Social Inclusion
Open Access Journal | ISSN: 2183-2803
Volume 9, Issue 4 (2021)

In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion

Editor
Miranda J. Lubbers

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion, 2021, Volume 9, Issue 4
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Published by Cogitatio Press
Rua Fialho de Almeida 14, 2º Esq.,
1070-129 Lisbon
Portugal

Academic Editor
Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain)

Available online at: www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion

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2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 203–210
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.5049

Editorial

In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion

Miranda J. Lubbers

COALESCE Lab, GRAFO Research Group, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain; E-Mail: mirandajessica.lubbers@uab.cat

Submitted: 8 November 2019 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
How do individuals' networks of personal relationships affect their social in- and exclusion? Researchers have shown that micro-level, informal relationships can be highly consequential for social inclusion, but in complex, contradictory ways: Personal networks reflect the degree of relational exclusion and protect against (other forms of) exclusion, but they also erode in conditions of exclusion and reproduce exclusion. While network researchers have widely studied some of these mechanisms, they have yet to embrace others. Therefore, this thematic issue reconsiders the complex relationship between personal networks and social inclusion. It offers a unique vantage point by bringing together researchers who work with different marginalised social groups, typically studied separately: refugees, transnational migrants, indigenous people, older people, people experiencing poverty, LGBT people, and women who have experienced domestic violence. This combination allows us to detect commonalities and differences in network functioning across historically excluded groups. This editorial lays the theoretical groundwork for the thematic issue and discusses the key contributions of the seventeen articles that compose the issue. We call for more attention to relationship expectations, the reciprocity of support flows, and contextual embeddedness, and question universally adopted theoretical binaries such as that of bonding and bridging social capital.

Keywords
bonding and bridging; embeddedness; inequality; informal protection; network erosion; personal networks; relationship expectations; reproduction; social inclusion; social relationships

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Processes of social exclusion make the headlines every day, whether it is the progressive banishment of women from public life and the oppression of Shia minorities in Afghanistan (and elsewhere), the racial disparities in access to healthcare or higher education in the US (and elsewhere), or the disproportionally negative effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the vulnerability of people with low incomes worldwide. The events that reach the news are just the tip of the iceberg, as exclusion is a daily, global reality. Social exclusion originates from accumulated histories of opportunity hoarding by categorical groups (Tilly, 1998) and the subsequent legitimisation and rationalisation of inequalities by dominant groups (e.g., Lamont et al., 2014; Lamont & Pierson, 2019). These processes make people see inequalities as "as natural as the air around us" (Galtung, 1969, p. 173).

The term "social exclusion" gained prominence in the 1990s to refer to the unequal power relations that generate inequality, contrasting with distributional terms such as poverty. However, it alludes mainly to macro-level relations among categories of individuals, such as between documented and undocumented residents, which result in unequal access to markets, services, and spaces (Das et al., 2013). In this editorial, I will argue that it is also critical to understand the role of micro-level, interpersonal relationships in reproducing, mitigating,

or magnifying exclusion. Personal network analysis is well-suited for such research, as it considers the set of social relationships individuals have across the different social circles in which they participate. However, exactly *how* personal networks bear on exclusion is still unclear. As I will explain, they can (1) reflect the degree of network exclusion, (2) protect against exclusion, (3) erode in conditions of exclusion, and (4) reproduce exclusion (see Figure 1). While network researchers have richly described some of these mechanisms, they have yet to embrace others.

This thematic issue aims to advance this research area by reconsidering how personal networks affect social in- and exclusion. To do so, we have selected authors who work with different marginalised social groups. While these groups are typically studied separately, more contact between personal network researchers working with different groups can help us see the commonalities and differences in network functioning across groups, giving us a better understanding of the intricate relation between networks and social inclusion. Before introducing the articles that compose this thematic issue, I will provide a theoretical framework to help readers place the contributions in the broader literature.

2. Theoretical Framework

Personal networks, i.e., the sets of informal social relationships surrounding individuals (McCarty et al., 2019; Perry et al., 2018), give detailed insight into individuals' participation in society's primary and secondary networks (Fischer, 1982; Wellman, 1979). Network composition, and more specifically its heterogeneity in terms of the social groups to which friends, family, and acquaintances belong, is often seen as an indicator of relational inclusion (see Figure 1, relation 1). The extent to which people can build heterogeneous networks depends greatly on the diversity of the social settings they attend, such as workplaces, neighbourhoods, and voluntary associations (Feld, 1981). However, apart from reflecting relational inclusion, personal networks also give a privileged view on the micro-relational mechanisms affecting social in- or exclusion in other areas.

Traditionally, personal networks have been conceptualised as sources of informal social protection (Bilecen & Barglowski, 2014; see Figure 1, mechanism 2). The conceptualisation of personal networks as safety nets draws primarily on theories of social support (Berkman & Glass, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000; Taylor, 2011; van Tilburg, 1994) and social capital (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1999). Social support theories have argued that people mobilise their networks to obtain different types of support, which affects their health and well-being. For instance, Kahn and Antonucci (1980) described personal networks as "social convoys," changing sets of multidimensional relationships that accompany people throughout their lives. When facing adversity, people draw on these convoys—their family members, friends, and acquaintances—for support, which mitigates the stress adversity produces and protects well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001). Social capital theories have further qualified ties and networks. For instance, Granovetter (1973) distinguished between "strong" (intimate and durable) ties, which provide the most emotional and practical support, and "weak ties," which are less supportive overall but particularly well-suited to provide access to novel information about, for instance, employment vacancies or housing. Putnam (1993) distinguished between "bonding" and "bridging social capital." Bonding capital refers to dense networks of relations with people from the same categorical group, which involve thick trust and substantial support for getting by. Bridging capital refers to the less densely connected relations to people of other categorical groups, which can help a person get ahead. Empirical research has consistently observed that personal networks are mobilised in times of forced and voluntary migration (e.g., Bilecen & Lubbers, 2021; Wissink & Mazzucato, 2018), mental and physical health issues (e.g., Perry & Pescosolido, 2012), poverty (e.g., Lubbers, Small, & Valenzuela-García, 2020; Stack, 1974), reentry in society after imprisonment (e.g., Volker et al., 2016), and widowhood (e.g., Guiaux et al., 2007), among other events. They provide individuals with companionship, emotional, material, economic, and practical support and information, which help them cope with disadvantages and increase their social mobility.

While network scholars thus generally conceive of personal networks as safety nets, exclusion-triggering life events such as migration or the onset of a poverty episode or mental health issues can also substantially change the structure, composition, and resourcefulness of the support networks that are supposed to protect people from the very vulnerability these events induce (see Figure 1, mechanism 3). These events affect networks by (a) reducing individuals' participation in specific social contexts or (b) violating general relationship norms (Lubbers, Valenzuela-García, et al., 2020). Let me give two examples concerning migration and poverty. First, as migrants move far away from their core relationships, they cannot exchange all the types of resources they previously exchanged with these people, leaving their support networks severed. Thus, migrants need to reconstruct their local networks at a moment of great need for social support (Lubbers et al., 2021). Their access to social settings such as work, neighbourhoods (i.e., stable housing), or schools is essential for rebuilding their networks. Second, poverty episodes alter relationships and, therefore, networks' protective capacity. Job loss and lack of money may lead to discontinued participation in work and costly leisure contexts, and thus, to a loss of relationships. Furthermore, while people experiencing poverty mobilise support from their networks, relationships become conflictive when people cannot meet norms of reciprocity for extended periods (e.g., Hansen, 2004; Komter, 1996), ultimately excluding them from family networks and balanced personal relationships

(Lubbers, Valenzuela-García, et al., 2020). In sum, the erosive effects of "biographical network disruptions" (Perry & Pescosolido, 2012) temper the idea of networks being safety nets.

The protective effect of networks is not only hampered by biographical network disruptions, however. While exclusion is historically rooted in macro-level categorical relations and supported by systemic forces, individuals enact and reproduce them in everyday interactions, intentionally and unintentionally (see Figure 1, mechanism 4). We clearly see this in interactions among strangers and professional relationships. For instance, Taliban men physically blocked women and girls from entering workplaces and schools to enforce their rules, and health professionals give differential treatment and pain management to patients of different races with the same health conditions (Lee et al., 2019), as a result of racial bias (Hoffman et al., 2016). However, informal relationships among family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues, classmates, members of the same community of worship, or parents whose children go to the same school also reproduce exclusion. Categorically unequal relationships with power differentials are particularly prone to reproducing exclusion. For instance, informal mixed-race relationships can exert racial micro-aggressions (Williams, 2020), more affluent family, friends, and acquaintances can shame and stigmatise people experiencing poverty (e.g., Garthwaite, 2015), and documented citizens sometimes exploit their undocumented friends or relatives (del Real, 2019). Consequently, marginalised groups tend to distrust others (Levine, 2013) or hide their status (e.g., as benefit recipient; see Garthwaite, 2015) for good reasons, decreasing support mobilisation. Understanding how the two parties of an unequal relationship interpret and negotiate power differentials is, therefore, fundamental, but this topic has been underrepresented in social network analysis (cf. Azarian, 2010).

3. The Thematic Issue

The seventeen articles in this thematic issue reconsider the complex role of personal networks in social in- and exclusion processes. Their authors adopt a qualitative or quantitative personal network approach to investigate how marginalised social groups experience exclusion in their networks and how their relationships protect them from or expose them to further vulnerability.

The unique vantage point of this thematic issue is that it brings together social network scholars who study different marginalised social groups, related to migration (Habti, 2021; Hoor, 2021; Hosnedlová et al., 2021; ten Kate et al., 2021), refuge (Brinker, 2021; Korkiamäki & Elliott O'Dare, 2021; Speed et al., 2021; Younes et al., 2021), indigenous ethnic minorities (Huszti et al., 2021), poverty and economic exclusion (de Miguel-Luken & García-Faroldi, 2021; Huszti et al., 2021; Valenzuela-Garcia et al., 2021), advanced age (Ferguson, 2021; Korkiamäki & Elliott O'Dare, 2021; Ortiz & Bellotti, 2021), socioeconomic status (Hanhörster et al., 2021), sexual orientation (Rengers et al., 2021), and domestic violence (Bellotti et al., 2021)—as well as the general population (Requena & Ayuso, 2021). These populations are typically studied separately, governed by different research interests. For example, for migrants, network researchers focus on the process of relational embedding (Ryan, 2018) within a new society of residence; for people experiencing poverty, on the extent to which individuals mobilise material support; and for older people, on loneliness. However, bringing these areas together may reveal commonalities and differences in network functioning *across* dimensions of exclusion, as well as intersectionality (for the latter, cf. Habti, 2021; Huszti et al., 2021; Speed et al., 2021; ten Kate et al., 2021).

The questions we initially asked the authors were: How beneficial are personal networks for social inclusion? Under which conditions do personal relationships and networks contribute to, versus impede, social inclusion? Which interventions reinforce the protective capacities of networks? The transversal themes that emerged across the articles, which I will summarise below, were related to these questions.

3.1. Relationship Expectations Qualify the Supportiveness of Ties

Various articles observe that personal network effects on well-being cannot be understood by only focusing on

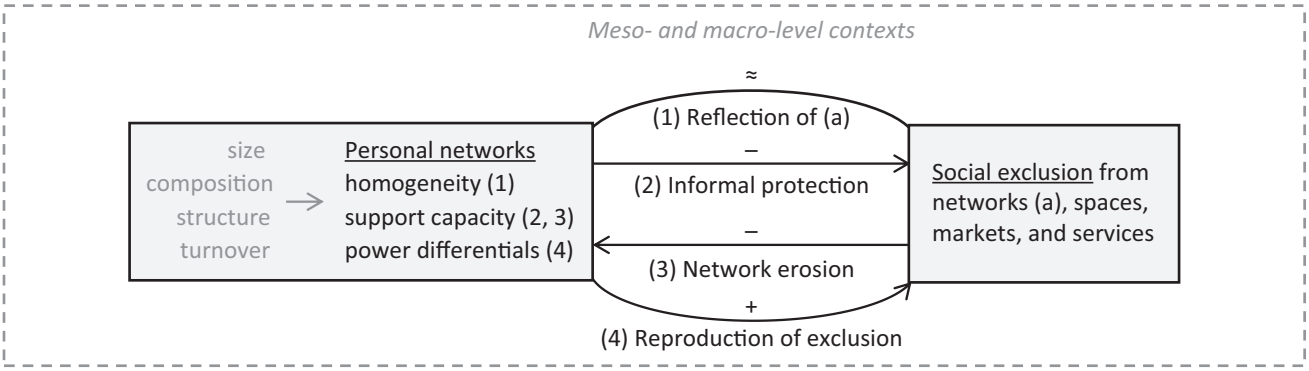

Figure 1. Relation between personal networks and social exclusion.

the amount of social support without considering individuals' relational expectations about support. A relationship is a "force-field" (Azarian, 2010, p. 328) where individuals negotiate contrasting expectations. Focusing on women who experienced domestic violence, Bellotti et al. (2021) formalise this complexity by crossing the supportiveness of ties with women's relational expectations about support. They distinguish between positive and negative "consistency" (i.e., receiving expected support and not receiving non-expected support, respectively) and positive and negative "ambivalence" (i.e., receiving non-requested support and being denied requested support, respectively) in relationships. They use this classification to show that agreement on the framing of the situation and the modalities of help (i.e., consistency) is vital for victims' disclosure and escape.

The lens these authors introduce resonates with other findings presented in this thematic issue. For instance, ten Kate et al. (2021) show that older migrants' unfulfilled expectations about their adult children's support, rather than support itself, are related to loneliness. They, too, use the term "ambivalent relationships." Focusing on older people in care homes, Ferguson shows that adult children give essential support, but they do not always meet parental expectations, and sometimes they restrict their parents' agency, making such relationships "ambiguous." Rengers et al. (2021) demonstrate how LGB individuals carefully consider expected acceptance of colleagues and weigh their own, sometimes conflicting, needs for belonging and authenticity in the decision to disclose their sexual orientation at work. Younes et al. (2021) direct our attention to the expectation of support *providers*. Dutch citizens who voluntarily helped Syrian refugees in a housing initiative expected refugees' gratefulness and unlimited availability, exacerbating relationship inequality. Brinker (2021) focuses on another grassroots initiative that aims to enhance the inclusion of refugees, namely the international NGO Refugees Welcome, which connects homeowners who have a spare room with refugees in need of housing. Based on previous analyses of power differentials in such arrangements, she analyses the role of the intermediaries the organisation assigns to these arrangements to compensate for potential power imbalances in the refugee-home owner dyad. She finds that intermediaries give refugees a sense of safety and balance, but they can also disconnect when not feeling needed (again indicating relationship expectations) or overprotect refugees. Together, these analyses show the need to consider relationship expectations and negotiations (or "control attempts"; White, 2008) for categorically unequal ties.

These relational dynamics and the aggregation of relations make personal networks extraordinarily complex entities to study. Unsurprisingly, personal networks are infrequently studied over time, let alone over a lifetime. Yet, as Ortiz and Bellotti (2021) show, social in- or exclusion results from an "accumulated history" (Bourdieu, 1986) of life events and network functioning that cannot always be reduced to current levels of social capital. The authors adopt an innovative retrospective life-history approach to reconstruct network trajectories over time. Studying retirement exclusion, they show that cumulative (dis)advantage describes the trajectories of the majority of respondents, but a minority experienced changes from disadvantageous to advantageous trajectories or vice versa.

3.2. Questioning Theoretical Binaries and Common Assumptions

Theoretical binary distinctions such as those of strong and weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) or bonding versus bridging social capital (Putnam, 1993) have often been reduced to platitudes over time, concealing more nuanced realities (Patulny & Lind Haase Svendsen, 2007). The articles in this issue question these binaries and other sometimes taken-for-granted assumptions about personal networks.

Regarding strong versus weak ties, Younes et al. (2021) show that ties between refugees and volunteers in a neighbourhood initiative could not be classified as weak nor strong, as they had characteristics of both types of ties (e.g., intense contact, but distant lifeworlds). They called such ties "hybrid." Many articles show that strong ties are not always supportive, and weak ties can be unexpectedly highly supportive.

Regarding the conception of bonding versus bridging social capital, both Younes et al. (2021) and Speed et al. (2021) show that intra-ethnic networks should not be equated with the qualities often attributed to "bonding networks," such as thick trust and horizontality. Internal divisions of education, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, or life stage (Speed et al., 2021) and competition over material resources, connections, and information (Younes et al., 2021) divided the networks of Syrian refugees, showing the need for an intersectional lens to reevaluate bonding and bridging social capital.

Similarly, Habti (2021) focuses on highly-skilled Russian migrants in Finland, who combine a high professional status with a migrant background. His respondents had the opportunity to professionally connect with locals in the work context (i.e., "bridging" in one social setting) but had similar difficulty establishing close ties with locals as observed for other migrants with lower professional positions.

Related to bonding, an assumption commonly found in personal network research is that large and dense personal networks are better suited to provide material and emotional support than smaller and sparser networks. However, in a quantitative analysis of the overall population, de Miguel-Luken and García-Faroldi (2021) find that these network characteristics are unrelated to higher economic inclusion. Instead, the average occupational status of non-kin relations is related to inclusion. In a qualitative analysis of women in households

experiencing poverty, Valenzuela-Garcia et al. (2021) further show that large and dense networks can go hand in hand with loneliness. In this vein, higher network density can reflect bonding, but also a restricted number of social settings (Feld, 1981). In Valenzuela-Garcia et al. (2021), what caused feelings of loneliness among those women were the many care tasks these women had toward their network members, many of whom were in similar conditions of precarity. These findings and those of other authors in this thematic issue also question the idea that refugees (Younes et al., 2021), women who experienced domestic violence (Bellotti et al., 2021), and people experiencing poverty (Valenzuela-Garcia et al., 2021) are predominantly recipients of support, ignoring the help they provide to others and how this affects their well-being.

Regarding academic preconceptions about friendship, Korkiamäki and Elliott O'Dare (2021) argue that intergenerational friendships have received insufficient scholarly attention. Their empirical study observes that such friendships are vital sources of support and belonging and can be an excellent alternative for support from age peers. Furthermore, they found that intergenerational friendships are characterised by equality and reciprocity, challenging the supposed "generational order" of support flows from older to younger individuals.

Regarding the idea that migrants have high migratory capital (i.e., relationships with earlier migrants), Hosnedlová et al. (2021) argue that relationships with non-mobile people are equally necessary for migration. The authors further find that people with a high proportion of kin and friends in countries outside a transnational migration corridor are not highly mobile themselves.

Together, these results suggest that binary distinctions such as weak versus strong ties and bonding versus bridging social capital are critical theoretical devices but should not conceal the complexity of real-life social situations.

3.3. Macro-Level Contexts Affect Network Functioning

The articles in this issue also stress that the spatial, institutional (cf. Small, 2009), and structural contexts in which networks are embedded affect network functioning. Interventions may therefore target such contexts to reinforce the protective capacities of networks.

Two articles compared *spatial* contexts. Hanhörster et al. (2021) compare three neighbourhoods with diverse social classes and ethnicities. While personal network research concerning social inclusion usually focuses on respondents from marginalised social groups, these authors cleverly flip the lens to study middle-class people and their in- and exclusionary practices (e.g., boundary-drawing and "bridging-out" to other neighbourhoods). This perspective on hegemonic groups indicates a relevant avenue for future personal network research in the area of social inclusion. The authors show that even in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, some middle-class families explicitly seek diversity and non-exclusionary spaces. They also argue that successful mixing requires a certain level of policy mediation and leading-by-example.

Huszti et al. (2021) show that the spatial segregation of economically excluded communities aggravates relational exclusion. Comparing three marginalised communities with distinct levels of spatial segregation in the same city but comparable population characteristics, they found differences in personal networks' spatial and ethnic homogeneity. Individuals in the spatially most integrated community had, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, most bonding ties on average, and in addition, Roma inhabitants of this area had spatially and ethnically more diverse bridging capital than Roma inhabitants elsewhere.

While not explicitly studying them, the participating authors acknowledge the effects of *organisational* contexts on network composition and mobilisation. Ferguson (2021) focuses on older residents of seven care homes and finds that their policy of person-centred care fails to the extent that residents do not nominate staff as support providers. Adult children were primary support providers, and external friendships were pivotal to maintaining connections to wider communities and church groups. No resident made new friends in care homes, which identifies an unfulfilled opportunity. Rengers et al. (2021) studied LGB individuals' disclosure of their sexual orientation at work in an explicitly LGBT-friendly organisation, and encouraged similar research in less inclusive organisational climates for comparison. Younes et al. (2021) evaluated a grassroots organisation for accommodating refugees, which provided a safety net for these people in highly vulnerable conditions. Nonetheless, they show that the good intentions of leaders and volunteers do not guarantee social inclusion, as unacknowledged power differentials between refugees and locals resulted in prejudice and privacy invasions.

Social settings that have received relatively little attention in personal network research that focuses on social inclusion are *online networks*. Focusing on the general population, Requena and Ayuso (2021) show that participation in online networks complements offline networks in generating subjective well-being. Interestingly, personality influences the extent to which people resort to online networks and benefit from them. The results can inspire social inclusion researchers to study whether online networks mitigate or magnify the inclusion of different marginalised communities.

For *structural* contexts, two articles compare groups of individuals with different rights in the same structural context. Speed et al. (2021) observe that the broader legislative context recognises different migration and asylum routes, creating distinct individual opportunity structures, which affect relational embedding processes. Similarly, Hoor (2021) delineates the personal networks of migrants with two legal statuses (asylum-seekers versus expatriates) in the same structural context and shows that the two groups vary in personal network size, the

number of transnational ties, and access to friendship and support.

Together, these analyses remind us that the meso- and macro-level contexts in which networks are embedded can greatly constrain or promote meeting opportunities and network functioning. Empirical comparisons of network functioning across different contexts, or across populations with different rights in the same context, are needed to improve our comprehension of the relationship between personal networks and social inclusion.

4. Conclusion

This introduction described the state of the art of research into the relationship between personal networks and social inclusion and presented the seventeen articles included in the issue. By bringing together studies about different social groups, the thematic issue reveals interesting commonalities, such as the impact of relational expectations on in-/exclusion, the need to consider the care and social support that marginalised people provide to others, alternative sources of support such as online networks and intergenerational friendships, and the constraining or promoting effects of spatial, organisational, and structural contexts. The authors have further shown that common theoretical distinctions and assumptions can conceal relationship differences that are consequential for inclusion.

In light of the findings regarding relationship expectations and assessments, personal network analysts may find it helpful to seek a closer alignment with relational sociology. Qualitative network researchers already build upon and contribute to relational sociology, but it is also valuable for network-structural analyses. Future research could investigate whether and how relationship expectations are structurally embedded, detect the different roles that network members play in terms of in- and exclusion, or analyse the relational benefits that exclusion implies for the excluders (cf. Wyer & Schenke, 2016). We hope that this thematic issue inspires readers to take up such research.

Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to the authors for their original contributions to this thematic issue and their dedicated work, to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback on the articles, and to Mariana Pires and the editorial team of *Social Inclusion* for their fantastic help editing this thematic issue. I would also like to thank the La Caixa Foundation (grant no. SR0587) and ICREA Acadèmia for their financial support.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Miranda J. Lubbers is an associate professor of anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and director of the COALESCE Lab. She is an ICREA Acadèmia fellow and an ERC advanced grant-holder. Her recent work has appeared in *Social Networks*, *Global Networks*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *Human Nature*, and *International Migration Review*. She is one of the co-authors of the book *Conducting Personal Network Research: A Practical Guide* (Guilford Press, 2019).

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 211–221
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4545

Article

Ambivalent and Consistent Relationships: The Role of Personal Networks in Cases of Domestic Violence

Elisa Bellotti [1,*], Susanne Boethius [2], Malin Åkerström [2] and Margareta Hydén [3]

[1] Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, UK; E-Mail: elisa.bellotti@manchester.ac.uk
[2] Department of Sociology, Lund University, Sweden; E-Mails: susanne.boethius@soc.lu.se (S.B.), malin.akerstrom@soc.lu.se (M.A.)
[3] Department of Culture and Society, Linköping University, Sweden; E-Mail: margareta.hyden@liu.se

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 24 May 2021 | Accepted: 26 July 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Social networks are usually considered as positive sources of social support, a role which has been extensively studied in the context of domestic violence. To victims of abuse, social networks often provide initial emotional and practical help as well useful information ahead of formal institutions. Recently, however, attention has been paid to the negative responses of social networks. In this article, we advance the theoretical debate on social networks as a source of social support by moving beyond the distinction between positive and negative ties. We do so by proposing the concepts of relational ambivalence and consistency, which describe the interactive processes by which people, intentionally or inadvertently, disregard—or align with—each other's role-relational expectations, therefore undermining—or reinforcing—individual's choices of action. We analyse the qualitative accounts of 19 female victims of domestic violence in Sweden, who described the responses of their personal networks during and after the abuse. We observe how the relationships embedded in these networks were described in ambivalent and consistent terms, and how they played a role in supporting or undermining women in reframing their loving relationships as abusive; in accounting or dismissing perpetrators' responsibilities for the abuse; in relieving women from role-expectations and obligations or in burdening them with further responsibilities; and in supporting or challenging their pathways out of domestic abuse. Our analysis suggests that social isolation cannot be considered a simple result of a lack of support but of the complex dynamics in which support is offered and accepted or withdrawn and refused.

Keywords
domestic violence; negative and positive ambivalence; negative and positive consistency; social support; social isolation; social networks; sociological ambivalence

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a crime that affects a considerable number of women, and increasingly men (Black et al., 2008). It touches people of all classes, ages, and ethnicities (Montalvo-Liendo, 2009; Reid, 1993; Sylaska & Edwards, 2014), and it manifests in various forms: stalking, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and in some cases, homicide. As domestic violence is highly under-reported to institutions, it has often been described as a hidden crime (Novisky & Peralta, 2015), but this does not mean that it happens in a social vacuum. The network of people surrounding the victim is frequently aware or at least suspects that something

is wrong (Hydén, 2015). Disclosure to family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, or even acquaintances often constitute the first important step that victims take toward escaping the abuse (Boethius & Åkerström, 2020). Social networks around victims are also often a vital source of social support: People may try to stop the abuse, may help the victim by offering means of escape (especially when the perpetrator controls the victim's access to finance and communication), or they may help report the violence to the authorities (Goodman & Smyth, 2011).

This is why social support has been extensively studied in the context of domestic violence, especially focusing on the availability of support (Carlson et al., 2002). In particular, Coohey (2007) notes that if we measure the size of the network of received support, abused women are not more socially isolated than non-abused women—but if we measure the size of perceived support, abused women appear more socially isolated. The focus on perception suggests an important element: Support is related to expectations, as victims may feel that people around them are not doing what they need, or not enough, or not at the right time. People can withdraw help, criticise the victim, become scared, or side with the perpetrator; they can also become a further burden for the victim, who may be worried that by disclosing the violence and asking for help, the perpetrator could retaliate against her or her network. This double role of social networks in abusive relationships has been recently recognised by a growing literature that focuses on the negative aspects of social support (Goodkind et al., 2003; Kocot & Goodman, 2003; Latta & Goodman, 2011, Levendosky et al., 2004; Trotter & Allen, 2009). The very term "social support" has been put under question because "support connotes images of encouragement and care, suggesting that responses from network members are uniformly positive" (Trotter & Allen, 2009, p. 222); however, networks can have a wide range of social responses, including those perceived as negative (Rook, 1984; Sandler & Barrera, 1984). As social support does not capture the complexities of networks' reactions, scholars have suggested replacing the term with "social reactions" (Trotter & Allen, 2009, p. 228) or "response network" (Hydén, 2016).

In this article, we build on the above theories of social responses by looking at how supportive social networks have been according to the descriptions of 19 female victims of abuse in Sweden. We asked these women to map the personal networks of people who were relevant for them during the abusive relationships and after they decided to report the abuse to the police. We then conducted qualitative interviews in which the relationships were extensively discussed, highlighting their perceived role in helping—or hindering—the victim. The picture emerging from the study shows complex relational dynamics that cannot be reduced to positive or negative responses. People may be supportive, but victims may not recognise the support until they escape from the abuse; they may be supportive immediately after the disclosure of violence, but they may also fade out in time, over burned by the difficulties involved in facing an abusive relationship. They may respond inconsistently to the victim's expectations, by providing support when not required or not expected, or by refusing it when asked. They may side with the perpetrator, blame the victim, dismiss the violence, yet help with childcare, with shelter, and so on. Victims can also hide the abuse, therefore expecting the surrounding network to withdraw, or at least not to interfere, but people may suspect and intervene regardless; alternatively, victims may indirectly disclose the violence, for example, by not hiding bruises, and develop unspoken expectations in the hope that people around them intervene even if not explicitly asked.

To describe and explain such complexities, which may happen within a single relationship but also across the whole network (Trotter & Allen, 2009), and which may unveil over time, we propose the concepts of relational ambivalence and consistency, which describe the relational processes by which people in interactions, intentionally or inadvertently, disregard—or align with—each other's role-relational expectations, therefore undermining—or reinforcing—individual's choices of action. By looking at these alignments and discrepancies, we theoretically redefine the concept of social support by moving beyond the distinction between positive and negative ties, to better understand why ties are perceived as supportive by the victim, and what role they effectively play in helping the victims to escape abusive relationships.

2. Ambivalence and Consistency: From Roles and Interactions to Relational Definitions

Sociological ambivalence is a "sensitising concept" (Blumer, 1954; Lüscher, 2002) that has been extensively used to describe conflictual relationships, especially in family and intergenerational relations (Connidis & McMullin, 2002). In its early definitions (Merton, 1976), sociological ambivalence is built and generalised into the structure of social statuses (i.e., gender, class, ethnicity). It refers to incompatible or contradictory normative roles' expectations assigned to a status, for example, the demands required from a doctor who has to be at the same time detached and compassionate, or the conflicts that emerge in a woman who juggles motherhood and work. Merton's sociological definition of ambivalence highlights the relational dimension of norms and counter-norms which define roles expected in social statuses, but it is Bott (1957) who empirically shows how such normative roles are not defined just within a relationship but within the network in which these relationships are embedded. In Bott's analysis, role-relationships are defined as those aspects of a relationship that consist of reciprocal role expectations, and variations in role-relationships are related to the configuration of social networks.

Role theory has subsequently been criticised for the relatively passive image of individuals which downplays their agency in role making (Stryker & Statham, 1985). When people enact their roles (such as that of a mother or of a colleague) they negotiate the norms of interaction (Blumer, 1969), although the type of expectations that individuals experience are constrained by the tendency of humans to typify situations, simplify social contexts, and interpret actions and responses using previous interactions (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Stryker, 2002). Goffman defines the act of role-performing as scripted in interaction orders which provide a social organisation of experience, or, as he calls it, "social ritualisation" (Goffman, 1983, p. 3). For performances to be consistently supported, they need to at least partially follow expected, culturally accepted interactive orders (Goffman, 1961, 1983). When actions are not supported, we may feel let down or misunderstood by our networks, and conflicts may arise.

Social network theory usually focuses on the positive social support that personal networks offer (Fischer, 1982; House et al., 1988; Wellman & Wortley, 1990) and typically shows how family, friends, and acquaintances assist respondents, connect them to various resources, and contribute to their physical and mental health (Offer & Fischer, 2018). Recently, however, attention has been given to the reasons why people maintain relationships with others that may not support their decisions, may be perceived as difficult, or may not offer any support at all (Offer & Fischer, 2018; Sarazin, 2021). Offer and Fischer (2018), for example, find that close family members are more likely than non-kin to be described as difficult people, as well as giving support that is not reciprocated or overly burdening, but that normative and institutional constraints may force people to retain difficult and demanding people in their networks.

In the context of domestic abuse, difficult relations are common, but so far, they have been described as negative responses of social support (Goodkind et al., 2003; Kocot & Goodman, 2003; Latta & Goodman, 2011, Levendosky et al., 2004; Trotter & Allen, 2009), with little attention being paid to the dynamic interactive nature of social relationships and their embeddedness in more or less constraining social networks. We define relational ambivalence as the relational dynamic in which people fall short of the victim's expectations, either by providing social support when not expected or requested (positive ambivalence) or by denying support when implicitly or explicitly expected and requested (negative ambivalence). Likewise, we define relational consistency as the relational dynamic in which people either provide support when expected (positive consistency) or do not offer support in line with the victim's expectations (negative consistency). The concepts of ambivalence and consistency, more than positive and negative ties, are better suited to illustrate the alignment or discrepancy between role-relational expectations and actual interactions. Note that in our theoretical framework, role expectations may be implicitly assumed and not always intentionally communicated: in the intimacy of a relationship, people may expect their contacts to respond in a certain way by intuitively understanding these expectations (Simmel, 1984/1907). Also, ambivalence and consistency introduce the element of time, where support may withdraw or change depending on decisions that victims take, for example, whether they disclose the abuse, and how these decisions are shared with their contacts and endorsed by them. Finally, ambivalent and consistent relationships can be reinforced or dismissed by the networks in which they are embedded, which may push others to respond to the abuse in a concerted way that conforms to the other members of the network. The concept of relational ambivalence has been previously used in psychology to explore attitudinal and motivational ambivalence toward romantic partners in the framework of attachment theories (Mikulincer et al., 2010) and in the context of migrations to illustrate the emotional work that individuals do when they take into account others' opinions in their decision processes (Palmberger, 2019). To our knowledge, this is the first time relational ambivalence and its counterpart, consistency, have been used to analyse the content and dynamics of social support.

3. Methods and Materials

In this study, we collected qualitative data via teller-focused interviews, specifically designed to explore such sensitive and morally questionable topics as violence in close relationships and the unbalanced power dynamics between interviewer and interviewees, who usually have to reposition themselves from a person of low value to one who is valuable to the research (Hydén, 2014).

The interviews explored the relational expectations and practices embedded in the personal networks of 19 female victims of domestic violence in Sweden, who decided to report the perpetrator to the police and terminate the abusive relationship. All interviews were conducted by the second author, who recruited the interviewees from help centres targeting abused women. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and all names and places were fully anonymised. Women were primarily Swedish citizens, but five were born in other countries (three of them had moved to Sweden as children, one in her late teens, and one as an adult). As they all spoke fluent Swedish, the interviews were conducted in Swedish, but the accounts related to relationships as well as the overall content of the interviews were summarised in English to make them accessible to the first author. At the time of the interview, the interviewees were aged between 27 and 55 years old, they had been in intimate relationships with the abusive perpetrators for periods between 3 months and 25 years, and they had experienced abuse for different lengths of time before reporting it to the police, with one woman filing a complaint one week after the first violent incident, while another after being abused for 18 years. Twelve

women were mothers and had full or partial custody of their children. For five mothers, the abuser was not the children's father. When interviewed, all women had separated from the abusers and lived in new accommodation. Some lived by themselves, some with their children and some had a new cohabiting partner.

We asked these women to name everyone who was around them during the time in which they were involved in abusive relationships and after they decided to call the police. They talked about what had happened in these relationships, why they were perceived as being there, and who the people were. We initially used the ideas of ambivalence and consistency as sensitising concepts, as in constructs that are derived from the participants' accounts and sensitise the researcher to develop theoretical definitions (Blumer, 1954). In our initial analysis, we consistently noticed that participants found it difficult to define their supportive relationships as positive or negative, or even as supportive at all. We used these descriptions to formulate a preliminary empirical construct of ambivalence and its counterpart, consistency, and informed it with existing theories of sociological ambivalence. Armed with our theoretically refined concepts, we then went back to the interviewing materials and categorised all the instances in which women discussed their relationships in (positive or negative) ambivalent or consistent terms, accounting for their nuances and variability. This categorisation was independently assigned by the first and second authors to increase validity, and all the cases in which the categorisation did not coincide were discussed and resolved. Note that not all relationships were discussed in these terms and that the categories of ambivalence and consistence were not used to classify relationships tout court, but the interactive instances that interviewees focused upon to describe why and how in certain cases they felt supported—or not—by the people around them. This means that the same relationship could have been perceived at times as ambivalent and evolve into consistent, or that only some aspects of support were described as ambivalent, while others were perceived consistent, as we will illustrate in the analysis.

From the qualitative materials, we also searched for instances in which the perpetrator actively tries to isolate the victim (for example, by confiscating her phone, by controlling her social media, or by relocating to an unfamiliar neighbourhood), the victim attempts to isolate herself (by refusing to answer calls, by avoiding meeting people, by withdrawing from social activities), and the personal network withdraws itself (by refusing to maintain contact with the victim, by forcing her to choose between them and the perpetrator). During the interview, we asked women to map all the people they named on two targets of concentric circles (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980), representing the time before and after they called the police, where the closer the people were placed to the centre of the target, the closer the relationship was perceived by the interviewees. We coded the type of people named into categories: family, relatives, friends and neighbours, and work and school. For each person, when known, we coded the gender, the age, and if they knew about the abuse before the victim reported the perpetrator to the police or not. Finally, we asked the interviewees to indicate which of these people knew each other, and with this information, we built their personal network structures. Figure 1 exemplifies the two personal networks of one of the interviewees, Louise, during the abusive relationship, and after she called the police.

Using these data, we describe the nature of ambivalent and consistent relationships, discussing how they evolved over time, the role they played in defining the context of domestic violence, their input in shaping the possible pathways out of it, and their embeddedness in the personal networks of abused women. Overall, our analytical strategy can be defined as a qualitative analysis of social network relationships, where the objective is to describe relationships' content and dynamics, and to propose relational typologies in which qualitative materials account for the diversity of individual experiences (Bellotti, 2021).

4. Ambivalent and Consistent Relationships and Their Roles in Dynamics of Domestic Abuse

In this section, we report the results of the analysis. Several themes emerged from the narratives describing the dynamics of relationships that victims indicate as salient in the process of leaving the perpetrator and reporting him to the police. We organise the themes by looking at how ambivalent and consistent relationships play a role in supporting women to reframe their relationships as abusive, or in dismissing the violence; in charging perpetrators with responsibilities for the abuse, or in siding with them; in relieving women from role-expectations and obligations, or in burdening them with further responsibilities; and in supporting, or challenging, their pathways out of domestic abuse. In each of these sections, we highlight the alignments and discrepancies between expectations and actions, fleshing out the relational dynamics of ambivalent and consistent ties.

4.1. Recognising the Violence: When the Network Dismisses or Acknowledges the Abuses

The first theme highlighted in our analysis relates to the relational dynamics that take place when women first disclose abuse or when the network starts suspecting it and the consequent network responses. In some cases, people around them acknowledged that women were victims of violence and helped them define the situation as domestic abuse; in other cases, they minimised the situation, did not fully believe the victims, or even considered them partially responsible for the abuse.

The example of Nicole is a good illustration of the consistent support that she received from her family

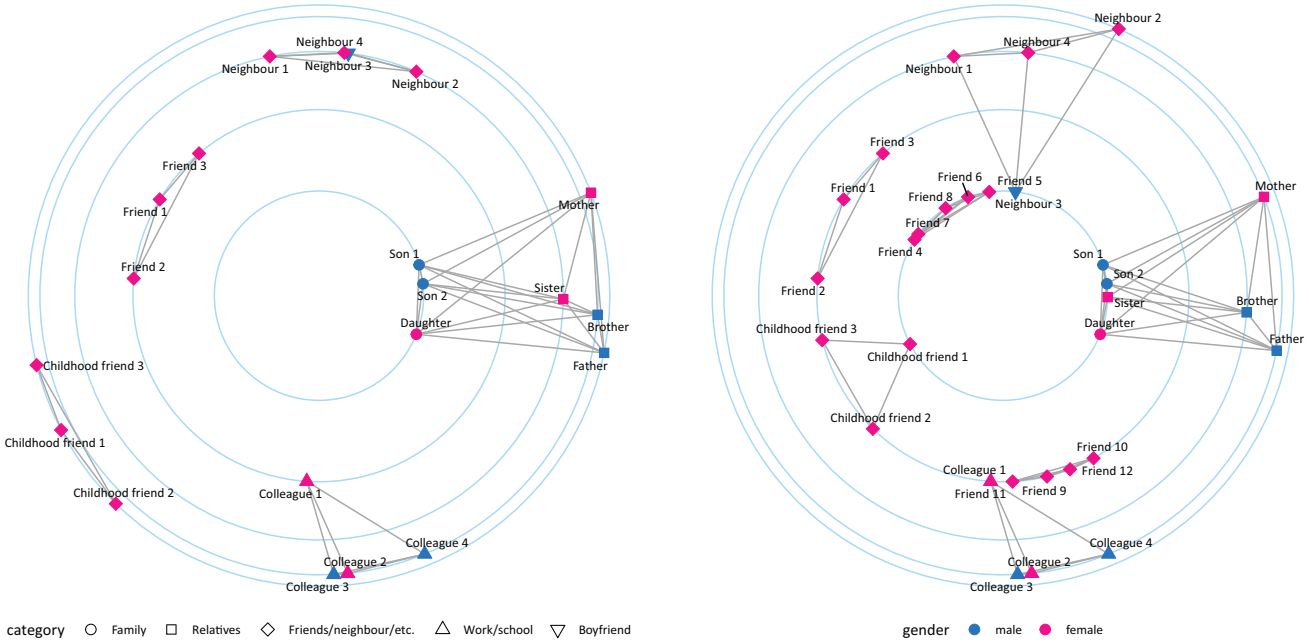

Figure 1. Louise's personal networks, representing the people who were around here before and after she called the police.

in redefining her relationship with her partner as abusive. Nicole had been with the perpetrator for four years, and they had children together. The violence started in the final year of the relationship, and Nicole confided in one of her sisters while she did not initially disclose the abuse to the rest of the family. However, her mother and brother suspected it, and her sister-in-law gave her the number of a service for abused women. Nicole contacted the service, who strongly advised her to call the police: During a violent episode, Nicole remembered the words of the woman from the service and decided to call the police. After she filed a police report, the whole family consistently supported her in leaving the perpetrator's house and finding a permanent home for herself and the children.

In the case of Amelia, however, her sister provided an ambivalent response. Amelia had been with the perpetrator for four years and maintained an amicable relationship after they split up. On one occasion, she invited him to her apartment, but once there, he sexually abused her. After the incident, she immediately called her sister, who, according to Amelia, reacted in an unexpected manner and minimised the abusive incident. Amelia also suspects that when subsequently interviewed by the police, the sister provided an inconsistent account and undermined the investigation:

> My sister did not really want to understand it and did not really want to accept it. She was very shocked, I would say. She could have been supportive, but she ran away from what had happened.

While Amelia's sister's reaction can be defined as negative ambivalent, as she failed to acknowledge the violent situation in a way that aligned with Amelia's expectations, her grandparents' presence in the network can be interpreted as negative consistent. Amelia describes them as people from a different generation who would not understand what had happened and why it was wrong: Amelia could not see the point of disclosing the abuse to them, as she was not expecting any constructive support. In the case of Amelia, her friends were the ones who helped her frame the situation as abusive and ultimately convinced her to call the police.

In some cases, people in the networks are the ones who reframe the situation as violent even when the victim consistently denies the abuse. Martina, for example, was in a relationship with the perpetrator for ten years, with mounting psychological abuse that had turned into physical violence in the final two years, during which time he also progressively isolated her by denying access to social media and spreading malignant gossip about her. Despite the psychological abuse and injuries, Martina acknowledges that while she could see her relationship was destructive, she did not frame it as violent. However, her mother and father suspected that Martina's partner was violent, and they even installed cameras to detect what was going on. While this initially angered Martina, she later recognised, once out of the abusive relationship, that this was a way of supporting her:

> Now, in retrospect, I am very grateful. It had to be done. In the end, it was about life and death; they have saved my life.

In this case, her parents' response was perceived as negative ambivalent at first, as they tried to impose a definition of a violent relationship that Martina did not accept, but it was then reframed as positive consistent once the three of them agreed to reframe the situation as abusive.

