accounts of migrant communities constituted by chain migration stress the strength of social control (e.g. Lindo, 2000). Naturally, social control means many things. The control exercised by a group of male peers, for example, is obviously not the same as the control exercised by parents over children to do their homework or control over young women's relations outside the family. I am arguing that certain forms of control relevant for school attainment are affected by the social relations established in migration contexts.

liable to have less capabilities than the average local working class, although the situation may vary according to what a particular national education system makes necessary (Keskiner, 2015).

In other words, it seems likely both that the migration trajectories of parents have effects on the networks their children form, and that, at least in the case of mass labour migration, this probably has effects on educational results.

## 9.11 First Jobs

Apart from the effects which children of labour migrants' social ties may have on their school career, and hence indirectly on the jobs they end up in, there are also more direct effects: for children of migrants, as for other young people, parents' and parents' friends' networks are particularly important for the first job (Kramarz & Nordström, 2014). Unlike some children of middle-class parents, children of labour migrants who do well in the education system are of course unlikely to have contacts via parents who could help them get a qualified first job; this is one (negative) way in which parents' inappropriate networks may affect children of migrants' insertion into the labour market (for these dynamics, see the chapters in the present volume by Keskiner and Waldring; Rezaei and Keskiner; Lang, Schneider and Pott). But for those who did not do well at school and are applying for a manual job, parents – or parents' friends and acquaintances – may be able to help. We know in fact that many unskilled jobs in the labour market generally are obtained through strong ties (Grieco, 1987, 1995; Hanson & Pratt, 1991, 1992; Morris, 1984) so we can ask whether migrant parents are as capable of helping their children as non-migrant parents, and what kind of jobs they channel their children into. If parents have a network of acquaintances who work mainly in similar niches in the secondary labour market – as we have seen, networks of this kind are common among first generation migrants arriving via the labour market trajectory – it seems likely that this may affect the jobs they could guide their children into. In her chapter in this volume Yaël Brinbaum suggests that the jobs which family and friends do provide to some children of migrants in France may in some cases limit their occupational mobility, giving them contacts in the non-skilled sectors where they themselves are employed. However, if children are not attracted by “immigrant jobs”, they may be able to offer no help for other kinds of manual jobs (Keskiner, 2017). So this aspect of labour migrant parents' social networks – in combination with the social networks children of migrants themselves form in the neighbourhoods they grow up in and the schools they go to – may be one of the reasons why many studies have found occupational disadvantage of children of migrants even net of education (Heath & Cheung, 2007). The French survey data Brinbaum uses in fact suggest that the low rates of occupation among children of North African and sub-Saharan African origins is related to the fact that few young people of these origins obtained jobs via networks. High rates of unemployment and economic inactivity among the first

generation, combined with concentration in work unappealing to young people, seem to have potent effects also on the second generation.

It might be thought that the situation of children of labour migrants was similar to children of the local working class. But the position of labour migrants within the local labour market is very specific, as is also the housing trajectory, and the neighbourhoods families settle in. So the network contacts parents are able to provide, and the information local neighbourhood youth provide, are liable to be different from those non-immigrant working class parents have. For this reason, it seems justifiable to talk of networks shaped by parents' labour migration trajectory, not just a general class effect.

## 9.12 Conclusion

Much of the work on migrants' social networks is focused on the maintenance of ties with co-nationals "back home" and in the place of immigration, and on the existence, or the lack, of ties with members of the "majority population". However, if we want to understand patterns of social mobility of migrants or their children, other aspects of their social networks may be at least as important. I do not claim to have written a complete survey of the way migration shapes the social networks of migrants and those of their children. For example, I have touched only indirectly on contacts with organizations (from childcare centres to schools to sports clubs) yet as Mario Small (2009) shows, many social ties originate in organizations, so it would be important to bring out the specificities of migrant families' relationships with organizations, which certainly exist. And I have not touched on the specificities of the networks of migrants arriving via the asylum trajectory, specificities I believe help to explain the lower employment rate of refugees compared with other migrants (what is called the "refugee gap") (Perino & Eve, 2017; Eve & Perino, 2018). However, I hope I have shown that migration does affect migrants' networks and those of their children. This in itself is important, because as I have said, effects of migration – rather than of being identified as ethnically different or a citizen of another nation – are surprisingly little studied.

I have argued that migrants inevitably reorganize their social networks with migration, and have analysed some of the ways in which their social relationships in the place of immigration are influenced by the fact of having moved geographically, and thus not having had a personal and family past in the place of immigration. Many social transactions fundamental to the maintenance of social ties – from childcare to commensality – are difficult or impossible to perform at a distance. Migration is age-selective and this has effects on ties formed in the place of immigration. Labour migration has strong effects on the neighbourhoods migrant families end up in, and this in turn affect the schools their children go to and who they play with outside the home. Most migration is class-selective, forming networks more class-homogeneous in the place of immigration.

I have also argued that there are important differences in the networks established by migrants arriving via different “migration trajectories”. As mentioned, I have not distinguished between labour migrants and skilled migrants on the basis of their skills or individual attributes, but rather on the basis of the kind of networks they tend to follow. Thus the core of the argument is the relationship between a migrant’s network at  $T_1$  prior to emigration and at the start of their migration, and at  $T_2$  some years later. Individual attributes like education obviously have effects on the ties people form, but I have focused on network factors such as the presence in the place of migration of kin, or a cluster of acquaintances from back home, and on the social ties which these other people have. After all, networks grow in large part out of existing ties (Eve, 2002b). And as Portes and Rumbaut (2014: 141) say, “isolating themselves from the influence of kin and friends is quite difficult for newcomers in the early stages of adaptation” – which makes the “characteristics of the ethnic community” of “decisive importance” in “moulding their entry into the labour market”.

Scholars have often distinguished between migrants who draw on the resources of an “ethnic community” and migrants who follow a more “individual” path. As Nee and Alba (2004: 91) put it, “In adapting to life in the United States, immigrants generally choose between two paths: ‘ethnic’ strategies (which rely on strategies in their own communities) and ‘mainstream’ ones (which involve the American educational system and the open labor market).” Portes and Rumbaut (2014: 141) distinguish on similar lines between migrants who rely on networks in their ethnic community and those – usually professionals – who “accept jobs away from areas of ethnic concentration and who compete primarily on the basis of their own scarce skills”. As essays in this volume and much other work shows, however, professionals often make use of networks, directly or indirectly: it is just that they are different networks. As I have argued in this chapter, the difference between a more “community” pattern of social relations and a more “individual” or “mainstream” one can be understood precisely in terms of the social ties migrants have at the beginning of their migration: for this reason it seems to me to make sense to talk of “migration trajectories”.

It will be clear, I hope, that comparing different forms of migration is fruitful to understand the network mechanisms in play. An important aspect of such comparisons in this chapter has been that between internal and international migration. I certainly do not want to deny the massive importance which citizenship, legal status and ethnic identifications have on international migrants’ lives, but I believe that lives are also influenced importantly by the systematic social processes due to migration itself – and to particular migration trajectories. And since we can exclude factors linked to citizenship, internal migrants and their children provide illuminating evidence of the effects of migration processes as such. I have shown the similarities in the networks of internal and international migrants, the difficulties in forming ties with locals, and the tendency to form ties with those from “home” if these are present. I have argued that the tendency to form networks composed mainly of people from “home” can be understood not just in terms of supposed cultural similarity but in terms of the network mechanisms in play. Arriving via a migration

chain has a significant effect on a migrant's network in the place of destination independently of ethnicity. The professional ties used by many skilled migrants to effect their move have different consequences, often leading to a network in the place of destination heavily based on colleagues and persons known through colleagues – especially where many of these colleagues are also non-locals, as is true in many occupations. Relationships with colleagues, but also with neighbours, with kin and friends are specific for migrants: as the examples I have given from internal and international migration illustrate, migration has structural effects on networks.

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# Chapter 10

## Early-Career Academics' Transnational Moves: The Gendered Role of Vertical Social Ties in Obtaining Academic Positions Abroad



Martine Schaer

### 10.1 Introduction

Moving across borders to take up academic positions abroad is one form of occupational mobility (or migration), one that is often presented as constitutive of an academic career. At the same time, academia has become an increasingly transnationalised and competitive marketplace in which recognition of one's academic achievements is a key rule of the game (Münch, 2014) and recruiting procedures involve recommendations from academic referees (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001).

Research has highlighted the importance of social relationships in employment and career processes and the role of networks in the reproduction of gender inequalities. Social-network scholars have shown that even when women occupy positions similar to those of men and have access to comparable networks, their networks are less resourceful than men's (Gray et al., 2007; McDonald, 2011; McGuire, 2002). Occupational and career research has brought to light the interactional mechanisms underlying these differences. In particular, it has shown that gendered representations of men as more competent than women are (re)produced in academia, in interpersonal interactions and workplace practices, and affect the distribution of social resources in different institutional and national contexts (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Fisher & Kinsey, 2014; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). However, there is still a lack of understanding of the gendered mechanisms through which social resources are distributed within early-career academics' transnational social networks.