These three examples illustrate how on the one hand, social support, when consistent, can help women reframe their relationships as abusive and convince them to report it to the police. However, it also shows how expectations are culturally embedded in generalised roles: A sister, for example, should be supportive, and if she acts differently from what women expect, her support is perceived as ambivalent. Older generations, instead, are not always expected to share the same culturally accepted references and expectations, and so disclosure to them may be withheld or support from them may be ambivalent. Also, the victim and her network need to agree on the modalities in which support is expected and provided (Coohey, 2007).

4.2. Violent Abuser, but Also Fathers and Partners: When Women and Their Networks See Perpetrators in Different Lights

A second theme emerging from the qualitative material relates to the way women and their personal networks define the perpetrator: In some cases, they may see him predominantly as an abuser, and therefore accountable for the violence. However, they may also see him as a father with rights toward his children, or as a partner whose violence is attributed to psychological problems or substance addiction, therefore making him less responsible for the abuse.

The case of Olivia is emblematic in this regard. Olivia met the perpetrator when she was in her mid-teens; she was with him for 16 years, during which period they had children together. He was violent from the very beginning of their relationship, but she justified it as him being a heavy drinker and drug abuser. She refrained from disclosing the abuse to her network and the police as she was afraid of losing custody of the children. One day the perpetrator abused her so severely in front of the children that she decided to leave him and report him to the police. The perpetrator was sentenced to a period in prison, and Olivia moved first to a protected accommodation and then to her own flat. After the police report, the perpetrator's siblings turned against her: They insisted on the perpetrator's right to see the children and blamed Olivia for keeping the children away from their father. One of the siblings went as far as filing a complaint to social services accusing Olivia of neglecting the perpetrators' children, a complaint which was dismissed. In this case, the perpetrator's siblings challenged the definition of the perpetrator as a violent person to superimpose it with one of a parent who has rights over his children: We do not directly know if their responses can be seen as negative consistent or negative ambivalent because Olivia does not explain if she was expecting them to react as they did. However, she clearly felt let down by the perpetrators' siblings. Nevertheless, the example shows how perpetrators are not only abusers but also sons, brothers, and fathers, and therefore parts of the network, especially when directly related to him, may take his side.

The situation is different in cases where the victim herself feels somehow responsible for the perpetrator, and therefore is hesitant to leave him. As it was in the case of Elizabeth, whose perception of the abusive relationship swung back and forth from her feeling responsible for the perpetrator and thus wanting to stay and "fix things," to acknowledging the violence and wanting to leave him. Elizabeth had been with the perpetrator for five years, and he started abusing her six months after having moved in together. During the interview, Elizabeth accounts for the perpetrator's violence as he was addicted to drugs, and explains that after each incident, he felt so bad about his behaviour that she eventually felt sorry for him. At the time, Elizabeth was living with the children she had had with her previous husband, who had witnessed the violence and disclosed it to their father: As Elizabeth refused to leave the perpetrator, the children moved in with their father, who informed Elizabeth's family about the abuse. Despite her whole family confronting her, she kept denying the violence, so her whole network eventually withdrew: Her family banned the perpetrator from social events, her kids refused to see her, and Elizabeth decided to move out of the suburban area where she lived to hide the perpetrator's violence and his drug problems from friends and neighbours. The violence escalated to the point that Elizabeth got so scared that she moved in with her sister, and the perpetrator started threatening the whole family. When she finally decided to file a police report, the case was dropped by the prosecutor and the perpetrator was not convicted, leaving Elizabeth highly disappointed by the outcome of the legal procedure. In this case, the response of Elizabeth's network was perceived as ambivalent because, to convince her to leave the perpetrator, it completely withdrew its support. Elizabeth, during the interview, acknowledges that it was really important that her family distanced themselves, especially the children because it was ultimately the reason why she decided to leave the perpetrator. She, however, does not talk to them about the perpetrator, as she still has feelings for him, and she finds her family judgmental and patronising:

> They distanced themselves because they loved me, they just wanted him to [disappear], they were terrified that he would kill me.

The process of reframing an intimate relationship in abusive terms, and how the network around the victim may or may not help, empirically shows how disclosure is a fluid progression that needs to develop a consistent narrative for the network to adapt its support and modify responses (Latta & Goodman, 2011). When narratives are not consistent, for example, when part of the network, or the victim herself, superimpose the definition of the perpetrator as a vulnerable person and rightful father over that of a violent partner, it becomes difficult for families or friends to plan a

pathway of action to help the victim out of the abusive relationship.

4.3. Roles and Responsibilities: When Victims Are Also Mothers, Daughters, Sisters, and Friends

Another theme that emerged from our analysis relates to the direction of support, or its reciprocity. Female victims of abuse are not just the recipients of help, but they also occupy roles in their networks that come with obligations and responsibilities. Because of that, women may refrain from disclosing the abuse in the fear that the perpetrator may retaliate against their networks, because they do not want to leave children behind, or because they do not want to burden friends and families who may also face difficult times in their lives.

Annika's experiences exemplify the case in which, to protect children, the victims progressively falls into a highly isolated situation. Annika describes the perpetrator as very controlling from the very beginning of the relationship, limiting her access to the phone and disapproving of her family and friends. However, it is only when they moved in together that the violence started, he forbade people from visiting her, and she felt so ashamed that she quit her job and deliberately argued with her family so as to avoid contact. Annika said that she did not want to leave the perpetrator in a rush because she felt responsible for his and his ex-wife's daughters who lived with them, and she feared for their safety. She spent a year secretly planning her escape with the consistent help of one of her close friends, her mother, and the perpetrator's ex-wife. The secrecy of the plan made her relationship with her sister ambivalent because while she disclosed the abuse to her, she did not disclose the escape plan. The sister was initially instrumental in putting the victim in contact with a centre for female victims of abuse (positive consistency) but became angry with the victim when she did not leave the perpetrator, while the victim was expecting more empathy from her (negative ambivalence):

> [I wish she] had been a little more understanding, but she is very impulsive and very principled and then she didn't know [about the plan], so I don't really hold it against her.

Unexpected help came from the perpetrator's ex-wife (positive ambivalence), while Annika's mother was consistent in her support the whole time, not giving up on the victim even when she tried to distance herself.

In other instances, we see reluctance on the part of the victims in reporting the abuse for fear that the perpetrator may retaliate against themselves or people in the network. Ronja's brother, for example, took the initiative and called the police: As a result, Ronja was exposed to even more violence, refused to collaborate with the police, and the perpetrator started threatening the brother, who ceased contact with the victim altogether:

> Even if he meant well, I got in trouble for it. I lived under threat and my family's attempts to contact me only resulted in worse physical violence.

Here the ambivalence lies in the timing of the brother's reaction: Not being expected by the victim, she did not make use of the brother's initiative, and the lack of concerted effort to involve the authorities resulted in retaliation, more violence, and the brother's withdrawal of support.

Finally, there are cases in which the victims do not disclose the abuse to people in their networks because they know their family or friends have other issues going on in their lives and do not want to burden them with their problems. Amelia refrained from talking to her brother, and Maja to her sister, because they had their own psychological issues to deal with and would not have coped with being confidants. Anne avoided talking to, and eventually ceased contact with, a pair of friends, married to each other, who were already dealing with the husband's suicide attempt: Not only were they unable to provide Anne with any help, but they also needed her support—and she was in no condition to provide it. These relationships can all be interpreted as negative consistent because the victims do not obtain any support from them, but they also do not expect it.

In these examples, we see how networks are not simply sources of support, but they come with role expectations and obligations (Connidis & McMullin, 2002; Stryker, 1980). Women may be victims, but they are also mothers, expected to look after their children; they are friends, expected to be there when other friends need them; they are daughters and sisters, responsible for their families. Not only do women need to negotiate role expectations within each of their relationships, but with the network as a whole. The shape of the network may or may not reinforce their definition of the situation (Bott, 1957): Family cliques may present similar views, a highly interconnected network may coordinate interventions, and non-overlapping circles may offer alternative views or conflicting obligations (Krackhardt, 1998).

4.4. Planning and Enacting Pathways of Escape: When Networks Facilitate or Constrain Available Options

The final theme that we identify in our analysis relates to the way in which personal networks may—or may not—support the decision of the victims to leave the perpetrator, the timing of it, and its modalities. For example, in the cases of Jeanette and Nicole, the perpetrator's family withdrew support when the victim decided to report the partner to the police. The consistent support the perpetrators' families offered during the relationship turned to ambivalent when the formal institutions were involved, as they would have preferred to solve the situation informally and were concerned about the long-term consequences that the perpetrator may have had to face. On the other hand, victims' family members may

condition their support on the victim's decision to report the perpetrator to the police, such as Nora's father, who stated that he would not even meet her if she was not prepared to go to the police, and once she did, he refused to go to court with her, contrary to her expectations:

> My father said: "I will not support you unless you report to the police." He was completely focused just on that. And after the police report I asked him if he wanted to come to the trial, which I thought he would because this lawsuit was obviously important to him….That was quite hard, that he did not care anymore, so I have not received any support at all from him.

A common type of support that turns from consistent to ambivalent is that in which people who initially help the victim then become frustrated and withdraw help when the victims repeatedly change their mind and return to the perpetrator. Nike, for example, disclosed the abuse to her uncle and asked for advice. The uncle suggested reporting the abuse to the police and ending the relationship with the perpetrator, but when the niece did not follow the advice, he refused to talk to Nike again. Kerstin's sister, despite being afraid of the perpetrator, offered a safe place for Kerstin to talk and gave her advice, but when Kerstin kept going back to the perpetrator, she became sarcastic and withdrew from the relationship. The ambivalence of these cases is a good example of support that comes with "strings attached" (Bosch & Bergen, 2006; Moe, 2007), a support that, instead of being unequivocally helpful, imposes further obligations on the victims.

When the victim's decision to leave the perpetrator aligns with her network's expectations, we see several cases of positive consistent support. Olivia's boss and her colleagues helped her by changing her shifts and hiding her when the perpetrator showed up at her workplace. Fia's boss initially lent her an apartment, then her parents bought her one and equipped it with surveillance, while one of her friends took the children to live with her while Fia settled in. Similar to the case Annika described, once Ronja decided to leave the perpetrator, she made a detailed plan on how to coordinate her network's support, so her mother, her aunt, her cousin, and a priest all liaised together to help her when she had to go back home (from where she moved in with the perpetrator) and with financial and living arrangements. This type of consistent support is in line with the positive help described in the literature (Edwards et al., 2012; Lempert, 1997; Mahlstedt & Keeny, 1993).

5. Conclusions

This article explores the nature of social networks that surround victims of domestic violence. As such, it focuses on the relational dynamics as described by women who have lived in abusive relationships, managed to find their way out, and recall the experience in hindsight. As we did not talk to victims who were currently in abusive relationships, our results do not extend to those situations. One of the traits we discussed about ambivalent and consistent relationships is how they may change over time, especially after the victims call the police and leave the perpetrators, so accounts from women who currently experience domestic violence may be very different, as relational expectations and disclosure may well be affected.

Intentionally, we focus only on informal sources of support, excluding, for example, social services, police, therapists, or support groups that are sometimes included in the personal networks of abused women. We also cannot say anything about the expectations and experiences that networks may have of the victims, therefore limiting our understanding of the development of reciprocal role-expectations. We only touch upon the interesting element of building relational expectations, which may rely on unspoken communication of needs or on culturally generalised role expectations that are implicit in personal relationships. Expectations may also depend on different views on the acceptability of violence against women, beliefs about men's sexual entitlement, and power inequities in relationships, which have been associated with increasing incidences of domestic violence (McCarthy et al., 2018). Further work is needed to focus on individual perceptions of support and what is reciprocally expected in relationships, especially when it comes from institutionalised sources of support.

Following the theoretical framework of ambivalence and consistence we delineated at the beginning of the article, we observe how women describe their networks' responses as disappointing or surprising when support is expected or unexpected. We observe how such responses may change over time and may be endorsed (or not) by others in the networks. In describing these relationships, we analyse how women and their networks come to define the relationship as violent, how they reframe the roles and responsibilities of both victims and perpetrators, take into account the other people that they may feel responsible for, and elaborate pathways of actions that lead them to terminate abusive relationships. Our analysis shows how each of these important aspects are negotiated within their personal networks and how they play a role in offering opportunities and constraints for potential pathways of action. Within the relational dynamics of these networks, alignment and misalignment in defining the abusive situation highlight role expectations as well as reformulations.

In this, we contribute to the theoretical debate on social networks as a source of social support, but also to the discussion of the role of social support in limiting or enhancing social isolation, as we shed an innovative light on why women suffering domestic abuse may end up socially isolated. When perpetrators cut them off from their supportive networks, these networks may respond by coordinating pathways for escape. However, to do so,

their definition of the situation as abusive, their perception of women as victims, and their acknowledgement of victims and perpetrators' roles and responsibilities need to be consistent with the definitions and perceptions of the victims as well as everyone else in the network. If not, the victim herself may withdraw from support, or the network may abandon her.

Therefore, social isolation is not the simple result of a lack of support but of the complex dynamics in which support is offered and accepted, dynamics which need to consider which times and modalities work for both victims and their networks. Our results suggest that when people suspect (or victims disclose) domestic violence, to negotiate consistent forms of support, time and effort should be spent to understand what the victim expects from her personal network as well as what her personal network expects from her. When working with victims or in domestic violence prevention, a focus should be on the alarming sign of networks withdrawing support altogether, which can have the valuable consequence of making victims more aware of the dangerous nature of their romantic relationship. Another focus should be on the potentially unexpected sources of support, such as neighbours and colleagues, and victims should be encouraged to disclose beyond their inner circle of family and close friends.

Acknowledgments

This study was funded by FORTE, the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (grant no. 2016–00987). The Regional Ethical Review (Lund) reviewed and approved the project (no. 2017/1077). We would like to thank David Schoch at the University of Manchester for the visualisation of the personal network in Figure 1.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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About the Authors

Elisa Bellotti is senior lecturer in sociology and member of the Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis at the University of Manchester. She has published extensively on applications of social network analysis and mixed methods in substantive sociological fields such as criminal networks, scientific networks, and personal networks. Her recent work focuses on gender aspects of social network formations and outcomes, and health networks. She is the author of *Qualitative Networks. Mixed Methods in Sociological Research* (Routledge, 2015) and co-author of *Social Network Analysis for Egonets* (Sage, 2015).

Susanne Boethius (PhD) is a researcher at the Department of Sociology at Lund University. Her research interests are interpersonal violence, violence against women, and treatment programs for violent men. Her current research focuses on the social network's involvement and responses to domestic violence.

Malin Åkerström is professor of sociology at Lund University in Sweden. Her earlier ethnographic studies have concerned social control and deviance. Her most recent book is *Hidden attractions of Administration—The Peculiar Appeal of Meetings and Document* (Routledge, 2021). It is written with co-authors K. Jacobsson, E. Anderrson-Cederholm, and D. Wästerfors, and concerns the involvement and embracement in bureaucratic concerns among human service staff. Apart from this, she has published *Suspicious Gifts—Bribery, Morality, and Professional Ethics* (Transaction/Routledge, 2014), and has published articles in *Sociological Focus*, *Social Problems*, *Symbolic Interaction*, and *Sociological Perspective*, among other journals.

Margareta Hydén is professor emerita in social work at Linköping University, Sweden, and visiting professor in criminology at Stockholm University, Sweden. Her research includes interpersonal violence, feminist, and narrative studies. Her recent work focuses on social network's responses to intimate partner violence. She has been acknowledged for moving the research field beyond a mere static victim's perspective by examining the complex ways in which victims negotiate their power, and for developing narrative approaches for the study of sensitive topics.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 222–231
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4509

Article

Conflicting Experiences With Welcoming Encounters: Narratives of Newly Arrived Refugees in the Netherlands

Younes Younes, Halleh Ghorashi * and Elena Ponzoni

Department of Sociology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands; E-Mails: y.younes@vu.nl (Y.Y.), h.ghorashi@vu.nl (H.G.), e.ponzoni@vu.nl (E.P.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 15 May 2021 | Accepted: 1 October 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Personal networks can be both enabling and constraining in inclusion practices. This study focuses on the contribution of a particular neighborhood initiative for refugees in Amsterdam. Earlier studies have shown that in the specific context of the Netherlands' welfare state, institutional or citizen initiatives can constrain the actual inclusion of refugees. These studies argue that good intentions do not necessarily lead to inclusion because hierarchal relations reproduce subtle exclusionary structures that limit refugees' inclusion as equals. Yet, building social contacts with locals is essential for inclusion. This article shows the simultaneous presence of inclusion and exclusion by engaging with narratives from Syrian refugees participating in a six-month housing project initiated in an Amsterdam neighborhood. Residents and volunteers shared responsibilities for organizing daily life in the project. The result was an unexpected combination of Granovetter's weak and strong ties, what we call "hybrid ties," that were embedded within neighborhood dynamics and networks. Despite occasional clashes in expectations, this community-based housing project enabled specific forms of personal relationships (through hybrid ties) that were essential in refugee participants' later inclusion in the Netherlands.

Keywords
cohabiting initiatives; hybrid ties; refugee inclusion; refugee reception; societal participation; unintentional exclusion

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

The so-called refugee crisis that began in 2015 created a new impetus for studying possibilities and challenges regarding long-term inclusion in the countries of settlement. Several researchers referred to the years after 2015 as an exceptional period in which many societal actors engaged with (bottom-up) initiatives (Boersma et al., 2019; Feischmidt et al., 2019; Vandevoordt & Verschraegen, 2019) and experimented with innovative approaches to refugees' integration and societal participation. In the Netherlands, bottom-up citizen engagement led to many different initiatives aiming to provide refugees access to resources, information, Dutch language learning, and opportunities to expand their social networks through both online and physical spaces for encountering locals (Rast & Ghorashi, 2018; Smets et al., 2017).

Municipalities and local communities have invested together in novel approaches to inclusion by experimenting with different forms of housing in which refugees live with Dutch people in the same space or area. These co-housing projects have been studied as efforts to aid integration by intensifying interpersonal ties between refugees and locals through daily life activities (Kim & Smets, 2020; Oliver et al., 2020). It will also be important to study what long-term impacts this new societal energy and political willingness has on refugees' actual inclusion in Dutch society.

Our contribution focuses on one such housing project, Hoost, and aims to answer the question of how the daily interactions and connections within the

initiative contributed to the inclusion of refugees in the Netherlands. The first author participated in this housing project six months after arriving in Amsterdam as a refugee from Syria. The authors are all part of a research group created by author 2, a scholar with a refugee background who has decades of experience studying the life trajectory of refugees. The author 3 is a researcher with a European migrant background.

During academic discussions on the types of interpersonal ties that offer distinct opportunities and resources, we became puzzled by disconnections between the theory and the personal experience of the first author. For example, idealized pictures of warm relations promoted by initiatives aimed at helping refugees did not match the development of relations that were merely instrumental, short lived, and colored by hierarchical imbalances. Existing research about housing projects paid little attention to personal ties among refugees themselves or to the competition for connections, information, and resources. The binary distinctions between intergroup ties providing a safe network of belonging and home and intragroup ties providing resources and connections bypassed the complexity of personal relations that in real life appeared meaningful in different ways at different times. We disentangled this complexity by engaging with participants' differentiated and multilayered experiences in the cohabiting project Hoost and reconsidered the role that personal networks have played in their processes of social inclusion.

Thus, in this article we engage with the narratives of newly arrived refugees who, along with the first author, were co-residents in Hoost. Our empirical focus is on the experiences of these refugees from the time they entered the Netherlands through their experiences as temporary residents of Hoost and afterward. Before describing our research process and findings, we first introduce the established theoretical distinctions between the types of interpersonal ties and present previous research on housing projects.

2. Weak and Strong Ties and the Promise of Housing Projects

Beginning in 2015, co-housing projects in the Netherlands aimed to provide favorable environments for the coexistence of refugees and local communities. However, the promise of improving refugees' inclusion through interactions with their neighbors and fellow refugees has been only partially successful. For instance, in Utrecht's Plan Einstein, asylum seekers worked and lived with young Dutch tenants. This arrangement provided access to information about study and work and helped refugees better understand the daily challenges they encountered (Oliver et al., 2020). However, the researchers also argue that conflicting objectives at the national and local level about asylum seeker reception jeopardized equal relations and constrained possibilities of friendships between refugees and Dutch tenants. Kim and Smets (2020) describe an example of a co-housing project aimed at facilitating social connections between groups (young refugees and Dutch students) who were at different stages in their lives and had different positions in terms of advantage, disadvantage, and social status. These types of intragroup ties have been studied often and are considered to enhance refugees' abilities to navigate society and access different types of resources. In this case, however, the authors argue that the project did not necessarily support refugees' integration (i.e., helping refugees acquire the relevant networks). Though the project increased the experience of home for refugees through connection with other refugees with the same background, it did not necessarily help refugees acquire the relevant networks to get ahead in the Netherlands.

Granovetter's (1973) conceptualization of "the strength of weak ties" has been used extensively to analyze the meaning of inter and intragroup relationships for social support and mobility. Granovetter showed that the strength of weak ties is due to the distribution of influence and information in relation to mobility opportunities. In his definition, a tie's strength is a combination of the amount of time spent together, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services at play (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). Accordingly, weak ties are connections among individuals or groups who meet casually and most probably do not belong to the same homogeneous group or ethnicity. Therefore, weak ties refer to connections beyond families, relatives, or friends. In contrast, strong ties refer to the primary connections within a group, which are mostly maintained by time spent together, commonalities among the members, and shared activities in the same area of residency.

Granovetter's notion emphasized the importance of the mobility of knowledge and resources across groups. This conceptualization has been used by many migration and refugee scholars who argue that for these groups, which have limited intragroup resources in the country of residence, having weak ties is especially important because it facilitates a diverse inflow of information and influence, and enables the group to access a variety of indirect connections via different social networks. Such connections increase their chances of encountering various opportunities, thereby facilitating their social mobility and job opportunities. Wells (2011), for example, describes the effectiveness of weak ties for young refugees. These refugees' connections with volunteers in the UK Refugee Council or in language schools connect them to a range of material and cultural resources and give them access to different institutions. In their study on refugee women in Canada, Rose et al. (1998) investigated the importance of both strong and weak ties in different spaces such as churches, workplaces, language schools, and community organizations. They concluded that the women got access to relevant social networks through frontline organizations such as schools or

churches. Weak ties developed at those sites provided gateways to resources and opportunities. But weak ties also appeared to be important in building new strong ties when they transformed into friendships. Finally, Greene (2019) described how a mixture of strong and weak ties provides the best support for migrants' integration. She showed how, at first, newly resettled refugees in the United States needed emotional support, which they found within their strong ties with friends and family members who were already there. However, these ties were too limited regarding resources and diversity to provide opportunities in the new society. The solution was the development of weak ties with cultural brokers, such as former refugees who acted as facilitators and introduced the refugees to broader resources, information, and opportunities.

Granovetter's distinction in these studies echoes the distinction between bridging and bonding social networks made popular by Robert Putnam's theory of social capital, which sees connections with friends, family, and other members of one's own social group as essential for providing material and emotional support and safety (bonding social capital), while connections with people with divergent backgrounds and interests and from different social groups are important for overcoming intragroup limitations and accessing new resources and opportunities. For example, Lancee (2010) investigated the economic integration of migrants in the Netherlands and how they use bonding and bridging social capital to achieve more benefits in the work environment. Only structural bridging social capital increased the likelihood of employment.

What has been less present in these studies on interpersonal ties and relationships and what we aim to tackle is the power dimension. In our study, it is particularly important to consider hierarchical relations involving layers of dependency and implicit expectations between refugees and locals. Hansen (2004) argues that even asking refugees if they want to be helped is a manifestation of privilege by the one who asks the question. This question puts refugees in a disadvantaged position, which sometimes leaves them in the uncomfortable situation of not being able to refuse help. The disjuncture between what people feel they need and what they think they can acceptably ask for reveals what Hansen (2004) calls the "asking rules" of reciprocity. Providing help and material support entails ingrained power issues and hidden expectations that rule gift giving (Komter, 1996), such as expectations that refugees show gratitude (Ghorashi, 2014). Earlier studies have shown that these power dynamics are quite subtle and thus normalized in the context of a welfare state such as the Netherlands (Ponzoni et al., 2017; Rast & Ghorashi, 2018). In addition, exclusionary practices could go hand in hand with inclusionary intentions, what is referred to as the "doubleness of inclusion and exclusion" (Eijberts & Ghorashi, 2017). In the case of recently arrived refugees, their lack of knowledge about the new context could strengthen the idea that an act of charity toward them is necessary because they are people who need help, which reinforces the hierarchical relationship between the giver and the receiver of help (Ghorashi, 2005, 2014). It is thus important to consider the hierarchical dimensions of ties emerging in encounters between refugees needing support and non-refugees engaging in civic initiatives. It is also important to focus on the relations that emerge among refugees themselves within those projects, which might create competition for connections, information, and resources and reinforce hierarchical layers in the relationships between people at different levels of disadvantage (Del Real, 2019).

3. Methodology

For this qualitative research, we used biographical narrative methodology for in-depth conversations (conducted March–September 2020) with a selected number of Hoost residents. Hoost residents (30 in total) consisted of three married couples, five kids, two women, and 17 men. This distribution was reflected in the selected research participants: nine men and one woman, with diversity in age (24–48 years old), marital status, education level, and home area in Syria. Initially, participants chose the location for their interviews, but ultimately, most interviews were done through video calls due to COVID-19 limitations. Interviews were conducted in Arabic, and the recordings were later translated and transcribed into English by the first author. In addition, we included an autobiography from the first author, who was also a Hoost resident. His position as ex-resident was essential in creating the necessary trust for the in-depth conversations with other residents. The combination of these narratives served as a window into the often inaccessible, intense emotional experiences of newly arrived refugees. The narratives evoke images and sensations that can help readers gain a deeper understanding of certain situations (see also Davis & Nencel, 2011). In addition, emphasizing the autobiographical nature of the first author's narrative by using "I" creates grounds for readers to emotionally identify with the narrator and enables readers to situate themselves within certain memories, both of which are crucial for understanding locations, interactions, and processes in a more profound manner (Haynes, 2006; Keyworth, 2001; Walker, 2017). Furthermore, the first author's personal experience functioned as a continual source of reflection and discussion. To analyze the narratives, we adapted "dialogical listening" (Van Laer & Janssens, 2014) by moving back and forth between the narratives and the multiple sources of knowledge that came from our specific positionings. Our different positionings as authors (a former refugee, a Western migrant, and a newly arrived refugee) created various levels of personal, societal, and academic knowledge that added an extra angle to "dialogical listening." The narratives revealed what was important to the narrators about their lives, the people and places

they identified with, and the meanings they attached to them (Kohler-Riessman, 2008). Many scholars have shown the importance of such methods for marginalized groups, such as women (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Ardener, 1975) and refugees (Ghorashi, 2008). Due to the first author's dual position as researcher and ex-resident, close-reading of the narratives and distinguishing the dominant patterns with the co-authors was essential. The balance between distance and attachment was a regular point of reflection.

To provide a broader context to the narratives, we next present an autobiographical reflection on the first author's initial encounters with refugee reception in the Netherlands.

4. Arriving in the Netherlands

When I first arrived at Amsterdam's central train station in September 2015, I congratulated myself that I had arrived and my mission was accomplished. I was finally here and not in a war zone. Now I would have a new, good life. I had heard many stories about different countries along the way, but for me, the choice of the Netherlands was clear. I did not know many people there, but I could speak English, which made the Netherlands favorable (many people told me that knowing English might not be helpful in some countries, such as Germany). The first place I was taken was a sports hall in East Amsterdam, where I met most of the people interviewed for this research.

Our first week there, we were overwhelmed by the warm welcome from the neighborhood and the number of volunteers who came daily. It created a nice connection between us and the Dutch volunteers. However, this warm welcome ended when we were moved to Havenstraat in Amsterdam South (for more see Rast et al., 2020). Havenstraat was an abandoned old prison with high fences and narrow corridors. This transfer was like having a bucket of cold water dumped on your head: a feeling shared by all of us from the sports hall. There was a great contrast between the warmth of our initial welcome and the coldness of that prison. Luckily, some of us had kept in touch with some of the Dutch volunteers from the sports hall, and I made some Syrian friends as well. These connections added warmth and a sense of security and support within the old prison. Though I did not have high expectations for them at the time, these connections later became quite valuable.

We were soon transferred again to another emergency shelter located in Heumensoord, a forest outside Nijmegen (eastern Netherlands). We were confused about what was happening because there was absolutely no communication from any institution. It was hard to leave the limited network we had built in Amsterdam and go to a city on the other side of the country. When we arrived at Heumensoord, I remembered back to my arrival in Amsterdam, when I had thought my mission was accomplished. How wrong I was.

5. Heumensoord

Heumensoord was one of the most discussed emergency shelters in the Netherlands because of its exceptionally bad (some said inhuman) conditions (Van der Wal, 2016). The shelter, which was managed by COA (Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers; a governmental organization tasked with arranging shelter for asylum seekers in the Netherlands), was designed to house 3,000 refugees. Big tents were divided into eight pavilions. Each pavilion had 12 rooms, each with eight beds. Nobody knew how long they would be staying there. Asylum seekers had to adapt to the new situation, the isolated location, and the bad conditions:

> I expected the Netherlands would be easier than it was or better than it was. Once, when they put us in that very huge camp in Nijmegen—so many people. There was no hygiene, no healthy situation, a very large number of people. Everything was bad. (RA, 36 years old Syrian man, married, low education)

Another respondent, AA, is a pharmacist and father from Syria. I met him in the Amsterdam sports hall, where we helped other refugees with translations because we were two of the few people who spoke English:

> When we arrived in Nijmegen, at first I thought it was a joke. It's a joke or prank somebody is playing on you. And you think like, oh, things will get better. On that day, the COA lady came and she was like a police officer. She said you have to behave and you have to, yeah, to act in a certain way….I realized that this is the place I'm in, and I will stay here for a long time, and it's a bad situation. I have to find a way to live with it. But then I started to feel, I will not call it depression, because I compared it with the war in Syria, I realized it was much better than living in war. (AA, 36-year-old Syrian man, married, high education)

Heumensoord residents ended up spending nearly six months in an emergency shelter situation without any knowledge of when they could start their asylum procedures (see also Smets et al., 2017). This ambivalent situation contributed to their increasing vulnerability. To survive the living conditions in Heumensoord, asylum seekers looked to the volunteers who came to the camp to help them. More than 2000 volunteers registered to get connected and help refugees in various ways, for instance, by inviting them for coffee or to play sports outside the camp and helping them learn the language (Smets et al., 2017). A form of convergence took place between *helpers*, the volunteers, and *those who needed help*, the refugees. MS, a 27-year-old Syrian man who came to the Netherlands with his wife, said the relationships back then were not the type of connection he was hoping for:

> The big step was when we moved to Nijmegen, when we stayed in the AZC [asylum seeker center] there. We realized that we were going to stay for months, so we had to do something. Then we started to go out and started meeting people just to get a sense of social life and get a sense of, yeah, being a human being. But that wasn't really satisfying, or we weren't ready. Yeah, doesn't really fit with your need to be like a human being and socially connect with other people. Because it was limited or just constrained by the fact that you were a refugee who just arrived in the Netherlands, who needs help, and who was vulnerable for everything. And when Dutch start from this assumption of the relationship, that's not really like the best base on which you can create, like, the relationship that I wanted at that time.

Refugees expected to have equal relationships with volunteers, but such connections were usually not possible, because any potential connection was conditioned by the refugees' situation as inhabitants of an emergency shelter. However, some refugees were able to create such relationships. OD, for example, used his long-term experience as an artist to present himself:

> Presenting myself as educated and in particular as an artist, that was via the online platform Yalla Foundation Nijmegen, helped me to connect with a Dutch painter. This painter introduced me to other painters also. I was able to practice my talent, or my hobby at least. Meanwhile, the other refugees were just waiting and doing nothing. I have to mention or recognize that, because I have a certain degree in education, that helps me. It gives me a different position in different places. Being an artist is a nice idea for them, for the Dutch; they like it and that opens doors for you. (OD, 43-year-old Syrian-Palestinian man, married, high education)

For OD, being helped by other artists like himself did not feel negative because he was being helped as a newly arrived professional and not so much as a refugee. However, it was not possible for everyone to make that kind of connection, either because they did not want to or because they could not find anyone to connect with. RA, for example, mostly stayed in his room with some of his friends, and he clearly felt excluded because he only spoke Arabic: "In Nijmegen, the Dutch were only communicating with those who were speaking in English or Dutch." According to RA, mastery of at least one of those two languages was required for relationships with the volunteers in Nijmegen, a requirement that created distance and deficits for those who spoke neither language.

6. Hoost: Experimenting with Connectedness

The Hoost initiative began in 2015 in Amsterdam's Indische neighborhood as an alternative to the much-criticized formal reception policy used in asylum seeker centers run by COA (Larruina et al., 2019; Larruina & Ghorashi, 2016; Rast et al., 2020). The local government and a housing agency made an empty building available as a temporary residence (February–August 2016) for some refugees from Heumensoord. Discussions about this initiative began in November 2015. The plan was to provide a house for 30 refugees for six months under the COA's responsibility. The 30 residents were selected by three Syrians (including the first author) and the initiator on the basis of the selectors' previous knowledge of them. The selectors considered age (18–23) and family situation to find an appropriate mix of people for the project. For those selected, this opportunity provided much needed certainty in an uncertain period of waiting for decisions on asylum applications and for permanent places to live. By the time residents moved to Hoost in March 2016, all but two had been granted residence permits.

AA was part of the decision group of four and was also very active in gathering the needed furniture and arranging the interior space:

> The advantage of Hoost was that we set up everything from zero. The first time we saw it was at night. At that first sight, we were dismayed. But then you see the potential that it can be something livable. At the same time, you see very empty and big—huge—empty spaces. It was difficult to recognize rooms, so we had to work very hard. (AA, 36-year-old Syrian man, married, high education)

The Hoost organizers were a team of four Dutch volunteers who were not residents themselves but who spent a lot of time in the house. Each had a different responsibility: daily life of the 30 residents; finances inside the house; thinking about the next steps for the residents; arranging new places for the residents to live (ideally permanent houses) after the initiative ended. All residents had to sign an agreement to meet certain obligations—from following Dutch classes to cleaning the house and arranging their finances with the organizers' help.

Hoost as an experiment had different and even contradicting meanings for the residents, which will be discussed in the next section. But the most important reason behind this experiment was formulated nicely by MS:

> Hoost was kind of a social experiment to try to discover the best way to integrate the newcomers in Amsterdam or in the Netherlands overall. So, the idea was that people have to move as soon as possible from the AZC and get into the city to get into their real lives, just making relationships, building networks, on an equal basis. Many volunteers came to Hoost trying to help by bringing stuff. So basically, the furniture at Hoost was provided by people who were really trying to help. (MS, 27-year-old Syrian man, married, high education)

In that transformational period, all Hoost residents were enthusiastic and optimistic about being recognized as human beings and living in a place where they were not reduced to numbers, as is often the case in formal institutions.

7. Safety Net(work)

Despite their enthusiasm regarding the encounter with the volunteers, refugees were struggling with personal issues: What do I need? What about my family in Syria? Should I go back to school or start a business? Intensive interactions with the communities involved in this project led to the volunteers creating a safety net or support system for the residents. AA provided an example:

> My family was in Syria, and Aleppo was at war. Back then, I was thinking there is no room for exceptions. I asked a volunteer if I could accelerate the procedure for family reunification. This woman, this volunteer, said: "No, but we can try. We can try as we did with Hoost." She talked to other people who helped with the application. (AA, 36-year-old Syrian man, married, high education)

However, the project's setup itself revealed some complications. One was the equivocality in the structure of daily life at Hoost. For some, it was not easy to live with other residents who shared the space and to not have complete ownership about the rules, regulations, and roles, all of which were the domain of the organizers:

> There were no clear lines, no clear roles—what we had to do, what we didn't have to do—let people organize themselves. There was disagreement, everyone would choose the best for them, everyone would choose to do the very least thing. And there would be rivalry and disagreements….For me, there was 100% no development, because I wasn't really focused on the follow-up or investing in myself, I was just waiting to get to my own home to start the life that I wanted. (MS, 27-year-old Syrian man, married, high education)

Another complication was the experience of inequality in relationships with volunteers. MS provides insight in this regard:

> There were no equal relationships, they all were formalized in a way. Okay, these are refugees, these people need help, and we're going to help them because they are poor people or because they are kind of unqualified people. They are less-skilled people. So we have to help them.

Despite organizers' and volunteers' efforts to be attentive to the needs of refugees and their space, there were occasions that refugees felt that their needs and their privacy were ignored:

> I remember the people or the guys who were teaching the language, they were knocking on our doors and rooms: "Open up! Wake up! I came here to give you a lesson." And I'm already woken up or something like that, I cannot speak….Privacy is just priceless. I enjoyed my privacy a lot when I got my own house and lived by myself. That was exactly when I knew what I wanted, what I wanted to do. (CA, 24-year-old man, single, studied high school in Syria)

During the project, the organizers devoted time to residing in the building so they could be of help. Yet, the assumption that residents needed help seemed to mean that they would be willing to accept that help without consideration of their availability. This created a somewhat contradictory experience in comprehending the nature of the connection: Was it is just a volunteer helping a refugee or did it have the potential to become an equal friendship? Thus, Hoost provided a safety net(work) for residents in a very insecure period in their lives, but the intensity of the support was also disruptive, especially when that support was embedded within certain assumptions that took away residents' privacy and agency.

8. Neither Weak nor Strong

Soon after the residents moved in, the living boundaries became elastic. Space was shared intensively during the day with the Dutch organizers and volunteers, which led to various connections. Hoost manifested as a magnet of weak ties in the city, according to Granovetter's definition. Support for Hoost was strong, and it received relatively high media coverage in the Netherlands. It provided space for volunteers from all over the country who were willing to spend varying levels of intensity and time to engage with the residents. RA provides an example:

> There was one language volunteer whose name is K, and he did me a big favor. Really. He helped me a lot with the language. He saw me helping other Hoost inhabitants for free with renovating and painting. He is a very good person and he is very sensitive. He also wants to help everybody, but especially with me, he helped me a lot. He wanted to support and assist me. He saw me helping people for free, so he found a paid job in painting with a contract for me. (RA, 36 years old Syrian man, married, low education)

This connection between RA and the volunteer grew through the elastic living boundaries at Hoost and the combined time and intimacy. SH offers another example:

> While we were having a Dutch language lesson, one of these teachers introduced me to her friend, who introduced me to the architect academy. I went

> with her and made a tour there and met with the study advisor. I had an idea about the situation, and I started to plan for study for a master in the academy. I received a phone call from somebody who owns a company, and he said he knew there was an architect in Hoost and he would like to offer me an internship with them. (SH, 32-year-old Syrian man, married, high education)

The time spent learning the language gave SH an opportunity to talk about himself and his competencies, thereby converting being a language student to being a job applicant.

These findings indicate that spending large amounts of time with Hoost volunteers created possibilities for residents to connect to other networks (weak ties) and to develop a kind of closeness and intimacy (strong ties) with the volunteers, which helped them access new resources. However, some residents were unable to make such connections; others felt unseen and neglected in the provision of new resources. And, naturally, for the residents who received less attention or had fewer interactions, the presence of volunteers had a rather negative impact, coming close to what Del Real (2019) refers to as toxic ties. EM even went so far as to call it nepotism:

> Because there was a lot of nepotism from volunteers and organizers. Mainly those who spoke English got a lot of benefits, and some guys in Hoost, we were not treated fairly. And the Dutch tended to communicate with people who spoke English. Some of those who were speaking English were making us feel like we didn't deserve to be in Hoost because we didn't speak English. (EM, 34-year-old Syrian woman, married, middle education)

Sharing time and space in such an intimate manner (a family of strangers) did not facilitate good relationships among the refugees themselves either. MS considers that period a difficult one:

> I wasn't really happy with Hoost and I was hoping to get out as soon as possible. I can't say directly why, but it just didn't feel very good to live there. Yeah. I think it's mainly because I was there with my wife. We had our own room, but still, we had to share the bathroom with 30 to 35 people there. We had to share the kitchen, we had to share the washing machine and everything we had to share, except our bed. There was limited privacy and… in our own room, we could hear everything that was going on outside. I bet everyone could hear me talking to my wife.

In sum, the Hoost project was shown to be quite challenging both internally and externally. The assumption that a shared ethnic and refugee background would enable a temporary homemaking experience proved to be unrealistic. Externally, despite the amount of positive energy from the community, the mismatch of expectations showed the complexity involved in refugee–volunteer relationships. The unique aspect of this project (its temporal intensity) and our access to deeper layers of the residents' experiences (because of the first author's position) enabled us to discover an additional aspect in the type of ties that were created—what we call "hybrid ties." The ties that developed between refugee residents and engaged non-residents (initiators, volunteers, journalists, students, and engaged neighbors) can be seen as hybrid in part because they show temporary moments of intense connection without the continuity of a long-term meaningful relationship. They also contain aspects of strong ties (such as friendship and intimacy) with the benefits of weak ties (enabling access to new resources).

9. Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we engaged with narratives from Syrian refugees who were residents of Hoost, an alternative temporary home. We challenged the models in which ties and networks are approached as either weak (and presumably bridging) or strong (to create bonding), arguing that ties do not fit simple dichotomies. Indeed, our results found hybrid ties that contained elements of both weak and strong ties. Those hybrid ties showed that the complex, nuanced, layered, and diverse aspects of intragroup and intergroup relationships were important ingredients in the life trajectories of the refugees participating in our study. Many residents thought Hoost provided a safety net(work) during a very insecure period in their lives, especially compared to the cold reception system in asylum centers, where relations with formal institutions or with "distant" volunteers were sometimes dehumanizing. They felt supported in practical aspects of living in a new context and learned how to navigate different aspects of the Dutch system.

This study also reveals and disentangles a vital layer not included in models that theorize on ties and their effects and value, namely: hierarchical power relations. Our findings showed that although the residents felt seen and approached as human beings and not reduced solely to the category of refugees, inclusion and exclusion were simultaneously present, as this experiment was also ingrained with certain normalized assumptions about refugees that hampered creating equal relationships with locals. The idea of refugees as needing help led to hierarchical forms of relationships between givers (locals) and receivers (refugees) of help. The unbalanced reciprocity led to paradoxical situations in which volunteers were sometimes pushing boundaries in offering their help, which some residents felt as an intrusion on their privacy. Expecting someone to be available at all times—and to be thankful—expresses an unequal reciprocity in a relationship as compared to the subtle expectations involved in gift exchanges (Hansen, 2004; Komter, 1996).

Also, although some residents were asked to work with the initiators to co-design the living conditions at Hoost, many felt that they did not have ownership of the choices made in what was supposed to be their house. Because this experiment attracted many locals from the city and many national media outlets, residents sometimes wondered who had actual ownership of Hoost and whether it could be considered a real home. They had to deal with myriad strangers who could come and go as they pleased. This forced intimacy undermined residents' sense of autonomy. However, getting to know volunteers on a personal level also led to advantages, as in the case of AA, who, through a trusted relation with a volunteer, was able to receive help in his family reunification process.

This living situation led to the simultaneous presence of strong and weak ties at various levels. Initiators, for example, had an office in the building and were partially cohabitating with the residents in a very intensive manner. In addition, they co-designed the living conditions and programs for different activities, such as the Dutch language course, together with selected residents. They were also the gatekeepers of the project, they talked to the media and other officials about the project, and they organized financial support (for example, through crowdfunding). Many others, such as volunteers who came to help or students who were doing research on the project, were also spending long periods of time in the house. Indeed, locals and residents were partly "living'' together (sharing responsibilities for organizing daily life within the project) yet living apart (because locals had their own homes outside the project). This created a condition of living together intensively for a limited period of time in a given day or of having intimate conversations about each other's lives, yet not being connected through relationships based on equality, instead keeping distinct positions as locals and refugee residents. This simultaneous presence of intensity with temporality, or temporal intensity, connecting often distanced lifeworlds (of newly arrived refugees and of local residents) and existence of normalized power relations created hybrid ties. Thus, several factors contributed to the emergence of hybridity in the ties: (a) the specific context of a large increase in societal initiatives to welcome refugees; (b) the temporal intensity of this particular project (living together yet apart, for a limited period of time); and (c) the normalized (thus unquestioned) hierarchical relationship between volunteers and refugees. The hybrid ties showed a combination of elements of strong ties (coinhabiting and co-shaping an experimental space like Hoost and sharing intimate conversations and friendship) with the instrumental nature of weak ties (providing access to information and resources).