Drawing on biographical and qualitative egocentric network interviews conducted with early-career academics of different nationalities working in Switzerland or the United States at the time of the interviews, this chapter investigates the distribution of career-related resources provided by higher-ranked academics to

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early-career scholars within a transnationalised occupational field. The research question guiding the analysis is: *When early-career academics are preparing for their upcoming career move abroad, how does gender affect the distribution of academic career-related resources provided by higher-ranked academics in their networks?*

To address this question, I focus on the relationships between early-career scholars and higher-ranked academics, the contexts in which these relationships develop, and the resources that circulate within them. I do so by mobilising the concepts of *tie strength* (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) and *tie direction* (Ryan, 2011, 2016), which I develop further by showing that the strength of vertical ties is underpinned by subtle and hardly visible gendered mechanisms.<sup>1</sup>

The chapter begins with an outline of the theoretical background. It then describes the methodology before discussing the empirical findings. The analysis reveals that subtle gendered practices generate variations in the distribution of academic resources, but also that digitalisation and institutional resources such as fellowships and dual-academic-career support may help counter the influence of vertical ties and their gendered effects.

## 10.2 Theoretical Background: Social Networks, Job Acquisition, and Gender

Network research has demonstrated the importance of social relationships in employment and career processes. Granovetter's (1973) ground-breaking work about the value of weak ties in finding a job led to significant research on how individual action benefits from access to and the use of social networks, in labour markets and beyond. Granovetter (1973) defined tie strength on the basis of the intensity, frequency, intimacy, and reciprocity of contacts, and similarities among the actors involved (see also Ryan, 2016, and Ryan, Eve and Keskiner, introduction to this book). According to Granovetter, weak ties are useful in getting a job if they connect to high-status actors who are "well placed in the occupational structure" (1983: 207). In these conditions, he argues, weak ties are more likely than strong ties to act as "bridges" and provide valuable resources to actors at the other end of the relationship. It follows that weak ties are not all equally valuable (not all weak ties act as bridges), and that strong ties may act as bridges as well, although Granovetter suggests that this is rather unlikely (1983). In her study on Polish migrants in London, however, Ryan (2016) showed that strong ties do indeed act as bridges and provide useful resources for Polish migrants' professional prospects.

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<sup>1</sup>Thus, this chapter focuses on the processes underlying the *distribution* of academic social resources within a transnationalised occupational field. It does not address the subsequent *effectiveness* of the resources early-career academics received.

Questioning whether tie strength is an adequate measure to capture the relative positionings of the actors involved in a relationship, Ryan (2011, 2016) has proposed new ways to conceptualise bridging ties based on their direction, namely their verticality – connecting actors differently positioned in a social hierarchy – and their horizontality – connecting actors in similar social locations. Ryan contends that “the most advantageous ties are vertical, bridging substantial distance, connecting an actor to someone who has more resources” (2016: 4). While it is theoretically fruitful to introduce tie direction in order to account for social distance – because it makes it possible to distinguish analytically between relationship quality per se and the relative positioning of the actors involved – Ryan’s conceptualisation of tie direction does not adequately address the role of gender dynamics in actors’ relative positioning. The first aim of this chapter is thus to contribute to current debates on tie strength and direction by “bringing gender in” (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

Since the 1980s, social-network scholars have demonstrated the ways in which networks are gendered, uncovering differences between the structure, composition, and effects of men’s and women’s networks (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1982; Moore, 1990). They have shown that interpersonal networks are marked by homogeneity, since actors tend to establish relationships with others who share some similar characteristics. Furthermore, social networks do not merely connect “concrete” actors, but are also “networks of meanings” (White, 1992), because they convey ideas, norms, and values (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). As a result, gender representations circulate within networks and are (re)produced or transformed by social actors in their interactions.

More recently, network scholars have begun investigating the role of networks in the reproduction of gender (and other social) inequalities in labour markets and career progression. Their research has demonstrated that structural differences between men’s and women’s networks contribute to gendered career paths (Ibarra, 1997). It has also found that even when women occupy positions similar to those of men and have access to comparable networks, they receive less instrumental support from their colleagues than men do (McGuire, 2002). Drawing on a nation-wide survey of employed individuals in the United States, McDonald (2011) highlighted complex variations in accessing social resources useful in getting a job. He found no difference in the number of unsolicited job leads received by men and women with structurally similar male networks, but observed that male job seekers received more job-finding assistance than their female counterparts, indicating that male network members were more likely to provide this kind of support to men than to women.

These and other studies (e.g. Gray et al., 2007; McDonald & Day, 2010) have found that women’s professional networks are less resourceful than men’s and indicate persistent gender inequalities in labour markets and workplaces. This phenomenon needs to be studied further. In particular, the aforementioned studies predominantly adopt quantitative methodologies, and there is still a lack of understanding of the gendered mechanisms through which professional resources are distributed within social networks in a transnational context. The second aim of this

chapter is to fill this gap by employing insights from career and organisational theory in a qualitative social-network analysis.

Career theory and organisational research have generated a significant stream of research about the role of social relationships in career processes and their implications in terms of gender inequality (Gersick et al., 2000). In her study on the corporate workplace, Kanter (1977 [1993]) showed that stable and long-term ties with sponsors were crucial to career promotion but excluded women. This work inspired further research, including studies on the academic workplace. Rose (1985, 1989) analyzed the professional networks of assistant professors in the United State. She found no difference in the size of men's and women's networks, but she did find that women's networks were less effective than men's at helping them build a professional reputation. In the UK, Bagillhole and Goode (2001) showed that behind the apparent neutrality of individual merit, academic men benefited from relationships with other men. This social support remained largely invisible, allowing men to appear self-sufficient, whereas women appeared "needy" when they tried to develop their own support networks. In UK universities, Fisher and Kinsey (2014) found evidence of male homosocial bonding, which remained unacknowledged by the actors but contributed to the promotion of male interests. Van den Brink and Benschop (2014) demonstrated that networking practices in the recruitment of professors in the Netherlands were underpinned by a masculine model of career success that contributed to the persistence of gender inequalities in academia.

This chapter builds on this research in scrutinising the subtle and often hardly visible gendered mechanisms that frame the ways in which social relationships develop in the workplace and how resources flow through these networks. Focusing on the practices of the actors makes it possible to illuminate gendered mechanisms in social-network processes and how they affect tie strength and tie direction. Adopting a constructivist gender perspective, this chapter does not use *gender* as a biological characteristic or as a categorical attribute of actors. The term refers to the social construction of the feminine and the masculine, a dichotomous and relational matrix underpinned by further normative assumptions about cisgender identity and heterosexuality. It involves norms and practices through which power is implemented and inequalities are (re)produced.

### 10.3 Methodology

This chapter draws on biographical and qualitative egocentric network interviews conducted with 14 early-career academics at the University of Zurich in Switzerland, and 16 at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the United States. I followed a purposive sampling strategy, including academics who had obtained their PhD no more than 10 years earlier, had moved to a different country at least once after their PhD, and represented maximum variation in terms of sex, academic position, academic discipline, nationality, mobility trajectory, and family situation (see Tables 10.1 and 10.2). I met each interviewee twice. I conducted a

biographical narrative interview (Rosenthal, 2007) in the first meeting and a qualitative network interview (Dahinden, 2005) in the second. The network interviews were intended to capture the *mobility network* of the interviewees (*egos*), namely all persons (*alters*) involved in their mobility decision-making process, as well as those who supported them during their stay abroad and, if applicable, after their return. Concretely, the interviewees were invited to consider all kinds of ties, close or distant, inside or outside academia (e.g. family members, partners, friends, academic peers, supervisors, people from institutional programmes). The interview procedure included a name generator and a name interpreter, through which I sought to trigger narratives about the elicited alters in order to understand their relevance in the different contexts in which they were mentioned, as well as the quality and dynamics of their relationship with the interviewees.

All interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed. I reconstructed single case studies – or dual case studies when interviewees were in a relationship with another academic also included in my sample. I wrote detailed notes about the elicited networks, their composition, the nature of the relationships, and the ways in which interviewees were – or were not – able to capitalise on them.<sup>2</sup>

The methodological design of this study avoids methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002) by not focusing solely on one national group. Instead, I endeavoured to select a diverse sample of academics with different geographical backgrounds and trajectories. However, academics from the Global North

**Table 10.1** Interviewees' age, year of PhD and discipline

	UZH		UCLA		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
N	8	6	7	9	30
<b>Age (at time of interview)</b>					
29–30	1	1	0	0	2
31–35	4	2	4	4	14
36–40	2	3	2	3	10
41–45	1	0	1	2	4
<b>Year of PhD</b>					
2003–2006	4	1	2	1	8
2007–2010	2	3	1	4	10
2011–2013	2	2	4	4	12
<b>Discipline</b>					
Arts and Humanities	1	1	1	1	4
Social Sciences	2	3	2	2	9
Natural Sciences	5	2	3	4	14
Engineering and Technology	0	0	1	2	3

<sup>2</sup>The interviews were conducted in English or French. In this chapter, quotations originally in French have been translated into English. People's names are fictitious, and the names of specific institutions and locations have been withheld to ensure interviewees' anonymity.



make up the large majority of my sample (see Table 10.2), as research participants predominantly come from European and North American countries (25 out of 30), and even more of them obtained their PhD in Europe or North America (28 out of 30). The difficulty in finding academics at the University of Zurich or UCLA who had earned their PhD in a Global South country before pursuing their academic career in the Global North reflects global economic and geopolitical inequalities (see e.g. Bauder et al., 2018).