While research on personal connections in situations of disadvantage has focused on the idea of protection through intragroup connections and community resilience (Frounfelker et al., 2020; Hanley et al., 2018), our study questions this assumption by showing the layeredness of such situations. Participants' narratives show the existence of hierarchical dimensions, be it refugees' disadvantages in relation to locals or their differences in privilege among themselves, that lead to competition for resources, connections, and information. Del Real (2019) describes such inequality-based relationships among undocumented migrants in the United States immigration system as "toxic ties." Whereas Del Real discussed a context in which relations among migrants were disrupted by resources being completely institutionally controlled, our research suggests the importance of refugees' own resources (such as knowing the language or having specific types of education or work experience), which attracted differing levels of attention from volunteers. The experience of being ignored (as a few refugees narrated) when there is so much positive energy around could have a toxic edge even when there is no intention to exclude those involved. In the case of Hoost, the intensity of close contact, emotional dependency, and sharing tasks went hand in hand with weak connections (due to the lack of a sense of community, the temporary nature of the stay, and the lack of intimacy), in some cases exacerbating already existing distances.

In sum, Hoost had strong enabling aspects by providing a safety net(work) for newly arrived refugees who were in very uncertain situations. It also provided opportunities to make connections with a large number of locals, which helped participating refugees find their way in their new society and navigate the unknown Dutch system. These aspects not only had short-term effects but also enabled long-term possibilities regarding jobs, education, and friendships. However, despite its good intentions, the initiative also had constraining aspects that were present from the start. We hope this analysis creates reflective possibilities that help citizen initiatives enlarge their capacity to enable refugees' inclusion.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Dutch Research Council (NWO) for making this research financially possible.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Younes Younes is a researcher in the Department of Sociology at VU Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and a member of the Refugee Academy (Institute of Societal Resilience, VU). He is also co-founder of Yalla Foundation, an active organization in refugees' inclusion in the Netherlands. His most recent publication, "Social Media in and Around a Temporary Large-Scale Refugee Shelter in the Netherlands" (co-authored with P. Smets, M. Dohmen, K. Boersma, and L. Brouwer), is in the journal *Social Media + Society*.

Halleh Ghorashi is full professor of diversity and integration in the Department of Sociology at VU Amsterdam and a member of KNAW (the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences). Her most recent edited volume publications are: *Contested Belonging: Spaces, Practices, Biographies* (2018, together with K. Davis and P. Smets; Emerald) and *Scholarly Engagement and Decolonisation: Views from South Africa, The Netherlands and the United States* (2020, together with M. Crul, L. Dick, and A. Valenzuela; Sun Media).

Elena Ponzoni is an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at the VU Amsterdam and is affiliated with the research group Youth and Society at the Inholland University of Applied Sciences. Her current research focuses on the inclusivity of youth services, inclusive conditions for community engagement, refugee advocacy, and the ability of engaged scholarship projects to cogenerate inclusive societal structures. She is also coordinator of the Refugee Academy, an academic platform that aims to connect societal and academic actors involved in refugee inclusion.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 232–242
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4511

Article

Security Net and Ambassadors for Social Inclusion? The Role of Intermediaries in Host–Refugee Relationships in Homestay Programs

Lara-Désirée Brinker

Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain;
E-Mail: laradesiree.brinker@e-campus.uab.cat

Submitted: 14 May 2021 | Accepted: 9 September 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
In response to refugees' social marginalisation and lack of appropriate housing, homestay programs have emerged as a new approach to refugee accommodation. However, caring relationships between asylum-seekers and refugees and locals are prone to reproduce power imbalances. As a countermeasure, flatshares initiated by the organisation Refugees Welcome are created within a three-fold network of hosts, social workers, and volunteers. The volunteers serve as intermediaries and provide refugees with personalised support to become more rooted in society. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and thirty in-depth interviews with hosts, refugees, intermediaries, and social workers in Catalonia (Spain), this article explores the responsibilities and struggles of intermediaries in the hosting networks. Results show that intermediaries give refugees and hosts a sense of security during the flatshare and keep social workers informed, yet their role varies considerably.

Keywords
family hosting; housing; migration; refugees; volunteering

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Secure and safe housing is considered a fundamental human need and a crucial prerequisite for refugees' social integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). As Phillimore and Goodson (2008, pp. 315–316) indicate, "finding a home is particularly symbolic as it marks the end of a journey and the point at which refugees can start to consider their wider need." A lack of stable and sanitary housing has been found to jeopardise refugees' well-being and physical health (Phillips, 2006).

Yet, refugees face difficulties transitioning from reception centres or specialised housing into the private local housing market due to insufficient knowledge of local procedures and discrimination (Adam et al., 2019). Support through local networks, and people who know the asylum application and transition process are crucial as refugees are particularly vulnerable and prone to exploitation during this transition phase (Provivienda, 2019). Often, refugees tend to settle with co-ethnics in disadvantaged areas (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2008).

As a response, hosting programs have emerged, which provide an alternative form of refugee accommodation (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019). In such programs, resident families or individuals offer a spare room to refugees for a limited time. They are expected to facilitate refugees' social integration by providing a safe and stable living environment and introducing refugees to local culture and customs by sharing daily life. However, such arrangements can be prone to reproduce power imbalances. Therefore, the international organisation Refugees Welcome additionally assigns an intermediary to the family–refugee arrangement, i.e., volunteers who facilitate the first meeting between the two parties and accompany them during the arrangement.

While relationships between residents and refugees in family hosting programs (Brinker, 2020; Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019) and befriending programs (Behnia,

2007; Charbonneau & Laaroussi, 2003; Stock, 2019) have been studied by various researchers, the impact of local intermediaries in family hosting programs has not been investigated before. The present study occupies this niche in the literature by exploring the role of intermediaries in host–refugee dyads, examining whether they can contribute to the formation of local social capital and compensate for potential power differentials in refugee–host relationships observed elsewhere. Thus, the research question guiding this article is: What do intermediaries contribute to host–refugee relationships in family hosting programs? More specifically, do they provide social support to the refugees, and do they compensate for potential power differentials in these relationships? To answer these questions, I draw on qualitative research conducted in the organisation Refugees Welcome in Catalonia (Spain).

The structure of this article is as follows. The next section presents the theoretical framework, which discusses concepts of power imbalance and social connectedness. Subsequently, I present asylum seeking in the Spanish context and the Refugees Welcome's activity in Catalonia. In Section 4, I describe the methodology adopted to conduct the research. Then, I present the findings, following the themes that emerged from the interviews, and finally, I draw my conclusions regarding the research questions and discuss their implications.

2. Theoretical Framework

The insufficiency of government-led housing for asylum seekers and refugees in many European societies has led to the emergence of family hosting programs in Europe (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019). Such programs tend to have a double objective: first, to provide safe and secure housing, and second, to aid local integration. Indeed, social integration goes far beyond offering permanent accommodation to refugees (Kourachanis, 2019). Establishing social connectedness with local communities and social cohesion, these local contacts are crucial to refugees' sense of belonging and integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). As refugees forcibly left their social and cultural surroundings and lost their support networks, they must build new local social capital from scratch (Hebbani et al., 2018). Such relationships can have varying *tie strength*, defined by Granovetter (1973) as a combination of the duration of a relationship, emotional intensity, mutual confiding, and the exchange of reciprocal services. "Strong ties"—enduring, intimate, and supportive relationships—provide access to social resources and a sense of belonging. Yet, Granovetter argued that the more numerous, heterogeneous, and less densely connected "weak ties" are also essential for diffusing information, enabling access to housing or employment. A wide array of "weak" or "peripheral ties," particularly with locals, benefits social integration as weak ties may "enhance intimate ties" and take the function of strong ties when individuals lack such ties (Fingerman, 2009, p. 74). For asylum seekers and refugees, they also promote upward mobility (Wells, 2011) and a sense of security and belonging through regular contact with locals (Verdasco, 2019).

Recent studies on the impact of family-hosting in refugee integration in France and Spain (Brinker, 2020; Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019), communal living between refugees and residents in Belgium (Mahieu & Van Caudenberg, 2020), and foster care of unaccompanied young refugees in local families in England (Sirriyeh, 2013) show that flatshares between refugees and locals are largely beneficial in this respect. Not only do they provide housing, but host families also facilitated refugees' access to local social capital and positively impacted refugees' well-being (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019). Brinker (2020) and Sirriyeh (2013) further highlight the close emotional bonds developed between flatmates and the extended family members of residents, fostering a sense of belonging. Mahieu and Van Caudenberg (2020) emphasise the benefits of mutual learning in intercultural flatshares and highlight the importance of flatmates as easily accessible providers of informal social support.

However, research on host–refugee relationships also exposed that such flatshares might reproduce power imbalances (Brinker, 2020; Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019). As Del Real (2019) explained for the US, the difference in legal status, rights, and social protection between documented and undocumented citizens is reproduced informally in mixed-status social relationships among friends, relatives, and acquaintances. Particularly when undocumented citizens relied partly on the resources to which documented citizens had access, documented citizens had the upper hand in these relationships, which could make these ties "toxic." Research on host–refugee relationships in family hosting programs shows that power imbalances manifested in different ways. First, although usually based on a formal contract, refugees and hosts often had a different say in rule-making, also due to the different status of rights regarding the property, and cultural differences often prevailed (Brinker, 2020; Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019). Second, hosts' and refugees' expectations towards the flatshare often deviated as hosts wished for more family-like interactions (Brinker, 2020). Third, hosts were prone to interfering with refugees' private space and, knowing or unknowingly, sabotaged refugees' path to independence through overprotection (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2019).

One way to manage this imbalance is intermediation. The NGO Refugees Welcome (see below) offers a family hosting program and pairs families and refugees with a local volunteer. This intermediary has various objectives: to extend the social support network of the refugee or asylum-seeker and, once the organisation has identified a suitable pairing, to verify housing conditions, facilitate the first meeting, and accompany the process throughout the period of co-living (Refugees Welcome, 2021d), giving both parties a sense of security. Furthermore, by taking up the role of intermediary, the volunteer also

promotes the "welcoming culture" that aims to welcome refugees into society instead of excluding them, "a call for accepting those in need and encouraging support of the civil society in the integration of refugees" (Liebe et al., 2018, p. 2). Traditional befriending programs established for locals and refugees assume that "due to their formal citizenship, resident volunteers have privileged access to the relevant cultural, economic, or social capital needed to facilitate migrants' integration into society" (Stock, 2019, pp. 128–129). Befriending programs are a valuable resource for refugee integration (Behnia, 2007). Volunteers provide "emotional, informational and instrumental support," ranging from assistance in administrative tasks such as searching for a job or place to live to cultural orientation in the new society (Behnia, 2007, p. 3).

Nonetheless, the concept of an intermediary in a refugee–host dyad differs from traditional befriending programs, where befrienders do not usually serve as direct mediators. While befriending programs for residents and refugees have been studied by various researchers (Behnia, 2007; Charbonneau & Laaroussi, 2003; Stock, 2019), the impact of local intermediaries in family hosting programs has not been investigated before. The present study, therefore, contributes to the literature by exploring the role of intermediaries in host–refugee dyads, examining whether they can compensate for potential power differentials observed elsewhere.

3. Refugees Welcome in Spain

The number of asylum-seekers has increased significantly in Spain between 2014 (5,952) and 2019 (118,446). The majority comes from Latin-American countries such as Venezuela, Colombia, and Honduras. However, others come from the neighbouring country Morocco, various West African countries such as Mali, and large conflict zones in other continents such as Syria (Oficina de Asilo y Refugio, 2020). Spain follows a three-phased reception and integration system, allowing asylum seekers to stay between six to nine months at reception centres after a one-month admission process. Subsequently, during the six-month phase two, refugees can receive further economic aid and social services. When entering phase two, refugees are expected to leave government facilities and find a private place to stay. The process may be completed with a third phase, in which the beneficiary receives additional assistance or sporadic support in certain areas (Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado, 2021). However, due to increasing rental prices (particularly in Madrid and Barcelona), xenophobia, gentrification, and landlords' discrimination, refugees are at risk of poverty and homelessness in Spain (Provivienda, 2019).

Founded in Germany in 2014, the international NGO Refugees Welcome serves as a broker by connecting local hosts with a spare room with refugees in search of housing. Refugees Welcome is active in Spain in six locations: Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, the Balearic Islands, Galicia, and Murcia. As of March 2021, it has created 100 cohabitations in Spain and 1,869 globally (Refugees Welcome, 2021a; Refugees Welcome International, 2021). The NGO's concept is based on (a) matching hosts with refugees for a minimum of six months, considering each party's specific needs and (b) supporting the flatshare with the help of social workers and volunteers, called *vínculos locales* ("local links"). Volunteers are supposed to act as intermediaries to guide flatmates through the process and serve as independent persons of trust (Refugees Welcome, 2021b). Refugees Welcome promotes a culture of horizontality among all parties. Flatshares are agreed on by contract, and refugees are requested to contribute a minimum rental fee (Refugees Welcome, 2021c). The fee is intended to ensure that the different parties contribute within their own ability, providing ground for a sense of horizontality and equality. Publicly, the organisation portrays co-living as an enriching experience for all parties, underlined by pictures and videos from previous flatshares. Intermediaries are commonly presented as activists for the *welcoming culture* (Refugees Welcome, 2021c).

4. Methodology

Data stem from my doctoral research project on flatshares between refugees and locals in Spain. The methodology encompasses participant observation at the NGO Refugees Welcome, data analysis of all flatshares organised in Catalonia, and thirty qualitative interviews with refugees, hosts, intermediaries, and social workers from Refugees Welcome.

For participant observation, I conducted my fieldwork as a "volunteer ethnographer" (a term proposed by Garthwaite, 2016, p. 61, to describe the dual role of volunteer and ethnographer; cf. Hill O'Connor & Baker, 2017), at the organisation's office from November 2019 to September 2020, revising the projects in Catalonia and participating in formal training and meetings for volunteers. Later, I also started volunteering as an intermediary for a new flatshare, which I continue to do until today.

With a social worker, I analysed the anonymised data that Refugees Welcome in Catalonia had collected of the thirty-nine flatshares they had organised between January 2017 and February 2020, involving thirty-nine refugees, thirty-three hosts, and twenty-nine intermediaries. The data concern participants' profiles, motivation, flatshare duration, conflicts, extensions, reasons to terminate, and the longevity of contact after flatshares ended. All individuals from whom data were collected accepted the terms and conditions stipulated by Refugees Welcome, including the use of the anonymised data by collaborators.

Last, I conducted thirty semi-structured qualitative interviews with eight refugees, eleven hosts, six intermediaries, and six social workers from Refugees Welcome. A social worker initiated the first contact. Later, I used snowball sampling to invite participants. Besides

collecting demographic and socio-economic information, the interviews focused on the different responsibilities within the flatshare network, patterns of contact during and after the flatshare ended, and the expectations of the hosts, refugees, and social workers. The interviews took ninety minutes on average and were mainly carried out via Zoom between March and September 2020 due to the first wave of COVID-19 in Spain. The interviews with each party were held separately and confidentially in English or Spanish, languages with which all participants were conversant. The interviews were recorded with consent and later transcribed verbatim and coded and analysed using NVivo 1.0 (QSR International), following a combination of a priori and emergent codes.

4.1. Sample

The interview sample of refugees consisted of seven male and one female participant. The participants were between 23 and 40 years old. Only one was in his late fifties. This distribution mirrors the high proportion of young, single, male West Africans and Latin Americans applying for asylum in Spain. Four of the flatshares were still active when the interviews took place.

The hosts were eleven white, middle-class Spanish nationals (six male, five female). Eight were in their mid-fifties to mid-sixties, one between forty and fifty and two in their mid-thirties. Two of their flatshares were still active when the interviews took place.

Interviewed intermediaries were six middle-class females from Spain, Italy, and the US. Five were in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties, with one above forty years old. Two of their flatshares were still active at the time of the interview, and five claimed to still be in contact with at least the refugee. Among volunteers and hosts, only one volunteer had a professional affiliation with the field of refugee aid.

The social workers I interviewed were five female, middle-class Spanish nationals in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties. One was a paid part-time employee at Refugees Welcome; the others were volunteers themselves, with previous volunteering experience at migration-related social organisations or migration-related studies. Notably, all social workers had previously served as intermediaries. One was one of the NGO's founders.

4.2. Ethics

From the first moment I contacted the organisation, I have disclosed my nature as a PhD student focusing on cross-cultural flatshares and provided detailed information about my research and methodology. The organisation's leadership accepted me, and in mutual agreement I also accepted the role as a volunteer at Refugees Welcome ES. At every first interaction (such as in events) with members, volunteers, or refugees, I disclosed that I was a PhD student at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, explained my research, and asked for consent to use observations confidentially in my research. For the interviews, I also explained the voluntary nature of participation and asked for consent. As it is a common policy at Refugees Welcome not to ask refugees or asylum seekers any triggering questions regarding their past, I did not ask such questions during the qualitative interviews. In this article, the data was anonymised, and names were replaced by pseudonyms. Although my participant observation as an intermediary in one family-hosting arrangement has informed my work, I have not described it explicitly in this article, as the other members of the arrangement would be able to recognise themselves and one another in such a description. Ethics approval for data collection was gained from the university's Institutional Review Board, the Ethics Committee on Animal and Human Experimentation (ID 5189).

5. Results

To unfold the perceived role of local buddies, I will first sketch the role of each network member and their expectations about the role of the intermediary. I will then discuss the different responsibilities intermediaries have within the family hosting network, ranging from facilitating the first contact between hosts and refugees and providing help to the refugee to different levels of interventions during the flatshare. Discussing these issues from the different points of view of hosts, refugees, intermediaries, and social workers allowed me to detect (dis)agreement in perceptions regarding social connectedness and power imbalances.

5.1. The Hosting Network

The concept of Refugees Welcome's family hosting network is based on a three-fold structure of support, comprising hosts, social workers, and intermediaries. To set the role of intermediaries into context within the family hosting network, I will briefly outline the roles and responsibilities of hosts and social workers based on my qualitative interviews.

In theory, hosts provide the core element in the hosting network: a safe and stable living environment for a fixed period. Refugees reported that hosts provided essential emotional and administrative support, often acted as advisers on cultural and everyday issues, and introduced refugees to their friends, families, or others. Six out of eight refugees named the host as someone they would consult if they needed help. The others mentioned other migrant friends and social workers of Refugees Welcome. When asked with whom they felt most safe in Spain, seven refugees named the same individuals, while one did not feel safe with anyone.

In contrast to hosts' emotional support, social workers represented stability and guidance supporting participants from the beginning of the process until, at least, the termination of the flatshare. Social workers

mentioned that the management of hosts and intermediaries' expectations was a focal responsibility. Properly introducing the hosts and intermediaries to refugee aid through training sessions is seen as key. Refugees valued the fact that social workers provided them with tools to integrate in Spain, such as access to language classes, cultural activities, information on job vacancies, and training programs provided by the local government or other social organisations. Furthermore, social workers reached out to humanitarian organisations and local refugee reception centres to get the project known. As Refugees Welcome does not provide legal assistance for refugees, social workers from respective reception centres continued to provide guidance and legal assistance throughout phase two of the asylum application process.

Responsibilities of hosts and social workers thus followed a specific structure with clearly defined responsibilities. In contrast, the role of intermediaries appeared to be more flexible, adjusting to the needs of hosts and refugees.

5.2. The Ideal Intermediary

Intermediaries were seen as crucial by social workers for their personalised support:

> When the flatshare starts, we [social workers] usually take a step back….If the intermediary and the flatshare get along well, it's the intermediary who supports them….The intermediary serves as a reference when problems occur and, if everything goes well, is doing the follow-ups. (Anita, social worker)

> If there is any query or anything they [intermediaries] don't know, we from the organisation are there to help. Still, we try to make the intermediaries the ones who are present [after the first encounter with the host]. (Laura, social worker)

As Refugees Welcome is an NGO, most social workers are volunteers. When the interviews took place, Refugees Welcome in Barcelona employed one social worker and two part-time marketing and project management professionals. Thus, from the organisation's perspective, intermediaries occupied an essential role in administrative support and accompanying migrants on their paths to autonomy. Furthermore, as intermediaries only attend one flatshare, they are closer to flatmates and better equipped to monitor and intervene.

Social workers emphasised respect for the refugees' privacy and the ability to handle racism and prejudice as essential skills of intermediaries:

> They must be very respectful, and they cannot ask the refugees anything about their story and why they are here. Above all, they need to have a constructive approach. By this, I mean, if a host says something racist, they shouldn't get angry and say, "You are racist!" Instead, they should explain why we, as Refugees Welcome, don't identify with that phrase….They have to be constructive because some people will say something without a bad intention….Some people need a bit of guidance and someone who explains a situation from a different perspective. If you can open this channel of trust, people often step forward and ask you more questions. (Éster, social worker)

Hosts agreed upon the crucial role of intermediaries, although they emphasised other skills:

> It is good to feel accompanied by a third person. Someone who is there if you might need them. Someone who does a follow-up and checks on you independently or when all three of you are together. He [the intermediary] feels fundamental to me because when you have a doubt, someone is there. (Enric, host)

> The intermediary is very important….First, you might think you don't need an intermediary. But after some time, problems and differences will appear, and you need one….It is essential that an intermediary can listen, is peaceful, and knows how to reflect with calmness. (Maria, host)

> I think it is essential to have a third person from outside the house. (Hugo, host)

From the interviews with hosts, it was found that mentoring and communication skills, empathy, patience, and pro-activity were traits of the ideal intermediary:

> [Intermediaries] should know how to listen and how to empathise with both sides. Every relationship is different, and so are the needs. Sometimes refugees and hosts might need more practical help, like finding a job. Some might have the typical problems of living together, like cleaning, and in some cases, there might be more emotional issues… like things you don't like about the other person. So they have to be open-minded about this. (Enric, host)

A good match between volunteers, refugees, and hosts was also valued. Maria, a Spanish woman in her sixties, hosted Alaya, a young South-Asian woman. Maria believed that depending on the refugees' culture, refugees and hosts should have the same gender to avoid discomfort on both sides and that a good demographic match was equally important for volunteers and refugees:

> The intermediary is essential….In the beginning, the young man we had didn't feel comfortable. I believe it was more a thing about him being a man and her a woman. He was young, married, and had a small

> child….If Alaya was a young woman from Venezuela or at least spoke some Spanish, things could have gone differently. (Maria, host)

Although the organisation emphasises matching volunteers and refugees according to demographic, cultural, and interest-related similarities, same-gender pairings remain challenging, as 72% of refugees accommodated in flatshares in Catalonia were male adults, while 90% of intermediaries were female.

Like hosts, refugees also highlighted the importance of a third party in the relationship. However, when asked about the ideal intermediary, they would not ascribe them specific characteristics or mention gender issues. The mere fact of having another party to turn to seemed most critical:

> It is not only the apartment, but they also follow the flatshare and give you someone like a mentor to see how the flatshare is going. If everything is all right and if you feel comfortable. I think for us migrants, it is vital. To have someone who is looking after you to see if you are doing well. I think the person [refugee] feels more comfortable and confident. (John, refugee)

> I was relieved….When the social worker told me I would stay in this apartment, but there would be someone [intermediary] for me… she didn't say there would be someone to monitor or control me…..If I had any conflict or problem, this person would be there for me if anything is not ok. It was like a backup relief for me. It doesn't stress me. Ana [intermediary] is like a house guardian for me. It was more than a relief. It was like, thank God; I have somebody to talk to. (Samuel, refugee)

To conclude, all interviewees valued the role of intermediaries to complement host–refugee dyads flexibly.

5.3. Breaking the Ice

Social workers reported that doubts and lingering fears often characterise the weeks before the flatshare. After a wave of joyful anticipation, hosts often struggle with their expectations and uncertainties about the process. Typical concerns of hosts include managing misunderstandings, getting along well, and proceeding if one party does not feel comfortable cohabiting. In contrast, refugees were most anxious about the conditions of the spare room.

One of the intermediaries' responsibilities is getting to know hosts and migrants separately and accompanying their first encounter before both parties sign the rental contract. Both hosts and refugees described intermediaries as crucial to breaking the ice at the first encounter and helping the parties connect:

> To me, the intermediary is one of the capital figures of the organisation. It is like at the beginning of a new friendship. You get along well or not. In some cases, this might not work out, but the intermediary is someone who makes [the first encounter] easier for hosts and refugees. (Ignacio, host)

Carmen, a Spanish lady in her fifties, and her family hosted Eduardo from Central America. She was slightly nervous about her new flatmate. Still, when the social worker and later the intermediary told her about Eduardo and introduced him, the day he moved in, he was no stranger anymore:

> Our intermediary was the first to tell us about the person who was coming. We didn't know anything, but by how she explained him to us, we already had an idea of him in our mind….She [intermediary] was such a nice girl, very natural….She had a good relationship with Eduardo, and she transferred this bond to us. And we continued with the affection she had for him. (Carmen, host)

Eduardo perceived this in the same way:

> My intermediary went with me to Carmen and Roger's house. It was very nice because she wanted to help me and when we went to see the family for the first time, I could feel they wanted to help me as much as she did. (Eduardo, refugee)

Intermediaries usually accompanied refugees on their first day of the flatshare, assisted with carrying boxes, and stayed with the new flatmates until they felt comfortable and settled. They also sometimes acted as translators or interconnectors. When Faizal from Morocco moved in with Hugo, Faizal was not conversant in Spanish and had difficulties understanding Hugo. To their benefit, their intermediary was from Morocco and translated between the two:

> Our intermediary was here on the first day. He was able to translate everything I said to Faizal. It was helpful. (Hugo, host)

Similarly, Enric reflected on how intermediary Paula helped to connect him with his flatmate Musa:

> Paula helps me a lot to understand Musa. When Paula comes to our house, Musa is always very open. I think she is doing an excellent job. Paula helps us because she knows how to approach him. She is also very patient and, I don't know, doesn't expect anything from the moments with him. She is just there for him. (Enric, host)

Intermediaries thus serve as essential bridges, carefully preparing hosts and migrants for living together and connecting them.

5.4. A Helping Hand

Once the flatshares had been active for some weeks, relationships between hosts and refugees varied considerably. While some grew fond of one another and created strong, amicable, or even family-like bonds (Brinker, 2020), other relationships remained weak and rather formal. In that case, the intermediary often stepped in as a friend, especially in the absence of other strong ties. In this sense, intermediaries, who were initially weak ties, indeed took over the role of strong ties in their absence, as previously theorised (see Section 2):

> It is nice. She [intermediary] is not like a landlord [referring to host]. She helps me with a lot of things related to my living situation. She is a very good person. Very empathetic. Before quarantine, we often met to have a coffee and talk. She is a good person, more like a friend, not just a volunteer. (Hamza, refugee)

As refugees in Refugees Welcome have not fully completed the asylum process, they regularly have appointments with different entities. Some hosts struggled to support their flatmates in these matters due to their own commitments. Therefore, intermediaries regularly substituted hosts or took full responsibility:

> The intermediary is a crucial figure because he provides help on behalf of the organisation if the refugee needs anything specific like preparing a CV, getting in touch with a social worker from the city council, or anything else. Because when Abdallah moved in, he had many appointments and programs [it was important to get some extra help]. (Ignacio, host)

However, intermediaries sometimes struggled with finding an acceptable level of support for the refugee without overstepping boundaries or undermining their autonomy. For instance, Paula recalled how she might have overstepped the line:

> They had already prolonged the flatshare, and the host didn't want to continue, and they had agreed on terminating it. We got a little desperate at this point, and I wanted to help him [the refugee]….I knew that he knew that my responsibility as an intermediary wasn't to get him a job, but I could see that he was very desperate. I know he received a lot of support from other organisations, but they didn't advance. So, I started to send out CVs for him [from her e-mail account]….He never told me to do so, but I wasn't sure if he had done it. (Paula, intermediary)

The fine line between adequately supporting and patronising migrants was also expressed by social workers:

> One rebound effect is when the intermediary is hyperprotective and generates dependency. In other words, they do everything for the refugee, and it is not the refugee who is making his/her own decisions….It is better if intermediaries tell them I am not the one who is going to do this for you, but I will accompany you. (Gala, social worker)

Overprotection, while well-meant, shows that volunteers, whose role was to intermediate and to contribute to horizontality, could at times reinforce the power imbalance in the family hosting network. To minimise this risk, Refugees Welcome provides training sessions for newly recruited volunteers to explain the asylum application process, the concepts of horizontality and equality in flatshares, and behaviours to avoid, such as overprotecting refugees.

5.5. Intervening in Host–Refugee Relationships

In conflict situations, intermediaries intervened by providing advice or a third opinion. Hosts and refugees valued the opportunity to consult with a third and independent party:

> It is an important person. And they should be given more importance than they are given….They are not affected by everyday life [in the flatshare]. They are a more independent figure. It is someone who is there, and I know it can be sometimes difficult to step in. But they [hosts and refugees] know they can consult them if things go wrong without burning any relationships. I think it is a figure that should be given more potential. (Belén, host)

Many hosts and refugees emphasised that they preferred to talk to the intermediary first when issues arose. In a disagreement with his flatmate, one host called the intermediary to ask for advice. When asked why he chose to talk to the intermediary instead of the social worker, he emphasised that consulting the social worker would have a "far too formal character." Although the intermediary did not intervene directly, informing her helped him "get the pressure off his chest."

Conflicts usually centred around daily issues in flatshares, such as cleaning, recycling, and rent. For instance, volunteer Katia described that Hamza complained that the rent was higher than previously agreed. Katia discussed the matter with both parties separately, even though it made her feel uneasy:

> First, I didn't know how to address it….I felt uncomfortable, but I could see that Hamza was very uncomfortable talking about the money issue. But in the beginning, we had agreed with the host on a way of paying, and later, he [host] changed it. He never said things clearly, so I felt uncomfortable. (Katia, intermediary)

As indicated before, hosts and social workers cherished direct intervention and the flow of information. Refugees

seldom called for direct intervention but emphasised the importance of having someone to turn to if they had a problem and the value of a safe environment through having an external person monitor the flatshare. While intermediaries were crucial for refugees' sense of safety, they often struggled with their roles and expectations.

5.6. Struggling With the Role as Intermediary

Social workers confirmed that there was a high turnover of intermediaries, as can be expected for volunteers. Analysis of the data of thirty-nine flatshares in Catalonia revealed that flatshares were active for 9.8 months on average and terminated after one contract prolongation, as refugees found independent housing. Around 50% of refugees and hosts stayed in contact with Refugees Welcome after the flatshare ended. However, most intermediaries lost touch with refugees, hosts, and the organisation while the flatshare was still running, despite initially being quite active.

Although the data collected by the organisation does not reveal why intermediaries left, it showed that intermediaries who stayed in contact were better embedded in the organisation's community through having additional responsibilities or regularly attending meetings. Regular interaction and a sense of belonging can motivate volunteers in emotionally challenging environments (cf. Doidge & Sandri, 2018).

The interviews showed that increasing demands in intermediaries' personal and professional lives often led to a temporary or permanent interruption of volunteering and the removal of the refugees' newly gained local social capital:

> The relationship was good. She lived in my village. So, we met from time to time. But then she found a job and was busy and didn't have time to meet. One day she told me she found a job abroad and moved there. (Azeez, refugee)

Besides, volunteers may struggle with finding the right amount and form of help, as Katia and Paula indicated (see above). Hugo also expressed this fragile balance:

> He [intermediary] shouldn't feel like a burden when he steps in and supports the refugee. I think it is essential that the refugee receives help from outside the house… but I also believe that the local buddy should be someone who helps rather than making things more difficult. (Hugo, host)

Furthermore, intermediaries often disengaged when they felt no longer needed. They were commonly the ones initiating meetings with hosts and refugees. Refugees did not want to bother intermediaries and thus waited for them to reach out. One social worker described this discrepancy in communication as a crucial factor in why intermediaries struggle:

> Some of them [intermediaries] disappear because the workload increases, some because the flatshare is going well, and they don't feel the need to keep communicating. I think that is the main reason they think everything is going well, so they are not needed. (Gala, social worker)

Intermediaries sometimes felt rejected or unfulfilled if they were not needed. They did not want to be mere bystanders or only check on flatmates through calls or texts. Speaking of an intermediary losing touch, Belén said:

> There were a lot of expectations of having quick rewards, of feeling needed….I think he didn't meet the profile of an intermediary… he got very frustrated every time he saw Yolanda [refugee] was very self-efficient because she needed little support. Instead of enjoying her independence, he got frustrated with it….He didn't like the feeling of not feeling needed. (Belén, host)

Intermediaries further reported that they felt closer to migrants and hosts when they had specific tasks.

Emotions and empathy are motivating forces for volunteering with refugees and are often fuelled by sentimental media coverage (cf. Doidge & Sandri, 2018). Éster described how the organisation's representation of the intermediary's role might influence volunteers' expectations:

> I also must be self-critical because we sell it [expectations] to them. When your website says it will be an enriching experience, people think it always will be. There are many expectations by applicants and sometimes also white-saviours, and they won't be part of the project….Sometimes people believe they must help refugees with the language, give them clothes and a job. But some may have everything. They just need asylum in Spain. (Éster, social worker)

Refugees Welcome mainly relies on its social media presence and appearances in the local press to increase host society engagement. To make its mission more tangible, the organisation regularly features stories of host–refugee relationships on its channel. Sometimes, they asked volunteers to invite refugees and hosts to participate in social media posts by providing photos or videos of living together or spending the COVID-19 lockdown. This role was challenging for some volunteers:

> Concerning the social media content, I felt a bit obligated to pass them on to the family. Then I saw that it was bothering them a lot because I sent them a couple per week, and they didn't want to do any. They stopped responding to me. Well, this has all been quite counterproductive… and now I don't know how to continue. (Mila, intermediary)

Thus, intermediaries' expectations towards their responsibilities might not always match their value to the flatshare and the organisation. One way to avoid high dropout was by recruiting volunteers mainly within the organisation's circle of friends and acquaintances or from other refugee organisations, as another unit in Spain did. However, previous friendship ties between hosts and intermediaries, which sometimes existed, made intermediaries less independent.

6. Conclusion

Homestay programs offer a way to provide refugees safe and stable housing and facilitate access to local social capital and mutual cultural learning. Yet, while they often enable refugees to create strong ties with hosts, they can also—even simultaneously—reproduce power imbalances. This article explores the impact of intermediaries on the host–refugee dyad, analysing whether intermediaries can compensate for potential power imbalances.

Refugees Welcome uses intermediaries with the aim to extend the support network of asylum seekers and refugees, provide a security net to host–refugee relationships, and promote the "welcoming culture" as ambassadors of social inclusion. My results showed, first, that intermediaries were regarded by all parties as essential bridges in the hosting network. While hosts' and social workers' responsibilities were structured, volunteers' responsibilities differed in each case. This flexibility in tasks and the unique dedication to one flatshare allowed them to give personalised support. Intermediaries often eased the first weeks of co-living, acted as impartial advisers, and provided emotional support, thus effectively providing a safety net for the refugee. Furthermore, intermediaries form a critical link with the organisation. By checking on flatshares periodically and providing social workers with updates, intermediaries enable the organisation to monitor flatshares discretely. Additionally, the organisation relies on volunteers to mediate minor conflicts.

All interviewees indicated that flatshares needed very few direct interventions. Yet, the presence of an independent party provided hosts and refugees with a sense of security. In this sense, intermediaries compensated for power imbalances in host–refugee relationships. However, by overstepping boundaries, volunteers could also reinforce power differentials. Furthermore, amicable relationships between volunteers and hosts jeopardised the neutrality of intermediaries. Lastly, volunteers often disengaged when they felt un-needed. These results suggest that the value of intermediation by volunteers depends ultimately on the extent to which volunteers have no previous ties to the hosts, have realistic motivations and expectations, and stay engaged.

The results have several implications. First, all parties appreciated the role of intermediaries in host–refugee flatshares, suggesting that this practice may be valuable for other homestay programs. Second, to maintain intermediaries' independence, social organisations should refrain from instructing volunteers to ask hosts or refugees for favours to support social media campaigns. Furthermore, they should avoid assigning intermediaries who are friends with the hosts. NGOs are encouraged to advertise the role of intermediaries in hosting networks differently from traditional befriending programs, emphasising the importance of a mediator for the host–refugee dyad. When this article was finalised, the organisation had already changed the description of volunteers and flatshares on their website. Specialised training on conflict mediation in intercultural relationships and interacting with vulnerable communities might enhance the quality of volunteers' support.

Furthermore, attracting a diverse group of volunteers in terms of gender and nationality allows for better matches between intermediaries, hosts, and refugees. Lastly, organisations are encouraged to invest in creating a sense of community among volunteers. By the time this article was completed, Refugees Welcome in Catalonia had introduced quarterly online meetings with volunteers to strengthen the community and keep volunteers informed and engaged.

While homestay programs can be highly beneficial for the incorporation of certain profiles of refugees, especially relatively young, single refugees, they remain small-scale projects compared to the large number of refugees in need of housing and offer only temporary housing. However, while not a viable mass alternative to government-led solutions, they can complement such solutions for specific groups of refugees. Furthermore, the study of intermediation in asymmetrical resident–refugee relationships can be valuable beyond these programs. Both homestay programs and intermediation could be upscaled with more financial support.

Future research could compare Refugees Welcome's approach in Spain with other homestay programs. As Refugees Welcome accommodates refugees who have already spent a minimum of six months in Spain, future research could examine the impact of similar functions at earlier stages of the asylum application process.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to the editors and anonymous reviewers of this article for their valuable comments. I would also like to thank Dr Miranda Lubbers for her constructive criticism on earlier drafts of this article. Sincere thanks also to Refugees Welcome Spain who supported me throughout my ethnographic fieldwork and to all participants of this study. All procedures contributing to this work comply with the ethical standards of the relevant national and institutional committees on human experimentation and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008. Ethical approval for data collection was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (ID: 5189), the Ethics Committee on Animal and Human

Experimentation (CEEAH) of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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About the Author

Lara-Désirée Brinker is a PhD candidate at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Her research foci include migration, refugee activism, as well as housing strategies and initial integration measures for vulnerable migrants. She is also a member of the Laboratory of Personal Networks and Communities (egolab-GRAFO), which is part of the Research Group of Fundamentally Oriented Anthropology (GRAFO).

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 243–253
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4521

Article

Networks Amongst Syrians: Situated Migrant Positionalities and the Impact on Relational Embedding

Francesca Speed [1,*], Tracy Scurry [1], Peter Edward [1] and Mona Moufahim [2]

[1] Newcastle University Business School, Newcastle University, UK; E-Mails: f.speed2@newcastle.ac.uk (F.S.), tracy.scurry@newcastle.ac.uk (T.S.), peter.edward@newcastle.ac.uk (P.E.)
[2] Stirling Management School, University of Stirling, UK; E-Mail: mona.moufahim@stir.ac.uk

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 15 May 2021 | Accepted: 19 July 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
This article employs Yuval-Davis concept of situated intersectionality to explore processes of relational embedding amongst Syrian migrants in the UK. By drawing on in-depth interview data from 31 men and women living in North East England, we explore how varying social categories—or positionalities—intersect and shape personal networks and feelings of attachment amongst Syrians. We show how wider structural contexts and systems of social relations shape migrants' sense of belonging and attachment which can serve to enhance or weaken opportunities for social and economic inclusion. The findings reveal how, for Syrian migrants, wider macro level contexts determine immigration and asylum routes which in turn shape place-specific opportunity structures that impact on micro individual level processes of relational embedding. We develop the term "migrant positionalities" as a social category to capture the multiple experiences of migration and asylum and the power dynamics that determine opportunity structures and processes of embedding. We contribute to the debates in this field by demonstrating how the wider structural context can lead to a multiplicity of immigration and asylum experiences for individuals, resulting in differences in support and rights that go on to shape processes of embedding and personal networks. By employing a situated intersectional lens, we also demonstrate how and why processes of relational embedding differ amongst migrants of the same nationality on the basis of social positionings such as ethnicity, class, and religion, that are situated in context, time, and space.

Keywords
migrant positionalities; relational embedding; situated intersectionality; Syrian networks

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Scholarship highlights the positive role migrant networks play in the integration of forced migrants (van Liempt & Nijenhuis, 2020). This links to shared linguistic, cultural, and religious capital, and the support and benefits gained from groups and initiatives led by, and for, migrant groups (Pincock et al., 2020). Yet, despite recognition of the limitations of migrant and co-ethnic networks (Gericke et al., 2018; Hynie et al., 2011; Kalter & Kogan, 2014), dominant and homogenising assumptions remain which overlook the varied challenges individuals face when navigating these networks. As a result, the nuances of individual needs and identities, and their implications for migrants' sense of belonging and attachment are often overlooked (Ryan, 2018). This has implications for processes of embedding and integration.

Embeddedness is central to discussions about migration (Lubbers, Verdery, & Molina, 2020) based on the assumption that social networks help to develop a sense of belonging and facilitate access to resources which can support social and economic integration (Wessendorf

& Phillimore, 2019). However, recent work has emphasised the limitations of static conceptions of embeddedness as an achieved state (Lubbers, Molina, & McCarty, 2020), reflecting a growing consensus that, if we are to move beyond simplistic assumptions of static network outcomes, it is valuable to consider processes of embedding to emphasise the complex relational dynamics that shape the ways in which networks are developed (for a discussion cf. Ryan & Mulholland, 2015). This perspective highlights how those experiences are highly varied within and between migrant groups and can be affected by life events, life course (Lubbers, Molina, & McCarty, 2020), and the varied rights and entitlements that diverse groups have (Ryan, 2018).

Whilst existing research acknowledges the impact of refugee status on network development (Bernhard, 2021; van Liempt & Nijenhuis, 2020), there is limited empirical exploration of how different experiences of the immigration and asylum system, including the different legal statuses and rights, affect processes of embedding amongst migrants of the same nationality. Research has explored the importance of individual opportunity structures (Wissink & Mazzucato, 2018) and the benefits of bonds based on shared hometown or regional identity (van Uden & Jongerden, 2021) in the formation of individual networks, and the role of social categories in shaping migrant opportunities to form new relationships with host-country natives (Lubbers, Molina, & McCarty, 2020). But more research is needed to explore how and why these personal networks differ amongst and across migrants of the same nationality and how these processes of embedding are shaped by wider structural factors (Ryan, 2018). This is reflected in calls for more intersectional analysis of migrant and forced migrant networks to understand how networks differ depending on the multiple social positionings held by individuals (Bilecen, 2021) and to explore the internal heterogeneity of "ethnic communities" (Lubbers, Verdery, & Molina, 2020).

Within the literature, multiple and contested terminology is used to refer to migrant status ranging from forced migrants to globally mobile talent. However migrant status is not as straight forward as a category or label implies. Focusing on Syrian migrants in North East England, this article challenges the homogenising and dominant understanding that groups individuals into two distinct categories: migrant or forced migrants. For clarity we use the expression Syrian migrants throughout, as not all research participants identified as refugees. We draw on situated intersectionality (Yuval-Davis, 2015) to unpack the lived experience and the various social categories that impact individuals which allows for a more nuanced understanding of processes of embedding for migrants of the same nationality.

We contribute to the debates in this field by demonstrating how the multiplicity of immigration and asylum experiences lead to different opportunity structures, attachments, and rights for migrants that go on to shape processes of embedding and personal networks. We develop the term "migrant positionalities" to signify how, like other social positionings such as class or gender, migrant status and the implications of immigration and asylum pose both identity and power questions that shape belonging and attachment for Syrian migrants. We also show how applying a situated intersectionality framework demonstrates how ethnicity, class, religion, and migrant positionalities shape relational embedding and highlights the multiplicity of these positions influenced by time and space.

The next section briefly considers the theoretical framework. Following the methodology, the authors present thematic findings and engage in discussion. Finally, the authors summarise the article's findings and implications.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Differentiated Embedding

Ryan and Mulholland (2015, p. 142) define "embedding" as "a means of explaining the process through which social actors connect to and interact with a multiplicity of social, economic and political structures through various social relationships/social networks." The authors state that they purposefully use the continuous tense to reflect the contextual, dynamic, and differentiated processes that occur as migrants navigate, negotiate, and re-negotiate different domains over time.

In later work, exploring how Polish migrants in London were integrating in the local context and the influence of interpersonal relationships on decision making, Ryan (2018) argues that whilst the size and nature of personal networks is important, processes of "relational embedding" cannot be understood in isolation from wider structural contexts (e.g., political and legal frameworks for migrants and place-specific opportunities) that shape the positions and subjective experiences of individuals. Ryan therefore developed the concept of "differentiated embedding" as a multi-level framework (macro, meso, micro) for understanding how and why processes of embedding differ, not only between individuals but also within different domains (employment, family, friendships, locality) over time. This perspective enables a wider examination of the multiple and dynamic factors, beyond an individual's control, which shape processes of embedding. Focus to date has been on embedding of European migrants (Ryan, 2018), with limited exploration of the impact of varied immigration and asylum experiences on processes of embedding. Whilst Phillimore (2020) highlights the variation in integration outcomes for resettled refugees and asylum-seekers, she calls for more examination of the impact of the different treatment individuals receive because of their immigration and asylum experiences. Therefore, a framework which enables an exploration of the wider-structural context provides a valuable lens for exploring

processes of embedding for Syrian migrants in the North East of England, who have a multiplicity of immigration and asylum experiences. It allows us to study how the wider structural context impacts the sense of belonging and attachment and processes of relational embedding for this group.

However, individuals' sense of belonging and attachment are not only shaped by opportunity structures and experiences of immigration and asylum. Individual processes of embedding are also shaped by relational processes. Hite's (2003) work with firms unpacks how relationally embedded ties differ from each other due to the needs, interests, feelings, and emotions between people, leading to variations in networks. Networks are further compounded by the effort to embed and the quality of the ties. Hite (2003) challenges the dichotomous understanding of relational embedding and draws attention to the depth of networks based on variations in trust, intensity, and frequency of ties. Building on this, Ryan (2018) develops a more differentiated notion of relationality that explores the depth of trust and attachment which underpin embedding. This perspective argues that networks are linked to the people and places encountered in the varying social domains which are characterised by varied degrees of attachment, trust, and reciprocity. However, whilst recent work has started to explore how individual identity and various social categories shape migrant opportunities to develop networks and embed (Bilecen, 2021; Lubbers, Molina, & McCarty, 2020), there is a need to further understanding of how this shapes relational embedding.

2.2. Situated Intersectionality and Migrant Positionalities

Intersectionality is the epistemological development of feminist standpoint theory developed by black feminists such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, and Patricia Hill Collins. Initially developed to theorise black women's standpoint, intersectionality is an "analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization" (Collins, 2000, p. 299) that shape forms of belonging and marginalisation. Hereafter, we employ the term "positionality" to refer to different standpoints and social categories. Recent network scholarship has drawn on intersectionality theory to problematise essentialist notions of ethnic migrant networks (Bilecen, 2021) and to contest the homogenous understanding of migrants. To contribute to this debate, we employ this theoretical framework to examine the intersecting power dynamics and various positionalities that influence experiences of embedding amongst Syrian migrants.

Specifically, we draw on situated intersectionality developed by Yuval-Davis (2015) who advocates its application to all and not just marginalised and racialised women. This lens allows for a multi-level approach (pp. 94–95), going beyond the social or relational by incorporating understanding of the temporal and spatial (Yuval-Davis et al., 2019). This includes how positions take on meaning—be they claimed or ascribed—at different times in different contexts. This approach argues that the "situated gaze, situated knowledge and situated imagination, construct differently the ways we see the world" (Yuval-Davis, 2015, p. 94), causing "contested, shifting and multiple" positionalities (p. 95). This means that "people positioned in the same social locations would often develop different identifications, meanings and normative attitudes and attachments to them" (p. 95). Focusing on situated gazes brings minority experiences from the margins to the centre and is useful when undertaking research with migrants of the same nationality to understand such differences.

3. Methodology

We draw on data from semi-structured interviews with thirty-one Syrians (19 women and 12 men), of varying immigration status, living in the North East of England gathered as part of a wider project where participants were asked to share their UK life story to unearth lived experiences of social and economic belonging. Trust and access were facilitated by pre-recruitment immersion (Mohebbi et al., 2018). The first author undertook an "extended stay" (Alfadhli & Drury, 2020) by attending community and charity events with Syrians such as a *Nowruz* event and a public *iftar* event during Ramadan. The first author sent a call for participants, in Arabic and English, to individuals in her network via text and email. Using a snowballing approach, participants were recruited if they identified as Syrian adults living in the North East.

The research design meant that participants had entered the UK via various immigration routes: four were students in the UK and subsequently claimed asylum when the war began; one participant came to study with help from the Council for At-Risk Academics; one came as a student and found work; 13 participants came via the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) resettlement scheme; three participants came via family reunion (i.e., one of their family was already here, having previously claimed asylum); nine participants claimed asylum. Participants had resided in the UK between 10 months to 20 years and experienced multiple aspects of the immigration and asylum system ranging from asylum seeker, international student, sponsored employee, refugee, claiming Indefinite Leave to Remain, and gaining British citizenship. Participants identified as Arab Syrian, Kurdish Syrian, and Palestinian Syrian and were aged 18 to 70, coming from a variety of backgrounds ranging from university educated, professional workers to manual workers, homemakers, and caregivers. Interviews were in-person, lasted between 40 and 180 minutes and took place between April 2019 and February 2020 in locations chosen by the participants.

To reduce language barriers and the implications of working with third-party interpreters, the first author (who already possessed conversational Arabic) undertook intensive Arabic language training for an eight-month period prior to data collection. Learning the language alone is insufficient to bridge the insider–outsider dichotomy, nor guarantee access or trust. However, using a participant's native language is a powerful route to acceptance and allows for more authentic expression and increased nuance of meaning (Welch & Piekkari, 2006). This research design allowed the first author a "third position" (Carling et al., 2014) whereby she was removed enough for participants to talk openly about challenges as she was perceived to be outsider as a white British non-Muslim, yet the language and extended stay facilitated connection and trust. The extended stay prior to data collection also helped the first author build knowledge of the communicative norms of the target population (Carling et al., 2014) whilst being exposed to variations in Syrian dialects and accents. To deepen mutual understanding, interviews moved between languages based on varied linguistic needs. We acknowledge that a limitation of this study is that some participants may have been more comfortable speaking in Kurdish.

Interviews were translated and transcribed into English, by the first author, in line with other studies focusing on refugees and multilingual communities (Ganassin & Holmes, 2013). This necessitated listening to recordings several times and consulting online Arabic dictionaries to find the most accurate translation. This resulted in a deep awareness of the data which facilitated the analysis process. The first author kept a reflexive diary that helped navigate the complexities involved with multi-lingual interviewing and translating processes (Abalkhail, 2018). We used thematic analysis to make sense of the interview data. The data was coded using descriptive coding (e.g., neighbours), value coding (e.g., social-cultural values), and process coding (e.g., support from Syrians). Personal relationships and networks emerged as central themes. The second author checked the consistency and clarity of the coding by looking through the initial codes from the first author. An inductive, iterative approach was employed. Ethical approval was obtained for this project in advance of data collection and oral consent was gained from all participants. For anonymity, we use pseudonyms chosen by the participants.

A situated intersectionality framework was applied to the analysis phase, to challenge possible methodological nationalism and essentialist approaches to forced migration research. Drawing on McCall's (2005, p. 1773) notion of intercategorical complexity, we "provisionally adopt existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality along multiple and conflicting dimensions." This meant provisionally looking at all Syrians as a shared ethno-national grouping whilst also searching for other social categories and dimensions that shape individual experience. By including other social categories, in addition to ethno-national ones, this approach provides a way of challenging the insider–outsider divide in migration research (Carling et al., 2014) and sets out to overcome some of the limitations of homogenising experiences to ethno-national positionalities only. We turned our focus to multiple social categories and the intersection of positionalities (Anthias, 2012) that came through the data, to remain open to the shifting nature of positionalities, meaning, and experiences.

4. Findings and Discussion

The coding analysis revealed two central themes that recurred in participants' identifications as migrants and in their understandings of their own personal networks in relation to the wider community. The first theme related to the wider structural context of embedding—namely the immigration and asylum system—that impacted participants rights, networks, and feelings of belonging (Phillimore, 2020; Ryan, 2018). Here, we identify how three primary routes—education, resettlement, or asylum—differently shaped migrant positionalities and opportunity structures for embedding. The second theme related to the intersections of various other assigned and claimed positionalities—primarily relating to ethnicity, class, and religion. We use "claimed" to indicate individual agency in asserting their position (e.g., what it means to the individual to be a Kurdish Syrian) and "assigned" to signal how individuals impose positions onto "others" (e.g., how people view Kurdish Syrians). Here we identify how complex, multiple, and shifting positionalities differently shaped participants' feelings of belonging and attachment and processes of relational embedding with other Syrians. We explore these themes in the following sections.

4.1. Migrant Positionalities and Opportunity Structures

Processes of relational embedding were highly varied and differentiated, shaped by the rights, entitlements, and support individuals experience because of their different entry routes and legal status. We use the term migrant positionalities to signify the multiplicity of immigration and asylum experiences and the implications these positionalities have for individuals. We identify three broad groups in the migration experiences of participants: education route, resettled route, and asylum route. The education route indicates students who came to study, some of whom claimed asylum, while others secured a working visa post study or came with support from the Council for At-Risk Academics. The resettled route signifies those that came to the UK via the UNHCR's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, which supports those affected by the war in Syria. The asylum route includes those that claimed asylum or family reunification.

We will now consider how understanding these different migrant positionalities shaped processes of relational embedding and personal networks for these individuals. Building on Ryan (2018) and Phillimore (2020), we unpack how the wider structural context of different routes to migration can shape structural and relational processes of embedding for individuals.

4.1.1. Education Route

For participants in this route, processes of relational embedding were more likely to be shaped by factors and positionalities outside of their experiences of claiming asylum. Zara claimed asylum with her family during her PhD study. She says:

> We have a support network, an existing support network in places outside of being refugees, so like when I go to university or it's like when I talk, I'm just another person so my experience is not summed up with being a refugee.

This highlights how, for Zara, the insecurity that the asylum system imposes was mitigated by the fact that she developed her network as a doctoral researcher at university and not as a refugee. This builds on Ryan and Mulholland's (2015) thesis, that different places present different opportunity structures, by highlighting the importance of the university as a social domain in developing participants' sense of belonging and facilitating professional relationships and economic embedding for students who claim asylum. Participants spoke of how the Education Route enabled access to networks beyond official refugee support and those experiencing hardship in the refugee community. This was seen to facilitate access to financial and emotional support that would otherwise be difficult for them to acquire. As Zara reflects:

> I have a network outside of being refugee. Most of their [other refugees] network comes with being a refugee, their dealings with the council, their dealings with the job centre….They do have a social worker but all of it comes within the experience, within their experience of being a refugee. I have another parallel experience as it were.

This was echoed in the account of Amani, who also claimed asylum during her studies. She highlighted being able to draw on classmates for support not only with the course of study but also for her emotional wellbeing and for help with accommodation. These wider networks gave access to resources, to professional networks and to better opportunities to perfect the English language. These accounts demonstrate how the difficulties of claiming asylum were mitigated, to some extent, due to the differentiated nature of relational embedding linked to place (the university) and time (student first, then asylum experience; Ryan, 2018).

However, embedding within this route was not without challenge reflecting the varied opportunities to embed in different settings or domains (Ryan, 2018). Participants highlighted that, while there were benefits to a wider network, many in the Education Route did not have access to networks that could support them with their claim for asylum. Zara spoke of the lack of informed support from the university, citing the example of when the visa support team told her to leave the UK or return to Syria to renew her visa, neither of which is possible whilst claiming asylum. This perhaps reflects that the emphasis of university support tends to be on supporting refugees and asylum seekers into study via scholarships rather than supporting international students who, due to unforeseen circumstances back home, claim asylum during their studies. This group is therefore almost hidden and outside of asylum support networks, for example from local charities and councils, needed to navigate the asylum process.

4.1.2. Resettled Route

Within this route participants accounts highlighted how networks were predominantly formed with members of the Syrian resettled community. Whilst this group arguably had more structured support for embedding and developing networks (Phillimore, 2020), provided through a dedicated team at the local council, participants spoke of their frustrations with the support provided. As described by Samir:

> The department responsible for Syrians can't absorb that much. Roughly every two months, or every three months, new families arrive. Sometimes, we go, me and my friend, we go to help. We help the council. Some support workers ask for help, always…. All employees at the Council do not have time. Sometimes they do not have time to reply on the phone.

Participants accounts highlighted how limited resource combined with increased demand meant that individuals waited many months to solve certain problems (e.g., issues with rent or heating). As illustrated by Zain: "I went twice and said this is the problem, but I didn't get an answer. Sometimes, people go and wait from the morning to the end of the allotted time… this is not the antidote to solve the issue."

As this network was the primary means of support for these individuals, limitations in the council's support meant some individuals were left isolated and excluded which led to disengagement. Sheear describes his experiences: "My relationship with the council is very weak, I don't go to the council a lot, or rather I don't go. Firstly, because of the language, secondly, I didn't find any benefit of going to the council." These "hollow ties" (Hite, 2003) reflected a lack of quality and depth in the relationship with the council which led to reduced frequency

of interactions and diminished the opportunities for this relationship to positively influence processes of embedding (Ryan, 2018).

To facilitate networking and integration participants spoke of how the council asked some individuals to welcome new families by helping translate and showing them the local shops. Participants recognised the benefits of receiving this help when they first arrived and liked being able to give back by helping new arrivals later on. This also helped build a network outside of the council. However, it was restricted to resettled families where trauma, limited resources, and accumulative disadvantage were generally more prevalent. Participants spoke about the positives of this inter community support, however, many individuals highlighted the drawbacks for their English language development, fulfilling their job aspirations and developing their personal network outside of migrant communities. As a result, participants accounts reflected a sense of dislocation from the local population, with some individuals struggling to develop their confidence and to forge personal relationships outside of their immediate ties to other local resettled Syrians. Applying a differentiated embedding perspective to these experiences allows us to build on Phillimore's (2020) work on resettlement by exploring how the opportunity structures, resulting from structural embedding processes of resettlement, created some positive experiences of relational embedding whilst simultaneously having a limiting effect on embedding in other domains (e.g., work, wider local community; Ryan, 2018).

4.1.3. Asylum Route

Accounts of participants within the asylum route, clearly highlighted the impact of context for processes of relational embedding. Significant to these individuals' experiences was the wider geo-political context (Phillimore, 2020) and how that impacted policy and positioning of Syrian migrants within social and political discourses at the time they came to the UK to claim asylum. The ways in which this context was subject to change over time shaped participants' experiences and processes of embedding.

For example, Nour came to the UK with her family in 2014 before the peak influx of Syrian migrants. She claimed asylum upon arrival and her family waited 4 months for a decision. However, other participants who arrived after 2015 reported waiting much longer for their asylum decision—up to two and half years in some cases. Prolonged waiting negatively impacts on individuals' sense of security, self, and belonging. While the consequential impact on mental health (Löbel, 2020), along with restrictions on movement and finances, negatively impacts on their ability to build a personal network (Phillimore, 2020). As a result, embedding is negotiated differently as relationships to people and places change over time (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015) due to the changes in status, forms of attachments, and feelings of security.

Another key feature participants identified was the role of personal resources—economic, social, and emotional—in facilitating access to different opportunity structures. Nour spoke of how, in comparison to those that come via the resettled route, her family had the resources, energy, and confidence to embed themselves and build networks which helped them quickly secure volunteering and work opportunities:

> The ones that came by themselves they know that they could do it [secure employment]. They have some qualifications; they have something to depend on so they could do it. But these families, these people who came from the camps they were hopeless, they have nothing, and they really deserve the support and the help [referring to the resettled route].

Participants' accounts therefore emphasised the differences in experience for those that come without a pre-existing network and depleted resources (emotional, financial). For many in the asylum route, a difficult journey and subsequent challenges of claiming asylum and integrating, impacted on physical and mental health (Phillimore, 2020). Mohammed spoke of his exhaustion following a long and traumatic journey to get to the UK. He came as a single man without family and had to wait a long time to secure the right to work. The variations in the experiences within this route demonstrate the multiplicity of forms of embedding, that go beyond migrant status to include emotional, financial, and family support (Ryan, 2018). Looking back on the challenges he had faced over twenty years in the UK, Mohammed compared his experiences to those he knew who had come via the resettled route. He said it had taken him ten years to reach the stage that those individuals find on their first day in the UK (e.g., refugee status, right to work, benefits, a house, living with family). Despite his perceived accomplishments in both his personal and professional life in the UK, Mohammed's account demonstrates the subjectivity of embedding (Ryan, 2018). Mohammed also reflected on the differences between his experiences and some of his family members who came via family reunification:

> When I came, I slept on the floor [street], when you [family member] came you sleep in my house, I give you money, I gave you a job, I took you to the Council, I get you a house, you know what I mean? I do all your paperwork, I take you to the solicitor, I do everything for you, so you didn't see anything.

In this section, we have demonstrated the multiplicity of migrant positionalities amongst and within the three identified routes. In doing so, we build on Phillimore's (2020) work, by highlighting the variations in structural processes, that determine migrant rights and

experiences, as well as opportunity structures. We show how the uncertainty of immigration status for Syrians, and subsequent implications on mental health and feelings of belonging, impacts processes of embedding more broadly. Going beyond social domains and the quality and depth of social ties (Hite, 2003; Ryan, 2018), we demonstrate how structural processes of the immigration and asylum system lead to variations in relational embedding. Like other social positionings, such as class or ethnicity, migrant positionalities are claimed and assigned in varied ways, with implications for processes of embedding.

4.2. Situated Positionalities and Relational Embedding

Whilst the previous accounts highlight how routes to migration shaped the opportunities for relational embedding for Syrian migrants, accounts also highlighted how other social categories intersect to shape relational embedding. The situated intersectionality lens helps explore how participants develop different identifications and meaning despite a shared social location of "Syrian migrant." We find that positions are contested, shifting, and multiple depending on context, social, and temporal factors (Yuval-Davis, 2015).

4.2.1. Situated Ethnic Positionalities

We define ethnic positionality as the multiple and complex ways that we enact, claim, and position our ethnic-cultural selves. This was central to participants' sense of belonging and relational embedding before, during and after displacement. Participants accounts highlighted varying ethnic positionalities regardless of route and how they materialise in different ways across contexts and time. Sheear spoke about the oppression he faced as a Kurd in Syria compared to the acceptance he experienced in the UK:

> The translator asked the nurse, where is the doctor from? The nurse smiled and said it is not custom to ask this question. By this I know that British people don't care if he was Arab, Kurdish, or Iranian. They know what a person does and how he works. I am in front of someone who is entirely different to me; yet he understands me. Effectively I could be myself. I noticed that here, they do not ask about one's identity, be it religion or language or whatever.

Sheear's account demonstrates a sense of acceptance and belonging, he felt he could be himself and that his Kurdish cultural-ethnic identity was respected in the UK, demonstrating how relationships can change over time and space (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015). As a result, Sheear felt enabled to set up a local Syrian Kurdish group as a way of claiming and defining his ethnic positionality in the new context:

> We need a Syrian Kurdish community group so that we can bring to society some of what we have lost in our country, for example learning the language, for example helping people who come here. Unfortunately, the ones that formed the community, did not think about that at all. They don't do anything. Every week we have a meeting, they talk about their cars, they talk [laughs]….Just this, nothing else, no culture, or education, nothing.

Sheear wanted to use the community group to celebrate Kurdish culture via educational programmes for children and events for families but felt that the rest of the group were content with meeting for coffee periodically. Sheear was claiming his ethnic positionality and shaping it in a way that had meaning to him with positive end goals for his community. He was assigning the same ethnic positionality to the fellow community group members but as his account highlights, ethnic positionalities are expressed and experienced differently amongst Syrian Kurds. Sheear understood these different attitudes to reflect differences in education and class background of the group members. These differences led to more shallow forms of embedding (Ryan, 2018) resulting in Sheear leaving the community group but remaining in contact by telephone. This intersectional lens helps unpack reasons for the variations in trust and quality of social ties (Hite, 2003). Unpacking ethnic positionalities as a starting point (Bilecen, 2021) helps demonstrate, in this case, that Syrian Kurdishness is expressed in several ways and influences personal ideas and goals and therefore processes of relational embedding and personal networks.

Furthermore, despite the network members coming via the same UNHCR resettlement programme, experiences of forced migration varied greatly. Sheear had been resettled to the UK with his wife, without any relatives or immediate family, therefore this community arguably played a more central role compared to the other members of the community who were resettled with their children, and in some cases extended family (for more discussion on the impacts of displaced family networks see Löbel, 2020). Sheear was also at a different stage in the life cycle to the other member of the group. Retired and without family in the UK, he had more time to invest in cultural and educational pursuits (Bernhard, 2021). Whereas the other network members were middle aged, with varying family responsibilities, in work or seeking employment. This illustrates how life stage (Ryan et al., 2021) and family networks shaped the nature and focus of processes of embedding and personal networks specifically.

A situated intersectional perspective shines light on the varying positionalities relating to ethnicity, stage in the life cycle, class, and experience of resettlement and how meanings are multiple and complex. In moving from Syria to the UK, meanings change through time and space, resulting in variations in the politicisation

of ethnic positionalities. Sheear was able to "own" his Kurdishness in a new way, developing a network to celebrate and maximise the opportunities he saw this as presenting for the wider community, now and for future generations. However, he encountered challenges as other people's positionalities came to the fore so that ethnic-cultural identities were claimed and assigned in multiple ways demonstrating the differentiated nature of wider processes of embedding (Ryan, 2018).

4.2.2. Politicisation of Religious and Class Positionalities

Participants spoke about the varying political and religious affiliations across the Syrian community in North East England and how this impacted personal networks. Reemie explained how she felt excluded from any socialising with the Syrian community in the region and left out of the Syrian Students' Society at the university where she studied. Reemie felt that this was due to the perceptions of others about her religious and political views, based on the region of Syria that she came from:

> When I joined the Syrian society, there was like if somebody gives birth, if somebody finishes the viva, they are always emailing congratulations to our friends blablabla who did… but the war had already started when I got married and they kind of divided and then I've never got any congratulations anything. I mean they just classify you, [if you're] coming from this part, so you are this, you are this. This is what I didn't like. I tried once to join, I tried. One Syrian guy he had a bad experience with something, I visited his wife. I mean I do this kind of initiatives, but I don't get any back.

This demonstrates the multiplicity of religious and political positionalities that are claimed and assigned within and across the Syrian community. The varying degrees of tolerance for religious minorities and varying religious practice is politicised. Uncertainty and fear of the regime and its network outside of Syria led to lots of speculation and suspicion, which was heightened in the new local as individuals' reasons for being in the UK were not always clear and fleeing or deserting Syria symbolised opposing the regime. This politicisation impacted processes of embedding and the personal networks participants forged across the Syrian community, and this highlights how wider macro dimensions of embedding can shape trust and reciprocity between individuals (Ryan, 2018). In Reemie's case, this treatment and rejection led her to have few Syrian friends in the UK, drawing heavily on networks with locals she forged through her son's playgroup and with the international student network at her university. An intersectional lens helps unpack the reasons for possible "hollow" forms of embedding characterised by low trust amongst Syrians (Ryan, 2018), calling into question the homogenisation of communities often grouped together by religion and political views.

Others also spoke of rejection by the local Syrian community. As Karen reflects:

> There's something that they [Syrians] don't like about highly educated people. Like for me, I am open minded for everyone, you know. I have been told, "please don't talk to us because you don't wear hijab. I don't want you to affect my daughter's decision later." That was one of the women in my daughter's school and I was shocked because I am the one who is helping. But at the end, if I am looking from a very different perspective, I would see that's not because of the hijab, that's because I have higher qualification and yet they don't. So, this is how to attack me, is to take me from a perspective of religion because in my country or like in the Middle East, if you want to control someone you go through the religion perspective.

Karen's reflections highlight the tensions that individuals face in developing personal networks based on perceived class and religious identities assigned to them by other Syrians. Whilst unlike Reemie who said she was not religious; Karen was Muslim and spoke of how she was being excluded from networks because of a perceived deviation from cultural and religious practices around women's dress and behaviour. But for her, it was the underlying differences in education capital and socio-cultural norms that explained these differences. This illustrates the complexity of personal network development for this group as they seek to navigate their own beliefs, values and behaviours in multiple contexts which are heavily politicised (Yuval-Davis, 2015). Karen distanced herself from this network and, like Sheear, she explained that this was due to differences in educational background and cultural practices. Instead, she chose to engage with her family and the student network that her husband had developed where he studied. Karen's experience highlights how class and religious positionalities can reinforce separation and segregation within groups, perpetuating stereotypes. Going beyond relationships with host-country natives (Lubbers, Molina, & McCarty, 2020), an intersectional lens helps unpack the reasons for variations in the quality and depth of relational embedding amongst migrants of the same nationality.

Yousef also spoke about a divide in the Syrian community which he links to educational background. He reflects on his voluntary efforts to run English classes in collaboration with the local council:

> They [Syrians] said maybe he has benefits when he tries to build this community. I said it takes time from me and I am working. I do my best for my kids. I need them to grow up and have a good education, I need your kids [to do that] also, because we are one community. We should improve ourselves; we should be a positive community, we need to do the best in this community, we need education, we need to be good

> people in the community. But they said, "I don't need [this]." It's very hard to deal with them, very hard! So, I left this community, because I said they're not educated people.

He goes on to link being uneducated to religious and cultural deviance by explaining that some of these married men would "go to bars and meet girls." Like Karen, Yousef reflects on the intersections between class and religion demonstrating the multiple positionalities that influence personal networks amongst Syrians. Yet, unlike Karen, Yousef said that he would still help these individuals if they reached out, although he did not see them as friends. Yousef's position as an educated man from a middle-class background shapes his long-term goals for his children. He places more emphasis on education, the English language and securing a future for his children shaping the process of embedding and Yousef's personal networks. His efforts were met with suspicion and jealously, reflecting the different goals and attitudes that can be explained by the varying class positionalities. Unpacking class as a category contributes to understandings of individual opportunity structures (Wissink & Mazzucato, 2018) and demonstrates how personal relations can become restricted by the ways that class structures work to reinforce disadvantage and exclusion.

5. Conclusions

In this article we have explored relational embedding amongst Syrian migrants, against a politicised immigration context in the UK. In developing the term "migrant positionalities," we highlight how processes of embedding are shaped by the rights, entitlements, and support Syrian migrants experience because of entry routes and legal status. We found that individuals who experienced the education route had access to opportunity structures, resources, and personal networks that helped secure jobs which significantly shaped processes of embedding. However, individuals faced immense strain juggling the demands of studying whilst navigating the asylum system, not being able to work and with limited specialised support due to their somewhat hidden circumstances. Furthermore, we demonstrate how the primacy of the "refugee" or "resettled" label assigned onto individuals in the resettled route, detracts from individual characteristics, experiences, and needs, and confines individuals to this assigned migrant positionality. For those claiming asylum, individual embedding was more subject to contextual and temporal factors—in particular timing of arrival in relation to the wider geopolitical landscape. Waiting longer for a decision and arriving alone with depleted emotional and financial resources negatively impacted mental health which restricted personal networks and integration. We show how assumptions of homogenised experiences overlook the diversity of the community. This has implications for policy and practice whereby a one-size-fits-all approach often excludes and overlooks those individuals who do not conform to the assigned label and associated behaviour.

Through a situated intersectional lens, we highlight the various social inequalities that are linked to the impact of state borders and explore the intersections of migrant status, class, ethnicity, stage of the life cycle, family composition, and religion. Applying this framework to Syrian migrant embedding has demonstrated the various migrant positionalities that shape individuals' access to different resources, capital, and networks. We find that there are various positionalities, that can be claimed individually or assigned onto others (within and between groups), and that these are subject to change over time and space. Through examining the accounts of participants, we highlight how processes of relational embedding are complex and shifting due to the multiple positionalities and the time and space needed for individuals to navigate, comprehend, and respond to this. This in turn impacts the quality and depth of relationships. Therefore, it is argued that an intersectional approach provides a more promising start for personal network analysis and migration studies. Going beyond the understanding that migrant personal networks are based on shared positionalities, we advocate Yuval-Davis' situated framework that calls upon temporal and spatial influences by highlighting the multitude of positionalities that impact the types of networks people want to invest in, have access to and how these differ within and across groups.

In this article, we have focused primarily on processes of relational embedding amongst Syrian migrants as a result of immigration and asylum experiences and other intersecting positionalities. We acknowledge participants' complex and dynamic relationships, with ties ranging from local to transnational across multiple social domains, but this was beyond the scope of the current article.

This article has three main practical implications. First, support for forced migrants, such as the resettlement scheme, often groups individuals by nationality or ethnicity with assumptions being made about common goals and identities that lead to nuances, and the importance of individual difference, being overlooked. Rather than presuming a common and shared position, recognising the complexities of migrant positionalities, and the impact of these on processes of personal network development and embedding offers an avenue for developing support mechanisms which are more inclusive of different possibilities. Second, we highlight some of the drawbacks of networks amongst migrants of the same nationality, notably how the variations in claimed and assigned positionalities, for example relating to class, ethnicity, and religion, lead to different individual aims, feelings of belonging and forms of relational embedding. We recommend that community groups should steer away from naming and defining themselves based on nationality (e.g., Kurdish Syrian group) and instead focus on shared goals (e.g., Kurdish history and language group). Finally,

we demonstrate the need to strengthen specialised support within university networks for students applying for asylum.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to all participants who took part in this research. This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (grant number ES/P000762/1). The intensive language training prior to data collection was funded by the Northern Ireland and North East Doctoral Training Partnership. The first author was also a recipient of a two-month Anglo-Omani Society scholarship to study at Sultan Qaboos college in Manah, Oman.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Francesca Speed is a NINE DTP postgraduate researcher at Newcastle University Business School, UK. Her research focuses on the lived experiences of forced migrants from an intersectional viewpoint, with particular focus on education and labour market progression. Her recent publication, in the *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness People and Performance*, looks at the role of talent intermediaries in supporting the access and development of talent from forcibly displaced backgrounds.

Tracy Scurry is a senior lecturer in human resource management at Newcastle University Business School. Her work seeks to reframe understandings about careers by demonstrating their multi-level and relational nature. She is interested in exploring how individual and societal factors interplay to influence career choices and outcomes, current research examines how imbalances and inequalities frame career experiences for different groups. Her work has been published in a range of journals including *Gender, Work and Organisation*, *International Journal of HRM*, and *Studies in Higher Education*.

Peter Edward is a lecturer in international business. His current research focuses on the relationship between business ethics, the changing role of business in society, and processes of social transformation in response to major societal challenges. His research has been included in publications by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and policy documents by diverse NGOs, and has been used in evidence to the UK Government by the reformist think-tank the New Economics Foundation. His latest book is *The End of Poverty: Inequality and Growth in Global Perspective* (Palgrave, 2019).

Mona Moufahim is senior lecturer at the Stirling Management School at the University of Stirling in Scotland, UK. Her current research interests include identity, immigration, and extreme right politics, religious travel, and consumption. She is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Marketing Management* and of the *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. She is the chair of the Political Marketing SIG of the Academy of Marketing and a board member of the International Society for Markets and Development.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 254–265
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4527

Article

A Privilege not a Choice: Transnational Support Networks of Asylum Seekers and Expatriates

Dorottya Hoór [1,2]

[1] Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento, Italy; E-Mail: dorottya.hoor@unitn.it
[2] The Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis, Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, UK

Submitted: 15 May 2021 | Accepted: 19 October 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
The article explores how different factors shape migrants' transnational social fields and support networks through a comparative study of two different groups of migrants—asylum seekers and expatriates—in Budapest, Hungary. To do so, the study employs a parallel mixed-methods social network design by combining personal network data with qualitative data based on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork with thirty-three migrants in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis. The article presents three key findings: First, it finds that asylum seekers' and expatriates' networks differ on several key characteristics, as asylum seekers' close personal networks are less efficient, smaller in size, and show a remarkable lack of friendship and transnational support ties. Second, it also finds that asylum seekers have limited access to social support and, especially so, to financial and emotional support. Lastly, using multi-level models, the article also demonstrates how migrants' legal status and the transnationality of their support ties affect their access to financial support, as well as how their gender and legal status shape their access to emotional support. These findings illustrate how migrants' individual opportunity structures affect their transnational practices alongside their access to social support, while also highlighting the importance of several individual and contextual factors which contribute to the diverse integration processes of migrants.

Keywords
asylum seekers; expatriates; migration; personal networks; social networks; social support; transnationalism

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

While the free movement of people has long been a key value of the EU, leading to 11.3 million European citizens living in another EU member state, the unprecedented influx of approximately 1.3 million asylum seekers in 2015 has squarely put the issue of migrant integration in the European spotlight (European Commission, 2017; Pew Research Centre, 2016). Several authors argue that due to the availability of new communication technologies, migrants now often "live dual lives" (Portes et al., 1999, p. 217) and maintain close social, economic, and political ties to their country of origin. Transnationalism refers to migrants' social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement, through developing different familial, economic, social, political, organizational, and religious relations that span borders (Portes et al., 1999; Schiller et al., 1992). Accordingly, migrants are considered to be embedded in multi-layered and multi-sited transnational social fields encompassing various forms of transnational activities (Levitt & Schiller, 2004). This process challenges some of the fundamental aspects of assimilation and contact theory (Allport, 1979; Park et al., 1921), which posits that migrants over time will decrease their ties to their country of origin and will gradually replace them with ties to the host society (Verdery et al., 2018).

However, several scholars have questioned the popularity or even validity of transnationalism (Dahinden, 2005; Portes et al., 1999; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

While some authors cast doubt on its novelty and question whether it indeed represents something new about migration (Alba & Nee, 1997), others are doubtful about its empirical prevalence and argue that only a minority of migrants are involved in transnational activities (Dahinden, 2005). Cutting through this debate, the article does not treat assimilation and transnationalism as mutually exclusive theoretical concepts but instead it explores different factors that determine the existence of transnational ties as well as their relevance to migrants' social support.

Migrating to a new country is often a challenging and stressful experience. However, the support networks of migrants mitigate stress, promote resilience, and contribute to re-establishing a sense of identity and integration in the host country (Abraham et al., 2018; Beirens et al., 2007). Transnational social ties also have a significant effect on migrants' access to social support. Several studies have looked at the exchange of different forms of support through both local and transnational ties and found that local and transnational ties provide various types of support to migrants (Herz, 2015; Kornienko et al., 2018). However, the maintenance of transnational ties depends on several factors: It requires effort and resources in terms of both communication and travel (Lubbers et al., 2021). Precarious living and employment conditions, low socio-economic and professional status in the host country, as well as political and economic instability in the origin country are known to have a negative impact on migrants' transnationality (Dahinden, 2005). In contrast, shorter geographic distance to the country of origin, the availability of communication technologies and sufficient means to cover return visits are known to be conducive to the emergence of transnational social fields (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018; Lubbers et al., 2021; Wissink & Mazzucato, 2018). Yet, only a handful of studies examined how migrants' individual opportunity structures impact both their transnationality and access to social support (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Dahinden, 2005; Wissink & Mazzucato, 2018), and none has done so through comparing two vastly different groups of migrants in terms of their legal status, mobility type, and socio-economic status, within the same national context. Thus, to explore how different individual and contextual factors impact migrants' transnationality and access to social support the article compares the support networks of asylum seekers and expatriates in Budapest, Hungary.

Even though researchers in the past faced challenges to empirically capture the concept of transnationalism, recently personal network analysis has been deemed a particularly appropriate analytical tool to do so (Bilecen & Lubbers, 2021; Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018; Molina et al., 2014). Thus, the article adopts such a personal network approach to explore the transnational support networks of different migrants in Budapest. It is structured into six sections. The following section provides a brief overview of the social, political and legal context of different migrants in Hungary and highlights several key differences between asylum seekers and expatriates. The third section reviews the relevant literature on the factors that shape migrants' transnationality and access to social support and puts forward the article's key hypotheses. The fourth section lays out the research design, data collection, and analysis processes, while the fifth section showcases and discusses the results of the study, highlighting key differences in asylum seekers' and expatriates' transnationality and support networks. The last section concludes the article, discusses some of its limitations and reflects on its broader relevance and directions for future research.

2. Expatriates and Asylum Seekers in Budapest

Migrants' integration processes are known to be influenced by several individual level characteristics as well as larger structural factors. Comparing asylum seekers and expatriates within the same country provides us with valuable insights not only on how these characteristics interact with the wider legal, economic, political, cultural and social context of the host country, but also on how they translate into different levels of transnationality and social support to migrants.

Data collection took place in the immediate aftermath of the 2015 refugee crisis. Although Germany has had the most asylum applications, Hungary had the highest in proportion to its population as, overall, 177,135 (almost 1800 refugees per 100,000 local citizens) claimed asylum. The asylum procedure starts with the authorities first assessing whether a person falls under a Dublin procedure then considers whether the applicant should be recognised as a refugee, granted subsidiary protection or a tolerated stay under non-refoulement considerations. In case of a negative decision, the applicant may challenge the decision, which may be upheld or annulled and followed by a new procedure (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2021). Thus, the overall process can take several months or even a year, during which asylum seekers are housed by the Hungarian state, have no legal right to employment or social benefits, and are entitled to emergency healthcare only. Even though the interviewed migrants fall under several different legal categories, for simplicity the article collectively refers to them as asylum seekers.

For the Hungarian Government, which spent millions of euros on a xenophobic anti-immigrant campaign, the influx of asylum seekers was not a humanitarian issue but rather a threat. Due to their different ethnic and racial origin, asylum seekers are likely to face high visibility in Hungary, underlined by a common perception of the host society as threatening and problematic in economic, social, and cultural terms (Leinonen, 2012). Having experienced forced displacement, asylum seekers are also likely to be profoundly affected by the loss of loved ones, who may be deceased or displaced as well (Sundvall et al., 2020).

In contrast, expatriates, according to some authors, cannot even be considered immigrants in the strict sense (Favell, 2013). They face little or no legal difficulties and are often perceived as "unproblematic" or "desired" migrants, while the white ethnic background of most of them makes them "invisible" in the eye of the host society (Leinonen, 2012). Their mobility is often motivated by professional advancement or a sense of adventure (van Bochove & Engbersen, 2015). Thus, their local social contacts are frequently work related, while they also remain connected with others at a great distance through telecommunication (van Bochove & Engbersen, 2015).

When coming from a "third country," they can enter Hungary for longer time periods with a suitable visa, providing them with a right to employment and access to healthcare. For EU citizens, the process is even more straightforward. Their entry and stay have no restrictions, however their full access to healthcare and social benefits are conditional upon their tax contribution. According to national statistics, in 2015, almost 150,000 foreign nationals lived in Hungary, of which 100,000 came from other European countries (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2021). Even though they comprise a largely heterogenous group, for the purposes of comparison the article defines expatriates as highly skilled temporary migrants, including professionals, their spouses, and international students.

3. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

3.1. Migrants' Social Networks

There are several micro and macro level factors that shape asylum seekers' and expatriates' social networks. First, different types of mobility and migrants' intention to permanently settle in the destination country are reflected in their personal networks. Cachia and Maya Jariego (2018) found that migrants who were settled in the host country were more likely to receive support predominantly from local ties, while the networks of those migrants who did not intend to permanently stay were more likely to be linked to the country of origin. Moving for professional and employment purposes also embeds migrants' mobility in formal employment structures, which already represent small cohesive communities facilitating the acquisition of new social ties (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018). Additionally, knowledge of the local language also affects migrants' integration process by contributing to migrants' shared understanding and ability to communicate with host country natives (Soehl & Waldinger, 2010). Migrants' legal status also has a significant bearing on their social integration, as not having the legal right to work can exacerbate economic inequality, negatively impacting immigrants' social networks as, for example, it might limit migrants' ability to share resources and consequently may destabilise exchanges within their social networks (Del Real, 2019). Moreover, as Lubbers et al. (2021) argue, migrants' opportunities to form new ties with locals are highly dependent on their position within their places of residence, and are heavily structured by their gender, race, and class. Accordingly, the same meeting mechanisms can lead to very different outcomes (integration vs segregation) depending on migrants' place of residence, education level, employment status, and levels of discrimination (Lubbers et al., 2021).

Regarding their transnationality, migrants' disadvantaged economic and social conditions have also been linked to the absence of transnational ties (Dahinden, 2005), as they negatively impact return visits and communication, two crucial elements of maintaining transnational ties. Return visits keep migrants' networks alive in the sending country and can reactivate pre-existing ties (Lubbers et al., 2010). Declining costs of communication technology also facilitate frequent interaction between migrants and those who remained behind. However, both communication and periodic travel require effort and resources from migrants, and thus are easier to arrange with a shorter geographic distance, a sufficient income, affordable internet, and phone access (Lubbers et al., 2021; Verdery et al., 2018). Theoretically, Wissink and Mazzucato (2018) posit that migrants' networks are embedded in migrants' individual opportunity structures, which are determined by their relationship preferences, resources, and available communication infrastructures.

Thus, due to the differences in their legal status and resources, the article puts forward the following hypotheses regarding asylum seekers' and expatriates' social networks:

> Hypothesis 1a: Expatriates' networks are larger, more efficient, and have a higher effective size.

> Hypothesis 1b: Expatriates have more transnational support ties than asylum seekers.

3.2. Migrants' Support Networks

Social support is an inherently relationship-based concept which highlights the assistive nature of personal relationships (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). Research posits that people are surrounded by a variety of social ties, which provide them with different supportive resources (Agneessens et al., 2006). To capture this diversity, it is common to differentiate between different forms of social support, such as emotional, instrumental, financial support and social companionship. Though the importance of social support for mental health outcomes is clear in general populations, having access to different sources of support is likely to be especially important for migrants, as it promotes resilience, integration, and the reestablishment of migrants' sense of identity (Abraham et al., 2018; Beirens et al., 2007).

The availability of social support in migrant networks is shaped by several factors. The structure of one's

personal network is believed to have a key influence on social support. For example, ties in bigger personal networks are less likely to provide social support, whereas ties in densely knit networks are more likely to provide social support (Wellman & Frank, 2001). Instrumental support may be sought through close ties, but also through transient acquaintances, or "weak ties," who have the necessary local knowledge but are outside of one's intimate social circle (Small, 2017). In the context of Turkish migrants living in Germany, it was also found that while high cohesion is beneficial for migrants' financial returns and care relations, a brokerage position is advantageous for information flows (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018).

Next, migrants' individual characteristics also shape their ability to access to social support. Employment status and income level have been linked to migrants' access to social support, as low-income communities are often characterised by resource scarcity and lower likelihood of reciprocal support exchanges (Menjívar, 2000). Time spent in the host country is also related to migrants' access to social support, as recent migrants tend to experience a temporary reduction in the amount of perceived social support, as well as a concentration of support functions (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018). Lastly, migrants' legal status and income level have also been positively linked to both providing and receiving financial and emotional support (Kornienko et al., 2018).

Besides individual characteristics, tie characteristics also impact the provision of social support to migrants. For instance, close ties are more likely to provide most forms of social support (Ryan et al., 2008; Wellman & Frank, 2001). Similarly, the relational context of a tie also impacts on its social support provision. Social companionship is likely to come from relationships with friends and colleagues, while workmates and neighbours are common sources of everyday informational support (Wellman & Frank, 2001). Amongst migrants, family ties are also major providers of supportive resources, particularly for financial resources, intra-generational social care (Bilecen, 2016), and emotional support (Ryan et al., 2008), while siblings and friends are also more likely to provide financial and emotional support to female migrants (Kornienko et al., 2018).