**Table 10.2** Interviewees' countries of origin and PhD

	UZH	UCLA	Total	
N	14	16	30	
<b>Country where grew up</b>				
<i>Europe</i>	Belgium	1	1	2
	Denmark	1	0	1
	France	1	2	3
	Germany	2	1	3
	Italy	1	2	3
	Poland	0	1	1
	Sweden	0	2	2
	Switzerland	3	1	4
UK	1	1	2	
<i>North America</i>	US	2	2	4
<i>Central and South America</i>	Argentina	1	0	1
	Mexico	0	1	1
<i>Other countries</i>	India	0	1	1
	Israel	0	1	1
	Russia	1	0	1
<b>Country of PhD</b>				
<i>Europe</i>	Austria	0	1	1
	Belgium	0	1	1
	Denmark	0	1	1
	Finland <sup>a</sup>	1	0	1
	France <sup>b</sup>	1	0	1
	Germany	1	0	1
	Italy	1	1	2
	Netherlands	0	1	1
	Sweden	0	2	2
	Switzerland	4	3	7
UK	1	2	3	
<i>North America</i>	US	5	2	7
<i>Other countries</i>	Israel	0	1	1
	Mexico	0	1	1

<sup>a</sup>The interviewee who obtained her PhD in Finland had a previous PhD from Russia (not displayed in table)

<sup>b</sup>Degree awarded jointly by a French and a Swiss institution (Switzerland is not displayed in table)

## 10.4 Vertical Ties Matter, But Not All Are Equally Valuable

The analysis revealed that persons mentioned by the interviewees as having given them academic support in obtaining a position abroad were almost all professors or higher-ranked academics with equivalent positions. These were often interviewees' former or current advisors, mentors, or more distant scholars at the same institution or elsewhere. Relative to the interviewees, they were vertical connections who occupied advantageous locations, in particular in terms of occupational status and reputation.

The role played by these vertical ties in the academics' transnational career moves varied between interviewees. While some interviewees attributed a prominent place to higher-ranked academics in their stories, others portrayed them as discreet members of their network. A deeper analysis revealed that these variations were shaped along gender lines and in combination with other resources to which the interviewees had access.

### 10.4.1 *Multiplex Vertical Ties*

This sub-section presents the cases of Enzo and Marc, who were able to rely on multiplex vertical support at the time of their most recent transnational career moves. Their stories echo the experiences of other male interviewees.

After his PhD and a brief postdoc in Italy, Enzo moved to the United States, where he had obtained a tenure-track professorship. During the interviews, Enzo emphasised that he viewed his relationships with several (male) professors in or from the United States as particularly helpful at that stage of his career. At a time when Enzo had felt utterly disillusioned by the Italian academic system, a US professor encouraged him to apply in the United States. He later invited Enzo to present his work in the United States and paid for his travel expenses. Eventually, he gave Enzo personalised advice and feedback at various stages of the application process:

He looked at my materials, he helped me put together a CV that was more in line with American conventions, and he looked at my writing sample. He really knocked himself out to help me out. (Bio\_In)

The two had become acquainted during the professor's earlier visit to Enzo's university in Italy. Throughout his PhD studies, Enzo had multiple occasions to meet US scholars invited by his PhD advisor, who would then ask him to look after these guests during their visit. This is how Enzo met another US professor who later happened to be in Italy once again for a sabbatical precisely when Enzo was applying for positions in the United States. Enzo explained that this other US professor also helped him during this process:

[He] coached me on how to handle the interview process, on how to prepare for questions that concerned teaching. [...] He had me take mock interviews, and then told me that I had to study syllabi, so I did spend a lot of time studying syllabi that I found online from

American universities, and tried to adapt, you know, my ideal syllabus to those that I was reading online. (Bio\_In)

Before his move to Switzerland, Marc similarly benefitted from multiple and repeated support from higher-ranked academics even though he was not looking for a job at the time. Lin (2008: 53) refers to this process as the informal workings of social capital, in which “ties in social networks [may] provide routine but unsolicited job information, which may eventually become critical in getting a better job, without the actor’s actually searching for that or indeed any job”. Originally from Belgium, Marc had moved to the United States for his PhD. He then went to the UK for a postdoc, before moving again to take up a more senior (fixed-term) position in Switzerland. Exchanges about Marc between a professor in the UK and another one in Switzerland resulted in Marc’s receiving a direct job offer from the Swiss-based professor, which Marc declined. Shortly afterwards, the Swiss-based professor contacted Marc again, informing him about another vacancy at a Swiss university and providing him with additional information, including the composition of the hiring committee. Marc recalled:

[The Swiss-based professor] told me: “There’s this vacancy, you should apply for it; these are the members of the committee”. He helped me a little, he gave me some advice. And I know that at this point, I sent my application like any other candidate. But I also knew that I had someone behind [me], following up, and obviously, this increases your chances significantly. So it’s not that he made his contacts work for me, he just... I submitted my application and was assessed like everyone else. (Net\_In)

While Marc readily acknowledged that being able to set the scene in advance helped him prepare adequately and reduce uncertainty, he did not think it distorted the selection process, but underlined instead that his competence was assessed fairly, the same as for any other applicant. He concluded that, as he said he later observed, the Swiss-based professor was simply “very good at identifying suitable candidates”.

Enzo and Marc stated that, except for recommendation letters, they did not receive support from their PhD advisors. Four referees wrote recommendations for Enzo: the two aforementioned US professors, his PhD advisor in Italy, and another former advisor in the United States. According to Enzo, their reputations and connections to US academia played in his favour.

One characteristic of Enzo’s and Marc’s support networks is that several male professors provided them with a combination of valuable resources throughout the process. Enzo was encouraged by one professor to apply in the United States, which enabled him to embrace career prospects he had not dared to consider. In addition, that same professor invited Enzo to present his work in the United States, giving him the opportunity to gain professional visibility with a new audience and providing financial support to that end. Later, Enzo could count on repeated advice and assistance from this and another professor to adequately prepare and present himself as a valuable candidate. By word of mouth between professors, Marc first received a direct job offer, followed by information about another vacancy and guidance during the application process.

Another crucial characteristic of their support networks is the repeated nature of some professors' support, who provided recurring support during various stages of the process and maintained regular contact with the interviewees. Enzo explicitly stated that he was "constantly in touch" with one professor during the application and hiring processes, and both Enzo and Marc described numerous occasions on which they received encouragement, information, advice, and other resources from vertical ties with male higher-ranked academics.

A third characteristic is the high degree of commitment shown by the professors who supported them. As Enzo said of one of those professors, "He really knocked himself out [...]". In both cases, the interviews reveal that the professors not merely possessed resources that were useful to the interviewees, but also were eager to share them.

In sum, these characteristics indicate that vertical ties, in particular if they include higher-ranked academics other than PhD supervisors, provide valuable resources when undertaking a transnational career move. At the time of resource transmission, the relationships between early-career interviewees and supportive professors seem to correspond to what Granovetter (1973, 1983) and other scholars have defined as strong ties, especially when one considers multiplexity (multiple types of support provided by a same alter), time (contact frequency), and commitment (willingness to provide support). Furthermore, these vertical ties are not only upward-oriented (with academics occupying higher positions in the academic hierarchy), but also outward-oriented, insofar as they provide useful resources in finding a position beyond one's current institution.

#### ***10.4.2 The Uneven Distribution of Vertical Support***

Comparing these stories about strong support from higher-ranked (male) academics with the stories of other interviewees reveals the gendered workings of these vertical relationships.