Lastly, the availability of social support is also dependent on the characteristics of network members. Women are known to provide more emotional support, while men are better at providing practical support (Dahinden, 2005; Wellman & Wortley, 1990). The geographical location of network members also plays a key role in their ability to provide support, even though its impact varies across different forms of social support. While it has very little impact on emotional support, it has a diminishing effect on practical support (Herz, 2015; Wellman & Wortley, 1990). Accordingly, transnational social ties are often mobilised for emotional support (Dahinden, 2005) and are crucial sources of childcare, while weak local ties often play an important role in the daily needs of childcare (Bojarczuk & Mühlau, 2018). The ethnicity of network members is also a determining factor in migrants' access to social support. Several studies have shown that cross-ethnic ties in the host country are important sources of instrumental and material support (Dahinden, 2005; Herz, 2015), while co-ethnic ties are common sources of emotional support (Dahinden, 2005). Lastly, conditions in the country of origin are also likely to impact alters' support-providing capacity, as unfavourable economic and political conditions can hinder alters' ability to provide migrants with financial and emotional support (Dahinden, 2005).

Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed regarding asylum seekers' and expatriates' access to social support:

Hypothesis 2a: Expatriates receive more social support than asylum seekers.

Hypothesis 2b: Migrants' legal status is likely to affect emotional and financial help more than social companionship.

4. Methods

4.1. Research Design and Data Collection

The study employed a parallel mixed-methods personal network design in combining personal network data with qualitative data based on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork. The data collection process took place in Budapest in 2016, over the course of eight weeks from the beginning of March. As part of the data collection process, demographic and personal network data was obtained from participants through an in-person survey. In 12 cases, it was also followed by a semi-structured interview, while in 15 cases I also had the opportunity to observe respondents in the context of their homes, which in most cases means different refugee shelters.

The first part of the survey obtained personal network data based on Barrera's social support survey (Barrera, 1986), focusing on three major dimensions of social support—financial aid, emotional support, and social companionship—and included three pertinent name generator questions:

1. Material support: "People often encounter unexpected negative events. If you suddenly found yourself in a financially difficult situation, whom would you ask for financial help?"
2. Emotional support: "From time to time, most people discuss important personal matters with other people. Who are the people with whom you usually discuss your own important personal matters?''
3. Social participation: "Relaxation and fun are also part of our daily lives. Who are the people you usually spend your free-time with?"

The survey also included name interpreter questions regarding the gender and geographical location of alters, as well as the length of the relationship between migrants and their alters and the kind of relationship they had, which were categorised as either romantic/spouse, family member, colleague, friend, or other. The survey also incorporated name interrelator questions, which required the respondents to indicate whether the nominated alters know each other. Replies were coded into three categories:

> 0: The two people do not know each other, or even if they do, they are not likely to talk to each other, even in ego's presence.
>
> 1: The two people do know each other, but they are not likely to talk to each other when ego is not around.
>
> 2: The two people do now each other and are likely to talk to each other even when ego is not present.

The last block of the survey also included several demographic questions regarding respondents' citizenship status, place and date of birth, gender, marital status, educational level, employment status, monthly income, and information about their migration trajectory, such as the time of their arrival to Hungary or reasons for migration.

Following the administering of the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with several participants. These often happened as the natural extension of the survey and offered valuable insights about respondents' experiences of living in Budapest as a migrant. Finally, I was also able to spend time with fifteen respondents in the context of their homes before or after administering the survey, most of whom were housed in the Hungarian Baptist Aid's Temporary Shelter for Refugee and Asylum Seeker Families in Budapest. To overcome the language barriers with those refugees who could speak neither English nor Hungarian well enough, social workers assigned some children who spoke Hungarian well enough to translate the conversation with their parents. As people live their lives in a natural rhythm at the shelter, my time there was punctuated by long pauses waiting for potential respondents to be available, which enabled me to get an intimate understanding of their daily lives and to actively engage with the children and other inhabitants as well.

4.2. Participants

Participants were recruited through snowball sampling with multiple entry points and comprise a diverse group. Out of the 33 participants, only 11 were either in the process of seeking asylum or had an already established legal status, as they were very hard to access as a population. Those I managed to reach, I was able to do so mostly through an official inquiry I addressed to the Hungarian Baptist Organisation and a weekend course offered to refugees at the Central European University. The other 22 participants of the study can be considered expatriates, defined as highly mobile professionals, their spouses and/or international students, who either worked (13 individuals) or studied (9 individuals) in Budapest at the time of my fieldwork. The sample consisted of 15 males and 18 females aged between 17 and 48 and came from 18 different countries (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the two groups.

	Expatriates			Asylum Seekers	
Average time in Hungary (in years)	2.9			3.3	
Average age	29.7			34.4	
Gender					
Female	12	54.5%		6	54.5%
Male	10	45.5%		5	45.5%
Country of origin					
USA	4	18.2%	Afghanistan	6	54.5%
Russia	3	13.6%	Ethiopia	2	18.2%
Spain	3	13.6%	Nigeria	1	9.1%
China	2	9.1%	Palestine	1	9.1%
Georgia	2	9.1%	Sudan	1	9.1%
India	2	9.1%			
Croatia	1	4.5%			
Iran	1	4.5%			
Lebanon	1	4.5%			
Philippines	1	4.5%			
Slovenia	1	4.5%			
Ukraine	1	4.5%			

4.3. Analysis

First, the personal networks of respondents were recreated and relevant ego network measures were computed using E-Net (Borgatti, 2006), which were compared across the two groups using two-tailed t-tests. Alter-alter relations were coded as present if the participant said that "two people either talk to each other without the presence of ego" or if they said that "the alters know each other, occasionally might even talk to each other but it is not very likely when ego is not present," as the ethnographic data showed that this definition of alter-alter ties offered a better representation of most asylum seekers' networks. Due to the specific living arrangements of asylum seekers in temporary shelters, many respondents seemed to have a disproportionately high number of people who they appeared to only "hang out with" but provided no major emotional or financial help. Thus, as financial and emotional support are argued to imply a closer relationship between ego and alters (Wellman & Frank, 2001), several, especially structural, network measures were computed twice: first, for all the alters featuring in ego's network (referred to as "full network"), and then only including those alters who provide either emotional or financial support to migrants (referred to as "close network"). This distinction allowed for gaining insights into the features of the closest and most supportive social relations of migrants. Also, as family ties are reasonably assumed to be the most stable ones in migrants' networks, the length of relationship between migrants and their social ties was computed without these ties as well, in order to capture the continuity or dissolution of non-kin relations in migrants' networks.

For hypothesis 2a, to assess differences in the overall level of social support of the two groups, the number of alters providing each type of support were summed up for each individual, which again were compared across the two groups using a two-tailed t-test. Similarly, access to each type of support was computed and compared across groups by adding up all alters who provided a given type of support.

For hypothesis 2b, to understand how different types of social support are impacted by migrants' transnationality and legal status, multi-level logistic regression models were applied at the dyadic level. Multi-level approaches are highly suitable for analysing personal networks—where alter-level characteristics are also likely to be dependent on ego's characteristics, leading to dependence or clustering if standard statistical tools were to be used—as multi-level approaches consider alter observations to be nested in egos (Perry et al., 2018). The dependent variable was a binary outcome, namely whether an alter provided the migrant with a given form of support; thus, separate logistic models were fitted, for each type of social support. The independent variables were different alter and ego characteristics, such as alter's gender, location, relation to ego, ego's gender, and ego's legal status (expatriate vs asylum seeker). To interpret the coefficients of significant terms in the multi-level logistic models, they can be raised to the exponent to obtain an odds ratio, giving the predicted probability of an alter with given traits to provide ego with a given type of support (Sommet & Morselli, 2017).

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Results

5.1.1. Hypothesis 1a: Expatriates' Networks Are Larger, More Efficient, and Have a Higher Effective Size

When looking at the average size of the full networks for both groups, we can see that expatriates indeed appear to have more ties, though this difference is statistically non-significant (Table 2). However, when looking at close networks only, expatriates' networks are more than twice as big as those of asylum seekers, indicating a statistically significant difference. When looking at other structural measures, we can also see that expatriates' full networks are indeed more efficient and have a larger effective size than those of asylum seekers, and when focusing only on close networks expatriates still outperform asylum seekers in terms of effective size.

There are also major differences regarding the type of relationships asylum seekers' and expatriates' networks consist of. A large difference can be observed between the portion of ties that the respondents consider as either "friend" or as "other." While 60.0% of expatriates' ties in the full networks are categorised as a friend, it is only 22.2% for asylum seekers. In contrast, expats categorised only 4.2% of all their ties as "other," while it is 40.0% for refugees. Additionally, there is a major difference in how long each group has known people in their networks. When looking at all alters, expats on average have known them for 9.98 years, while refugees only for 1.15 years. When excluding family ties, the gap narrows, yet it remains significant, with expats knowing their alters for 4.73 years on average and asylum seekers for 1.23 years.

5.1.2. Hypothesis 1b: Expatriates Have more Transnational Support Ties Than Asylum Seekers

As Table 2 shows, expatriates also have significantly more transnational ties than asylum seekers. When looking at the full networks of both groups, on average 49.6% of expatriates' networks are made up of transnational support ties, while it is only 18.7% for asylum seekers. When looking at close networks only, the difference further increases with 55.0% of expatriates' alters living in a different country, while it is only 17.6% for asylum seekers. Furthermore, when looking at the multiplexity of relationships, measured by the multistrandedness measure of Alexander et al. (2008), we can see that ties

Table 2. Summary of personal network measures of different groups of migrants.

	Full Networks			Close Networks		
Network measures	Asylum Seekers	Expatriates	p-value	Asylum Seekers	Expatriates	p-value
structural measures						
size	7.45	9.32	0.2161	2.73	5.95	0.0013***
density	0.33	0.23	0.0468**	0.35	0.26	0.1964
effective size	3.23	5.68	0.0068***	1.98	3.41	0.0078***
efficiency	0.44	0.60	0.0400**	0.50	0.58	0.3967
multiplexity	1.17	1.59	0.0003***			
constraint	0.50	0.37	0.0386*	0.68	0.44	0.0807*
compositional measures						
transnational ties (%)	18.71	49.64	0.0028***	17.57	54.95	0.0040***
female (%)	49.45	55.16	0.6074			
length of relationship (all ties)	1.15	9.78	0.0000***			
length of relationship (excluding family ties)	1.23	4.73	0.0002***			
Type of relationship (% of network)						
romantic partner/spouse	6.06	8.82	0.3837			
family member	31.72	24.30	0.5252			
colleague	0.00	2.72	0.2105			
friend	22.19	59.97	0.0062***			
other	40.02	4.18	0.0165**			

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

in expatriates' networks often provide multiple kinds of support, while asylum seekers tend to obtain different kinds of social support from different people.

5.1.3. Hypothesis 2a: Expatriates Receive More Social Support Than Asylum Seekers

Looking at Table 3, we can see that there is also a significant difference between expatriates' and asylum seekers' overall access to social support. On average, expatriates can access different forms of social support from 14.4 sources, while it is only 7.9 for asylum seekers. When looking at different kinds of support, the difference remains significant, with the exception of social companionship. Expatriates, on average, can rely on four people for financial help, while for asylum seekers it is only 1.3. Similarly, expatriates can seek emotional support from 4.4 people on average, while asylum seekers can, on average, rely on only 2.1 people for emotional support.

5.1.4. Hypothesis 2b: Migrants' Legal Status Is Likely to Affect Emotional and Financial Help More Than Social Companionship

As the results of the multi-level models show (Table 4), migrants' legal status has different effects on different types of social support. First, as Model 1 shows, financial help is affected by alters' gender and transnationality, as female alters are more than three times less likely to provide financial help than male ties, while transnational ties are 7.69 times more likely to provide such help. Additionally, being an asylum seeker also makes it 3.1 times less likely that a migrant would receive financial

Table 3. Asylum seekers' and expatriates' access to social support.

	Asylum Seekers	Expatriates	p-value
Type of social support			
Total	7.9	14.4	0.0005***
Financial	1.3	4.0	0.0002***
Emotional	2.1	4.4	0.0004***
Social Companionship	4.5	6.0	0.1466

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Table 4. Summary table of multi-level models of social support.

	Financial support (Model 1)		Emotional support (Model 2)		Social companion (Model 3)	
Variable	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value	Coefficient	p-value
Ego						
female	−0.94	(0.071)*	−1.09	(0.105)	0.29	(0.579)
asylum seeker	−1.13	(0.017)**	−1.81	(0.009)***	−1.09	(0.081)*
asylum seeker × female			1.85	(0.037)**		
Alter						
female	−1.12	(0.011)**	0.90	(0.017)**	0.08	(0.838)
transnational	2.04	(0.001)**	0.09	(0.858)	−2.62	(0.000)***
n dyads	160		160		160	

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

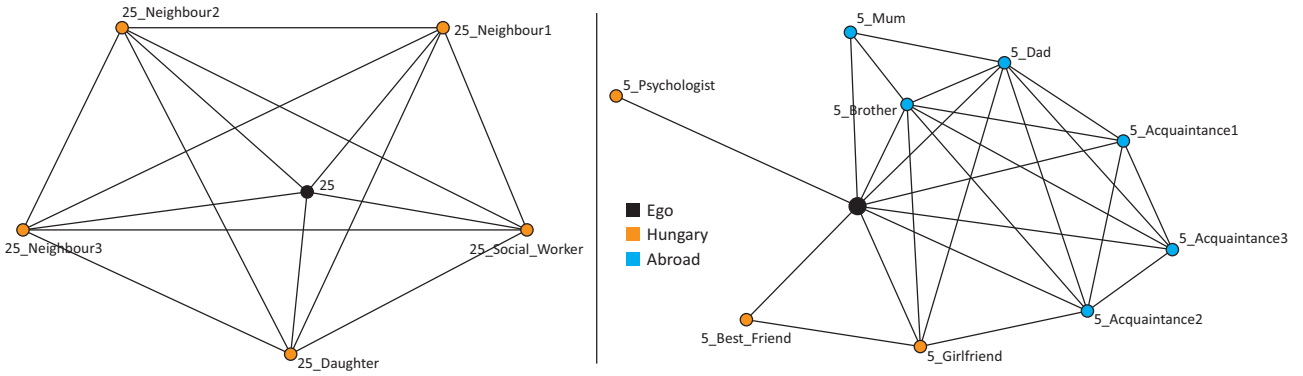
help. Second, as Model 2 suggests, asylum seekers are also 6.1 times less likely to receive emotional support than expatriates; however, as the significant positive interaction term shows, this effect is mediated by gender, as female asylum seekers are 6.36 times more likely to receive emotional support than male asylum seekers. The model captures another gendered aspect of emotional support, as female alters are also almost 2.5 times more likely to provide migrants with emotional support than male alters. Lastly, as Model 3 demonstrates, migrants' legal status has no strong bearing on their access to social companionship, as the only significant term affecting an alter's likelihood of spending their free time with an ego was their transnationality, which made it more than 13 times less likely that a given alter provides ego with social companionship due to the obvious limitation of geographical distance.

5.2. Discussion

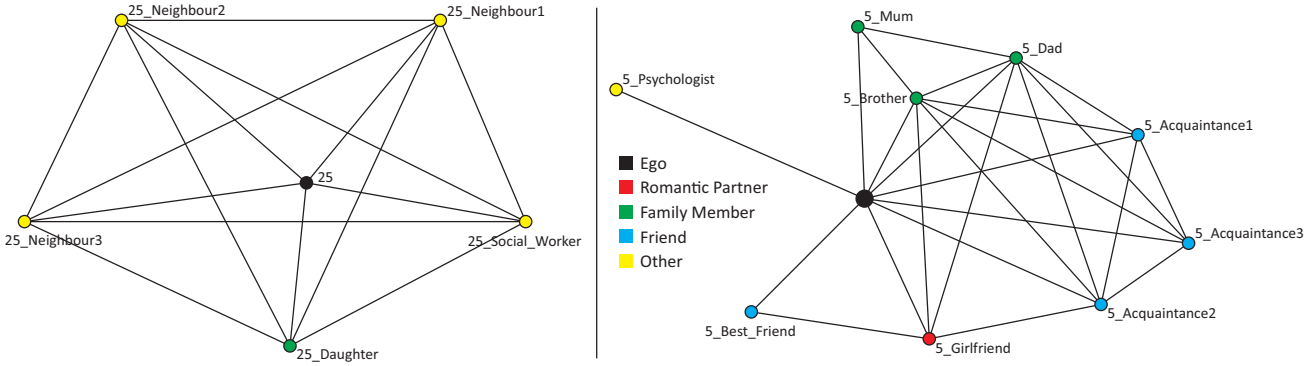
Taking a closer look at Leila's and Aarav's case (Figure 1) illuminates some of the processes through which these differences between asylum seekers' and expatriates' support networks emerged. Their networks were also chosen for visualization as they can be considered typical examples, with their network measures falling the closest to the respective central tendencies of each group. Aarav (pseudonym) is an Indian postgraduate student at an international university in Budapest who arrived in the country five years ago at the beginning of his studies. His support network consists of nine people and is dispersed across different countries. Only three of his network members live in Hungary, while his family and other friends live in different other countries. Most of his ties provide him with various forms of social support. His best friend and girlfriend are vital sources of all three kinds of social support, while for example his parents in India provide him with emotional and financial help. His research visit to a Latin American country also enriched his network with three acquaintances he is regularly in touch with through online communication tools, while besides communicating online, he has also been able to maintain a close relationship with his brother and parents in India through regular visits.

In contrast, Leila (pseudonym) is a female Afghan asylum seeker, who arrived in Hungary a year ago and lives in a temporary shelter provided by the Hungarian Baptist Church. Her support network consists of five people and is centred around the Shelter. It includes her toddler daughter, a social worker and three other asylum seekers. As neither her legal nor her maternal status allows her to work, she spends most of her time with her daughter at the shelter, where she socialises with other Afghan mothers, who are also exclusively her source of social companionship. In contrast, she relies exclusively on one of the social workers for emotional and financial support as she does not have any transnational support ties either.

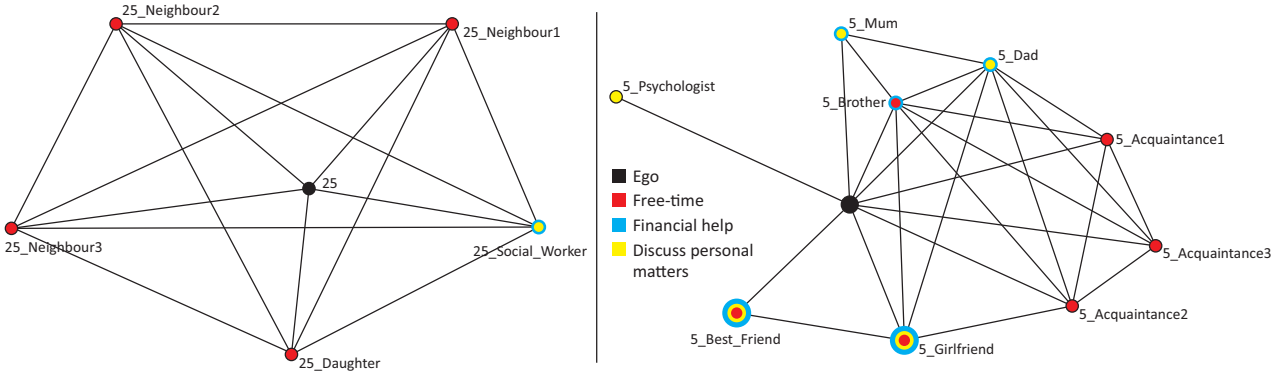
The differences in the support networks of asylum seekers and expatriates reveal several factors that affect migrants' capacity to build a transnational social space. Expatriates' networks closely mirror a transnational pattern. The high proportion of ties who do not live in Hungary and the relatively longer time they had known people in their networks show how migration, for them, did not entail a clear break in their networks causing the loss of social ties in their country of origin. Instead, it rather meant the expansion of their social networks by acquiring additional ties in the host country, while also maintaining their social ties in the country of origin and even other countries, creating a transnational social space. In contrast, asylum seekers' networks at first glance seem to reflect an assimilatory process, where the act of migration entails a rather clear break with the society of origin, as reflected by the high proportion of alters living in the host country, as well as by the relative newness of these ties, suggesting the loss of most pre-migratory social ties. However, instead of a progressive substitution of these contacts with new host country ties to natives, as classical assimilation theories would suggest, the diminished size of asylum seekers' networks and high proportion of ties to other asylum



(a) Location of alters in a typical refugee (left) and expatriate (right) network.



(b) Types of relations in a typical refugee (left) and expatriate (right) network.



(c) Social support provision of alters in a typical refugee (left) and expatriate (right) network.

Figure 1. Visualisations of a typical support network of an asylum seeker (left) and an expatriate (right).

seekers rather suggest a marginalised position within the host society. As several interviewed asylum seekers explained, they often face difficulties in establishing new ties, as local people, in the words of an interviewed Nigerian asylum seeker, are often "xenophobic and full of prejudices… who do not even try to get to know [him]." Additionally, as the interviews revealed, the process of rebuilding asylum seekers' support networks is also significantly hindered by language barriers. Living in the rather specific linguistic context of Hungary has been challenging for both expatriates and asylum seekers. However, as one expatriate's case shows, most expats can proficiently communicate in English allowing them to establish new social ties:

> Yeah, the language is really hard. But I have been very lucky. The people I know all know English. It might be a disadvantage for some jobs, but I guess I just know the right places [to find other English speakers].

In contrast, asylum seekers face a significant language barrier, which in some cases is exacerbated by the lack of basic literacy skills, further limiting their capacity to repair their diminished support networks. For example, while some of the interviewed asylum seekers could communicate well enough in English or Hungarian to conduct the interviews in one of these languages, others only knew their native language and required the presence of a translator. In several cases, where

these asylum seekers' children have been enrolled in Hungarian schools they often act as the main communication channel between their parents, social workers and other members of the host society, severely hindering these asylum seekers' capacity to establish social ties outside their linguistic community.

The striking absence of transnational ties from asylum seekers' support networks also highlights the importance of individual opportunity structures for the maintenance of such ties. In the absence of legal right to employment, most asylum seekers live on an income significantly below the national minimum wage, highly restricting their means to online communication tools. Additionally, their legal status, coupled with their often traumatic background and political instability in their country of origin further eliminates even the possibility of return visits, significantly curtailing the availability of transnational social support to them.

Additionally, as the results show, these differences in the integration process of asylum seekers and expatriates also significantly affect their access to social support, leaving asylum seekers with highly limited access to social support. Besides differences in the number of people they can rely on for vital emotional and financial support, having fewer multiplex ties also leaves asylum seekers in a further disadvantaged position when it comes to social support, as multiplex support ties provide better support due to a stronger relationship and more detailed knowledge of each other's needs (Wellman & Wortley, 1990). Moreover, even though a significant proportion of expatriates' social ties does not live in the host country, these transnational social ties can often provide them with sufficient emotional and financial support, as also shown by the results of multi-level models. As Leila's case also highlights, while the number of "other" kinds of ties was negligible in the networks of expatriates, 40% of refugees' social relations were categorised as such relations and served as their major source of local emotional and financial support. As the interviews and ethnographic observation revealed, these ties mostly include social workers, other asylum seekers and/or legal advisors, whom asylum seekers often excessively rely on for different forms of assistance. This also illuminates how, in the absence of other supportive ties, asylum seekers try to seek vital social support from alternative sources, who themselves also have limited capacity to provide them with social support albeit for different reasons.

Finally, the results have also illuminated how migrants' transnationality and legal status—and consequent opportunity structures—have different impacts on their access to different kinds of social support. Transnational ties are vital sources of emotional and financial support, thus their absence from asylum seekers' networks is a significant contributing factor towards asylum seekers' diminished access to social support. Moreover, the significance of legal status as a predictor for receiving emotional and financial support shows that it is not only the lack of transnational ties that contributes to asylum seekers' disadvantaged position, but even their existing ties are less likely to provide them with help as they are often also constrained by different economic, legal, and political factors. Additionally, the significance of the interaction term between migrants' gender and legal status for the availability of emotional support does not only highlight the gendered nature of the socialisation process of asylum seekers, where women often interact more with other women at the shelters, but also cultural and gender differences in seeking emotional support. A highly illuminating example is a middle-aged male asylum seeker from Ethiopia who, when asked with whom he discusses his personal matters, replied with "God" and explained that in times of difficulties he always reads and consults the Quran for guidance and solace. This example also demonstrates a broader need for more culturally sensitive ways of mapping support networks, especially emotional support, in a non-Western cultural context.

6. Conclusion

The article has explored how the characteristics of different migrant groups shape their integration processes and access to social support within the same national context. To illuminate the complex interplay between these two processes from a comparative perspective, I conducted a mixed-method personal network study of asylum seekers and expatriates in Budapest, Hungary. The results have shown that migrants form a heterogenous group, where their transnational practices and social support networks are actively shaped by several factors, such as their legal status, gender, language skills, employment opportunities and sending country conditions. As a result, while expatriates maintain extensive transnational networks and can easily access all forms of social support, asylum seekers' networks are highly localised and often reflect their marginalised position, with limited access to financial and emotional support. These findings highlight the importance of migrants' individual opportunity structures and show that the maintenance of a transnational support networks is not always a personal choice but rather a privilege of a few migrants.

The article offers a contribution to our knowledge on migration in several ways. It contributes to the debates surrounding theories of migrant integration by presenting empirical evidence on the vastly different integration processes which different migrants go through within the same host society. Specifically, it illustrates several individual and contextual factors which facilitate or hinder the emergence of migrants' transnational social fields. It also contributes to our understanding of how migrants' transnationality impacts their support networks from a novel comparative perspective, highlighting how transnational ties can be a valuable source of emotional and financial support under the right conditions. The observed differences also illuminate some of the mechanisms behind the vastly different migratory

experiences of refugees and highly-skilled professionals, highlighting a general need for a multi-layered and differentiated theoretical approach to migrants' integration. The article's findings also shed some light on the difficulties asylum seekers encounter during their integration process, as well as some of the major limitations they face in accessing social support, which can have far-reaching policy implications for the integration and well-being of involuntary migrants. Lastly, the article also furthers our understanding of how migrants' transnationality may intersect with their support networks, under different conditions.

Finally, it is also important to note some of the limitations of the presented work. While the sampling method tried to achieve diversity, asylum seekers in Hungary represent a typical case of hard-to-reach populations, with highly restricted access. Thus, the sample cannot be considered a representative sample as, for example, asylum seekers living in refugee camps in smaller Hungarian cities might have drastically different experiences. Additionally, the data represents only a snapshot of migrants' integration processes and support networks and for a more thorough understanding of the underlying mechanisms behind the emergence of these networks a longitudinal approach would be desirable. Thus, future research should consider undertaking the study of this topic from a longitudinal perspective with larger and more representative samples.

Acknowledgments

The author is currently an excellence postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Trento. Data for this project was collected while she was based at Central European University. The data was analysed and the manuscript prepared while she was affiliated with the Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis at the University of Manchester.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Dorottya Hoór has recently obtained her PhD in sociology at the Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis at the University of Manchester and currently is an excellence postdoctoral research fellow at the Research Methods Centre of the Department of Sociology at the University of Trento. Her main interests centre around understanding how social networks shape individual outcomes, especially in the context of migration, and her doctoral research explored the relationship between returning migrants' social networks and re-integration process in Hungary.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 266–277
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4546

Article

Differentiated Embedding and Social Relationships Among Russian Migrant Physicians in Finland: A Narrative Socio-Analysis

Driss Habti

Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland, Finland; E-Mail: driss.habti@uef.fi

Submitted: 24 May 2021 | Accepted: 28 October 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Migrants' processes of (dis)embedding in local and transnational social networks have received growing attention in recent years, but most research focuses on low-skilled migration. This study explores the affordances and challenges that Russian physicians, as a high-skilled migrant group in Finland, experience in these processes in work and non-work domains. Based on semi-structured biographical interviews with 26 Russian physicians, the study employs Bourdieu's socio-analysis to analyze their narratives. The results reveal that Russian migrant physicians negotiate and experience differentiated embedding across work–life domains in local and transnational contexts. They mostly develop collegial relationships with Finnish colleagues and benefit from fulfilling professional relationships in the work domain. However, alongside time and efforts needed for building social ties, various factors often impede friendship making and socialization with locals beyond the work domain. These physicians cope with individual life circumstances through their enduring and supportive relationships with their Russian relatives and colleagues–friends. These results indicate that high-skilled migrants have a greater opportunity to connect professionally with locals than low-skilled migrants, but experience similar challenges to the latter in building close personal relationships.

Keywords
embedding; friendship; Russian migrant physicians; social relationships; socio-analysis; work–life domains

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

High-skilled migration research on social networks, friendship making, and the resources they provide in social integration has burgeoned in the last decade (cf. Ryan, 2011, 2015), although research has focused primarily on social networks of "low-skilled" migrants (Lubbers et al., 2021). Research interest in work–life domains among high-skilled migrants has been embedded in the academic tradition of global economy and labor market integration in such disciplines as human resource development and management, political economy, and human geography (Favell et al., 2007; Habti, 2012, pp. 149–151). Empirical studies across disciplines have provided insights into the employability and career mobility of high-skilled migrants as a fundamental feature of social integration in receiving countries (cf. Habti, 2012; van Riemsdijk & Wang, 2017). However, beyond professional opportunities in the work environment, transnational mobility, and networking, the "human face" (Favell et al., 2007) of their social lives has been little considered although these latter may be characterized by challenges in socialization and friendship making (Ryan, 2011; Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). Research in the Nordic countries has shown that high-skilled migrants often experience challenges in social integration related to language, sociocultural norms, and friendship making (Habti, 2014; Povrzanović-Frykman & Mozetič, 2020), and adjustment to informal social settings, acculturation, and identity negotiation (Habti, 2012, pp. 149–151; Lahti, 2013).

Forming social networks is "the product of endless effort to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits''

(Bourdieu, 1986, p. 90), while social relationships are "conduits for flows of material and non-material resources" (Bilecen & Lubbers, 2021, p. 838). Building social relationships with local natives require much time, effort, and nurturing, because they are triggered by opportunities, structures, skills, and shared interests (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). Research on low-skilled migrants found that social networks were ethnically or racially homogenous in a wide range of relationships, from marriage to work relationships and old-school friendship ties (Ryan, 2011). Nevertheless, research has lately shown interest in high-skilled migrants' social embedding and networking outside the work domain.

Building on a range of theories and concepts on social embedding, migrant networks, and social relationships, this study contributes to existing research by adopting a work–life approach to identify and understand the affordances and challenges Russian migrant physicians experience in apparently diverse and dynamic processes of embedding. Conceptually, "embedding" is used to understand the diversity of migrant's ties as they perform various functions across various social settings (Ryan, 2011, 2015). Moreover, it may carry less normative theoretical baggage than "integration" and "assimilation" theories, which overlooked the dynamics of embeddedness over time (Lubbers et al., 2021). The study draws on qualitative biographical interviews from 26 Russian migrant physicians, and uses Bourdieu's (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) socio-analysis of narratives and meaning-making at the micro-level. It examines what facilitates and inhibits social embedding, access to and maintenance of social relationships in different work–life domains in the context of Russian migrant physicians.

2. Migration of Russian Physicians in Finland

Finland is a small and highly homogeneous society of five million people, with an immigrant community of three percent. The Russian-speaking community is the largest foreign language group in Finland, comprising almost 21 percent (around 79,000 people) of foreign language speakers (Habti, 2019). Most Russian immigrants live in the Helsinki area in the south and in eastern border cities, where their contacts with Russia are maintained through cross-border mobility. They actively participate in creating extensive transnational social ties and networks in both countries (Kemppainen et al., 2021). Generally, they are considered less visible and culturally more proximal to the Finnish population than other ethnic migrant groups. However, studies show they experienced discrimination based on social, political, and historical grounds (Liebkind et al., 2016). Moreover, high-skilled migrants in culturally diverse workplaces face stigma because of their "Russianness" when negotiating their cultural identity (Lahti, 2013).

Russian migrant physicians are the largest group of foreign-born physicians, and their migration has developed through different channels since the 1990s (Habti, 2019). Their migration can be attributed to the post-Soviet Union crisis and the ensuing deterioration of socio-economic and political conditions. An EU-Russia partnership agreement made in 1997 fueled work-related migration to Finland. Besides, major EU regulations regarding residence procedures and labor integration transition governed mobility and migration from Russia. Finland has suffered from shortages of physicians, especially in rural and remote areas, and has started to recruit foreign-born physicians. The number of Russian migrant physicians remains small, though it has increased in the last decade from 357 to 644 physicians in 2016, with a large proportion of women, at 60 percent. Habti (2019) found that their motivation and aspiration for migrating are better career expectations, quality of life, and the prospect of permanent stay. Moreover, major drivers for migration for many physicians were work, marriage, and Ingrian Finns' repatriation.

3. Theoretical Considerations

Granovetter (1985, p. 490) developed the concept of embeddedness that emphasized the "role of concrete personal relationships and structures" in individual agency, necessitating a continual effort to develop, reform, and maintain them. The convertibility of social networks into actual or virtual resources, accessed or employed in social relationships, equals "social capital" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). Korinek et al. (2005, p. 780) defined embeddedness as "social relationships that foster a sense of rootedness and integration." They added that:

> Embeddedness emerges through a variegated web of social ties, some of which link migrants to kin, co-villagers, and others with whom they are familiar and share a common background, and others of which link migrants to new, diverse, urban-based folks who share their new environment. (Korinek et al., 2005, p. 782)

Research into conceptualization of migrants' experience of social networks proposed ways of thinking about nuanced details of migrants' engagement with people and places constituting their relational social world, and which mitigate such fixed concepts as "inclusion" and "exclusion," "integration," and "assimilation." As Lubbers et al. (2021, pp. 529–530) observe, critics of assimilation and integration theories indicated the "methodological nationalism" implied in these theories, which "focus only on that part of the migration experience that falls within the boundaries of the receiving nation states, reproducing state projects" and "ignore the internal heterogeneity of 'ethnic communities' " (see also Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002).

Migrant social networks and relationships may illuminate their dynamic and multi-layered sociability patterns over time in work–life domains. Importantly,

their study avoids pitfalls of the "ethnicity-centrism" and methodological nationalism of previous research (Dahinden, 2016). Considering the interest in migrants' embeddedness in local and transnational social systems, the concept of "embedding" has been used to understand how migrants' processes of becoming embedded in these systems unfold (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014, 2015). Embedding is a useful concept for understanding the dynamic process through which migrants build social relationships and attachments, and access resources with specific people across different life domains. Moreover, "differentiated embedding" highlights the characteristics of various levels of attachment and belonging migrants negotiate (Ryan, 2018, p. 237). Ryan's emphasis on such conceptual approach seeks to overcome the "simplistic" and one-dimensional views of migrant integration and networking. It also illuminates migrants' complex experiences of diverse social ties more subtly, moving beyond polarized accounts of success/failure binaries in migrants' integration paradigm.

A similar line of research emphasized processes of social embedding are fundamentally "shaped by factors beyond individuals' agency" (Lubbers et al., 2021, p. 546). Embeddedness may be influenced by other factors such as structural conditions, life events, life stages and socio-demographic factors. To understand the different degrees of embedding, we need to examine the major domains within which embeddedness occurs and the web of social relationships that develops. Korinek et al. (2005) suggest four domains of embeddedness which may overlap: household, workplace, neighborhood, and wider community. Such multi-dimensional aspects of embedding allow identification of various factors and degrees of embeddedness in specific domains (work, nonwork), and different spaces of networking (local, transnational, physical, virtual). Besides, the relational aspects of networks are important for facilitating migrants' embedding. As Hite (2003, p. 13) explains, "relational embeddedness" does not represent "a single, dichotomous construct" within social ties that show if a person is either embedded or not, but "most strong network ties, like most groups of friends, are of sufficient variation to be more precisely classified and differentiated by the specific characteristics of their social relationships." Ryan and Mulholland (2015, p. 141) call for understanding such characteristics by exploring the nature of migrants' social embedding and relationships in particular networks, and their changing needs and priorities through their life courses.

Social networks in the workplace are "conduits of information and resources exchanged by actors in pursuit of instrumental objectives" (Podolny & Baron, 1997, p. 675), "regulating influence and reputation, providing socialization, mentoring and models for constructing identities" (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004, p. 6). Lately, an extensive body of research has addressed the role of the workplace as a source of social relationships, and the influence of networks in the workplace, especially informal relationships (Yakubovich & Burg, 2019), in facilitating opportunities for professional competence and career progression within and between organizations. Informal coworker relationships are important sources of support and friendship (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016). Particularly, work relationships are effective when they include sparse weak ties to enable a flow of information and learning (Blouin, 2018), and strong ties based on loyalty and mutual support (Mikkola et al., 2018). Coworker relationships can, however, turn into "voluntary and holistic" friendships, cherishing positive attitudes, social and emotional support (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016, p. 123).

Work and nonwork experiences are generally understood as subjective perceptions of interrelations between the two (Povrzanović-Frykman & Mozetič, 2020). People need to have shared interests to access and form new interpersonal relationships in social domains of work, family, hobbies, or the residential neighborhood. Beyond work-related "privileges" high-skilled migrants may accumulate in the work domain, their social life involves non-instrumental aspects such as socialization for the sake of "real, close friendship" (Ryan, 2011, p. 722). These experiences may foster local activities and close relationships within different social networks. Such relationships may also give access to positive resources for individuals such as interpersonal trust, reciprocity, social support, a sense of belonging, and identity. However, like low-skilled migrants, they may have negative experiences in the local society, such as social and racialized categorization, and failed sociocultural adjustment because of the missing cultural and ethnic proximity with local society (Habti, 2014; Lahti, 2013). Such challenges may emerge with disadvantageous outcomes in culturally diverse workplaces (cf. Habti, 2012, pp. 149–151; van Riemsdijk et al., 2016), even when high-skilled migrants are assumed to fare well in professional life.

Because friendships are usually viewed as dyadic interpersonal relationships, their social significance may be overlooked. Social relationships such as friendships do not simply represent relations between two people; they connect overlapping networks of relations between different people, usually through shared interests and experiences in particular temporal and spatial contexts (Ryan, 2015). Furthermore, migrants' exchange of support with co-ethnics and co-nationals in local society (Ryan, 2011) signals their importance in the adjustment to that society. Many studies indicated that such networks tend to support migrants with opportunities by providing important resources to their members (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015). In exploring the characteristic composition of relationships, we may understand whether and why migrants experience transversal social embedding and ties that may intersect, for example, with ethnic-national backgrounds, within local and transnational spaces of interactions. However, shared interests and opportunity structures are sources of friendship making

and networking, which challenge the simplistic assumption of sought out national and ethnic "enclaves" (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014).

Moreover, interpersonal relationships can be lasting or fleeting in the space of flows. Networking in such contexts necessitates time, efforts, specific interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and language skills from high-skilled migrants. They may draw on high levels of these sources to build a range of social ties in the receiving society (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015). Additionally, age-related social relationships, networking formation and maintenance, and the effects of career stages on such ties are important to consider (Wrzus et al., 2013) because they influence the meanings and importance of ties. To illustrate, intermarriage can be a resource of integration and broad social ties for female migrant spouses in work–life domains (Jääskeläinen, 2003); otherwise, it may instill loneliness for them (Koelet & de Valk, 2016).

Migrants are often embedded in and negotiate long-distance ties of different forms of transnational relationships across countries (Bilecen & Lubbers, 2021). Among their transnational experiences and practices are relationships between family members living in the sending and receiving countries, as an existential form of familyhood over time and space (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). These ties provide resources in the form of "social remittances" such as ideas, *savoir-faire*, and social capital (Levitt, 2001), and emotional and care support (Kemppainen et al., 2021) generated through internet-based communication and co-presence. Dahinden (2009) observes that transnational ties and practices include reciprocity between individuals, groups, and communities, solidarity among ethnic groups, trust, and cooperation behind these relational connections. However, research shows human activity remains embedded in geographical locations and social structures (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 236), accentuating local and in-person embedding and networking. While ICTs enable online communication, co-presence remains important for forming and maintaining social relationships in different life domains. Moreover, beyond family ties, friendship remains "the best quality in our personal relationships" (Pahl, 2000, p. 43) not only for meetings and communication, but in providing intersubjective spaces for personal and emotional support.

Migrants' diverse experiences of embedding and social relationships need to be seen as a multi-level process of managing work and nonwork domains, as Ryan (2018) highlighted, across different layers or sectors of society. Conceptualizing embeddedness as multi-layered can explain the migrant's experience of social embedding and relationships, and the determinants of their processes. This approach may explain the ways Russian migrant physicians' ties are formed, the social structures and locations in which they unfold, and reasons why they are embedded in some domains and disembedded in others. Building on the theoretical discussion, the empirical originality surrounds analysis of the affordances and challenges this high-skilled migrant group experiences in their social embedding.

4. Data and Methods

This article presents findings from semi-structured narrative interviews with 26 Russian migrant physicians, conducted in various Finnish cities between 2014 and 2015. It is part of a research project on their career mobility that seeks to capture their perceptions and lived experiences, including social integration in work and nonwork settings. Russian migrant physicians constitute the second-largest foreign-born group after the Swedish (Habti, 2019). The majority of respondents were recruited using a purposive sampling strategy based on the information retrieved from the Finnish Medical Association on registered physicians in Finland. The sample was completed with snowball sampling, by asking the first group of respondents to name other candidates to participate. The sample is unevenly split between 22 females and four males, which is partly due to the higher presence of female Russian physicians in Finland (Habti, 2019). They migrated to Finland between the late 1980s and 2000s in their early or mid-career stages, which reflects the major trend of their migration to Finland. On average, they had lived in Finland for more than 15 years and worked for around 14 years. Their length of residence ranged between eight and 35 years, providing diverse migration trajectories and experiences. Many held dual citizenship, were married to Finnish citizens, and had children (see Supplementary File).

The interviews were conducted mostly on Skype or in phone calls, while a few were held face-to-face. Most interviewees had difficulty finding convenient time for their interview. The interviews were conducted mostly in Finnish and Russian in accordance with interviewees' preference and lasted between one and a half to two hours. A comprehensive content analysis of the transcripts was performed and coded manually, and the coding was undertaken within and across the transcripts to capture the characteristics of individual narratives and extract the themes shared by interviewees. The transcripts provided rich data, including the interviewees' views of their social networks and relationships in work–life domains. The cited quotations were translated from Russian or Finnish to English. For reasons of confidentiality, personal information such as real names, professional specialization, and locations are undisclosed, and names are pseudonymized. The narrative analysis was guided by grounded theory and draws on Bourdieu's socio-analysis. In his interpretative methodology, the units of analysis are the relational dynamics between actors, contexts, and structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 63). Finding a "logic" in these units' mutual constitution, socio-analysis can reveal the interviewees' self-interpretations in biographies, strategies, practices, and the structures governing their life courses.

The methodological approach is useful in exploring interviewees' narration of experiences and reflections, capturing insights into the complexity, diversity, and intensity of social relationships in which migrants are embedded within specific networks in work–life domains. Especially relevant are the major determinants and content of migrants' social relationship formations, and the meaning of their (dis)embedding. The analysis section shows the transversally emerging themes in the interview data among the interviewees. It is organized in three subsections, based on forms of social relationships and embeddedness discussed in the theoretical literature: the local work domain, the local life domain, and transnational work–life domains. Each subsection is split into themes characterizing respondents' experiential perceptions of (dis)embedding and social relationships in work and nonwork, local and transnational settings. The themes are not interpreted as separate but as interconnected aspects of general patterns. The concluding section discusses the findings and outlines the study's main contribution and its relevance to the research area of high-skilled migration.

5. Findings

5.1. Embedding in Work Domain

The interviewees' narratives support recent empirical research that the workplace is not an opportunity structure for close social ties and friendships between migrant professionals and local colleagues, but only for formation and maintenance of "friendly" professional relationships, as previous studies found (Habti, 2014; Povrzanović-Frykman & Mozetič, 2020). Professional networking is "as much performed on the ground of the corporate world as at the top" (Wittel, 2001, p. 56). As an "opportunistic" resource (Ryan, 2011), such relationships are elemental in boosting professional development, competence, and job opportunities. However, strengthening professional relationships is often part of the job of collegial coworkers. For example, Vladimir, a late career specialist in his 50s, described his relationship with local colleagues as "neutral" and characterized by "mutual respect according to the principle of collegiality." As Ryan (2011) indicates, the value of relationships partly depends on the willingness to share information and know-how. The interviewees emphasized the interprofessional exchange basis with local colleagues on the acquisition of information, skills, and experience in their relationships, especially in their initial career-stage after migration.