Reaching the end of her PhD in Finland, Irina attended an international conference at which, she recalled, a (male) professor informed her about an upcoming vacancy at a Swiss university:

He told me: "The advertisement isn't out yet, but I want to let you know about this opening [in Switzerland]". And I didn't know then that he would actually be part of the selection committee, which he was. And then, after a couple of months [...] the advertisement was on [a website...] where all sorts of conference announcements and job advertisements like this get put. (Net\_In)

It was not the information given by the professor to Irina that was valuable – shortly afterwards, Irina saw the vacancy advertised online – so much as the personal encouragement that came along with it:

He was just friendly and encouraging, that was important for me at that moment. [...] I was probably just a bit hesitant because the job description was a little bit broad in that they

didn't mention, for instance, whether they were looking for an assistant or an associate or a full professor. [...] But maybe because [he] told me that it was okay for me to apply in the first place, I wasn't hesitant any longer, because I knew they'd consider me anyway. (Net\_In)

The incentive effect of this encouragement in the initial steps of Irina's job search echoes Enzo's experience. In both cases, they felt legitimized to apply for the position available. In Irina's case, however, the professor provided her with "one-time" support, whereas the encouragement Enzo received was the first of a series of supportive resources from his vertical connection. Furthermore, although the professor who informed Irina was part of the hiring committee, he did not, in contrast to Marc's vertical connection, provide further guidance on how to prepare for the interview process or tell her who else was on the committee. This is not to say that this professor did not support Irina's candidacy during committee discussions behind closed doors: he might well have. But in their interactions with these younger scholars, and in the amount of resources they provided directly, the professors acted quite differently in Irina's and Marc's cases, albeit in other regards the two situations are rather similar.

Another interviewee, Nadia, also mentioned a useful and opportune resource provided by a professor when she was finishing her PhD in the Netherlands. While she had started looking for a postdoc abroad too late and was approaching the end of her PhD without having landed the next position, a visiting professor at her university offered her to join his laboratory in the United States. She explained:

The postdoc at [US university] just fell in my lap really, because my then-future postdoc advisor was just spending a year [at my university], and so he said, "Why don't you come with me?" And so I was, "Okay, I'll think about it", and [laughs], but then, you know, there wasn't much thinking to do. [...] That was pretty much the only thing available at the time. (Net\_In)

This excerpt describes another instance of one-time support from a single professor. While Nadia was able to capitalise on her relationship with the visiting professor, her narrative portrays a very different situation from the ones depicted by Enzo and Marc. Again, the point here is not to assess the effectiveness of the support provided, but to gain insights into what is at play in interactions between early-career academics and higher-ranked scholars who support them.

Luc, from France, provides another example that contrasts with the support received by Enzo and Marc. As he was finishing his PhD in the United States, his (female) PhD supervisor recommended him to a (male) colleague in Switzerland. She had lived in Switzerland herself and had known this colleague for many years. She seized the opportunity of a conference to tell him about Luc, as Luc explained:

He had just settled and was looking for postdocs, so they started discussing it and [my PhD advisor] told him: "I have this PhD candidate who will graduate soon. Why not set up an interview?" And a few months later, there was a conference in [Canada], which my PhD advisor and this professor were attending, and so I went there too, for an interview, rather informal. [...] He contacted me a few weeks later and asked me whether I was interested in the position, and I answered [yes]. (Net\_In)

Taken together, these experiences illuminate different ways in which higher-ranked professors may support young academics' career moves, showing more or less commitment, offering single or multiple types of resources, on a one-off basis or repeatedly. These variations in vertical support raise questions about the nature of the relationships between early-career and higher-status academics. To understand why vertical ties provide better returns in some cases than others, I now turn to the contexts in which interviewees established first and subsequent contacts with higher-ranked academics.

### *10.4.3 The Strength of Informal Socialising*

The interviewees who benefited from strong multiplex ties appeared to have numerous opportunities to develop more personal relationships with professors in contexts beyond formal academic ones. Urged by his PhD advisor to look after invited scholars, Enzo was regularly presented with casual occasions to create personal connections with external professors and establish, as he emphasised, "other relationships with them". Marc's encounters with the Swiss- and UK-based professors also took place in informal contexts, outside the confines of the university. Marc had first met the Swiss-based professor at a summer school in the United States and later also by chance in bars and for private celebrations. Marc had also first met the UK-based professor in the United States. Afterwards, while Marc was in the UK, the two kept in touch regularly. Marc visited him on several occasions and once spent a week at his place, during which they discussed common research interests, but also personal concerns, such as Marc's frustration about his position. In brief, Enzo's and Marc's interactions with supportive professors, which took place not only in a formal academic setting, but also in informal settings, including bars and private parties, allowed them to develop more personal relationships.

In contrast, female interviewees had few, if any, opportunities to socialise informally with male professors. Nadia, for instance, met her future postdoc advisor in the department where she was doing her PhD. She did not develop a strong professional connection, let alone a more personal relationship, with him:

I hadn't worked with him. We worked on related subjects but not directly, you know. I had my PhD project [...]. He was a professor in the department, you know, he'd just arrived, or barely, and so.... (Net\_In)

Irina explained that she did not personally know the professor who informed her about the vacancy in Switzerland. She made clear that she mostly knew him through his published work, and that the conference was the first time they spoke to each other.

These examples echo the experiences of other female interviewees who, when asked about the contexts in which they interacted with higher-ranked academics, mentioned summer schools, international conferences, and other academic settings such as their university department. In very rare instances, female interviewees

mentioned more informal contexts. This was the case for Nicole, who, approaching the end of her PhD in Austria, met her future US postdoc advisor when he gave a talk at her university. She knew his work, and his visit was an opportunity to meet him in person. Nicole recalled that a senior female colleague in charge of the guest lectures offered her to look after him during his visit:

She told me: “He comes in three weeks, on such and such a day [...]. He’ll be all yours, work it out”. That’s how I met him personally. During that day when I was in charge of him, he met all the students, but I had more opportunities to talk to him. Then there’s always a dinner in the evening, to which students are not always invited, but [my colleague] told me: “Come with us!” And that’s when we discussed the possibility [of me doing a postdoc in his lab]. (Net\_In)

Unlike Enzo, who was regularly extended opportunities to socialise with guest professors, Nicole depicted this opportunity as a special favour that was set up with the explicit purpose of allowing her to meet and discuss postdoctoral prospects with this professor. Nicole further emphasised that thereafter her senior colleague “was always there” for her – but “from a distance”, because “she had already done enough” by letting her look after this professor during his visit. Nicole’s narrative conveys a quite different sense of entitlement to receiving support from higher-status academics from that expressed by Marc, who, after describing the personalised guidance he received, clarified that this was fair because he was subject to the same selection process as everyone else.

Other interviewees mentioned supportive female advisors. But they did not indicate encounters with female professors other than their advisors. Unsurprisingly, the interviewees’ networks comprised fewer female than male professors, reflecting the unequal distribution of professorial positions between men and women throughout academia in general (see e.g. European Commission, 2019). Furthermore, the interviews do not provide examples of informal relationships between (male or female) early-career academics and female professors, or between female early-career academics and male professors.

## 10.5 Transnationalised Job Markets

While most interviewees applied to more than one position when preparing their next career move, some of them applied to as many openings as they could find, and in numerous countries. The interviews reveal that early-career academics in some disciplines could rely on a digitally integrated transnational marketplace, which simplified both information searching and application processes. For example, when Fabio was looking for a postdoc after finishing his PhD in Denmark, he applied to multiple openings in Europe, the United States, Australia, and Japan. He was not sure if he was “good enough” and anxious about his chances of finding a postdoc position. He was thus willing, he said, to “accept just whatever”. Fabio applied online, by means of two websites with an international scope that gathered academic openings in his field. Because the online application process was



centralised and convenient, Fabio even applied to positions he would not have considered otherwise:

You can upload your files, like your application and your CV, and then you check the positions that you want to apply for so that they're able to see your files. It's really easy to apply through this website. You can apply to a lot of places, in that kind of mindless way: you just check [boxes]. (Net\_In)

It thus came as a surprise when a renowned university in the United States contacted Fabio. He did not remember having applied there, he said: it was “just some click that you do because you have the possibility of doing it”.

Very much like Fabio, other interviewees relied on similar websites with an international scope to apply to many positions in different countries. In Jack's field, such a website encompasses vacancies in academic, industry, and government sectors, and all employers follow the same yearly recruiting schedule. At the end of his PhD, Jack applied to 111 open positions across the world.

Other academics, in contrast, had to invest much more effort to learn about vacancies, which were advertised separately, in different media platforms, and according to different schedules. At the end of his PhD in the UK, William was worried that he would not find an academic position. Like Fabio and Jack, he had a large portfolio of applications:

I did a PhD, and then I realised that, at some point, I was going to run out of money again [laughs], and so I started applying furiously for postdoctoral [and teaching] positions. I applied to lots of places, I applied to several in the UK, five or six; I applied to five or six jobs in the States, a couple in France, three in Germany, one in the Netherlands, one in Belgium. (Bio\_In)

He found the job openings online, but there were no websites that integrated the employment market in his field. The process of finding (and applying to) vacancies was therefore much more complicated and, as another interviewee noted, “less transparent”, because one cannot be sure that one has spotted all existing vacancies.

These stories reveal specific characteristics regarding access to resources from academic ties. First, the interviewees did not mention additional professors apart from their current advisors and did not access external social resources in their search for a position. No direct offer “fell in their lap”, as it did in Nadia's case. But also, they were not provided with direct social resources to help them enter a specific labour market, in contrast to Enzo, for instance, who benefitted from various resources to gain visibility and recognition in the United States and prepare himself according to US academic specificities. Although the academic marketplace has become increasingly transnationalised, “academic practices continue to be firmly enshrined in national and regional contexts” (Bauder, 2015: 91) and higher-ranked academics are simultaneously located both transnationally and locally. The resources they provide may be highly localised, and the value of those resources may vary across academic labour geographies (Waters, 2009), as Enzo's case demonstrates. He was provided direct resources to help him enter the US academic marketplace, and he may have benefitted from the transnational and US-based reputation of his referees.

Second, interviewees with such large and geographically scattered application portfolios appear to have minimally mobilised their PhD advisors in the process of getting a job abroad. They essentially asked them for letters of recommendation. William emphasised that only after he received an offer for a postdoc in Switzerland did he learn that one of his PhD co-advisors was “a good friend” of the professor in charge of the position. While William’s advisor may well have put in a good word for him, he did not provide him with personalised advice about how to “act” with his Swiss friend. This suggests that, apart from subtle gendered mechanisms, other structural features may be at play in framing interpersonal relationships. Differing norms and practices may permeate different academic systems – whether national, institutional, or disciplinary – notably regarding recruitment and promotion. Some systems are potentially more prone to patronage than others, which may in turn affect how higher-status academics interact with young scholars (see also Gray et al., 2007).

Third, these academics engaged in a large-scale, market-oriented and transnational job search with minimal support from higher-ranked academics. But this market-oriented search also seems to have been underpinned by gendered mechanisms. Strikingly, none of the female interviewees engaged in such an “all-out” application process. While several did apply to vacancies in different countries, the geographical scope of their application process was more restricted. These female academics – as well as a number of male interviewees – carefully considered their destinations from the start of the process. As I have shown elsewhere, negotiations between academics and their partners are gendered (Schaer et al., 2017), and women who wish to pursue an academic career face conventionally gendered representations and expectations from their closer and wider social environments, which may create obstacles to their strategies. Nevertheless, it remains entirely possible that male interviewees who applied “all out” would have declined an offer if it were irreconcilable with other aspects of their lives, notably their partners’ employment prospects. In other contexts, male interviewees indeed indicated that their partners’ career was equally important to theirs and that they would have declined an offer abroad had their partners not also found a job matching their expectations. These observations suggest that gender relations are evolving, as men may find it increasingly difficult to find partners willing to follow them (see also Le Feuvre, 2009). In addition, academic men have been shown to decline academic opportunities, not because of a lack of ambition, but because they found them too costly for their and their partners’ well-being (Bataille et al., 2017).

## 10.6 Institutional Resources as Complementary Elements

### 10.6.1 *Fellows' Independence*

Fellowships are an important institutional resource that early-career academics may mobilise when preparing the next step in their career. About one-third of the interviewees moved abroad as fellowship recipients, after successfully applying to funding schemes that financed their salary stipend and some other expenses. Funding programmes often require recipients to move to another country for all or part of their fellowship to an institution (and a supervisor) that agrees to host their research stay. The narratives of academics who moved as fellowship recipients depicted a career step essentially centred on fellowship requirements (in particular writing their own project proposal and finding a host abroad) and in which previously established ties with higher-ranked academics played a secondary role.

After his PhD in Switzerland, Florian obtained a fellowship and moved to the United-States for a postdoc. A year earlier, upon his PhD advisor's suggestion, he had travelled to the United States and presented his work at different universities where his advisor had connections, exploring whether he might want to do his postdoc at any of these institutions. Like other male interviewees, Florian was offered the chance to gain visibility at US universities, an opportunity that was financed by his (male) PhD advisor, who put him in contact with (male and female) members of his own (transnational) network. This "tour" allowed Florian to establish preliminary contacts with US-based professors, one of whom he contacted later, and who agreed to host and supervise him.

Florian's partner, Elsa, finished her PhD at about the same time as him and also applied to a fellowship to do a postdoc in the United States. Her description of the support she received in the process contrasts with those of Florian and other male interviewees, for instance when she explained how she found her host professor:

I went [online] through the departments and looked at each individual professor, and looked at what they were researching, and then I made a list. I had a list of ten people. Then I started contacting these people. There was one guy in [my field], and I contacted him. He didn't reply immediately. And [another] guy in [my field] wrote back that he wasn't interested. (Net\_In)

At this point, Elsa turned to her PhD advisor:

I mentioned that [professor who did not answer], and then he said, "Oh yeah, right, I know him". But he wouldn't contact him especially for me. He just said, "Yeah, just write them again". (Net\_In)

The US professor eventually replied that he agreed to host Elsa for her postdoc. Although Elsa portrayed her PhD advisor as generally supportive of her career, he did not appear to provide direct support at this stage. The ways in which Florian and Elsa were able to capitalise on their social relationships with professors reflect gender disparities similar to those previously described. Florian was readily extended encouragement and instrumental (including financial) support by his PhD advisor,

who sent him on a talk tour in the United States. Elsa, in contrast, received quite moderate support from her (male) PhD advisor, who, even when she turned to him because she had difficulty in reaching a professor he knew, did not offer to help.

Yet, finding a host professor abroad did not seem to depend on the interviewees' previously established ties with higher-ranked academics. Ingrid and Nola, another dual-career academic couple in my sample, wanted to move to the United States after finishing their PhDs in Sweden. Ingrid recalled that she did a lot of research online to find appropriate host institutions, professors, and funding schemes, and that her PhD advisor did not help her. Her wife Nola recounted that she too was left on her own in this process:

I told [my PhD advisor] from the very first time we had a meeting, me and him, when he was my main supervisor, that my goal was to get a postdoc in the US. So he was very aware of that, although he didn't contribute much to me achieving my goal, other than me getting my PhD. [...] He never helped me with the applications for grants or anything like that, or contacts.... In that way, he did nothing. (Net\_In)

These stories echo those of other fellowship recipients, who also found a host professor on their own. In contrast, when Pierre was preparing his fellowship proposal, he was reluctant to contact potential host professors directly. He really wanted a professor from his network to establish the first connection between him and a professor abroad. To this end, he created a list of US-based professors who potentially knew his current or former supervisors in Europe, whom he then asked if they could put him in contact with these professors. When I asked Pierre what he thought of the possibility of contacting these potential host professors without being introduced by his advisors, he answered:

"I didn't even try, for any of them. I didn't want to blow my chance, you know, it's really important to be recommended in this profession" (Net\_In).

Notwithstanding Pierre's belief that it was important to be "recommended", the interviews suggest that, for fellowship recipients, being able to capitalise on (previously established) relationships with professors does not lead to significantly different results from not being able to do so.

In contrast to academics who applied "all out" and were left with little leeway regarding their destination, fellowship recipients were able to "choose" their destination from early on. Admittedly, this choice was constrained by the need to be hosted by a professor and convince funding institutions that the institution was appropriate for their career. Nevertheless, the narratives of fellowship recipients clearly indicate greater latitude in planning their upcoming career move, including in terms of timing, and including when they were in dual-career academic couples.

### ***10.6.2 Spousal Vertical Ties***

Although much rarer, dual-career support is another institutional resource that may be crucial in a transnational career move. It is obtained on a case-by-case basis through hiring negotiations conducted with an institution's representatives.

Dual-career support varies significantly across countries and universities. It is not always formally institutionalised, and transparent procedures are often lacking.<sup>3</sup> Access to dual-career support not only implies institutional resources, but also involves strong ties with high-ranking academics, insofar as it is negotiated through – or jointly with – one's academic spouse. Dual-career support is often presented as intended to overcome the “two-body problem”. However, it is not only academics in dual-career relationships who may experience this problem, but also universities, which may be concerned about missing opportunities to recruit “excellent” academics because of their spousal ties. Hence, this support is generally available only when at least one of the partners is hired for a professorial position.