Several interviewees had opportunities to develop "good" relations with Finnish peers, and often alluded to the benefits of getting support from Finnish managers (Mikkola et al., 2018). For example, Tatjana, a late career GP aged 55, referred to the role of managers as trustworthy personal contacts in consulting and supporting her: "I always get help, advice and consultation from managers….I got so much help and support from my senior physician and I knew I could trust her." On the occasions of organizational and professional events such as trainings, these conduits of information and advice are important as they allow interprofessional encounters and learning. However, most interviewees reiterated the fact that interprofessional relationships were fundamentally work-related only, and served as an important career resource especially for younger physicians, depending on employee turnover, as Irina, an early-career GP aged 36, explained:

> If you encounter mobility between different medical centers, employee turnover doesn't matter. You do your work, communicate with colleagues in the canteen, discuss the weather forecast and travel plans. What matters is probably the motivation to learn more and acquire experience for specialization. But if you work in a department with a low employee turnover for a longer time, this has a big impact, because much depends on how colleagues perceive you, and how you position yourself among them in your relationships.

Irina's conditions of rewarding professional relationships spanning long-term work togetherness are rich sources of learning and experience, but also building propitious interpersonal relations. Hence, long-term work relations may transform professional ties to personal ones, particularly among younger respondents. However, many interviewees highlighted the professional nature of their embedding in the workplace, their interpersonal relationships with colleagues remained "neutral" and "shallow,'' and restricted within use of and communication through their workplace's intranet. Such infrastructures reduce face-to-face physical meetings and interconnectivity across organizations, which may impede the transformation of interprofessional relationships into close friendships. For example, Olga, a late career GP aged 55, described her "neutral" contact with Finnish colleagues, because they often moved, and she spends most working time in her office: "I work in my office where I consult patients. I participate in meetings along colleagues when our manager gives reports….I have neutral relationships with staff because they change frequently.''

Qualifying relationships as "neutral" reinforces the relatively separate distinctiveness between relationships in work and nonwork domains, between "friendly" work relations and voluntary personal friendships (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016). Katarina, a late career specialist aged 54, mentioned: "I rarely meet colleagues at work in the coffee room. I don't generally consider colleagues as important as the team I work with." Tania, an early career GP aged 33, differentiates between relationships in work and nonwork life domains, when she remarked: "Work relationship should always be work-related. We come to the hospital to work, not to make friends." This tenet

resonates with the position on coworker relationship in the Finnish culture that differentiates between work and nonwork personal relationships, though they may be characterized by personal companionship (Mikkola et al., 2018).

People are more likely to help and support each other if there is a strong bond of trust and loyalty between them. Such bonds in coworker relations can turn into voluntary reciprocal friendships (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016). Few interviewees experienced this transformation into close friendship with Finnish colleagues. Ksenia, a divorced mid-careerist aged 42, is a rare case whose small network of normal friends consists mainly of Finnish colleagues, as she mentioned: "There aren't many friends, but we have good relations….It's not such special friendship[s] at work. My social network is more work-related." The characteristic of normality here infers the absence of close ties. Katarina, living and working in a peripheral town, has solely Finnish friends, but she confessed: "I hoped for more friends from my origin [country], but it hasn't happened. I lived twenty years in a quiet provincial place where there are few Russians." Being married with a Finn might have shaped her social embedding within local Finnish contacts-friends. Nevertheless, there are few cases that sustained close ties between Russian and Finnish coworkers within the work domain.

Most interviewees developed friendships with conational Russian colleagues at work. To illustrate, Anastasia, a mid-career specialist aged 43, developed intimate friendship with her former colleague from Russia Olga who supported her when she moved to Finland for work: "We worked together many years in the same medical institution in Russia. We both have friends-colleagues who moved to Finland before us." Olga provided Anastasia with instrumental support sharing important procedural information with her. They somehow transformed their weak tie, a dyadic relationship of professional and interpersonal interests into friendship. Anastasia and Olga developed close friendship based on loyalty and mutual support, and efforts and time given for such relationships. Their close relationships can be explained by their former ties in Russia before migrating to Finland.

5.2. Embedding in Nonwork Domains

Migrants' coethnic ties are often assumed to be nurtured by emotional support, reciprocity, and trust (Ryan, 2011). The narratives generally reveal that most interviewees formed friendships and networks with Russian migrants in work and nonwork domains. As high-skilled professionals with a busy workload, an important aspect raised among interviewees is the time and effort needed to build meaningful friendships. The interviewees referred to occasional gatherings, virtual communication, and phone calls as forms of socialization. Maria, an early career specialist aged 31, stated: "Work takes a lot of time. There are many Russian doctors with whom I meet and talk in leisure time. We call each other and sometimes meet." Ksenia interacts with friends "more on the internet, because we all have our own lives and jobs. We don't always have the energy or time to go out together, but almost every weekend we do something, going to the theatre, bowling, or walking." Spatial distancing in her Finnish provincial town reduced Anastasia's socialization with friends: "I can't say I interact intensively with friends. We live in different towns and usually call each other once a week."

Many interviewees discussed the challenges confronted in building close ties outside work, despite frequent professional meeting opportunities. Generally, they confessed becoming close friends with Russian community members. Ivan, a late career specialist aged 52, observed: "I prefer to interact with Russians. I don't have meetings with colleagues outside work. I don't have common interests." Apparently, the narratives reveal their easiness to meet other Russians, because they shared common interests in friendships, a similar culture, language, and roots. As Kennedy (2005, p. 188) argues, strong bonds of friendship, defined by "reciprocity and closeness," can be strengthened by the interviewees' shared transnational experiences. Their migration experiences provided a common motivation for friendship making among these migrants which extended to their families. Additionally, Julia, an early career specialist aged 31, referred to the language barrier: "I have more friends from our Russian culture than work….Finnish language was a challenge at first… and was very stressful." Katarina highlighted her lack of emotional support from friends in her life in a provincial town: "I don't have female Russian-speaking friends, and it actually affects me." Slava, a mid-career specialist aged 40, acknowledged her limited interaction with Finns because of cultural and language differences, and the perceived lack of openness of Finns to foreigners:

> I interact mostly with Russian friends. I have good relations with some neighbors. We meet sometimes in the yard and chat. But I couldn't say I interact much with Finns, or have Finnish friends….It's a problem because people aren't open to interaction, especially those who live in the north. I can understand them, because it's very difficult to accept someone from a different culture with a poor command of Finnish.

Most interviewees did not refer to their residential neighbors probably because the neighborhood was not one of their meeting opportunities. Finnish neighbors may be reluctant to build new friendships with migrants because they already have established local ties (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). Moreover, immigrants in northern Finland experience limited acceptance among Finnish society (Yeasmin, 2012). For Slava, the northern periphery as a spatiality of socialization may challenge friendship making with locals. The extent to which social

networks give access to social support depends on migrants' positions in the spatial and temporal context (Ryan & Mulholland, 2015).

As Lubbers et al. (2021, p. 546) found, building social relationships with locals depends partly on "the cohesiveness of the primary networks of local migrants and natives in the place, and their intersection with factors such as race, gender and social class." Under similar structural conditions, some interviewees succeeded in making Finnish friends outside work mostly because of intermarriage, while others failed, and instead, their social ties and friends largely consisted of Russians. Though ethnic embeddedness and ties may not negatively influence their professional lives and careers, they may result in such "cumulative disadvantage" of social disembeddedness with locals. Such conditions may create social life challenges in adapting to the local sociocultural environment, which several interviewees highlighted in their narratives. Inga, a late career specialist aged 55, admitted: "The difficulty was adaptation to a new country, a new mentality, the loss of connections with close friends." From a transnational perspective, Inga's difficulty in adaptation and embeddedness in the new social life relates to the loss of friends in Russia after migration. Her migration trajectory drastically changed her personal needs, resources, and participation in the new social life. Additionally, few interviewees referred to a "shared sense of relative exclusion" (Kennedy, 2005, p. 190), which results in large bonding ethnic networks negotiated through constructed features of sameness or difference. A few interviewees, like Irina, referred to perceived suspicious attitude and fear towards Russians and Russia, generally labelled as "Russophobia" (Vihavainen, 2013), which they believed to impede social relationships:

> It could be said there is Russophobia. It's not nice, but you gradually get used to it. It doesn't hurt….I don't pay attention to it, but this is a disadvantage, I mean interactions with patients and colleagues. It's a feeling; it happens sometimes… and could be expressed openly.

The few interviewees did not narrate how these experiences impede social embedding and networking in local context because the process is driven by factors beyond their individual agency. For Irina, a divorced woman in her early postmigration phase and career stage, the reason of feeling ethnically categorized could be a sense of frustration and disappointment at such life stage in experiencing difficulties to access local ties in informal settings she perceived socio-culturally different. However, Anatoli, an early career specialist aged 35, enjoyed socialization and friendships with some Finns across work–life domains: "Finns are nice and open. I've never experienced any racism….There are people who are cautious toward foreigners. It's easy to break barriers with Finns when you speak Finnish and understand the Finnish way of life." He emphasized the importance of language proficiency and local culture proximity for embedding into social life. His young age and career stage seem instrumental in networking and friendship making. A few others succeeded in building diverse ties in diverse socialization contexts. Alexei, another early career specialist aged 28, sought friendship and socialization with Finnish colleagues for cultural and language learning and embedding into Finnish cultural life: "Because I work in Finland, I have to learn Finnish, its traditions and things I can learn from Finnish people, not Russians." His stance points to professional and cultural identity aspects of embedding through self-identification with the local sociocultural environment.

Some literature suggests Ingrian-Finnish Russians defined their belonging and "Finnishness" with hybrid identity markers (Varjonen et al., 2013). Few interviewees raised such question when discussing their social networking and embeddedness. Marina, a late career specialist aged 59, has an Ingrian lineage, self-identified herself as Russian and Finnish: "Finland was a closed country for so long. Few foreigners came, and they haven't been welcome; but I have Finnish roots….In Russia, I always heard I was Finnish, and when I moved here, I was Russian." In navigating her belonging, she expressed such hybrid cultural, ethnic, and national identity. These layered identities could indicate attachment to local society alongside Russian identification. After a long migration life stage in Finland, she conceded her being perceived differently in different national and social settings, which negatively affected her embedding into local social settings. Embedding is highly subjective in nature in any life domain, and the sense of belonging and attachment are important in negotiating it (Ryan, 2018, pp. 246–247).

The interviews revealed rare experiences of "ambiguous embedding" (Ryan, 2018) of interviewees' social life of loneliness and isolation, despite their established working lives. They linked their quality of life to fulfilling social relationships and social life. Elena, a specialist aged 39, confessed: "The quality of life is deficient if a person is lonely. It's difficult to be a single parent." Her divorce and singlehood are major life events that exacerbated her social life and socialization: "I'm lonely and don't have a family; my relatives live in Russia. My work consumes all my time, and I spend nearly all my free time with my child." Though married, Irina felt bereft of her Russian family support network, which negatively affected her wellbeing: "My personal and family experience in Finland has disadvantages, mainly loneliness. My relatives live in Russia. Social life, I mean inward peace and wellbeing, is an advantage and important for me." Alla, a mid-career GP aged 47, saw her missed affinity with Russian language as important in her social life, because she did not use it: "My social life is very poor. This isn't anything ethnic, but it's certainly nicer to speak your mother tongue." Being unusual for professionals with families and children, social life conditions of Elena and Alla appeared devoid of socialization, friendships,

or pastimes. These interviewees lack time and meeting opportunities to build meaningful friendships with Russians or Finns. Moreover, Russian language is a major cultural and identity marker for Russian migrants which connects them. As such, their migration life courses and marital situations explain their shifting life conditions in Finland.

Few interviewees spoke of successfully transforming coworker relationships into voluntary friendships in nonwork domains. Extant research found that migrants' social relationships are not grounded just on shared ethnic ties (Ryan, 2011). Ljudmila, a mid-career stage GP aged 47, developed friendships through shared meeting contexts of work and hobbies: "Ethnic background doesn't affect my attitude toward other people. It doesn't make any difference where I work….I made friends through work and hobbies, which are opportunities to get to know people." Her working life, occasional sports, and leisure events for socialization expanded her social ties across her professional circle and beyond. Friendship as a voluntary relationship fulfills enjoyment and satisfaction (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016). However, most interviewees did not reveal how they qualify and define "friendship" in such contexts. Vladimir mentioned: "My social network involves work-related leisure time, maybe medical personnel parties, or dinner in a colleague's home." Such occasional informal meetings related to work do not necessarily build close friendships with Finnish colleagues or Finns outside work. Occasional gatherings for lunch in restaurants, or dinner in Finnish colleagues' homes do not necessarily infer dyadic friendship which is reflected in longevity and strength.

Rare cases of friendships with Finns were facilitated by shared opportunities, interests and experiences usually linked to specific places and group activities. Some interviewees formed friendships through their marriage, their spouse's relatives and friends, or their children's schooling and leisure time activities in sports clubs. Sociality with their Finnish partners' relatives and friends offered opportunities to engage in and form relationships with locals. Some interviewees referred to their extended network on their Finnish husband's side, involving relatives and friends. Natalia, a mid-career specialist aged 46, mentioned: "My spouse's old friends and schoolmates have gradually become my friends. When we came to Helsinki, we got to know a few new friends who weren't from work." Her relational embeddedness appeared to develop her sense of connectedness and belonging to local society when attending Finnish social events.

Moreover, interviewees' sports clubs or other group activities may enable locally embedded friendships. For example, Ljudmila had Finnish friends from sport: "The coach at the swimming pool is my friend," and "there's a separate group from ice-swimming that I meet every Tuesday at my place." Anatoli spoke of his friends in his local tennis club: "No Russians play tennis at the club….I have Finnish friends from hobbies and work. They aren't necessarily doctors." Family needs and social connections may foster opportunities for mothers to make friendships outside work. Some interviewees' children also bridged friendship making with Finns. Milla formed a close friendship with her Finnish colleague, partly because they both had "children of the same age in the same school….If there's a need, we help each other in everyday life, not just as duty." She added: "My child attends gymnastics classes, and the coach who works there is also our friend." The structural location of Milla and her friend at work and their children in one school, as meeting opportunities, facilitated their friendship making, while their activities are sources of embedding structured by gender and motherhood role.

5.3. Transnational Embedding

Face-to-face and online communication are the most common forms of networking and often reinforce each other. Whereas high-skilled migrants often engage in transnational professional networking, most interviewees did not participate in or maintain official professional ties with Russia. Like most interviewees, Elena admitted: "I'm not involved in professional activities with Russia. I only talk with former colleagues sometimes about subjects unrelated to medicine….I have a network of physicians here I'm familiar with and consult." Elena referred to her professional Finnish ties, and underlined the lack of time, energy, and shared interests reinforced her professional "disembedding" with Russia: "I personally lack the time and energy for professional networking with Russia. Everything is done in its own way in Russia." Moreover, life events such as Elena's divorce and single motherhood might have weakened her transnational connections with Russia. Several interviewees mentioned that structural conditions explained their transnational disembedding. They claimed existing differences between the healthcare systems, education, and profession between Russia and Finland, as Anastasia confessed: "I don't communicate with doctors in Russia about my profession, because they have different spheres and treatment methods."

Nevertheless, some interviewees refereed to maintaining informal personal contact with Russian physicians, as Anastasia reported: "There are doctors who are friends, with whom we talk sometimes on the phone; but we never discuss our work." Others often keep transnational ties with physician acquaintances in Russia and exchanged information with them about professional activities, using communication technologies, namely Facebook, Vkontakte, Skype, or phone calls. Milla noted: "I'm in contact with colleagues through Facebook or Vkontakte about anesthesia for childbirth or some other problems. We just share our personal work experience." Similarly, Ivan maintains professional exchange with his former colleagues–friends in his specialization: "I sometimes chat with anesthesiologists on

Skype, sharing news about the field." Hence, informal discussions constituted the core of transnational professional ties, while their substantial and meaningful networks are in Finland, because interviewees are deeply embedded in local work context.

Transnational professional ties play an important role for physicians in Russia. Migrant physicians provide transnational health therapy practices, based on trust, a shared language, and belonging to Russia (Kemppainen et al., 2021). A few interviewees exercised transnational medical care practice by transferring their *savoir-faire* (Levitt, 2001) to former colleagues, friends, or relatives in Russia, such as Inga: "I transmitted the experience I received here to my former colleagues, and they adopted it." Transnational therapy networking consisted of sharing health information, advice, and medications. Tania networked with "a few professionals and acquaintances. Most often, it involves medical prescription when people do not trust Russian drugs." Similarly, Marina recalled the questions she was often asked: "Many ask how to get treatment in Finland. I send them information about doctors and tell them what to do." She also provided her friend with advice and treatment: "My friend's daughter has breast cancer, and they ask me for advice. I write them prescriptions from Finland to buy medicines here." Such care practices extended transnational networking function into medical, social, and emotional support to relatives and acquaintances.

The findings support that multiple connections at the family level are bound by practical and emotional caring. Many interviewees attempted to maintain enduring transnational family ties in Russia. For many interviewees, migrating to neighboring Finland was meant to preserve close connections with families within proximity to Russian Karelia and St. Petersburg. For Slava, "the short distance from my native town makes it possible to visit parents and relatives." Her marriage with a Russian presumably also bridged local and transnational embeddedness and frequent border-crossing trips. Many used phone and social media platforms to maintain ties with families in Russia, as Ksenia noted: "We communicate via internet and often talk on the phone if we don't visit each other." They frequently exchanged visits with relatives as a transnational kinship pattern, as Elena illustrated: "My native home is nearby in Karelia, where my relatives still live….My parents often visit us here." The nature of these transnational relationships frequently involves aspects of caring and emotional support. Life events like marriage, and frequent visits reinforce their kinship ties.

Research pointed to the endurance of migrants' friendship networks back home (Conradson & Latham, 2005). However, the narratives indicated transnational friendships might weaken with less frequent contact. This suggests less effort was made to maintain friendships with former colleagues or friends in Russia. Anatoli revealed that his close friends were mostly in Finland, but he maintained contact with Russian school friends: "I'm in touch with my friends from the same school… but I can't say they are close friends." His "old friends" were no longer close, reflecting the changing dispersed friendships he maintained in Finland and Russia. His young age, changing life after migration, and marital life emplaced him in local work–life embeddedness, which shifted his priorities in friendship making.

Several interviewees had less in common with or interest in sustaining relationships with old friends, which are explained by their changed lives and priorities. Vladimir mentioned: "I meet familiar people whom I knew from St. Petersburg University, but I rarely interact with friends—probably one or two calls a year." Perhaps, absence of shared interests or life experiences widened the distance with his old friends, and contact became less frequent over time, considering his late career stage. However, a noteworthy pattern in some narratives was the conception of "friendship" rooted in childhood, schools, university days, or former workplaces, shared links from the past that preserved an emotional attachment based on reminiscence. Alexei admitted: "I left many friends and acquaintances in Russia….Everyone needs some support. Emotionally, it was quite harsh and the greatest difficulty." Likewise, Anatoli said: "I guess you always get your best friends at school or during childhood." The meaningfulness of friendship has driven the young Alexei and Anatoli to describe old friends as their best friends.

6. Conclusion

Existing research has focused on low-skilled migrants' social networks and embeddedness in receiving societies. This study explores the affordances and challenges in processes of social (dis)embedding and friendship making that Russian migrant physicians, as a high-skilled group, experienced in Finland. The study analyzed how they form and mobilize different ties as resource or support in work–life domains in local and transnational contexts. Earlier, Ryan and Mulholland (2014) found that building meaningful friendships for high-skilled migrants requires nurturing, efforts and time. The study approaches social embedding as dynamic over time, depending on changing social and individual life circumstances (Ryan, 2011, 2015). Drawing upon Bourdieu's narrative socio-analysis, the migrants' experiences on how they navigate work–life domains in terms of social (dis)embedding were motivated by various relational and structural conditions and, sometimes, individual agency, which fostered forms of 'differentiated' social embeddedness and ties across life domains.

The results confirm that these high-skilled migrants found difficulties in translating coworker relationships into close ties and friendships with Finnish colleagues. They based their work relationships on existing shared professional opportunities and interests that serve professional practice and career progression. Social relationships with Finnish colleagues are mostly interprofessional within a web of professional ties. The workplace

does not constitute meeting opportunity structures for nurturing and building close ties and friendships with Finnish colleagues, considering the changing needs and priorities in career phases. Few cases, however, showed voluntary reciprocal friendships, driven by individual agency rather than structural contexts of the workplace. Relational dynamics of embedding such as intermarriage, or spatial dynamics of peripheral locality also nurture such ties. The important finding, however, is the prevalent pattern of social ties with Russian colleagues, combining weak and strong ties, which provide supportive friendships in nonwork domain.

The findings show that Russian physicians generally succeeded to form close ties with Russian colleagues outside work and across larger Russian community. Common interests in friendships, similar culture, language, and roots create strong friendship defined by "reciprocity and closeness" (Kennedy, 2005). Their migration experiences as major life events provided a common motivation for friendship making which often extended to their families, while culturally sensitive and emotional support nurture coethnic ties (Ryan, 2011). Hence, social embedding and networking within the Russian community appear to be structured around ethnic solidarity, identity, and affiliation. Agency played a role because some made no attempt to establish close ties with locals. Additionally, socio-cultural adaptation and openness were perceived as challenges to socialization and friendship building with locals. Yet, a pattern that transcended such "boundaries" and allowed friendship building with Finns challenges the simplistic assumption of embedding into national-ethnic "enclaves." Relational ties with Finnish spouses' relatives and friends facilitated Russian physicians to extend local networks. However, relationships to the spouse's kin and friends do not necessarily increase belonging. A few women who were married to Finns reported loneliness and isolation in social life, while disadvantageous life events of divorce and singlehood exacerbated such experiences for others.

Transnationally, the findings revealed an absence of professional ties with Russia at the institutional level. However, there were informal dyadic ties with former colleagues and old friends, exchanging information and experience. Nevertheless, as high-skilled professionals, they sometimes transfer their *savoir-faire* as social remittances (Levitt, 2001), such as medical practice, advice, and prescriptions. They maintain close and mutually supportive transnational ties with families in Russia. Life events like marriage and frequent exchange of visits between families living close to the border reinforce transnational kinship ties. Yet, dyadic ties with old friends become weak. Changing life circumstances and interests after migration seem to shift their priorities, and widen the distance with them, as they become more embedded in local work–life domains (also Lubbers et al., 2021). However, their conception of friendship is rooted in childhood, former schools or universities, or former workplace in Russia. Interestingly, in the local context, friendship is clearly delineated with such emotional attachment based on reminiscence of the past.

In sum, the findings disclose a heterogeneity of individual migration experiences despite the clear characteristic patterns of the migrants' social embedding. Russian migrant physicians in Finland experience intersecting yet differentiated embedding across work–life domains. They appear well-integrated in the work domain but have less close social relationships with locals whether work or nonwork related. In this regard, their social embedding resembled that of high-skilled Arab women in Finland (Habti, 2014) and migrant physicians of various origins in Sweden (Povrzanović-Frykman & Mozetič, 2020); however, it differed from French high-skilled migrants in the UK who showed greater ease in forming friendships with work peers (Ryan & Mulholland, 2014). The degree of autonomy in the job and the local culture explains some of these similarities and differences. They seem generally disembedded from the local community in their social lives, and even more in their engagement with Russia, as high-skilled diaspora members, to harness and transfer their skills and experiences at a national level. This study contributes to the discussion on social embedding and networks among high-skilled migrant groups, and their experienced opportunities and challenges in the processes. Further research is needed to approach social embedding using narrative analysis and qualitative life course approach, because migrants' experiences are multi-layered, idiosyncratic, and operate across different life domains.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the academic editor of the thematic issue and the two anonymous referees for providing helpful comments for revision. Grateful acknowledgment goes to Kone Foundation for funding this study as part of a research project (2014–2016). Last, thanks go to Karelian Institute for supporting the publication of this article.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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About the Author

Driss Habti is a postdoctoral researcher in sociology at the University of Eastern Finland. His research interests surround international highly skilled migration, ethnicity and social inclusion, cultural diversity, sociology of work, and career mobility of migrant academics. His interests also include Bourdieu's sociological theory, and qualitative life course methods. He teaches sociology of migration, and the intersections of globalization, migration and cultural diversity. Habti published edited volumes and peer-reviewed scholarly papers ranging across the aforementioned fields.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 278–290
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4568

Article

Structural Embeddedness in Transnational Social Fields: Personal Networks, International (Im)Mobilities, and the Migratory Capital Paradox

Renáta Hosnedlová [1,*], Ignacio Fradejas-García [2], Miranda J. Lubbers [3] and José Luis Molina [3]

[1] LEREPS, University of Toulouse, Sciences Po Toulouse, France; E-Mail: renata.hosnedlova@ut-capitole.fr
[2] School of Social Sciences, University of Iceland, Iceland; E-Mail: ignacio@hi.is
[3] Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain;
E-Mails: mirandajessica.lubbers@uab.cat (M.J.L.), joseluis.molina@uab.cat (J.L.M.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 29 May 2021 | Accepted: 2 September 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
In this article we focus on individuals' structural embeddedness in transnational social fields (TSFs) and examine how this is related to patterns of international mobility. The main argument is that the structure of TSFs matters for (im)mobility trajectories, and thus all actors (migrants, non-migrants, and returnees) need to be examined as a whole to obtain a deeper understanding of the role of social networks in processes of transnational mobility. Taking the case of Romanian migrants in Spain as a TSF connecting their place of origin (Dâmbovița in Romania) with their destination (Castelló in Spain), we analyze survey data for 303 migrants, non-migrants, and returnees, sampled through an RDS-like binational link-tracing design. We then categorize types of personal network using an international mobility scale to assess the degree of structural embeddedness in the TSF. An important contribution is the rigorous operationalization of TSF and assessment of the level of migratory capital of each individual. Our results reveal that migratory capital is not always linked positively with high mobility patterns and that its role is strongly related to the overall composition and structure of the TSF.

Keywords
migratory capital; mobility patterns; personal network typology; Romania; Spain; structural embeddedness; transnational social field

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Research into international mobility patterns tends to focus on the immigrant population, ignoring other actors who are immobile or have other forms of mobility, such as tourists or mobile workers. However, some authors stress that mobility and immobility define each other and should be studied together (see Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013). For instance, mobility is often an informal livelihood strategy (cf. Fradejas-García et al., 2021) or a household strategy where some people migrate while others stay behind to take care of children, aging parents or the family business (cf. Lubbers & Molina, 2021). Thus, the immobility of some individuals allows others to be mobile (e.g., Dahinden, 2010).

To grasp the effects of international migration in the wider population, it is of great interest to know how immigrants, non-migrants, and returnees to the country of origin relate to each other and how these relations facilitate or constrain transnational mobilities. From a theoretical point of view, immigrants and/or returnees provide new experiences and resources to non-migrants (De Gourcy, 2007; Koikkalainen, 2019; Lacroix, 2014), which influences migration decisions through facilitation and normalization of the idea of migration. While many empirical studies have shown that having contacts with

people who have migrated affects one's probability of engaging in future mobility (e.g., Herz et al., 2019), some argue that these contacts can also discourage migration (Faist, 1997; Mazzella, 2014) through a negative experience or because of family obligations (e.g., if an individual is the only sibling left in the country of origin, he/she will have to take care of the aging parents). Contact with migrants can also affect other aspects of non-migrants' lives, such as their material well-being through financial remittances.

Most of the authors refer to this prior mobility experience as "migratory capital," a topic that has been the subject of numerous publications (e.g., Ryan et al., 2015). However, the usual idea of this concept remains very general and abstract, its definition varying across different works. Typically, this concept is defined as either the number of direct, personal ties an individual has to people who have experience of migration (e.g., Garip, 2008; Massey & Aysa-Lastra, 2011) or simply whether one has such ties or not; yet such measures are usually isolated from individuals' personal networks, and little is known about the characteristics of relationships with migrants, such as their role for the individual and the strength of such ties. Furthermore, the question of how these networks of migrants and non-migrants are embedded in the wider transnational social field (TSF) has hardly been studied at all empirically. However, TSFs have been explicitly defined in network terms, as a "set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are unequally exchanged, organized and transformed" (Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004, p. 1009).

This article examines how individuals' structural embeddedness in the TSF (i.e., the number and pattern of connections of individuals in the whole network across borders) relates to their international mobility. On the one hand, the concept of migratory capital allows a relational approach to be adopted in studying the resources available for migration. On the other hand, the study of migratory capital through the lens of transnationalism enables this type of capital to be examined not only among immigrants, but also among non-migrants and returnees, leading to a more accurate picture of the phenomenon. One of the key arguments of this article is that the personal environment is interrelated with the whole structure of the TSF, and thus the effect of migratory capital will depend on a focal individual's ("ego") degrees of structural embeddedness in the TSF. Our methodology is inspired by the work of Mouw et al. (2014) in the context of movement between Mexico and the USA, and our data provide a unique opportunity to test this argument in the European context. More precisely, we study the TSF between Dâmbovița in Romania and Castelló in Spain by addressing two research questions: How is the migration experience of network members related to individuals' own mobility trajectories within the TSF? Do individuals with greater migratory capital occupy structurally more central roles in the TSF?

To answer these questions, we first address several conceptual and methodological challenges. Firstly, given the inherent complexity of today's international mobility, we develop an international mobility scale based on the migration-mobility nexus that takes into an account the stage in the migration process (of migrants, non-migrants, returnees). Secondly, we use a personal network analysis approach which focuses on individuals' personal network structures and composition, to assess rigorously the level of migratory capital of each individual. Next, we develop a meaningful typology of personal networks that includes ties of both family and friendship or acquaintances that can be related to different phases and levels of the (im)mobility process. Thirdly, by measuring the TSF, we can observe different degrees of individuals' structural embeddedness in the TSF and relate them to their specific mobility trajectories.

2. Structural Embeddedness in the TSF

The focus on structural embeddedness allows one to go beyond inclusion criteria based on one location to assess the level of inclusion of different actors in transnational social structures simultaneously. The question is how to assess this structural embeddedness from a transnational perspective.

The great challenge resides in the fact that most studies that implement the perspective of TSFs do not measure or delimit precisely what lies within this field and what is outside it. To assess the degree of structural embeddedness, the TSF must first be rigorously operationalized. In this article, we do this with reference to the international corridor between Dâmbovița (Romania) and Castelló (Spain), in which transnational practices take place and cross-border social formations emerge. Our definition of this corridor through the example of personal networks is illustrated in Figure 1. More precisely, the delimitation of this TSF is based on the geographical residence of the contacts of Romanian migrants from Dâmbovița in Castelló. Those contacts who reside in either Castelló or Dâmbovița are part of the TSF; remaining contacts, namely those in Spain but not in Castelló, those in Romania but not in Dâmbovița, or those in a third country, are considered as being outside the TSF.

Summing up, the application of social network analysis to studies of international mobility and transnationalism sheds light on the relationships that are embedded in these processes and their outcomes (Bilecen & Lubbers, 2021). Thus, we argue that, by studying the composition of personal networks that make up this corridor, paying special attention to migratory capital, and by studying social network structure to measure individuals' degree of structural embeddedness in TSFs, we can not only refine the understanding of international mobility patterns, but also contribute knowledge about the clustering of mobility levels in networks. As we shall show, individuals who have more transnational links are not necessarily more central in the TSF.

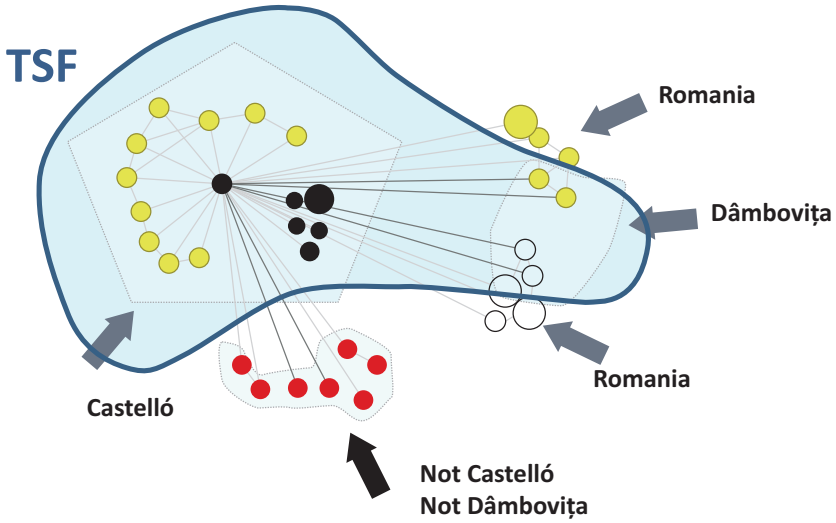

Figure 1. Delimitation of TSF based on the geographic residence of ego's contacts.

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Data

The data come from the research project ORBITS (MINECO-FEDER-CSO2015–68687-P) conducted in Spain and Romania between 2016 and 2020. We analyze the quantitative data from one of the two TSFs we have researched, connecting the region of Castelló in Spain with Dâmbovița County in Romania. In this project we replicated part of the binational link-tracing methodology used by Mouw et al. (2014) in the USA and Mexico. First, districts in Spain with more than 10% of their total populations from Romania were identified. One of them was Castelló, situated on Spain's Mediterranean coast, which has a substantial ceramics industry and is where Romanians are the immigrant group with the highest share of employees with formal contracts (Bernat & Viruela, 2011). Moreover, this municipality is characterized by "institutional completeness" (Molina et al., 2018), a concept that refers to a high density of institutions related to the area of origin, such as churches, associations, enterprises, and even a Romanian consulate.

Second, we identified the region of origin of migrants with the support of the city council and secondary sources. About 80% of the people came from Dâmbovița (Viruela, 2002), situated 78 km north-west of Bucharest. Hence, one of the aims of the ORBITS project was to measure and analyze relations within this transnational corridor.

Data collection took place between November 2017 and July 2018. The target population consisted of adult Romanian immigrants in Castelló resident there for at least six months and returnees and non-migrants in Dâmbovița who had social relationships with them. The binational link-tracing sampling design, which is similar to respondent-driven sampling (Heckathorn, 1997), started in the destination (Castelló) with a few diverse informants ("seeds") selected during preliminary ethnographic fieldwork in the community. The seeds were interviewed and asked to nominate three to six relatives, friends and/or acquaintances ("referrals") who might want to participate in the survey, ideally three in each location of the TSF. Subsequently, the referrals were contacted and interviewed upon their consent. Every new interviewee was in turn asked to list three to six referrals. As a result, using nine seeds, a sample of 303 respondents was reached: 147 immigrants in Castelló and 109 non-migrants and 47 returnees in Dâmbovița. Among the returnees, 18 had returned from Castelló, while the remainder had had their migratory experience either in another Spanish region or in another country.

The sample diverts to some extent from the demographic structure of the population in terms of sex and age, but unequally in each locality studied. While in the subsample of residents in Romania the share of females is very close to their general distribution in the population of Dâmbovița (53% females in the sample versus 51% females in the population), the average age (37) is lower than that of the total population of Dâmbovița (48). Conversely, in the Spanish subsample, women are overrepresented (72% in the sample versus 53% in the population), but the sample is similar to the Romanian population in Castelló in terms of average age (44 versus 41 years, according to the Spanish National Statistics Institute, 2017). For more detailed information about the sampling procedures, the sample characteristics, and the factors affecting the data collection see Hâncean et al. (2021).

Each face-to-face interview consisted of several parts: a core set of items for all types of respondents (like sociodemographic attributes); questions depending on respondent status (e.g., working/life situation in Romania, experience of migration to Spain, transnational practices, return and post-return experiences); and questions in order to elicit and describe personal networks. For the latter, five name generators were used to obtain up to forty network members, or "alters" in personal

network terminology. Figure 2 shows the proportion of alters elicited through each name generator by type of respondent. Average network size ranges from fourteen for immigrants to eighteen for non-migrants and returnees, producing a mean number of sixteen alters.

The respondents also provided basic characteristics of each elicited alter (place of residence, sex, occupation, type of relation, contact duration, emotional proximity, frequency of communication, religion). In addition, the questionnaire inquired about the existence of up to nine randomly selected alter-alter ties in each personal network. The data were collected by using either a paper-based questionnaire or Egonet software (http://sourceforge.net/projects/egonet). As a result, 4,834 alters were elicited by 303 respondents. After a very laborious procedure, the 303 personal networks were interconnected into a network of networks with 4,529 unique nodes (respondents and alters) and 7,876 ties (nomination ties and alter-alter ties). This network of networks thus represents a sample of the TSF between Castelló and Dâmbovița.

3.2. Measures

The following measures were used in this study.

3.2.1. International Mobility Scale

To measure international mobility patterns, we have combined three variables with different weights into a single scale: (a) the respondent's migration experience, ranging from the lowest to the highest score (never migrated, migrant in Spain without other migration experiences, and return migrant or migrant in Spain with previous migration experiences), and having the highest weight; (b) the frequency of visits abroad (no visits, one visit, or more than one visit abroad in the past two years), having a lower weight than the first; and (c) future migration intentions (depending on respondent status: plan to return to Romania within a year/plan to return to Spain within a year/considering moving abroad) with the lowest weight. The reasoning behind the attribution of the differentiated weights to the variables in the order given above was that migration is a set of *past* actions where visits abroad admittedly entail much less complexity than migration itself and that the intention to move is a plan that is not necessarily put into effect. As a result, we have developed a fourteen-point international mobility scale that ranges from immobile to highly mobile respondents (see Figure 3 for the distribution of respondents on this scale). More precisely, it goes from those who never migrated, have not made visits abroad in the last two years, and had no intention to migrate abroad in the near future (0 points on the international mobility scale), to those who are migrants in Spain with previous migration experience or returnees to Romania from Spain, with at least one visit abroad in the last two years, and still having the intention to move (migrate/return) again. This international mobility scale provides a more comprehensive view of human migratory mobility by taking into account not only migration but also other forms of mobility. It thus enables analyses that go beyond the focus on the migrant group alone, allowing a joint analysis with the non-migrant and returnee populations.

3.2.2. Network Typology

To develop a meaningful network typology providing greater insights into the role of different types of networks in international mobility patterns, we had to decide the optimal solution for our data. When analyzing personal networks, it must be realized that many of their characteristics are not independent. In light of this fact, the clustering methods seem to be adequate

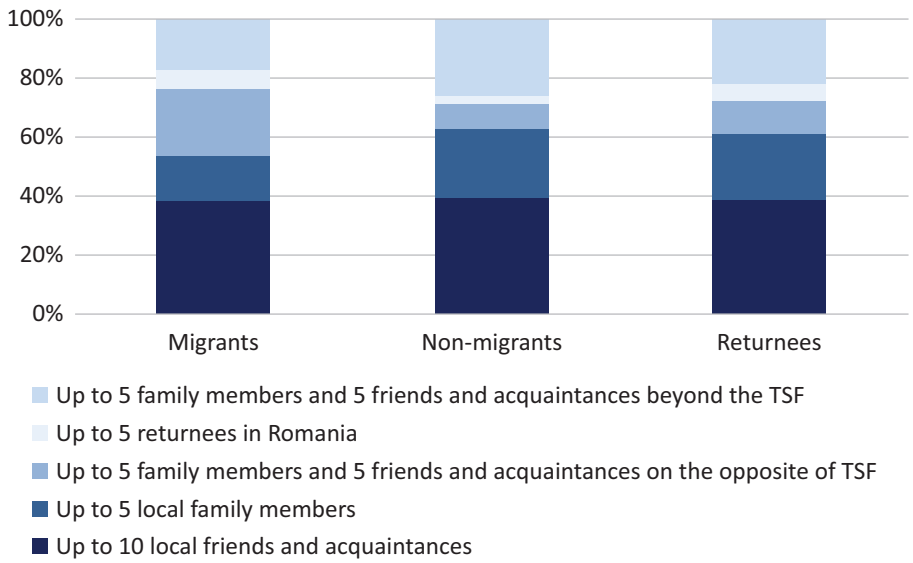

Figure 2. The proportion of ties according to type of respondent and name generator (N = 303 respondents; 4,834 alters). Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020).

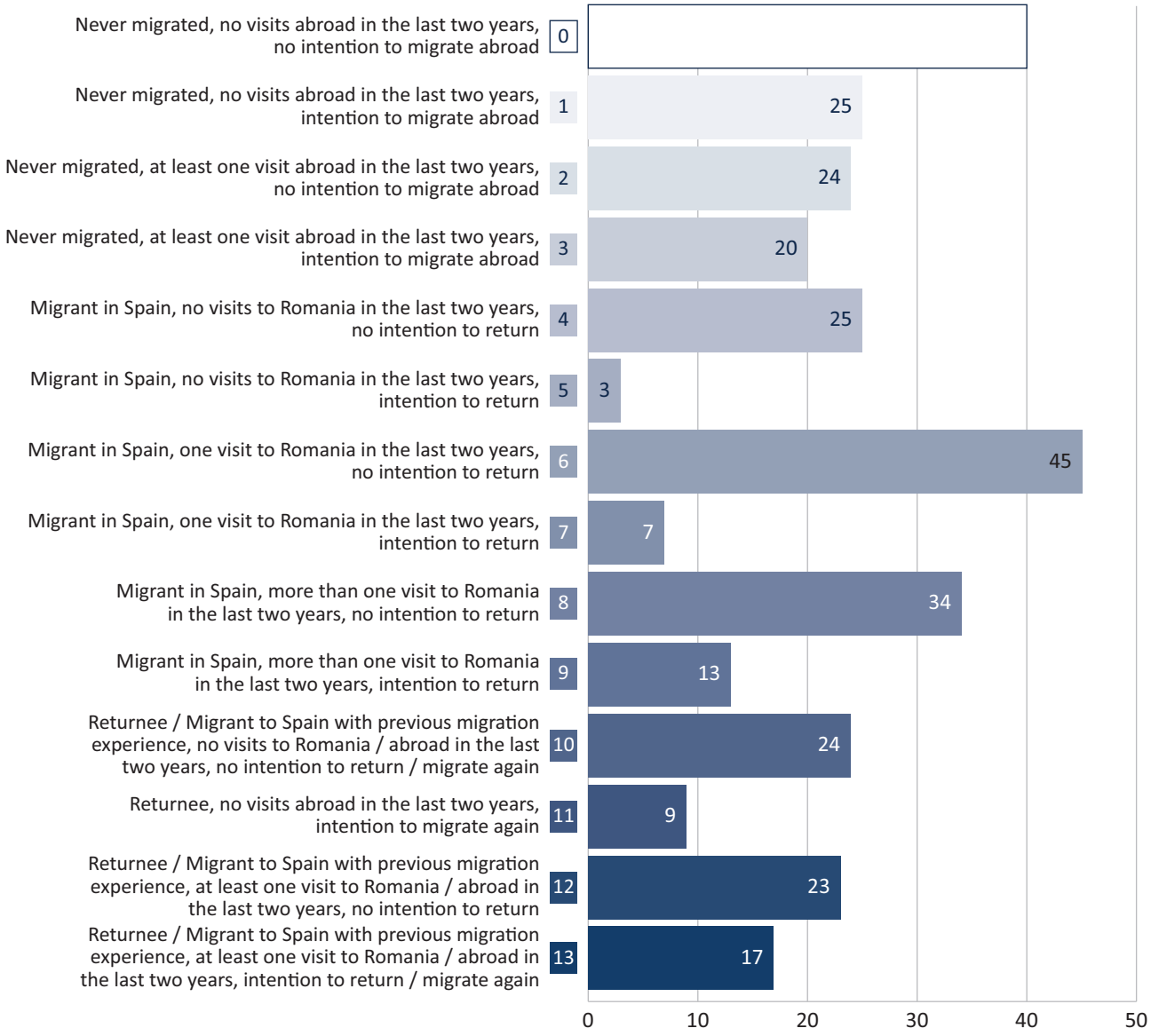

Figure 3. Distribution of cases on the fourteen-point international mobility scale (N = 303). Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020).

for finding subsets of similar personal networks. Indeed, as Rong and Houser (2015) argue, studies analyzing the network environment in which individual decisions are made (here, mobility decisions and behavior) can benefit from clustering methods, as it is difficult to specify a priori the complex behavioral rules that are often behind these patterns. Although there are a number of clustering methods, not all of them are suitable for our data. For example, the increasingly popular stochastic modelling method is a very complex form of analysis applicable mainly to sociocentric data (Vacca, 2020). One of the best established and simplest procedures is K-means clustering, which in addition has proved to be efficient for the analysis of a set of personal networks (see, e.g., Lubbers et al., 2007; Vassilev et al., 2016). The basic idea behind K-means clustering is the grouping of objects (here, personal networks) into K predefined subgroups (here, network profiles) by minimizing the distances between the data and the corresponding cluster centroid (arithmetic mean of all the data points that belong to that cluster; see Yang et al., 2010). We conducted this analysis using SPSS version 23 (SPSS software, IBM Corp.), based on the following six network characteristics:

1. *Percentage of alters with current and/previous migration experience*: This variable measures the percentage of alters who are currently migrants or have past migration experience in any country outside their country of origin. This measure indicates the level of migratory capital in the respondent's network (the higher the proportion of these alters, the higher the level of migratory capital). In contrast to the majority of studies concentrating on the people's own migration experience, we address the role of the migration trajectory of

network members—a neglected issue in research—and explore its cumulative association with an individual's international mobility. One of the exceptions is a study by Herz et al. (2019, p. 102) revealing the positive effect of network members with experience abroad on the probability of engaging in future mobility and claiming that these members are a "ticket to move."