Gary and Linda provide an interesting example. Linda was already a well-established (tenured) professor in a renown US university when she was offered a prestigious research position in Europe. At the time, her husband, Gary, had not yet obtained a position corresponding to his expectations. Together, they discussed how this opportunity for Linda might work for them as a dual-career academic couple. As Gary put it, he would essentially need to “find a job nearby”. A Swiss-based professor played an important role in this context. He had been Linda's postdoc advisor years before and had since left the United States and taken up a professorship in Switzerland. Having heard about Gary's situation, he informed Gary about academic vacancies in Switzerland. When Gary was later shortlisted for a professor position, the Swiss-based professor, who was part of the hiring committee, informed him about a few “issues” he saw in his candidacy because of his “dual-body problem”. The professor proposed raising this issue during Gary's hiring interview so that he could deal with it frontally. Gary accepted this offer and the professor intervened during his interview:

[He] asked: “You're married to Linda [last name], who's also [an academic] who has an offer at [university]. How do you foresee handling this if you get this job?” And so I said, “Well, we'd live in [European city] and I'd come here every week, for say three days or something like that”. I said this in the interview. [...] And it turns out [...] nobody liked it. (Net\_In)

Pessimistic about his chances of getting the position, he was surprised to receive an offer from the head of the hiring committee:

[He] called up and said, “Well, it's unanimous that you're the top choice, so we'd like to hire you for this job, but we have one reservation, which is that we want you to live here, and therefore we were wondering if we can test how feasible it would be to try to make your wife an offer too”. (Net\_In)

Gary and Linda's story demonstrates how dual-career academic couples may capitalise on their relationship and make joint career moves. Their experience shows that established academics also mobilise academic ties when considering a (transnational) career move. The support provided to Gary by the Swiss-based professor played a role in this process. Though Gary referred to this support explicitly, he

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<sup>3</sup> But see the programme at the University of Michigan, which is often cited as an example: [https://www.provost.umich.edu/programs/dual\\_career/](https://www.provost.umich.edu/programs/dual_career/) (accessed 17.05.2020).

nonetheless emphasised, like Marc, that he did “all the work” himself, making clear that it was his individual merit that counted in his recruitment.

Gary provided a detailed account of his relationship with the Swiss-based professor and the ways in which he intervened to help him. His narrative echoes those of other male interviewees and suggests that (some) men expect and are unabashed about receiving support from higher-status men (see also Bagilhole & Goode, 2001), while women are much more tempered in portraying their vertical ties.

## 10.7 Conclusions

Drawing on the notions of tie strength (Granovetter, 1973, 1983) and tie direction (Ryan, 2011, 2016), this chapter has examined the relationships between early-career scholars and higher-ranked academics and the resources that circulated within these relationships in support of the former’s transnational career move. As previous studies have shown, the distribution of social career-related resources is gendered (Fisher & Kinsey, 2014; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014) and women’s professional networks are less resourceful than those of men in similar positions (McDonald, 2011; McGuire, 2002; Rose, 1989). My work confirms several of these studies’ results while pushing the notions of tie strength and tie direction.

First, this chapter has shown that the strength of vertical ties is gendered. Traces of strong male support networks mark access to network resources when searching for academic positions abroad. Martin (2001) observed that male support is subtle and discreet, and that it remains largely unacknowledged by the actors. My data demonstrate that it remains widespread in academia: it emerged recurrently, in small touches, throughout the data. Both male and female early-career academics have access to vertical ties with higher-ranked academics, and both benefit from these connections, but the vertical ties between men are stronger and provide more resources.

Second, access to strong and multiplex vertical ties is affected by subtle and discreet gendered mechanisms. Having opportunities to socialise informally emerges as one such important mechanism. The analysis has demonstrated that interactions with higher-ranked academics in contexts that extended beyond the workplace made it possible for early-career academics to develop stronger vertical relationships that in turn provided more resources than vertical relationships restricted to formal academic settings. Female (and some male) interviewees appeared to be excluded from such opportunities. These informal boundaries follow “unspoken rules of interactions [that] make gender inequality possible and highly resistant to change” (McGuire, 2002: 303–304) and reproduce heteronormative representations defining the (in)appropriateness of cross-sex interactions. As previous studies have found, informal socialising in the workplace may be a delicate practice for cross-sex actors who may worry about being perceived as having romantic or sexual interests (Gersick et al., 2000). In the present context marked by the #MeToo

movement, men and women may still be far from able to socialise informally within and beyond the workplace without raising suspicion.

Researchers have identified another important gendered mechanism underlying the uneven distribution of career-related resources: higher-ranked actors treat women differently because they do not trust women as having the potential to be successful (McDonald, 2011; McGuire, 2002). These practices relate to social representations of men as more professionally competent than women and are consistent with the gendered character of universities, which have been historically constructed around stable and deeply entrenched representations of male-oriented career models (Le Feuvre, 2009; van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). These practices indicate that if same-sex relationships between men in male-dominated contexts provide access to better support than cross-sex relationships, this cannot be reduced to homosociality insofar as men also benefit from being members of the dominant gender group (McDonald, 2011).

This chapter contributes to theoretical debates about the strength of vertical ties. I have attempted to show that the social distance that vertical ties bridge in academic career moves involves (transnational) academic hierarchies. My findings are consistent with Ryan's observation that the willingness of a vertical tie "to take an interest, share resources and invest time and energy" (2016: 15) in the relationship is an important aspect of what make these ties valuable. However, my study shows that only (some) men have access to strong vertical multiplex ties, while women and other men do not. This finding indicates that this willingness is framed by mechanisms beyond relational idiosyncrasies between two isolated individuals and reflects gendered structural barriers.

In parallel, the analysis has demonstrated that vertical ties with higher-ranked academics play a secondary role when early-career academics mobilise other career-related resources. The extent to which the academic marketplace has been digitalised differs across disciplines and countries. Yet, digitalisation not only contributes to the transnationalisation of academia, but is also of utmost importance in the career moves of some early-career academics, allowing them to access information that would otherwise be scattered across websites and national systems, and to maximise their chances of pursuing their academic career. Websites with a global scope may function as a bridge and replace (or compensate for the lack of) vertical social ties.

Fellowships and dual-academic-career arrangements are further institutional resources that complement the strength of vertical ties. Insofar as they enabled some interviewees to move as dual-career academic couples and appear less marked by gender dynamics, these resources may contribute to greater gender equality in academia. Furthermore, these findings suggest that it is important in social-network analysis to account for institutional and wider social contexts in which network practices between actors take place. This observation calls for further network research that includes institutions in the research design and does not focus merely on interpersonal relationships (see also Herz & Altissimo, 2021).

In this paper, I have adopted a gender perspective to interpret the stories and experiences of early-career scholars. Choosing a theoretical approach means



leaving out others, since it is not possible to make sense of all the complexities of social realities at once. The interpretations that I have presented here do not suggest that other categories of social differentiation, such as class, ethnicity or race, are irrelevant in these stories. Bringing those into the analysis requires further research but will undoubtedly provide a deeper understanding of the ways in which different social inequalities are entangled. In particular, my findings suggest that being in a renowned university that attracts well-established visiting scholars is a fruitful way to develop vertical ties that may provide career-related resources later on. This observation implies that global and inter-institutional power hierarchies within academia contribute to the uneven distribution of vertical support. This uneven distribution requires further investigation in order to understand how it intersects with gender (and other social) dynamics.

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# Chapter 11

## Epilogue: Where Did Weak and Strong Ties Go Wrong?



Maurice Crul

### 11.1 Introduction

In this volume, both qualitative and quantitative scholars describe their findings on the networks of migrants and their descendants and explore the content of their social ties for educational and labor market success in seven European countries. Some contributions cover decades of work in this field, making this one of most comprehensive books on this topic, both theoretically and empirically. Almost without exception, the authors, although describing various ethnic groups, different geographical and professional contexts and different time periods, are critical of a number of the main arguments about the networks of migrants developed in the field of migration studies. Central in their critique is the question about the importance of co-ethnic or inter-ethnic ties and networks, and their importance to enter the labor market and move up. In the field of migration studies, concepts like integration and assimilation have greatly influenced the thinking of its scholars. The idea that newcomers only become fully integrated in a society when they gain a similar economic position and are in contact with people without migration background, or, in other words, become part of the mainstream, has been a strong and dominant view in our field (Alba & Nee, 2003; Alba, 2009; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Portes & Zhou, 1993). People who largely interact with co-ethnics and or work in labor market sectors that are dominated by co-ethnics (ethnic niches) are usually seen as not (yet) fully integrated into their new society. And when this also translates to the native-born children (so-called ‘second generation decline’), this is seen as problematic (Ganz, 1992). In this broader framework on integration and assimilation, Granovetter’s (1973) idea of strong and weak ties has entered the field of migration studies. Lang and Schneider, in this volume, rightly state that it is questionable whether the idea of strong ties – for co-ethnics – and weak ties – for ties with people

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without migration background – was originally intended by Granovetter to be used in this way. But what is clear, however, is that this idea fitted perfectly with broader theories on integration and assimilation. The importance for newly arrived migrants of strong co-ethnic ties in ethnic networks is generally considered one of the starting pieces of the puzzle laying out the process of assimilation in its first phase. The idea of weak ties, also in its symbolic emphasis on ‘weak’, perfectly suited the still scarce and superficial contacts with people of native descent in the early stages of the assimilation process. Since the concept of weak and strong ties fitted so well with the dominant theories about integration and assimilation (classical, neo and new assimilation), much of what was happening with migrants, and even their descendants, in the labor market was seen through, what many would call, *an ethnic lens* (Crul, 2016; Dahinden, 2016; Wimmer, 2013). Migrants gained a first foothold in the labor market through strong co-ethnic ties and were slowly moving up through their weak ties, making use of information and resources of people of native descent with whom they had only superficial contact. The idea of strong ties also resonated with the notion that their relations with co-ethnics were more meaningful and profound. There was also a dark side to strong ties. Under some conditions, because of the limited information and resources in the co-ethnic network, for some the strong ties could lead to an ethnic mobility trap.

The contributions in this volume correct this simplified view, or ethnic lens, on how migrants and their descendants enter and move up in the labor market. In several contributions, the authors show that it often was *strong ties* with people *without* migration background that were important for moving up. Or that initial weak ties, like Ryan shows in her contribution, with people without migration background, over time developed into strong ties. Keskiner and Waldring, in their contribution to this volume, even pose the question ‘Are weak ties really weak?’ in their chapter’s title. At the same time, ties with co-ethnics, are not always strong and deep simply because of sharing a similar ethnic and or cultural background. Ryan rather sees weak and strong ties as points along a continuum of social ties that evolve and change.

Many authors in this volume describe a quite pragmatic view on why people first find employment through co-ethnics or explore and exploit a co-ethnic market. Often, blocked opportunities in society trigger the need to use co-ethnic ties. This is perhaps most dramatically clear in the research among successful second-generation Turkish professionals. As a result of discrimination, or a glass ceiling, some of the professionals of Turkish descent start to explore the possibilities of the upcoming Turkish business world or the Turkish market to get ahead by taking an alternative route. Indeed, some in the low wage labor market get stuck in an ethnic niche. Not because of their preference for co-ethnics, but because entrepreneurs and their middle men (some of whom are co-ethnics) make use of their vulnerable labor market position.

## 11.2 Alternative Approaches to the Ethnic Lens on Strong and Weak Ties

The authors of this volume, some explicit, some more implicit, have developed alternative approaches to look at the networks and resources of migrants and their descendants. I will highlight five main approaches: *the power relations approach*; *counter stratification of social capital*; *a sector or professional labor market approach*; *a gender approach*; *a mobility approach*. These approaches have important consequences for how a research design is constructed, who you choose to approach for interviews and what context will be the focus of your research. These approaches all give us important practical clues on how to get away from the ethnic lens that is so prevalent in the field of migration studies.

### 11.2.1 Power Relations Approach

With the emphasis on ethnicity, some would say the ethnic lens, the issue of power in relations between migrants and co-ethnics and migrants and non-migrants is largely ignored and even made invisible. A crucial contribution in this volume by Ryan brings power relations back in the discussion by talking about vertical versus horizontal ties in migrant's networks. The very concept of the vertical ties is important because this implies that we should look at relations in which power differences are taken into account. In many relations discussed in this volume, one or more persons (co-ethnic or not) are positioned in relation to persons who have power over them. The person in a position of power can or cannot – which is equally important to look into – provide information, resources or chances to a person in a lower hierarchical position. With the concept of the vertical ties, the issue of power is put on the agenda and it makes us aware that in the labor market the playing field of employers and employees, and people in high status jobs versus those in low status jobs is not equal. Though your employer is a co-ethnic, still the main characteristic of the relation is likely to be that this person has power over you, not that you share certain cultural, religious or social characteristics. Bringing in the notion of power also problematizes exclusion, discrimination and ethnic segmentation in the labor market. Rather than framing the clustering of certain ethnic groups in certain sub sectors as the result co-ethnic networks, this could also be studied as a form of inequality and as the result of existing ethnic power hierarchies. Labor market outcomes should, in my opinion, always be studied by analyzing the actions of both employers and employees together. A point in case are high skilled professionals that often become deskilled in the migration process. In many places they become, the infamous example, taxi drivers. One could explain this phenomenon by studying how co-ethnic networks provide the resources and contacts to become a taxi driver, but it can also be studied by analyzing how employers in the professional sectors are excluding these high skilled migrants from entering their original professions.

However, because in the field of migration studies we tend to look mostly through the ethnic lens we research the migrants and their networks and not the most powerful group in the labor market: the employers. To some extent, this is even true for this book, which is critical of the ethnic lens to begin with. The intentions of the employers are mostly only discussed indirectly, through the experiences of the employees of migrant descent. In the chapter of Schaer we get to know the intentions of the professors in the academic field as seen through the eyes of the early career researchers, but not through interviews with the people who hired them – or not. We get the information on what helped people, according to themselves, to move up in the labor market in London, Stockholm or Paris, but we don't get a look through the eyes of the employers that did or did not hire them. An essential route to get away from the ethnic lens is to study the people who are in the positions of power to hire or fire other people. Studying the employers means studying employers both with and without migration background. We need to study the intentions of employers, both with and without migration background, to hire co-ethnics more comprehensively. The topic of discrimination is maybe the best example to make this point. We could ask people about their experiences of being discriminated against in the labor market, but this can never convey the complete picture if we fail to scrutinize potentially discriminatory selection processes. The positions of those who can either provide or deny opportunities and resources are understudied.

### *11.2.2 Counter-Stratification of Social Capital*

A sub field of the power relations approach is to look at how migrants and their descendants can turn around existing power relations by counter stratification, making use of family and network resources. Newly arrived migrants are confronted with a range of structural conditions, because of their individual lack of power, or the low status of their ethnic group in the new land, which makes them vulnerable for exploitation. For Behtoui, in this volume, this is the starting point. Existing networks of people without migration background are instrumental in reproducing inequalities in society. These networks, the contacts and resources in these networks, mostly work in favor of people without migration background, who are already in a higher status position. Behtoui introduces the concept of counter stratification, using the Iranian community as the main example, to show how social and cultural capital at the group level can work as a buffer against existing stratification. Some networks and resources, when pulled together by migrants and their descendants, can work to counter the 'business as usual' stratification. Behtoui emphasizes that we should not look at the individual level of people's resources, but at the aggregate level of the resources at the group level. These resources could be seen as collectively owned. Citing Bourdieu (1998) he argues that when a member of the group obtains a better position in the hierarchical social space, the social capital of all others in the group improves too. Marginalized and stigmatized groups can organize themselves and pool resources that challenge the existing balance of power.



They can make use of transnational resources, of resources brought from their home country or of resources and positions gained in the new country. One form of capital thus is transferred into another form of capital.

Transferability of capital is also a keyword in the chapters of Keskiner and Waldring and of Rezaï and Keskiner who are studying descendants of migrants who are highly successful in professional positions. They studied people with a migrant background that usually started out in families that do not possess a lot of cultural and social capital deemed valuable in the country they reside in. In terms of Bourdieu: they lack the necessary capital to be successful. However, the contributions of these authors uncover the hidden capital in these families, and how this is transferred into educational capital and social capital over time. The emphasis on the importance of education in the family is transferred into educational capital, which in turn is transferred into social capital and informational capital, which helps them to indeed access economic capital. We have described this process in an earlier publication and coined it “the multiplier effect” (Crul et al., 2017). The idea of the multiplier effect fits well with what many authors in this volume describe as the development of networks and resources over time. The multiplier effect shows how, over time, original forms of capital accumulate and are transferred into other forms of capital in each stage of the process of upward mobility. This explains why, taking Bourdieu’s theory of reproduction into account, it is indeed possible for people without the proper cultural and social capital in their families to climb the social ladder against the odds. We showed how with each consecutive step they enter a new social network, which then gives them access to new resources and contacts that in turn propel them to the next step. It turns out that with each consecutive step up the ladder, their cultural and social capital multiplies exponentially.

Rezaï and Keskiner introduce the concepts of reliability and likeability to explain more in detail how individual characteristics like competence and drive are transferred into social capital. Rezaï and Keskiner analyze the phenomenon of people without migration background in corporate companies who act as ambassadors or mentors for people who come from a different ethnic and class background. This analysis offers an important piece of the puzzle. Many professionals belonging to the second generation describe that they have a mentor or an ambassador in their company who advises and supports them and helps them to ‘understand the rules of the game’. It is an interesting phenomenon that children of low educated migrants, some with parents who are illiterate, end up being coached by captains of industry who sometimes belonged to the upper class already for generations. How these two worlds meet and come together is a fascinating puzzle of counter stratification, as Behtoui would call it. What motivates these people in power positions to become such a mentor or ambassador? What is in it for them? Rezaï and Keskiner show that one of the interlinked characteristics of the ‘mentees’ involved is that they are extremely *reliable*. You can be sure of them doing their job well, which lowers the risks of supporting them. Furthermore, they have good social skills, they are what the authors call *likeable*, nice people to be around, which makes it easy to introduce them to others in your network. The fact that descendants of migrants are used to step into a new social environment from primary school onwards makes them often

very adaptive to new circumstances and environments. This is especially the case for the most successful among them, often being the first in their family to attend Gymnasium, to enter University and to move up into a prestigious professional function. They have learned to function in new settings along the way. It has become a second nature. They are very skilled in reading a new environment, understanding unwritten rules and codes of conduct quickly and they can play around with them. This makes them adaptive and pro-active, characteristics generally liked by the managers above them.