2. *Percentage of the transnational family*: This variable measures the percentage of alters who are family members living in a country other than ego's country of residence.
3. *Percentage of transnational friends and acquaintances*: This variable measures the percentage of non-kin alters living in a country other than ego's country of residence. We pay special attention to the type of relationship with network members, especially transnational ones, as they are usually seen as one of the most important drivers of international mobility. From a data availability standpoint, the analysis of family ties is predominant, while there is still a lack of clarity concerning the role of friendship ties in the mobility patterns. In many studies, the importance of non-family ties is stressed without actual verification. Some of the studies that take ties of friendship and acquaintance into account focus on a specific point in the migration process and analyze the intention to move in the future (e.g., Epstein & Gang, 2006; Herz et al., 2019; Palloni et al., 2001), while comparative studies that give an account of the different degrees of importance given to non-family ties across the whole (im)mobility process are scarce. In particular, insights into the relevance of these ties to immobility are missing.
4. *Percentage of alters residing in the transnational social field*: This variable measures the percentage of alters living in either the region of Castelló or Dâmbovița County. It records the proportion of alters in the space of interaction within the delimited TSF.
5. *Average emotional proximity of transnational ties with ego*: This variable records the mean emotional closeness between ego and his or her alters (family and/or friends/others) living in a country other than ego's country of residence. The emotional closeness of each alter was assessed by means of the following question: How close do you feel toward this person (emotionally)? The scale ranges from 1 (*not close at all*) to 4 (*very close*).
6. *Average emotional proximity of local ties with ego*: Like the previous variable, this variable measures the mean emotional closeness of ego to his or her local ties (i.e., having the same country of residence as ego). According to previous studies (e.g., Hosnedlová, 2014), comparing the quality of one's personal environment in the local situation with the transnational situation can help one achieve a more meaningful understanding of the drivers of international mobility.

As the procedure relies on Euclidean distances, all variables were standardized. The analysis was performed on 268 cases (out of 303), after removing outliers and cases with missing data on one or more network characteristics. Having examined three-, four-, five-, six- and seven-cluster solutions, we selected the five-cluster solution, which reached the lowest maximum number of iterations, was most easily interpretable and had the best proportional distribution of cases in each cluster. These five clusters represent five personal network profiles, named and described as follows:

1. The "transnational friendship network, with average migratory capital" (N = 51) is the type of network with the highest proportion of transnational friendship (28%), a low percentage of transnational family ties (13.5%), an average proportion of alters with migratory trajectories (59%) and relatively strong local ties.
2. The "transnational network based on strong ties, with average migratory capital" (N = 65) is characterized by strong local and transnational ties, with a high proportion of transnational family members (29%), but a low proportion of transnational friends (6%) and an average proportion of alters with migratory experience (60%).
3. The "network embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital" (N = 53) is the type of network with the highest proportion of alters with migratory experience (72%), i.e., high levels of migratory capital, where most alters live in Castelló or in Dâmbovița (90%), and where transnational ties are strong and local ties are weak.
4. The "network extending the TSF, based on weak ties, with average migratory capital" (N = 40) has the highest proportion of transnational alters (44%), but with the lowest proportion of alters within the TSF (one third on average live beyond Castelló and Dâmbovița); furthermore, the transnational alters are of weak emotional proximity.
5. The "local network with low migratory capital" (N = 59) consists of a relatively low proportion of alters with current or previous migration experience (only 24%), a very low proportion of transnational alters (7.5% of transnational family members and 7% of transnational friendship ties) and a relatively low proportion of alters within the TSF, but strong relationships with local alters.

3.2.3. Structural Measures

To analyze the structural embeddedness of an individual in the TSF, two centrality measures that indicate the level of intermediation capacity have been used, calculated

using UCINET 6 for Windows (Borgatti et al., 2002): ego betweenness and brokerage:

1. Ego betweenness is calculated as the sum of the proportion of times ego lies on the shortest path between each pair of alters. If two alters are connected, the contribution to the ego betweenness of this pair is 0. If two alters are connected only through ego, then the contribution is 1 (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005).
2. Brokerage is calculated as the number of times ego lies on the shortest path between two other actors in the TSF.

The rationale for using ego betweenness and brokerage (from UCINET) in the analysis is that the former allows ego's level of embeddedness among his or her alters in the TSF to be measured, while in the latter it is ego's capacity to mediate between different regions of the whole network that is of interest. This latter capacity is related to our theoretical goal of having to take into account not just mobility but also those who are immobile and less connected to the TSF.

4. Results

4.1. Migratory Capital and Individual Mobility

To discover if there is a relationship between the international mobility scale and the profile of the personal network, we ran a non-parametric test, the Kruskal-Wallis test, since the "international mobility scale" does not have a normal distribution (see Figure 3). The result shows a statistically significant association between these two variables ($H(4) = 38.3$, $p < 0.001$), with the largest mean ranking on the international mobility scale (167.96) for individuals with the profile of belonging to a network embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital. Conversely, individuals belonging to a local network with low migratory capital have the smallest mean mobility ranking (85.33). To evaluate how individuals with different network profiles differed from one another in their degree of mobility, we ran the Mann-Whitney U post hoc test. The post hoc tests indicate that the central tendency of the international mobility scores of individuals with the profile "local network with low migratory capital" differs significantly from all other network profiles. The profile situated on the other side of the scale ("network embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital") also differs significantly from the other profiles, except for the profile of the "transnational friendship network, with average migratory capital." Figure 4 shows the comparison of all pairs of network profiles.

These findings can be interpreted as follows. First, the amount of migratory capital is associated with different levels of transnational mobility. More precisely, the higher the mobility score, the greater the presence of migratory capital. This is shown in Figure 5, where the network profiles are ordered by mean international mobility, from the highest to the lowest. Second, the results also suggest which type of ties play an important role in international mobility. Comparing the average international mobility of the three network profiles with similar levels of migratory capital (those with average migratory capital), it seems that friendship ties are a pull factor in networks that are less constrained by family obligations. However, we also observe that people with lower mobility have more ties outside the TSF. More precisely, individuals with "transnational friendship networks, with average migratory capital" scored on average 6.8 points on the fourteen-point scale, compared to 5.4 points on average for the individuals with a "network extending the TSF, based on weak ties, and with average migratory capital," a difference that is statistically significant. This is an interesting observation that deserves more attention. We explore this through a comparative analysis of two extreme cases (those of Gabriel and Iulian—pseudonyms).

Network profile / **Mean rank of network profile**	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**
(1) Network embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital / **167.96**					
(2) Transnational friendship network, with average migratory capital / **154.76**	⊘				
(3) Transnational network based on strong ties, with average migratory capital / **140.73**	✓	⊘			
(4) Network extending the TSF, based on weak ties, and with average migratory capital / **126.73**	✓	✓	⊘		
(5) Local network with low migratory capital / **85.33**	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Legend:

✓ A statistically significant difference ⊘ No statistically significant difference

Figure 4. Network profiles ordered by mean rank and the results of comparison between network profiles using the Mann-Whitney U test ($p < .05$). Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020).

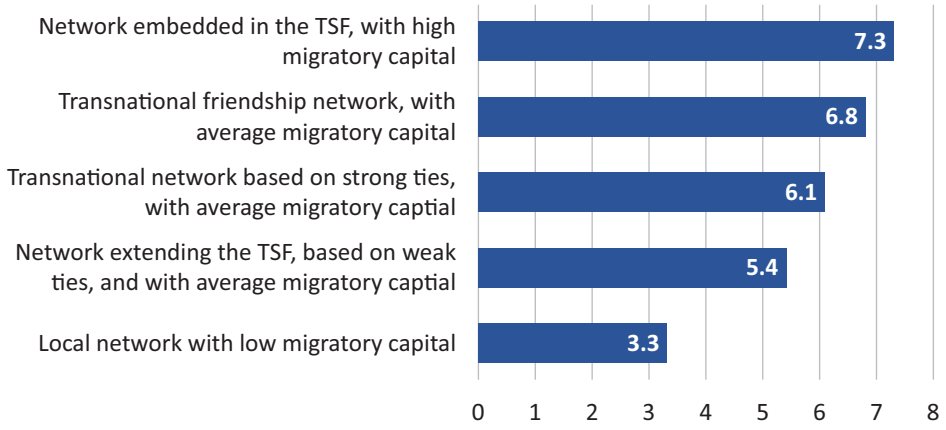

Figure 5. Average international mobility by network profile. Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020).

4.2. Two Cases

We have selected two cases that are very similar in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics (sex, level of education, type of employment, family situation), for the sake of comparability. Although one is younger (Gabriel is 29 years old, Iulian 46), both men are of working age, both are married with children, and all the members of their immediate families are local. Both have completed secondary vocational school, and both are working as drivers. However, their international mobility patterns are very different. Gabriel lives in Castelló and has a highly mobile trajectory (with the highest score on our international mobility scale). His migration history started in 2000 when he was nine years old and moved from Romania to Castelló to join his parents. Later, he married a Romanian woman, and the couple returned to Romania. They had their first child, but things did not go very well there, and they decided to leave for Austria. After four years of residence there, they decided to leave, unable to adjust to Austria's climate or society. They returned to Romania, and in the summer of the same year moved to the same place in Spain where they had lived before. When the interview took place, the couple had three children and were still considering returning to Romania in the future. This case is a clear example of multiple migrations. By contrast, Iulian can be considered immobile. He scored 0 points on the international mobility scale. He has never been to Spain and has never considered moving abroad, even though several of his network members have lived in Italy, the UK, Belgium, and Castelló.

Also, they have different personal network profiles. Gabriel's network is transnational, based on strong ties, and with average migratory capital. His network has 29 ties. His transnational kinship accounts for 34% out of 29 ties and is represented by his distant relatives (in-laws and cousins) living in Romania and some in Austria. He considered all these network members emotionally very close and maintained contact on an almost daily basis with those living in Austria while communicating two or three times a year with those living in Romania. His transnational friendships, all living in the TSF, account for 21%. Communication with most of his transnational friends is infrequent. In contrast, he communicates very often with his family members (parents and spouse) and friends in Castelló. All the contacts in his network are of long duration (more than ten years), and all except one are of Romanian origin. That means that, when he migrated to Spain the second time, he was immersed in the local "same-origin" network he had created in the past, his anchorage in the local host community being almost non-existent.

As for Iulian, he has the type of network that extends the TSF, being based on weak ties and average migratory capital. Compared to Gabriel, his network is relatively small (thirteen ties). While his local ties consist of the immediate family (one parent, one sibling, and one child) and four friendships of both short and long duration, his transnational ties consist of three friends from his childhood who now live in Castelló and three extended family members who live outside the TSF, in England and Italy. While he has daily communication with local members, his communication with his transnational contacts is very scarce (lower than Gabriel's). It seems that Gabriel's transnational network, being based on strong ties with frequent communication, allows and sustains this mobility. Conversely, the network with an important proportion of its contacts outside the TSF, which is not activated very often, as in Iulian's case, does not seem to encourage international mobility. Thus, we could hypothesize that international mobility is reduced because the individual is less embedded in the TSF and is therefore less exposed to the flows and circulation of knowledge, ideas, material, monetary resources, etc., and thus to the possibilities or opportunities for moving.

Before affirming or rejecting this explanation, it is necessary to explore in more detail the characteristics of the links with alters who reside outside the TSF. It should be remembered that there are two types of ties concerning the geographical location. The first type is located in a third country (that is, in a country other than Romania or Spain); the second type is located in Romania or Spain, but in a region other than Castelló or Dâmbovița.

We could hypothesize that most individuals who are less mobile and have a high proportion of ties outside the TSF are non-migrants or returnees who have most of these contacts in other regions in Romania. This would point to the explanation that these people have highly developed local social capital, and consequently, if they opt for mobility, this mobility would be more internal than international. However, our data do not support this argument, since in this type of network most contacts outside the TSF live in third countries (71% in contrast to 58% for the rest of the networks; see Table 1). Being based in third countries, they are a potential source of migratory capital for ego, but evidently, they do not always have a positive effect on international mobility.

This encourages the argument that immobile or less mobile individuals play a special role in the dynamics of the TSF and recalls the phenomenon of the interdependence between mobility and immobility that Glick-Schiller and Salazar (2013) claimed to exist. In the following analyses, we therefore go beyond the individual's direct personal ties to address his or her structural position in the TSF and to enhance this dichotomy between mobility and immobility as mutually constructed poles.

4.3. Structural Embeddedness and Migratory Capital

Figure 6 represents the 303 personal networks of the sampled individuals. The colored dots are the egos (respondents), the colors indicating the network profiles. The white dots are the egos' contacts (alters), and the lines between the dots represent the connections between the actors (ego-alter or alter-alter). Visually, we detect some clustering on the right hand of the graph, marked by the red nodes, but most people with similar network profiles are scattered over the network.

To interpret this figure, we performed a non-parametric analysis of the association between the network profile and two structural measures introduced previously: brokerage and ego betweenness. The Kruskal-Wallis test indicates a statistically significant association between the network profile and the two structural measures: $H(4) = 54.19$, $p < 0.001$ (brokerage) and $H(4) = 17.11$, $p = 0.002$ (ego betweenness; see the mean rank for each measure of each network profile in Table 2). Consequently, the structural position the respondent occupies in the transnational social field is correlated with the composition of his or her personal network, which is in turn associated with different mobility patterns.

More precisely, respondents belonging to networks with a high proportion of alters within the TSF (green nodes in Figure 6, type 3) and a great number of alters with migration experience have low levels of structural embeddedness on both measures, and they are also the most mobile ones. This indicates that migratory capital is associated with high mobility patterns. Besides, the low levels of structural embeddedness of highly mobile egos can be explained by the brokerage role of immobile egos who bridge mobile individuals between them. According to social network theories, and more precisely the work of Gould and Fernandez (1989), brokerage is described as the role played by a social actor who mediates contact between two alters in different contexts and in different localities. This is the case for Gabriel, for example, who is in direct contact with the respondents of varied networks, as well as with an important number of people whose networks are local with low migratory capital (see the red nodes in Figure 6) and who are the least mobile. Conversely, those respondents with networks with more contacts outside the TSF (see the violet nodes in Figure 6, type 4, like Iulian) have high degrees of structural embeddedness on both measures and are the second least mobile ones.

The high mean rank of both structural measures means that the respondent is mostly in relationships

Table 1. Differentiated means of ties by network profile (N = 268).

Network profile	Mean number ofties outside the TSF	Mean proportion ofties outside the TSF in a third country with respectto all ties beyond the TSF	Mean proportion ofties outside the TSF in a third country with respectto the network size
Network embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital	1.3	60%	7%
Transnational friendship network, with average migratory capital	3.8	65%	12%
Transnational network based on strong ties, with average migratory capital	2.3	59%	10%
Network extending the TSF, based on weak ties, and with average migratory capital	6.8	71%	23%
Local network with low migratory capital	3.8	39%	8%
Total	*3.4*	*58%*	*11%*

Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020).

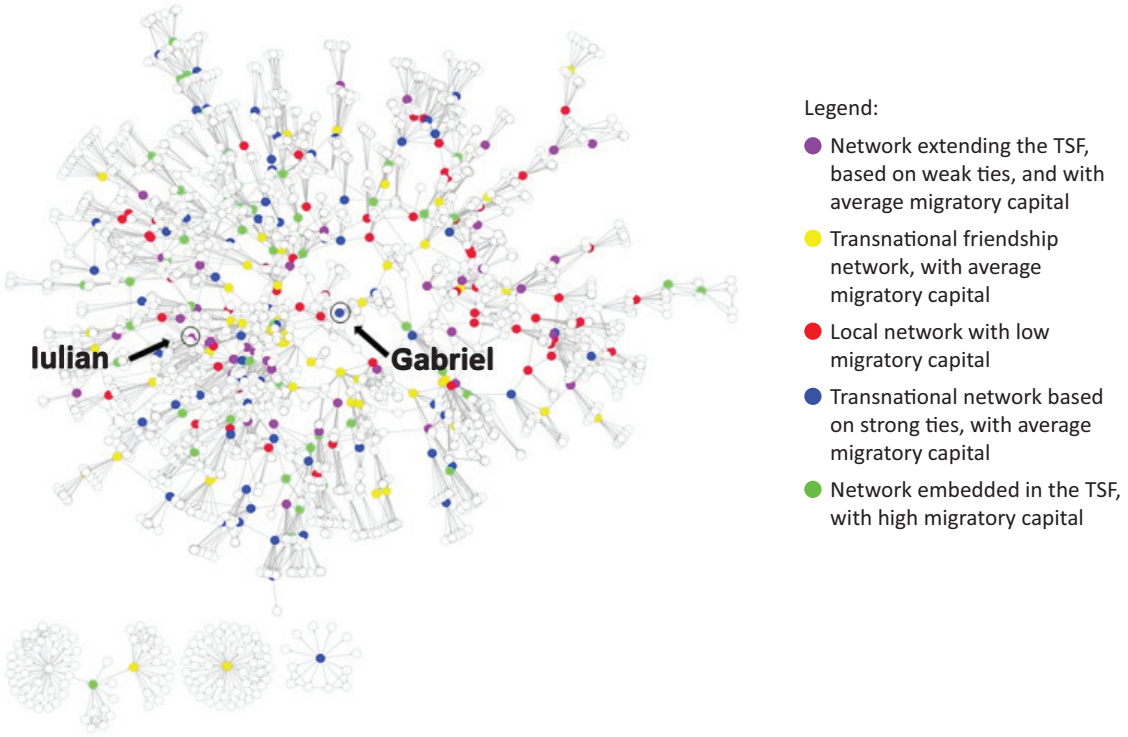

Figure 6. Visualization of the network of networks: example of TSF Castelló-Dâmbovița. Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020). Notes: The egos are highlighted by their network profiles; the network profiles in the legend are ordered by the mean rank of structural measures from higher to lower. Visualization made in Visone, version 2.17 (Brandes & Wagner, 2017).

with people with the same or very similar network characteristics (see the violet and red nodes around Iulian in Figure 6), that is, with people in the two types of networks with the lowest scores on the international mobility scale. Hence, it could be presumed that this respondent is less exposed to migratory capital than the others, who are connected directly to individuals with more varied networks. Also, it can be expected that these immobile or less mobile respondents who have a high capacity for intermediation are more constrained in terms of international mobility and could exercise a special role in the TSF. For instance, some scholars have already pointed out that some family members remain immobile, as they must take care of aging parents or assume responsibility for the continuity of the family business (see, e.g., Dahinden, 2010). Nonetheless, the reason could also lie in the lack of motivation or comfort due to the inflow of remittances in money or kind. Interestingly, our data reveal that those with a "network extending the TSF, based on weak ties, and with average migratory capital" are most likely to receive remittances from the family abroad. In reverse, those with "networks embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital," are less likely to receive financial remittances but most likely to send

Table 2. Mean ranks for different network profiles on two structural measures.

Network profile	N	Brokerage (Mean rank)	Ego Betweenness (Mean rank)
Network extending the TSF, based on weak ties, and with average migratory capital	40	177.85	160.46
Transnational friendship network, with average migratory capital	49	172.10	150.38
Local network with low migratory capital	59	140.88	140.25
Transnational network based on strong ties, with average migratory capital	65	105.71	117.98
Network embedded in the TSF, with high migratory capital	52	86.83	106.05
Total	*265*		

Source: Lubbers and Molina (2016–2020).

them. However, going into more detail about these roles and reasons for (im)mobility would imply a more qualitative approach that goes beyond the remit of this article.

5. Conclusion

In this article, we have examined the relationship between the international mobility patterns and personal networks of Romanian migrants, non-migrants and returnees within a TSF linking Spain and Romania. We have emphasized the proportion of migratory capital in personal networks and its association with (im)mobility. Moreover, we have explored their interdependencies with the degree of structural embeddedness in the TSF.

Our results reveal the positive association between migratory capital and individuals' international mobility, but they also show that a connection to a non-mobile core is also necessary. This confirms the argument of earlier studies that mobility and immobility are complementary, as one cannot exist without the other (e.g., Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013). In addition, we have seen that immobility and mobility are strongly related to the composition of personal networks, which in turn is linked to the structure of the TSF. Thus, not only is the immediate social environment important for mobility patterns, so is how this immediate social environment is embedded in the wider social setting. Thus, an assessment of the overall composition of TSFs and the individual's degree of structural embeddedness in it are necessary for a better understanding of international mobility and immobility.

Another important finding is that not all conveyors of migratory capital are positively associated with international mobility patterns. Although a more profound analysis is needed of this aspect, our data suggest that the effect of migratory capital on mobility depends on the type of ego's structural embeddedness in the TSF. More specifically, a high proportion of ties of kinship and friendship outside a TSF are negatively correlated with international mobility. Furthermore, those respondents with a high proportion of ties outside the TSF (of whom the majority reside in a third country, being migrants themselves) have the highest levels of ego betweenness and brokerage scores, and are the second least mobile. Together, these associations suggest that mobile people create and maintain ties that are mostly local to their places of origin and residence, which may be structurally more redundant. These outcomes represent what we call the "paradox of migratory capital," calling into question some studies whose analyses assume that having contacts abroad always has a positive impact on international mobility.

It should not be forgotten that TSFs are "hard-to-count" or "hard-to-find" populations for which there is no sampling frame. This hinders assessment of the sample's representativeness. For this reason, we have used respondent-driven sampling methodologies, which can approach unbiased samples (Heckathorn, 1997), employing a variant of link-tracing network sampling. Hence, much more research is necessary in this field, replicating the same study to compare and advance the obtained results.

In this article, quantitative methods have been prioritized. However, triangulation with more qualitative empirical material could help to shed more light on the functionality of different ties to improve understanding of the role of network members who reside outside the migration corridor or TSF in mobility processes. Also, future research could examine the influence of the previous and current migration experiences of network members separately. As underlined by Herz et al. (2019), very little is known about the role of returnees in future mobility. In addition, it could be helpful to consider the time of migration experience of network members.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank two anonymous reviewers and the academic editor for their valuable comments. We also gratefully acknowledge the Romanian team led by Marian-Gabriel Hâncean—Iulian Oană, Bianca-Elena Mihăilă, and Alexandra-Adelina Stoica—for their valuable contribution to this article (execution of the project, data collection, preparation, and processing). The authors also wish to thank Angelina Kussy and Adriana Suiu for collecting the data in Castelló. This article was supported by the research project ORBITS "The Role of Social Transnational Fields in the Emergence, Maintenance and Decay of Ethnic and Demographic Enclaves." This research was funded by the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness—Government of Spain (MINECO-FEDER; CSO2015–68687-P, 2016–2020, and FPI grant number BES-2016–076859). The third author is grateful for the support of the ICREA Foundation (Acadèmia grant).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Renáta Hosnedlová received her PhD in sociology from the Complutense University in Madrid. She is currently teaching statistics and quantitative methods in the social sciences at the University Sciences Po Toulouse and is a researcher and member of the Studies and Research Laboratory in Economics, Policies and Social Systems (LEREPS). Her work focuses on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of personal networks applied to east-west European migration, migration decision-making, ageing, and relational inequalities.

Ignacio Fradejas-García is a post-doctoral researcher in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland. With extensive fieldwork experience in The Gambia, Chile, Morocco, Haiti, RD Congo, Turkey, Romania, and Spain, he does research in migration, transnationalism, (im)mobilities, humanitarianism, and informality.

Miranda J. Lubbers is an associate professor in social and cultural anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, and the director of the Research Group of Fundamentally Oriented Anthropology (GRAFO). In 2021, she was granted a European Research Council Advanced Grant and the ICREA Acadèmia Award. Her research addresses social cohesion and social inclusion. In particular, she analyzes the role that formal and informal social relationships and settings have in the production, mitigation, or exacerbation of exclusion and segregation.

José Luis Molina is professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology (UAB). He is an economic anthropologist interested in livelihood practices in a globalized, digitalized, and unequal world. His approach is to use mixed methods with an emphasis on ethnography and personal network analysis. Southeast Europe and Romania are his particular geographical areas of interest.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 291–303
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4508

Article

The Role of Parent-Child Relationships and Filial Expectations in Loneliness Among Older Turkish Migrants

Rowan L. F. ten Kate [1,*], Başak Bilecen [1,2] and Nardi Steverink [1,3]

[1] Department of Sociology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands; E-Mails: r.l.f.ten.kate@rug.nl (R.L.F.T.K), b.bilecen@rug.nl (B.B.), b.j.m.steverink@rug.nl (N.S.)
[2] Centre on Migration, Citizenship and Development, Bielefeld University, Germany
[3] Department of Health Psychology, University Medical Centre Groningen, University of Groningen, The Netherlands

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 12 May 2021 | Accepted: 16 July 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Older first-generation migrants living in Europe, particularly Turkish migrants, feel relatively lonely, which indicates social exclusion. Social embeddedness within the family, particularly parent-child relationships, can alleviate loneliness for older migrants, but such relationships can also be ambivalent, which may not prevent loneliness altogether. Earlier research indicates that Turkish migrants in Germany report high quality relationships with their children and high levels of social support exchanges within the family; however, some still report disappointing aspects of the relationship with their children, such as feeling disrespected. To better understand these contradictory findings, this article focuses on various aspects of parent-child relationships that may explain loneliness among older Turkish migrants in Germany. Moreover, the article considers whether filial expectations can be potential sources of intergenerational conflict that may explain higher levels of loneliness among older Turkish migrants. Using the Generations and Gender Survey with 606 first-generation Turkish respondents aged 50 and above, findings show that having low satisfying relationships with children and not having adult co-residing children is associated with more loneliness. Turkish migrants with higher filial expectations feel lonelier when they have good perceived health, and less lonely when they have bad perceived health. These findings indicate that especially healthy older Turkish migrants may have unfulfilled expectations regarding parent-child relationships, which adds to their loneliness, while parents with bad health experience solidarity, which lowers their loneliness. This shows that both intergenerational solidarity and conflict influence loneliness among older Turkish migrants.

Keywords
intergenerational conflict; intergenerational solidarity; intergenerational support; international migration; loneliness; older adults; parent-child relationships

Issue
This article is part of the issue “In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion” edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Older first-generation migrants living in Europe, particularly Turkish migrants, feel relatively lonely (van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020), which is worrisome given the detrimental impact of loneliness on both mental and physical health (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015). In some European countries such as Germany, the ageing migrant population from Turkey represents a large migrant group (Steinbach, 2013; van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020). Given the increasing numbers of older Turkish migrants who feel relatively lonely, recent research has tried to explain their higher levels of loneliness via factors such as socioeconomic status (SES), health, and feelings of belonging

(Fokkema & Naderi, 2013; Klok et al., 2017; van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020; Visser & El Fakiri, 2016). Loneliness is defined as the unpleasant experience when one's social relationships are not as desired in terms of quantity or quality (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 2006). Thus, loneliness can be conceptualised as the perception of social inclusion and as the opposite experience of social embeddedness (de Jong Gierveld et al., 2018). As earlier research showed ample evidence of high levels of loneliness among Turkish migrants, this might indicate that they do not feel as socially included as they would like to be. However, the higher feelings of loneliness seem at odds with the previous findings of "strong family cohesion" among Turkish migrants in Europe (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019). This raises the question of whether this family cohesion alleviates overall feelings of social exclusion.

With regards to social relationships, parent-child relationships are particularly central for older adults concerning social support exchanges (Bordone & de Valk, 2016; Offer & Fischer, 2018a). In later life, parents not only give support to their children but may also receive so-called "upward support," which is support given by children to parents (Bordone & de Valk, 2016). When older adults have a decreasing social network size due to retirement or losing relatives or friends, children, as a source of support, constitute an important part of the social network. For older migrants who are often not socially embedded within the larger society in the country of migration (Ciobanu et al., 2017), children may play an even more important role in later life. Theoretical assumptions pinpoint that children are a source of support and companionship to their parents, which is crucial for lower levels of loneliness (de Jong Gierveld et al., 2018). In parallel, earlier research shows that having high quality relationships with children is related to lower loneliness among Turkish migrants in Germany (Fokkema & Naderi, 2013). However, in explaining the relatively high levels of loneliness among Turkish migrants, the role of parent-child relationships also seems somewhat ambivalent.

One explanation for this might be that social relationships are not always uniformly positive and may also encompass frictions (Parrott & Bengtson, 1999). With regards to family relationships that are not as voluntary as compared to friendships, conflict may not result in termination of the relationship (Offer & Fischer, 2018b), especially in the Turkish culture (Tezcan, 2018). In the context of migration, older adults might experience conflicts with their children when they perceive their children as adapting to the norms of the country of immigration (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019; Tezcan, 2018). In qualitative research, older Turkish migrants in Germany reported disappointment in their relationships with their children (Tezcan, 2018, 2019). For instance, "during the interviews, [older Turkish migrants] often characterised their children as disrespectful, Germanised, and assimilated" (Tezcan, 2018, p. 88). In addition, disagreements may also arise due to expectations of transmitting cultural and familial values to grandchildren, such as older migrants saying their "children [are] contributing to the high level of acculturation of grandchildren" (Tezcan, 2019, p. 12). Thus, unfulfilled expectations may be a source of conflict in parent-child relationships (Nauck, 2005), making parents feel neglected, disrespected, or disappointed and such conflicts can increase loneliness (Albert, 2021).

Against this background, the present study investigates the role of parent-child relationships in feelings of loneliness among older Turkish migrants living in Germany. Turkish migrants in Germany exemplify an ageing migrant population in Europe who feel lonely and who experience both positive and negative aspects in the relationship with their children. Such negative aspects are assumed to be related to intergenerational differences in cultural norms of the country of immigration and emigration. In this study, the second generation (i.e., born in the country of migration and both parents born in Turkey) are the children of older Turkish migrants who grew up and were socialised in Germany. Expectations with regards to interdependence and obligations in family relationships tend to be higher in the Turkish culture as compared to Germany (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019; Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005). This may lead to friction in the parent-child relationship (Baykara-Krumme, 2010). To investigate possible conflict, we focus on filial expectations to better understand whether the expectations of parents regarding their children can explain loneliness. Whereas previous studies often compared several aspects of social relationships between Turkish migrants and native populations to explain loneliness (see van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020), this article contributes to the literature by focusing on the role of parent-child relationships and possible intergenerational conflict among older migrants.

In Germany, Turkish migrants represent the largest migrant population, and there is an ageing population of first-generation Turkish migrants (i.e., born in Turkey and both parents born in Turkey; Steinbach, 2018). Labour migration from Turkey to Germany started in the 1960s within the guestworker framework and continued later for family reunification purposes (Abadan-Unat & Bilecen, 2020). Those labour migrants and their families, who arrived in the 1960s, are ageing and they are the focus of our article. Turkish migrants in Europe have worse health, SES, and housing characteristics as compared to their peers in Turkey who did not migrate (Baykara-Krumme & Platt, 2018). In addition, older migrants have an early onset of health issues, for which they often retire at a relatively younger age (Reinprecht, 2006, as cited in Palmberger, 2019, p. 78). Using the first wave of the Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) collected among Turkish migrants in Germany in 2006, the following research question is addressed: What are the roles of parent-child relationships and filial expectations in explaining loneliness among older Turkish migrants?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Intergenerational Relationships and Migration

Intergenerational relationships in migrant families can be explained by two paradoxical theories. First, according to the intergenerational solidarity thesis, family relationships become strengthened through international migration (Baykara-Krumme, 2010; Steinbach, 2013). The idea of strengthened relationships between migrant parents and their children is usually attributed to being a minority in the country of immigration, having poorer health and SES, as well as experiences of discrimination and social exclusion (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019). This may make migrants more focused on their immediate family as sources of support and companionship as opposed to broader social integration in the country of migration. When adult children adhere to the cultural norms of the parents, a harmonious parent-child relationship is maintained (Kwak, 2003). Second, the intergenerational conflict thesis proposes that conflict and tensions arise in migrant families. When adult children are more integrated into the country of immigration and adopt different cultural norms than their parents, conflicts and a lower contact frequency with parents might arise (Kalmijn, 2019). As described before, such tensions could make parents feel disappointed or neglected.

In research looking at both solidarity and conflict in parent-child relationships of older Turkish migrants in Germany, findings show that parent-child relationships are characterised by high solidarity and conflict at the same time (Baykara-Krumme, 2010). In sum, while both solidarity and conflict may be integral aspects in migrant families (Parrott & Bengtson, 1999), their role in explaining loneliness among Turkish migrants might be ambivalent. Based on the intergenerational solidarity and conflict theses, we expect that solidarity and conflict in parent-child relationships influence loneliness in different ways.

2.2. Solidarity in Parent-Child Relationships

First, we expect that higher solidarity is related to lower loneliness. Several aspects of the relationship may foster solidarity in parent-child relationships, including aspects such as spatial proximity, contact frequency, emotional closeness, and support (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019; Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Such aspects of solidarity are also interrelated, such as higher proximity positively influencing contact frequency (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Quantitative studies show high solidarity in parent-child relationships among older Turkish migrants. For instance, Turkish migrants have high relationship satisfaction and high contact frequency with their children, as well as high levels of social support exchanges within the family (Steinbach, 2013). In addition, older Turkish migrants report higher levels of co-residing with children and of emotional closeness with their children, and fewer conflicts as compared to older native Germans (Steinbach, 2018).

These findings may reflect the Turkish culture in which values such as relatedness, obligations, and interdependence with regards to family relationships are important (Kagitcibasi et al., 2010). Higher obligations for social relationships and preferences for interdependence can also be described as reflecting a collectivistic culture. This is found at the opposite spectrum of individualism, which is observed in Northwestern Europe (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019; Kagitcibasi & Ataca, 2005). For instance, older Turkish adults living in the Netherlands prefer to have weekly visits from non-residing children (de Valk & Schans, 2008). Thus, a high contact frequency with children may fulfil the expectation of interdependency that Turkish parents have, which could lower loneliness.

Next to contact frequency, having social relationships characterised by high satisfaction is an important aspect of solidarity. Higher satisfaction with social relationships was protective against loneliness for older migrants (ten Kate et al., 2020). In research among native populations, satisfaction with social relationships was found to be a more important predictor of loneliness than contact frequency (Nicolaisen & Thorsen, 2017). In contrast, a higher number of social interactions with someone may facilitate more opportunities for giving support to each other (Steinbach, 2013), which subsequently fosters solidarity. Having *supportive* social relationships that provide affection, aid, and services is related to lower levels of loneliness among Turkish migrants (Fokkema & Naderi, 2013). Emotional support is particularly important in understanding loneliness, given that emotional support refers to "demonstrations of love and caring, esteem and value, encouragement, and sympathy" (Thoits, 2011, p. 146). Emotional support provides a sense of affection and of being valued by significant others (Thoits, 2011), which reduces loneliness. For Turkish migrants, receiving emotional support was indeed associated with lower levels of loneliness (Fokkema & Naderi, 2013), but it is unknown whether emotional support *from children* also lowered loneliness. In sum, we expect that Turkish migrants who have high parent-child solidarity feel less lonely compared to those with low parent-child solidarity (H1).

2.3. Conflict and Filial Expectations

Next to solidarity, conflict due to differences in intergenerational norms can arise in parent-child relationships, which may increase loneliness. For instance, being in conflict with family members increased loneliness among older Portuguese migrants in Luxembourg, which can also be described as a migrant population with a collectivistic culture living in a country with individualistic norms (Albert, 2021). We propose that filial expectations, which are expectations that parents have regarding interdependency with children and of caregiving obligations

of children towards parents (de Valk & Schans, 2008), can be a source of conflict and may explain why older Turkish migrants feel relatively lonelier. We refer to these caregiving obligations as filial *expectations* to highlight parents' perceptions and desires from their children.

In Turkish culture, caregiving is seen as a sign of appreciation and respect towards parents (Conkova & Lindenberg, 2018; Tezcan, 2018) and a family obligation (Bilecen, 2020). For instance, older Turkish adults often agree with statements that children should take care of their parents when they are in need; and co-reside when parents are older to take care of them (de Valk & Schans, 2008). Thus, the so-called filial expectations are high and are important for feeling appreciated by children for Turkish parents, in particular given the potential need for receiving care among older Turkish migrants.

As opposed to aspects of solidarity such as contact frequency and satisfaction describing the parent-child relationship, filial expectations show what is desired of the parent-child relationship. In the case of Turkish migrants living in Germany, the intergenerational conflict theory would assume that children do not meet the filial expectations of the parent when they adapt to the norms of the country of immigration (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019). In contrast, the solidarity thesis would expect that high filial expectations strengthen parent-child relationships when adult children adhere to the (cultural) expectations of the parent. Based on theoretical and empirical evidence, we expect the former situation (conflict) and not the latter (solidarity) with regards to filial expectations.

Turkish migrants living in Germany, a country depicted as having norms of independence, might experience a change in their parent-child relationships which can create friction in the relationship because of unmet filial expectations (Steinbach, 2018). While first- and second-generation Turkish migrants are found to be alike in expectations regarding family relationships (Baykara-Krumme & Fokkema, 2019), it might be the case that the adherence to filial expectations is lower for the second generation (Tezcan, 2018). As children become more integrated into the country of immigration and adapt to different cultural norms as compared to their parents, parents may experience their children distancing themselves from them and from the larger migrant community (Kalmijn, 2019). Older migrants may find it difficult to accept these changes in the relationship with their children living in a country with norms of independence (Albert, 2021; Kalmijn, 2019). This change in the fulfilment of expectations can happen within one generation when adult children of migrants adapt to the norms of the country of immigration (de Valk & Bordone, 2019). For instance, there might be more independence by adult children leaving their parental homes or outsourcing care for parents, which parents preferably receive from children themselves and not at nursing homes (Bilecen, 2020; Palmberger, 2019). Research shows that adult children share parental care duties among siblings, and when hands-on care is not possible, adult children also give financial support to parents or outsource support to others (Bilecen, 2020). From the parents' perspective, receiving support from third parties may be disappointing, given that this is not their preferred choice of personal care as desired in the Turkish culture (Palmberger, 2019). Not receiving the care and attention from children as desired made some Turkish parents describe their children as "disrespectful," which created conflict and sometimes even led parents to refuse to talk to their children temporarily (Tezcan, 2018).

In sum, unmet filial expectations might increase loneliness. Some scholars argue that in collectivistic cultures with higher interdependence standards, such as in the Turkish culture, feelings of loneliness may arise, given that higher expectations on social relationships are more difficult to fulfil than in individualistic cultures with lower interdependence standards (Lykes & Kemmelmeier, 2014). Hence, loneliness can even be described as a response to not meeting cultural expectations (Lykes & Kemmelmeier, 2014), which may be the case regarding the filial expectations of Turkish migrants. Such differences between parents and children can increase conflict in the relationship, which increases loneliness (Albert, 2021). Therefore, given that having higher expectations indicates a higher risk of unfulfilled expectations, Turkish migrants who have higher filial expectations are lonelier than those with lower expectations (H2).

2.4. Unmet Expectations

For loneliness, it is mainly the discrepancy in the fulfilment of filial expectations that explains loneliness rather than merely having high filial expectations. The fulfilment of filial expectations depends on individual circumstances, such as whether care is needed in the first place. After all, "strong feelings of family responsibility may predispose individuals to be supportive, but whether assistance actually materialises depends on the specific context of need" (Dykstra et al., 2013, pp. 33–34). Hence, when a discrepancy arises between expected support and given support, the result is a higher level of loneliness.

An important factor with regards to the fulfilment of filial expectations is intergenerational co-residence, given that it influences opportunities to receive support from children (Dykstra et al., 2013). Co-residing children may fulfil filial expectations better than non-residing children, as the former can give hands-on care. If parents have high filial expectations and also have co-residing children, they will have fewer unmet expectations as compared to those with high expectations who do not have co-residing children, lowering loneliness. Thus, Turkish migrants who have higher filial expectations and have co-residing children are less lonely than those without co-residing children (H2a).

In addition, health is a major determinant of care needs and loneliness. The need to receive care increases as health worsens and this, subsequently, could increase discrepancies between filial expectations and received filial care, thus increasing loneliness. Older migrants have, on average and at a relatively young age, relatively many health problems and a low perceived health, partly resulting from poor working conditions in low-skilled jobs (Ciobanu et al., 2017). Such health issues may indicate a relatively high need for receiving care. Moreover, income difficulties can also indicate a need for support. It is known that most Turkish migrants prefer to receive this kind of care and support from their children, rather than from the welfare state (Bilecen, 2020; Palmberger, 2019). However, when adult children, who are socialised in Germany, do not meet these needs with regards to health and income difficulties, this would lead to unmet filial expectations and, subsequently, to more loneliness. For parents who have poor health and income difficulties, having lower filial expectations would decrease loneliness given there is less of a risk of unmet filial expectations. We, therefore, expect that poor health coupled with income difficulties strengthen the association of H2: Turkish migrants who have higher filial expectations and poor health (H2b) or income difficulties (H2c) feel lonelier than those with good health and few income difficulties.

3. Method

3.1. Study Sample

We use the first wave of the GGS Turkish-German subsample, which was collected in 2006. For the sampling, an estimation was made of Turkish respondents aged between 18 and 79 in all German municipalities who are not living in residential or nursing homes. A random selection was then made of respondents within these municipalities (Fokkema & Naderi, 2013; GGS Online Codebook and Analysis, n.d.). Out of the 9,711 eligible respondents, a total of 4,045 completed questionnaires were collected, showing a similar response rate (41.6%) as a survey among older Turkish migrants living in the Netherlands (i.e., 45% in the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam collected in 2013–2014; see also van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020).

Trained interviewers visited the respondents at home and interviewed them face-to-face, using standardised questionnaires (available in the German and Turkish language) to collect data. The Turkish questionnaires were translated only forward, and not backward, which might have the risk of misinterpretation by the respondents when some questions were posed in different languages by the interviewers. Survey topics revolved around partnerships, children, household members, SES, health, loneliness, and social support exchanges. Respondent incentives were up to 10 euros and respondents were informed about the study via a letter before interviewers visited them at home. The average length of the interview was 65 minutes (in German) and 88 minutes (in Turkish; Fokkema & Naderi, 2013).

For our analysis, we selected respondents who (a) are first-generation Turkish migrants, determined by the country of birth of the respondent, (b) had at least one child, and (c) were aged 50 years or older. Our final sample consists of 606 respondents.