### ***11.2.3 Sectoral or Professional Labor Market Approach***

Another important outcome of the volume, addressed by several authors, is that different countries and professional sectors ask for different kinds of networks and ties to become successful. This more detailed approach helps to concretize the sometimes abstract and generalized idea of migrant networks and resources. In some sectors it can be very helpful to have ties with co-ethnics and carve out a niche for an ethnically oriented market. Case in point are lawyers of Turkish descent who work as independent lawyers for a largely Turkish clientele or in corporate law firms for big Turkish companies in Europe. But, as Lang and Schneider demonstrate, they didn't find any direct correlation between being a lawyer for 'the Turkish community' and expressing 'strong (ethnic) ties' and identities in their respondents' private lives. There is also the likelihood of co-ethnics being able to help and support you. In the government's administration sector, as mentioned by the same authors, people with a migration background are still dramatically underrepresented in higher level functions. This lack of opportunities means that to find an entry into this sector, they have to rely primarily on contacts with people of native descent. However, when more people with a migration background enter the field of the administration in higher level jobs (trailblazers as they are called) the context will change and co-ethnic ties are likely to become more important.

Ryan, in her contribution, also makes the point that the channels to get an entrance into a professional field can be very different according to the different sectors. In the private sector social connections play a key role, while in the public sector formal recommendations are more important. The rules of the game in a professional field, to paraphrase Bourdieu, can be very different. Lang and Schneider, for instance, show how in Germany middle level public administrators often enter the field through vocational training channels (a prominent track for students of Turkish descent) and move up the ranks slowly through internal qualification programs. To enter the law sector, however, you need a university degree and a very competitive state exam that only gives access to high level jobs with high marks. Most people only get high marks after repeating the exam several times and after extra private tutoring. For this you need the financial resources that many children of immigrants lack.

Brinbaum, in this volume, contributes to the labor market approach by studying through which channels migrants and their descendants actually got their jobs. She finds large differences between people of migrant descent with high qualifications and those with low or little qualifications. The last group more often relied on social networks, while the first relied more on direct formal applications. She also points to a gendered pattern, with men relying more on social networks and women on direct formal applications (in part to be explained by the higher levels of education attained by the women of migrant descent). Ethnic differences among descendants of migrants are also found to be important in relation to existing ethnic niches of the first generation, for instance established in the building sector. These sectors can work as a safety net especially for young men who did not manage to get formal educational credentials. Those without such contacts have to rely on public employment agencies as a last resort.

The approaches focusing on the specific sector, professions and segments of the labor market help us to move away from the ethnic lens that analyzes networks primarily by looking at the actions of migrants and their descendants. Taking the labor market context as the starting point already in the research design helps to identify what is asked from migrants to enter a certain field and to be successful in this context. As the editors in the introduction to this volume state: we should rather study *labor market relationships* (my emphasis) than a priori classifications of *discrete categories*, like ethnic groups (my emphasis).

#### ***11.2.4 Gender Approach***

Gender is another important start-off when analyzing labor market careers. Schaer shows in this volume how power relations can take a specific gendered shape. Schaer explores when and under which conditions people in positions of power (usually men) are willing to share their insights and resources to others or not. Taking a gender perspective, she unearths how resources are more elaborately shared between men than between a male professor and a female early career researcher. The gender lens provides an important alternative lens to look through, next to or substituting the ethnic lens. The career paths of new arrivals, as several authors in this volume show, are highly determined by gender roles. And again, we see that networks of women often come into place because gender roles in general work against women gaining a position in the labor market. This form of counter stratification can, for instance, take the shape of solidarity among women, enabling women to combine work and care. There is also a clear intersection of gender and class and educational level. First generation migrant women with low levels of education had very little choice in how they could arrange their lives in the new country. But, as shown by Bilecen in this volume, this does not mean that these women do not fulfill a crucial role in the family network. They provide important basic provisions for their children to be successful through education and again provide assistance taking care for their grandchildren to enable women to enter the labor market.

Gendered hierarchies, like is shown in the example of Schaer for the sector of academia in this volume, can give rise to persistent gender inequalities. It also raises the question how these hierarchies can be shifted. Schaer shows that positions advertised on the worldwide web and hiring procedures being more formalized can help to counter the effect of ‘the old boys’ network’. It makes the playing field more equal and more transparent.

Both for women and for migrants an important question is what happens when more women and migrants – or their descendants – reach positions of power themselves. Will they share their resources and information with other women and migrants? There is not a lot of research into this topic yet. Being the only person of color or the only woman in such a position can make one very vulnerable, which will hinder the ability to help others. But the visibility of these people in these positions is already important as such. Lang and Schneider introduce the concept of trailblazers: those who are the first to enter certain fields function as role models for others to follow. The symbolic importance of seeing women and or people of color in positions of power should not be underestimated.

### ***11.2.5 Mobility Approach***

The ethnic lens with its emphasis on similarities between co-ethnics is further challenged through the findings of the study of Eve in this volume. Eve shows that it is not the ethnic background per se that is responsible for certain network patterns but, as his analysis of internal migrants shows, it is more broadly the mobility of people. Like Behtoui, he argues that it is wrong to see friendships as a purely dyadic relationship between two individuals. Relationships are embedded in wider networks of people and take meaning from these networks. It is clusters of people who usually provide the activities, the subjects of conversation, the interdependencies in which we function. Mobility abruptly changes the social configuration of people’s relationships. New people, and new subjects for conversations become important. This leads to the reorganization of social ties. Eve shows that it is a combination of both pragmatic and emotional reasons why people first cluster together with other mobile people from the same regional origin. The pragmatic part is that there are usually limited options of where to find a first home in a new town, or how to find a first job. This brings people in places where other recently mobile people are also present. The housing market is an interesting example since both social housing and private housing sort people out according to waiting lists (years of residence in a city) and available income. We could view the clustering of people through the lens of a preference of living with co-ethnics, but Eve shows convincingly that the sorting mechanisms of the housing market are at least equally important. The emotional part of why people cluster together is that people, maybe especially in a new situation, want to feel safe and want to be understood. This is easier, as Eve explains, based on a shared life story: moving from the same place to the new place. Sharing a similar context in which they grew up enables them to draw on relationships in the past

that are known and are understood by others that know that place of origin too. This gives these relationships a depth that the new relationships still lack. And what Eve shows is that these sorting mechanisms have real consequences for the people and even for the opportunities of their children. Living in certain neighborhoods influences which school the children will attend and thus the formation of their peer groups, which in turn will influence their chances on the labor market.

### 11.3 Final Remarks

The contributions to this book provide important new approaches as an alternative to the ethnic lens which is still used in the field of migration studies studying migrant networks and resources. These alternatives will enable a new generation of scholars to explore other avenues of research through different lenses. This will, no doubt, further complicate the picture we have of migrant networks and resources, but will also make the picture more complete. Maybe even more important: it will lay bare some of the structural barriers that migrants face and show some of the alternative pathways to overcome these barriers. Both are important in tackling existing inequalities that migrants and their descendants face.

In this last paragraph I want to make a few general final remarks about a few topics that are still missing in the conversation. The contributions in this volume largely looked at social ties of people with a migration background with co-ethnics and with people without migration background in the context of Granovetter's theoretical framework of weak and strong ties. Increasingly, however, people live in arrival cities that are superdiverse in composition (Crul, 2016). Most new arrivals live in neighborhoods together with people from numerous different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. In reality, nowadays people with a migration background have often become the most established groups in these cities, while the newcomers are actually those without a migration background who come to live in the city at a later age for study or work. Therefore, many new arrivals with a migration background will also foster ties with people with a migration background who are not co-ethnics. These people can be other newcomers to the city, but often it will also be long-term established migrants or descendants of migrants. There is still very little research into these types of relationships and their function.

The critical reflections on weak and strong ties and the conflation with ethnicity are a very important contribution to the debate on networks of migrants and their descendants. But I want to make a plea not to do away with research that looks at all sorts of crucial solidarity between mobile people (co-ethnic or not) who are arriving in a new place. Almost without exception, mobile people have several stories of (unexpected) solidarity of other mobile and non-mobile people who helped them to feel at home and to settle. Not just practically, but also emotionally these gestures (big and small) usually have been crucial for them to make a home of the new place. They helped them, bit by bit, to also get more control over the new situations they faced. These forms of solidarity might partly be framed as gestures with an expected

reciprocal return in the future, but this not always the case. Empathy can also be an important driver for people's actions. The fact that once someone experienced similar difficulties when settling in a new country can also be a reason to help other people out. It is important to not only see networks, and that what is exchanged in them, in economic terms and as investments or loans that need to be paid back sometime in the future. It can also be satisfying to help someone without getting anything in return, other than a good feeling that you have helped somebody to find their way in a new place.

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