3.2. Measurements

3.2.1. Loneliness

Loneliness was measured by the six-item de Jong Gierveld scale (α = 0.78), which was tested as psychometrically sound for older Turkish migrants (van Tilburg & Fokkema, 2020). The scale has been used in several studies to measure loneliness among older migrants (see Fokkema & Naderi, 2013; Klok et al., 2017; ten Kate et al., 2020). For three items, respondents indicated whether they have enough or many relationships that provide them with a sense of closeness, support when needed, or people whom they trust. For the other three items, respondents indicated whether they experience feelings of emptiness, feeling rejected, or miss having people around. Respondents could answer *yes*, *more or less*, and *no.* For the first three items, the categories *more or less* and *no* count as lonely, and for the latter three items, *yes* and *more or less* count as lonely (de Jong Gierveld & van Tilburg, 2017).

3.2.2. Parent-Child Relationships

For aspects that are likely to reflect solidarity in parent-child relationships, we use four indicators.

Co-residing was measured by the number of adult co-residing children aged 18 and above in the household. Respondents could list for each household member who this person was (e.g., child), and their age. Based on this information, we counted the number of co-residing children aged 18 and over.

Contact frequency is measured by the number of children living outside the household with whom the respondent meets at least weekly. Respondents could list for each non-residing child how often they meet. Hence, we counted the number of non-residing children that the respondent meets daily, several times a week, or weekly.

Relationship satisfaction was measured by the question of how satisfied the respondent is with the relationship with each child living outside the household on a scale from 0 (*not at all satisfied*) to 10 (*completely satisfied*). Information on satisfaction with the relationship with co-residing children was not available. Scores below 7 are considered to be low-satisfying relationships and scores of 7 and higher are considered to be high-satisfying relationships (Fokkema & Naderi, 2013). Based on this, two variables were constructed, indicating (a) the number of low-satisfying relationships with non-resident

children and (b) the number of high-satisfying relationships with non-resident children.

For *emotionally supportive relationships with children*, respondents could list up to five people with whom they talked about personal feelings and problems in the last 12 months. Next, they indicated for each person the type of relationship (e.g., their partner, child, or friend). From this, the number of emotionally supportive relationships with children was derived, which could vary from 0 to 5.

3.2.3. Filial Expectations

For filial expectations, a scale (α = 0.79) was constructed that shows the average regarding five statements: (a) children should take responsibility for parental care if parents are in need; (b) children should adjust their working lives to the needs of their parents; (c) when parents are in need, daughters should take caring responsibility; (d) children should provide financial help if parents have financial difficulty; and (e) children should live with parents when parents can no longer look after themselves. Respondents could indicate from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*high agreement*) their agreement with each of the statements. We decided on these five items as they measure parents' perceptions of children's support obligations towards their parents.

3.2.4. Health and Income Difficulties

Health is measured by two variables. First, perceived health is measured by the question: How is your health in general? Answer possibilities were 0 (*very bad*), 1 (*bad*), 2 (*fair*), 3 (*good*), or 4 (*very good*). Low perceived health is related to lower levels of loneliness among older migrants and has an effect on loneliness above and beyond merely objective health indicators (ten Kate et al., 2020; Visser & El Fakiri, 2016). Second, objective health is measured by whether respondents have a long-standing illness or a chronic disease, or a health-related limitation or disability. Respondents who have answered *no* to both of these questions were considered to have no disease or disability. Income difficulties show the perceived difficulty of making ends meet on a scale from 0 (*not difficult at all*) to 5 (*very difficult*).

3.2.5. Controls

We control for the possible influence of the following variables on loneliness: *partner*, *emotional support*, and *socio-demographics*.

We include whether respondents have a partner and are satisfied with the relationship. Respondents could rate their satisfaction with the relationship with their partner on a scale from 0 (*not satisfied*) to 10 (*very satisfied*). Relationships scoring below 7 are considered as low-satisfying relationships and those scoring 7 and higher as high-satisfying relationships. Having a partner and having a satisfactory relationship with the partner is related to less loneliness as it fulfils the need for having a close bond (ten Kate et al., 2020).

Based on the types of social contacts besides the children from whom the respondent received emotional support, we also include the number of people besides children from whom respondents received emotional support. In addition, respondents could list up to five people who talked about their personal feelings or problems to the respondent. Based on this, the number of people to whom the respondent gave emotional support was constructed. Giving emotional support to others gives a sense of mattering in life and feeling appreciated by significant others (Thoits, 2011), which may reduce loneliness.

For socio-demographics, we include age, gender, and whether respondents are retired or homemakers, the latter being described as looking after the home or family.

3.3. Analyses

In complete case stepwise linear multivariate regression analyses we first add the control variables and aspects of parent-child relationships to test H1. We then add filial expectations to test H2. Next, health, income difficulties, and interaction terms were added to test hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c. To avoid multicollinearity, the continuous variables were first centred before constructing the interactions. For H2a, an interaction term was made between having adult co-residing children and filial expectations; for H2b, between perceived health and filial expectations, and between objective health and filial expectations; and for H2c, between income difficulties and filial expectations. With regards to missing data, the percentage of missing values was highest on the variables of loneliness (6.8%) and filial expectations (5.8%) and was below 5% on all other variables. Listwise deletion was used for missing data.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptives

Table 1 shows the description of the sample, indicating that, on average, respondents have a moderate level of loneliness, with 45.1% having some feelings of loneliness, and 11.9% experiencing severe loneliness. With regards to parent-child relationships, about half of the respondents (52.3%) have at least one adult co-residing child. Of the respondents who have non-residing children (59.9% of the sample), 37.1% have weekly contact and 56.9% are satisfied with the relationship with at least one non-residing child. In addition, the average of 0.17 on receiving emotional support from children shows that most respondents do not list their children as emotionally supportive ties. The mean value on filial expectations of 3.29 on a scale from 1 to 5 shows an agreement that children have a responsibility to take care of parents

Table 1. Descriptives of older Turkish migrants living in Germany (n = 606).

Variable	%	*n*	Mean (*se*)	25th, 50th, and 75th percentile
Loneliness			1.91 (0.08)	0,1,3
Not lonely (0–1)	48.2	292		
Moderately lonely (2–4)	33.2	201		
Severely lonely (5–6)	11.9	72		
n adult co-residing children			0.95 (0.05)	0,1,1
0	48.8	296		
1	32.3	196		
2–3	14.1	85		
4–8	4.9	29		
n non-residing children with weekly contact			0.67 (0.04)	0,0,1
0	62.4	378		
1	17.7	107		
2–3	17.4	109		
4–6	2.0	12		
n low-satisfying relationships with children			0.20 (0.03)	0,0,0
0	88.1	534		
1	6.9	42		
2–4	4.9	30		
n high-satisfying relationships with children			1.49 (0.07)	0,1,3
0	43.2	262		
1	12.0	73		
2–3	32.5	197		
4–10	12.4	75		
n children giving the respondent emotional support			0.17 (0.02)	0,0,0
0	88.4	536		
1	8.1	49		
2–4	3.5	20		
Filial expectations			3.29 (0.04)	2.4, 3, 4.2
Perceived health			2.29 (0.04)	2,2,3
Having a disease, illness and/or disability	42.4	257		
Income difficulties			2.94 (0.05)	2,3,4
Having a partner	81.2	492		
High satisfaction with partner	76.2	462		
n ties besides children giving the respondent emotional support			0.32 (0.03)	0,0,1
n ties respondent has given emotional support to			0.42 (0.04)	0,0, 0.25
Women	47.9	290		
Age			58.74 (0.25)	54,58,63
Retired	35.1	213		
Homemaker	21.9	133		

who are in need. For bivariate associations, we refer to Tables S1 and S2 of the Supplementary Material.

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

In Table 2, the results of the linear regression model are displayed. For H1, which described that solidarity in parent-child relationships is related to lower loneliness, there is partial support given that two out of the four aspects of solidarity are related to loneliness. First, having adult co-residing children is related to lower loneliness. Second, having low-satisfying relationships with non-residing children increases loneliness. Having high-satisfying relationships with non-residing children, weekly contact frequency, or receiving emotional support from children were not related to lower loneliness, suggesting that discrepancies (e.g., not being satisfied) predict loneliness, but fulfilled expectations do not

Table 2. Linear regression models for loneliness (n = 524).

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	B[a] (*se*)	B[a] (*se*)	B[a] (*se*)
Constant	2.92 (0.46)	2.69 (0.51)	2.82 (0.61)
Perceived health	−0.26 (0.10)**	−0.28 (0.10)**	−0.27 (0.10)**
Having a disease or illness (1 = yes)	0.29 (0.19)	0.27 (0.19)	0.28 (0.19)
Income difficulties	0.18 (0.07)**	0.17 (0.07)**	0.17 (0.07)**
Having a partner (1 = yes)	0.48 (0.35)	0.51 (0.356)	0.45 (0.356)
Satisfaction with partner high (1 = yes)	−1.20 (0.34)***	−1.22 (0.34)***	−1.21 (0.34)***
R. receiving emotional support besides children	−0.16 (0.17)	−0.16 (0.18)	−0.15 (0.18)
R. given emotional support to others	−0.22 (0.13)	−0.21 (0.13)	−0.19 (0.13)
Age[b]	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)
Gender (1 = women)	0.02 (0.20)	0.01 (0.20)	0.01 (0.20)
Being retired (1 = yes)	−0.20 (0.21)	−0.21 (0.20)	−0.19 (0.20)
Being a homemaker (1 = yes)	−0.37 (0.24)	−0.37 (0.24)	−0.40 (0.24)
H1. N. adult co-residing child(ren)	−0.20 (0.07)**	−0.19 (0.07)**	−0.19 (0.07)**
H1. N. weekly contact child(ren)	−0.07 (0.09)	−0.07 (0.09)	−0.06 (0.09)
H1. N. low satisfaction with child(ren)[c]	0.39 (0.13)**	0.39 (0.13)**	0.38 (0.13)**
H1. N. high satisfaction with child(ren)[c]	−0.10 (0.07)	−0.10 (0.07)	−0.10 (0.07)
H1. N. child(ren) giving emotional support	0.07 (0.18)	0.06 (0.18)	−0.01 (0.18)
H2. Filial expectations		0.09 (0.08)	0.05 (0.12)
H2a. Adult co-residing child × filial expectations[d]			−0.05 (0.06)
H2b. Perceived health × filial expectations[d]			0.25 (0.10)**
H2b. Disease × filial expectations[d]			0.19 (0.19)
H2c. Income difficulties × filial expectations[d]			−0.03 (0.07)
R^2	0.08	0.18	0.23
R^2 adjusted	0.07	0.16	0.20
F—change model	9.38***	1.29	2.04

Notes: *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$; Results of complete cases analysis with n = 524; [a] unstandardised regression coefficients; [b] this variable is centred for a better interpretation of respondents who score 0 on age (mean age = 58.74); [c] satisfaction with non-residing children; [d] continuous variables were centred before making the interaction term to avoid multicollinearity (this means that the slope shows the effect of scoring above average on the variables); mean values are perceived health = 2.29, income difficulties = 2.94, filial expectations = 3.29.

(e.g., weekly contact, satisfying relationships, receiving emotional support).

H2, which stated that older Turkish migrants who have higher filial expectations are lonelier, is not supported. The small insignificant positive effect of filial expectations on loneliness had a high standard error, showing variation in the association between filial expectations and loneliness. No support was found for H2a, H2b, and H2c, focusing on the interaction between co-residing children, health, income difficulties with filial expectations on loneliness (see model 3). Interaction effects of observed values for H2b with regards to perceived health are shown in Figure 1 and H2a until H2c are depicted in Supplementary Material (Figures S1 to S3). Contrary to H2b, the positive and significant slope of perceived health multiplied by filial expectations shows that respondents who have an above-average perceived health and above average filial expectations, have higher levels of loneliness. Respondents who have below-average perceived health are less lonely when they have higher filial expectations. This is depicted in Figure 1, showing that respondents who have fair or good perceived health and higher filial expectations have a higher level of loneliness. Moreover, the scores on loneliness are around a value of 2 (moderate loneliness) when respondents have higher filial expectations, regardless of their health status.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This article focused on the role of parent-child relationships in explaining loneliness among Turkish migrants

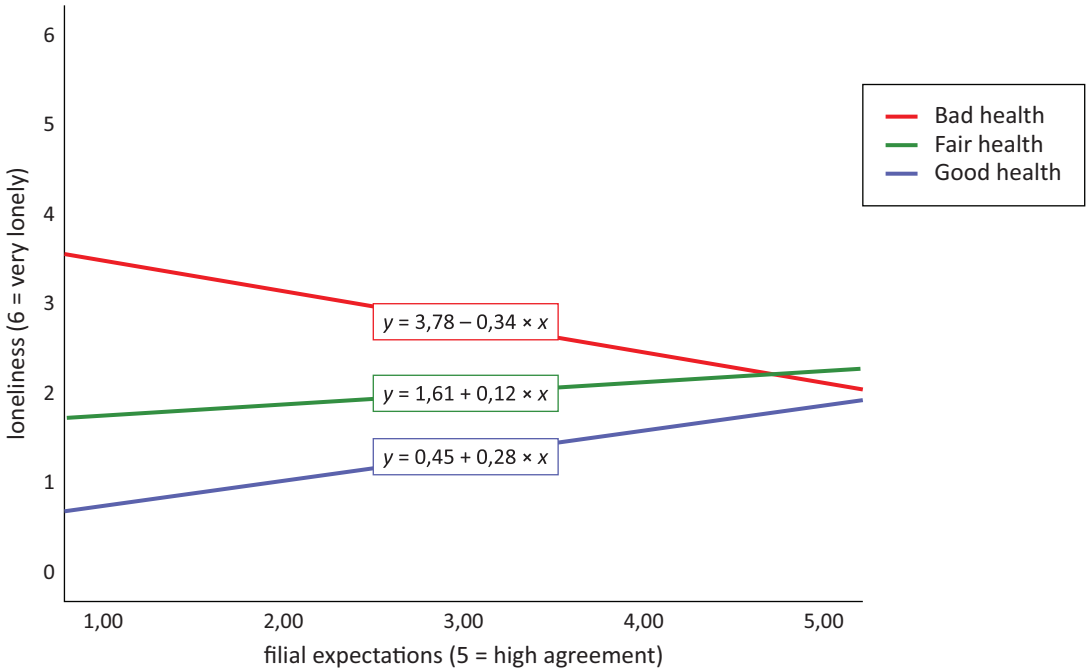

Figure 1. Interaction of observed values between loneliness and filial expectations for categories of perceived health.

in Germany. In Germany, as well as in other European countries, migrants age alongside native populations. This not only has demographical but also societal consequences, given the stronger feelings of loneliness among older migrants. Older Turkish migrants are an example of an older migrant population who have stronger feelings of loneliness, which can be seen as the opposite of social inclusion and embeddedness. Higher loneliness has several negative outcomes on both mental and physical health, highlighting the importance of a better understanding of high loneliness. While some research shows a high family cohesion for Turkish migrant families that could prevent loneliness, there is also ambivalence in parent-child relationships. Such ambivalence may be related to the social integration of adult children (i.e., the second generation) who adapt to the norms of the country of immigration, which could disappoint parents who have the norms of the country of emigration (Kalmijn, 2019).

We contribute to the literature by focusing on several aspects of parent-child relationships that foster solidarity, and on the role of filial expectations as a potential source of conflict in parent-child relationships that may increase loneliness. Certain aspects of solidarity, such as having co-residing children, are related to lower loneliness, but high satisfaction with children, contact frequency, or receiving emotional support from children are not. Our findings thus challenge previous studies assuming that "good" relationships always reduce loneliness, given that there was no association found between several aspects of solidarity in parent-child relationships and loneliness. As for the conflict thesis, qualitative studies showed that some Turkish migrants have conflicts in the relationship with their children, due to filial and cultural expectations (Tezcan, 2018, 2019), which may increase feelings of loneliness. However, we found that filial expectations had no independent effect on loneliness, suggesting that expectations themselves are not necessarily a risk for loneliness.

Moreover, we found that Turkish migrants with fair or good perceived health and higher filial expectations have higher levels of loneliness. This suggests that older Turkish migrants with worse perceived health may get satisfactory support and care from their children, and hence have less often unfulfilled filial expectations compared to those with better perceived health. This finding indicates that when parents have worse health, children may perceive their parents' needs, and are ready to care for them. Perhaps for parents with worse health, the parent-child relationships are more akin to solidarity than to conflict. Interestingly, older Turkish migrants with worse health feel lonelier when they do not have high expectations from children. This suggests that Turkish migrant parents with lower expectations may have more friction in their relationships with their children. It might also be the case that older migrants with low filial expectations experience a deviation from what is expected in the Turkish culture, which could increase loneliness. These findings are crucial to understanding the effects of health needs concerning filial expectations explaining loneliness among older migrants living in Europe who migrated from a country with a collectivistic culture.

Although our study has its contributions, there are some limitations. First, filial expectations were measured by statements describing what is expected of children in general. Therefore, it is unknown whether older Turkish migrants have the same filial expectations when it comes to their own children and situation. For instance, some

older migrants describe that they do not want to be a burden to their children and may accept formal care if needed (Conkova & Lindenberg, 2018; Palmberger, 2019). Second, receiving instrumental support or financial support from children was not included in the present study. In the data, only a handful of respondents indicated that they received help with personal care or financial support from their children. We, therefore, could not include receiving instrumental and financial support in our analyses, but these types of support may have an impact on loneliness. Last, the data did not include information on migration characteristics or life course events, such as feelings of belonging to Germany, the motivation for migrating, or changes in health or SES over the years. While the years of residing in Germany and the age of migration were not related to loneliness (see Supplementary Material, Table S3), migration characteristics and life course events may play a role in loneliness.

For future studies, we have three recommendations. First, the role of receiving instrumental and financial support from children, and the possible outsourcing of caregiving should be further considered. Care responsibilities can also be fulfilled by a third party, which is not preferred by older Turkish migrants (Bilecen, 2020; Palmberger, 2019). This may still be a viable option for care that can lower unfulfilled filial expectations, which, in turn, might decrease loneliness. Here, it should also be considered how the health and SES of older Turkish migrants influence the extent to which they receive care from their children, and subsequently, loneliness. Second, the role of gender in parent-child relationships needs closer examination, in particular in the context of the Turkish culture placing more caregiving responsibilities on daughters than on sons (Conkova & Lindenberg, 2018; Kagitcibasi et al., 2010). Some gender differences were also found in the GGS data (see Supplementary Material, Table S4), but this needs further examination. For instance, research on relationships between daughters, sons, fathers, and mothers with a Turkish migration background shows distinct patterns, such as daughters having both more conflicting and harmonious relationships with their parents as compared to sons (Baykara-Krumme, 2010). Third, while our study focused on feelings of overall loneliness, loneliness can also be theorised and analysed as a bidimensional concept (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001; van Baarsen et al., 2001). Social loneliness (i.e., feelings of embeddedness to a larger social network) and emotional loneliness (i.e., lack of strong emotional bonds) may be related differently to parent-child relationships. For instance, whereas lack of engagement in social activities with children could explain social loneliness, low relationship satisfaction and emotional support could explain emotional loneliness. While we did find some differences according to the type of loneliness (such as the interaction between filial expectations and perceived health predicting social loneliness but not emotional loneliness; see Supplementary Material, Table S5), future studies may look into this issue more in-depth.

In sum, parent-child relationships play an ambivalent role in explaining loneliness among older Turkish migrants in Germany. Several aspects of solidarity in parent-child relationships such as receiving emotional support are not associated with loneliness. For older Turkish migrants who have relatively high filial expectations, this may explain both higher and lower levels of loneliness. These findings indicate that especially healthy older Turkish migrants may have unfulfilled expectations regarding parent-child relationships, which adds to their loneliness, while parents with poor health experience solidarity, which lowers their loneliness. This paints a picture of both intergenerational solidarity and conflict: Turkish migrants maintain close relationships with their adult children, and expectations on caregiving responsibilities from children may be fulfilled for parents who have worse perceived health, but not for those with good perceived health. This suggests that in such situations, children also perceive the needs of their parents and fulfil the expected caregiving role. The interplay of ageing, migration, and filial expectations in what constitutes a satisfactory social relationship and social support from children—and its impact on loneliness—should be considered in future research and in policy interventions aiming to reduce loneliness among older migrants.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the editor and anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts. We also thank our colleagues of the FLAG research group at the University of Groningen Sociology Department for their comments and suggestions.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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About the Authors

Rowan L. F. ten Kate is a PhD student in sociology at the University of Groningen (RUG). After completing the research master behavioural and social sciences at RUG, Rowan continues to study research topics related to social networks, social support, and social wellbeing in her PhD research. Her doctoral thesis focuses on feelings of loneliness and social relationships of older migrants living in Northwestern Europe.

Başak Bilecen is an associate professor of sociology and Rosalind Franklin Fellow at the University of Groningen. Her research focuses on international migration, transnational social protection, social inequalities, social networks and well-being. She is the author of *International Student Mobility and Transnational Friendships* (Palgrave, 2014) and has co-edited special issues in such journals as the *Comparative Migration Studies* (2019), *Social Networks* (2018), *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (2017), and *Population, Space and Place* (2015).

Nardi Steverink is a professor of sociology at the University of Groningen and the University Medical Centre Groningen, and programme leader of the "Self-Management of Well-Being" intervention. This intervention focuses on the improvement of self-management ability, subjective well-being, and loneliness. In her research line "Aging Well: Social Relations, Self-Regulation, Health and Well-Being," Nardi focuses on questions concerning social and behavioural determinants of health, well-being, and quality of life over the lifespan, with a special focus on the role of social needs and self-regulation.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 304–314
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4555

Article

Intergenerational Friendship as a Conduit for Social Inclusion? Insights from the "Book-Ends"

Riikka Korkiamäki [1,*] and Catherine Elliott O'Dare [2]

[1] Faculty of Social Sciences, Tampere University, Finland; E-Mail: riikka.korkiamaki@tuni.fi
[2] School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; E-Mail: elliot@tcd.ie

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 26 May 2021 | Accepted: 9 September 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Friendship is said to promote psychological and physical well-being and increase social inclusion. Yet, intergenerational friendship has garnered little research attention due to the assumed dominance of age homophily in friendship. In this article we explore intergenerational friendship from the perspective of "younger" and "older" friends at the "generational book-ends" of the life course. We focus on the role that intergenerational friendship plays in processes of social inclusion in the everyday lives of the participants, bringing together a study conducted in Finland and one in Ireland. Both studies employ qualitative methodology, drawing from interviews with 31 young people who were refugees (aged 13–18) in Finland and 23 older people (aged 65+) in Ireland. Our findings reveal that the younger and the older participants concur on the qualities and benefits of intergenerational friendship. Additionally, while age is not a uniform definer of friendships, differences in chronological age are not meaningless but support caring, enjoyment, and inclusion in alternative ways compared to peer-aged friendships. Access to diverse company, distinct support, broader networks, and alternative identities lead to increased experiences of social inclusion at a personal and societal level. We conclude by calling on policy makers and communities to create spaces and opportunities for inclusion through friendship for all generations.

Keywords
book-end generations; friendship; intergenerational friendship; older people; social inclusion; young people

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Friendship as a precursor and predictor of individual happiness and wellbeing is well documented by social scientists (e.g., Nehamas, 2016). Connection with friends is referred to as a "social glue" (Pahl, 2000) fostering inclusion and belonging (e.g., Blieszner, 2014). Adams and Taylor (2015) on conclusion of an extensive literature review on the topic of friendship purported that "the literature clearly demonstrates that friendship and happiness are positively related" (p. 160). Happiness and life satisfaction are reported to be highest among those individuals who have friends (Demir, 2015). Chopik (2017) further argued that friendships in later life promoted increased happiness and health for the older individuals, beyond even family relationships. For young people, friendships are said to provide an important environment for informal learning, healthy identities and developing solidarity (e.g., Bartos, 2013; McLeod, 2002). As sources of social support, it is suggested that young people often find their friends to be more important than their parents (Cotterell, 2007). Accordingly, Muraco (2012, p. 15) stated that friendship is one of the most significant, yet socially ignored, relationships.

In addition to exploring the benefits and outcomes of friendship, understanding and conceptualising friendship and its characteristics has occupied social scientists throughout history. In the fourth century BC, Aristotle

distinguished between the character of friendships of the young and the friendships of the old, with the young forming fleeting friendships "in pursuit of pleasure" and the old more inclined to form enduring friendship based on virtue. Aristotle argued that people form friendships with those who are similar to themselves, including similarity in age (Crisp, 2014, p. 144). Seeking friends who are similar to oneself is conceptualised in contemporary research as homophily, i.e., "birds of a feather flock together." The "feathers" that bind people in friendship have most commonly been identified as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or education (Block & Grund, 2014; McPherson et al., 2001). Elliott O'Dare et al. (2019a, 2019b) argue that the assumed prevalence of homophily in friendship has resulted in a particular valuable and interesting type of friendship, namely intergenerational friendship, to be ignored by social scientists and others to the detriment of individuals, societies, and policymakers.

This article seeks to add to the sparse yet growing body of literature on intergenerational friendship in focusing on the role that intergenerational friendship plays in the processes of social inclusion in the everyday lives of the "old" and "young" at either end of the generational life course, conceptualised by Hagestad (2008b) as "generational book-ends." We ask how older and younger people experience friendships with people from a different generation and if intergenerational friendship promotes social inclusion. In this article, we bring together the views of the two book-ends, the old and young, which were initially part of separate studies, one in Finland and the other in Ireland.

2. Intergenerational Friendship

The term intergenerational in this article refers to friendships between people who belong to different social generations. The term generation, as conceptualised by Mannheim (1928/1952, p. 290), refers to "a common location in the historical dimension of the social process." Pilcher (1994, p. 481) clarifies the "notion of generation as widespread in everyday language as a way of understanding differences between age groups and as a means of locating individuals and groups within historical time." Hence, intergenerational friendship is defined here as a friendship between people of different social generations who are not related.

Likely influenced by the principle of homophily, intergenerational friendship as a topic had attracted little research attention (see, e.g., Bettini & Norton, 1991; Holladay & Kerns, 1999; Matthews, 1986; Roos, 2004). However, more recently, Dykstra and Fleischmann (2016) provided quantitative empirical evidence as to the existence and prevalence of intergenerational friendships across 25 European countries. In all countries, the proportion of people reporting cross-age friendships was higher among the older (30.6%) than among the younger people (18.1%). This was highest in Finland at 50%, followed by Sweden (46.2%), then Ireland (43.5%), Germany (39.8%), the UK (38.5%), and lowest in Lithuania at 4%. Younger people in Ireland reported the highest proportion of cross-age friendships at 36% (Dykstra & Fleischmann, 2016).

Elliott O'Dare et al. (2019b, 2021) purported that the dearth of interest in exploring and understanding intergenerational friendship may lie in the sociocultural creation of intergenerational "schisms" grounded in the social construction and expectations of age-norms, underpinning the principle of age homophily. Identifying sociocultural expectations in regard to how individuals of all ages "should" conduct their behaviour, Neugarten et al. (1965, p. 711) defined age norms as "expectations regarding age-appropriate behaviour and interaction, a network of expectations that is embedded throughout the cultural fabric of life." Cuddy et al. (2005) point to the pervasiveness and consistency of age stereotyping and argue that the outcome is the social exclusion of older people. The same goes for the young, as the categorical age norms lay development-psychological expectations for them to primarily interact with same-age friends (Cotterell, 2007). Stereotypical understanding of the nature of peer friendship in youth also places young people under constant surveillance by grown-ups which determines who, when and how they should meet and, for instance, restricts their access to public spaces (Kallio, 2016; Korkiamäki, 2013, 2016). Intergenerational friendships defy this dichotomy between the "young" and "old," as friends are of different generations yet choose to engage in a close relationship with each other. Intergenerational friendship, hence, challenges the notion of age-norms and age homophily as a deterrent to meaningful intergenerational interaction (Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019b, 2021; Korkiamäki & Kallio, 2017).

2.1. Generational Book-Ends as a Concept for Intergenerational Friendship Exploration

Ironically, the sparse discussion on intergenerational friendship centers on the views and needs of one generational end: older people. Children and young people are recognized as actors in familial (parent/grandparent–child) and formal (teacher–student,) intergenerational relationships, but their informal ties to non-kin adults are often overlooked (Korkiamäki & Kallio, 2017). Hagestad (2008b) criticizes the separation of what she calls "generational book-ends" for neglecting the interdependence and interconnectedness across age and generation. This "generational myopia" has consequences at both institutional and personal level and should thus be societally acknowledged and deliberately addressed in policy making as well as in research (Hagestad, 2008b, p. 21; see also Hagestad, 2008a).

As one of the reasons behind the generational distinction, Hagestad recognizes the assumption that the two marginal ends of the lifespan, the old and the young, are in competition for similar resources such as government funded social and health care services. The institutional

segregation and relational asymmetry caused by this could be, in Hagestad's view, avoided by seeing the two as the "*book-end generations*, who may have more in common than is commonly recognized" (Hagestad, 2008a, p. 114). The modern institutionalization throughout the life course affects social networks and socialization experiences, particularly for the young and the old, and the everyday spatial segregation of age groups feeds cultural segregation suffered at the book-ends, as the young may lose their connection to history and the old to the contemporary (Hagestad, 2008a). Contemporary society, where age groups are segregated into detached "islands," inhibits intergenerational networks between the young and old, limiting opportunities for them to discover what they have in common (Conti & Sgritta, 2006). As a result, old and young are isolated and "vertically deprived," that is, missing out on the support of and experiential connection with people outside their own age-group (Hagestad, 2008a, p. 129). This holds true especially for "generational solos": for older people not embedded in familial intergenerational chains, such as the childless/grandchildless older people, and young people inhabiting out-of-home environments (Herlofson & Hagestad, 2011). Therefore, the discussion on interdependence across generations should not be limited to familial ties but seek to study the potential common ground between youth and old age in their sociability beyond families. In this article, we search for this common ground by looking at the characteristics and benefits of friendship with both book-ends: the "young" and the "old."

3. Methods and Materials

Herlofson and Hagestad (2011) suggest that to overcome the challenging issues of age segregation, policy makers, social scientists, and other interested parties must forge "cross-alliances" within academia. This article combines two research projects of which the first is a social work study concerned about vulnerable young people's peer and intergenerational friendships in Finland and the second is a gerontological study exploring the meaning and significance of intergenerational friendships of older adults (aged 65 and over) in Ireland. The Finnish study was funded by the Academy of Finland and granted ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Tampere Region in August 2016. The Irish study was funded by the Irish Research Council and granted ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at Trinity College Dublin in September 2015. Pseudonyms are used in this article to protect the privacy of the participants.

Author Korkiamäki's research investigated friendship of vulnerable young people, namely newly arrived asylum-seekers and refugees in Finland. Twenty-three boys and eight girls, 13 to 18 years of age and originally from Asia, the Middle East, and Northern Africa, participated in the research. The data was gathered at the school where the young people attended preparatory courses (before being gradually integrated into the Finnish basic education classes). The research applied an ethnographic methodology, and Korkiamäki spent several weeks at the school becoming familiar with the young people, observing activities and negotiations around friendship, and performing various research tasks with the participants. The information on their friendships used in this article was gathered through three types of activities. Firstly, the participants drew person-centered friendship network diagrams (e.g., Bravington & King, 2018) where they indicated people who they would define as their friends under different categories: friends in their current (group) home, in their home country, at school, in town/street/public places, online, through hobbies, and "other." In the diagrams participants also indicated how close they felt to these people and if the people in their diagram knew each other. Secondly, the participants were asked to choose photographs to share with the researcher about their friends or about friendship. Thirdly, social support network diagrams were drawn to point out who the young people felt would be there for them with support or advice under the categories of family, *friends*, authorities, other. The diagrams and photographs were then discussed in open-ended and participant-centered individual interviews where the participants explained why they had chosen these people on their diagrams and photos. In addition, the origin, quality, characteristics, and the shared activities of the friendships were discussed, while other issues were also highlighted by the young people during flow of the conversation. Because of the vulnerable nature of the research group and the possibly sensitive topic, the interviews followed the ideology of only asking questions and follow-up questions about people and issues that the participants chose to talk about (Korkiamäki & Gilligan, 2020).

Initially, Korkiamäki's study concerned not only intergenerational friendships but friendships in general. However, participants chose to discuss not only same-age friends, with 16 of the 31 participants (four girls and 12 boys) naming people clearly older than themselves as "a friend." To investigate intergenerational friendships in this study, "intergenerational friend" was defined as a person from a different age group and a presumed generational difference. Hence, the 13- to 18-year-old participants had intergenerational friends ranging from 30 years of age to people in their 70s.

The accounts of the 16 participants talking about older friends were analyzed to identify the characteristics, meanings, practices and significance of intergenerational friendship. An abductive analysis, alternating induction and deduction, was employed to allow the data to "surprise" and create new theoretical insight while being in a dialogue with the existing theories of friendship (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). Hence, the analysis first proceeded from data-based coding to case-specific qualitative content analysis. The inductively identified analysis-units were then thematically categorized utilizing the theoretical pre-knowledge on friendship,

social support, and social inclusion (see Timmermans & Tavory, 2012).

In Ireland, to understand the meaning and experiences of non-kin intergenerational friendships in later life, Elliott O'Dare conducted in-depth interviews with 16 women and seven men aged 65 and over living in Ireland, from diverse educational, occupational, and socio-economic backgrounds. Participants ranged in chronological age from 66 to 95 years of age, were community dwelling, and they had an intergenerational friend(s) for more than three years duration. An intergenerational friendship for the purposes of this study was understood as a friendship between an older (aged 65 years plus) individual and a younger (by 15 years or more) non-kin individual. The decision to allow for a minimum 15-year age gap reflects a pragmatic choice to opt for a presumed generational difference that would be generally understood as potentially significant. It was recognised that in using these criteria both friends may adhere to a societal definition of being older, for example, an 80-year-old with a 65-year-old friend, and this emerged to be case for many of the participants. Therefore, the 15-year age-gap also recognises that distinctions based solely on chronological age may be arbitrary, as both parties, despite having significant age differences and being part of different generations, may commonly be labelled and grouped together as "old." Additionally, this challenges an ageist approach by recognising that the intergenerational friendship is no less valuable or worthy of attention simply because both parties to the friendship may be labelled "old."

Elliott O'Dare considered grounded theory's offering of the generation of theory from data as important as the topic of intergenerational friendship is under-researched and therefore theoretical insights on the topic were imperative (Hood, 2007; Morse, 2016). The research therefore took a qualitative approach using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). The participants' preference for being interviewed in their own home shaped the data gathering and analysis phases; an additional layer of observational data along with the recorded interview data was captured. Field notes, in the form of memos, were written to capture observations related to participants' homes and environments (for instance, technology and equipment used for hobbies and interests with intergenerational friends). In keeping with the grounded theory method, an initial interview guide prioritised learning about the participants' views, experiences, and actions, and contained open-ended questions, for example: "Could you describe how your friendship started and how it grew?" Coding (line-by-line and focused), analysis, and memoing (observational and analytical) progressed in tandem, as participants with particular characteristics or in particular circumstances were recruited as being suited to build and add depth to emerging concepts (theoretical sampling).

For both researchers, the "troublesome trinity" of "theoretical sampling, constant comparison of data to theoretical categories and theoretical saturation" speak to the strength of the validity of analysis (Hood, 2007, p. 164). In our shared analysis we draw together our data and findings to explore the qualities and benefits of intergenerational friendship in ways that are not confined to the views of a single generational "book-end." In this article, we focus on the role that intergenerational friendships plays in processes and promotion of social inclusion in the everyday lives of the "young" and "old'' participants.

4. Supporting Inclusion and Belonging Through Intergenerational Friendship

While the data with the older people was generated through exclusively focusing on intergenerational friendship, the research on young people focused on friendships in general. Nevertheless, when asked about their friends, the young participants referred not only to their same-age peers but also to people of other generations. The youths had formed intergenerational friendships with assistant teachers and the care-workers in their residential homes and, particularly, with volunteers who were assigned to them to ease their cultural integration and who were commonly referred to as "aunties," "uncles," and "grannies" by the young people. Some participants also spoke about their summer job co-workers, neighbours, or their girlfriends' parents as adult friends. In Elliott O'Dares's study the older participants met prospective younger friends through four main settings: leisure pursuits and interests, work and professions, meeting through peer-age friends and family members, and through social interaction in their community.

For both book-ends, the activities pursued with friends from different generations often differed from activities that were performed within same-age friendships. The older or younger friends guided their intergenerational friends to places, relationships, and activities that they did not typically engage in with their peer-aged friends. For instance, the young people visited museums, theatres, specific outdoor activities, and the workplaces of their older friends. The older people spent time together with their young friends at football clubs, camera clubs, and societies based around a shared interest in music, drama, or history. In these ways, the generational book-ends accessed the other generations' communities and mundane milieus, broadening the inclusionary space that is available for them (see also Korkiamäki & Kallio, 2017). Next, we look at how this inclusionary space was created in friendly intergenerational mingling. Finally, we return to the question of how these practices of "doing friendship" relate to the broader concepts of inclusion and belonging.

4.1. Companionship, Fun, and Enjoyment

Without exception, the older and younger emphasised the significance of having company and sharing fun and

laughter with their intergenerational friends. The lighthearted commonality was signalled to be of immense importance in the experience of intergenerational friendship. Regardless of age, the participants talked about the importance of being in company that felt easy and natural. This was often narrated through comparison to their same-age friendships, as the participants clearly felt that due to the perceived "unusual" nature, intergenerational friendships needed to be expressly justified:

> She [Liisa, intergenerational friend] is an adult, not my age, but she's still a good friend. Because with people who are my age I quite often feel that they don't understand me or, that, I don't fit in. But with Liisa it is just easy to be with, it's just that we have so much fun together. (Maria, 16)

> Age doesn't matter. The important thing is that you get along and that you can be together and it's fun, so then you are not lonely. (Mehrab, 17)

> I'm not good on my own. I love people. I don't see myself making any more close friends. They, will grow old with me. I get on with younger and older people, age doesn't matter to me at all. I love people, I love talking to them and having a bit of laugh. (Lucia, 89)

Laughing together was perceived by the participants as an essential element of the process of transitioning from a "good friend" to a "close friend." Both the young and the old stated that shared laughter, joy, and humour is a conduit for close friendship:

> We [Eileen and her younger friend] had the greatest laughs… we laugh and laugh when we go out, and, I mean, I have to put great effort into it [going out] now, because I'm killed with arthritis. We had more laughs and fun together, and that brought us even closer. (Eileen, 79)

> [We are friends] because we have the same sense of humour. So that's why, because it's so important with friends, that you can laugh to the same jokes. (Jawed, 16)

While having fun and joking around are typically viewed as a feature of young people's friendship (Cotterell, 2007; Korkiamäki, 2013), they are rarely mentioned in extant literature focused on later life (Elliott O'Dare et al., 2019a). However, in our study, it is evident that fun and laughter are a vital part of "being friends in action" for the older intergenerational friends also. Iris, 91, and Valerie, 67, declared:

> A friendship is not always a cry for help. It's just being together, friendship, chit-chat that sort of thing. So we don't notice the age difference and that. (Iris)

> Yeah, a bit of a laugh there….If you are feeling down you could say, Denise [a younger friend] will we go for a walk. Ah yeah, a great relationship, you know we have a great laugh. She is great fun and all, I am eighteen years older than Denise, I never really think of it that way. (Valerie)

As the examples above demonstrate, companionship and having a good time are not solely "light" or superficial features of friendship (Demir, 2015). Often expressed through humour and shared laughter, spending time in a comfortable company prevents loneliness and provides effortless experiences of belonging. As suggested by May (2013), it is possible that such sense of belonging in close personal relationships translates into more generalised experiences of being included, hence promoting emotional inclusion in meaningful communities.

4.2. Trust, Emotional Support, and Reciprocity

Along with being fun and enjoyable company, the participants explained that a friend is a loyal and trusted confidante who will listen to worries and anxieties. Hence, fun and laughter was not only about joyous time but had deeper meanings, often those of emotional support. This was reflected by the older generation, an example of which was given by Valerie above, and it was also mentioned in the interviews of the young people. Benham, 17, demonstrates:

> Friend is important because, for instance, if you have a problem, if you are sad you can talk to them, if you are sick, friend comes to see you.

Talking to an intergenerational friend was referred to as "great therapy" by Lucia, 89, as she engaged in coping with widowhood, and as "therapeutical" by Fatima, 17, who struggled with the stressful situation of seeking asylum in Finland. The word "therapy" was also used by Mariam, 16, to highlight trust in friendships:

> It is like therapy, because you can talk about anything and trust, trust is there.

While trust is always a crucial characteristic of friendship (e.g., Nehamas, 2016), some of the younger participants felt that it can be more easily obtained in intergenerational than in peer relationships. Mohammad, 15, explains:

> If I tell her [intergenerational friend] my secrets, I don't worry that she'll tell them to other people. Because she doesn't know any of my friends, so then she won't tell them.

In friendship and in social life in general, the division between benefits and disadvantages is not clear-cut. Being able to confide in her older friend undeniably

provides Mohammad with an important source of emotional support, but the narrative also signals the isolation of their friendship from Mohammad's other spheres of life. For Mohammad's peer age friends, this challenges the notion of access to broader networks through intergenerational friendship which we look at in the following section.

Kathryn, 94, reflected on how fortunate she is in her intergenerational friendships as "they are all very good, good fun, and good people." This statement stresses how, along with being fun, being "good" (supportive) and "good people" (trustworthy and loyal) are characteristics that Kathryn observed and admired in her friends. Crucially, these characteristics, i.e., being confidant, trustworthy, and supportive, are required to flow both ways. While this kind of reciprocity is commonly described in accounts of peer aged friendship (e.g., Cotterell, 2007; Nehamas, 2016), in intergenerational relationships it is equally important:

> I know, it's funny, and many wonder about that, why, how we can be friends, since I don't have anything to give or, something like that. Or, well, I think I do, but people just don't get it because I'm young. (Karima, 15)

Equality and reciprocity are not typical definers of intergenerational relationships, as it is more common that adults are the "givers" and children and youths the receivers. In the same way, older people are often viewed as passive recipients of the bounties of care through friendship, rather than equal contributors (Hagestad, 2008a). However, in our data, both bookends described reciprocity in their intergenerational friendships and portrayed themselves as both "giving" and "taking":

> Then I can go and offload to her. I call it offloading and Jane can offload to me because we're very good friends….You're equals in their [friend's] company, you are equals when you're chatting. (Iris, 91)

> Abdul… he is my friend, I always do everything with him and, I help him find work because he doesn't speak Finnish or English, only Arabic. And he helps me and I work with him and I learn….This is why he is my good friend. (Amin, 17)

> I think it's like a shared experience and also that we are both getting something out of it, out of the relationship and the friendship because I would say it's very 50/50. (Janis, 78)

Being a confidant and confiding, trusting and being trustworthy, supportive and being supported were enabled within the bounds of friendship. Hence, the benefits of friendship were equally experienced when the status as good friends were shared. The bidirectional flow of the attributes that the friends considered significant in their friendship, seemed essential according to the participants. These exchanges took varying forms, as narrated by Maria, 85, who had mobility difficulties:

> But I know that if there is anything the matter they would come to my rescue, you know, that sort of thing. And there is solidarity about the friendships that they give me, its solidarity. They are with me; they are for me. That's the sort of thing you expect…and you are for that person…it has to be mutual…that's how I feel, to have a friend you have to have mutual understanding and mutual consideration.

While it would be easy to assume that Maria was the lone recipient of care in an intergenerational friendship, the shared elements—solidarity, understanding, and consideration—are signalled as necessary ingredients in Maria's friendships. Moreover, in addition to the mutual flow of emotional support, the alluded "if anything is the matter," encapsulates a broad array of support—an important aspect of friendship achieved through broadening intergenerational networks.

4.3. Belonging and Access to Broader Networks

Friendship is traditionally understood as a bonding and exclusive relationship between two people or within a small group and, thus, not necessarily beneficial for broader social inclusion (e.g., Putnam, 2000). However, when looking at intergenerational friendship it seems that with and through their friends, people access networks, spaces and opportunities that would not be available for them without their intergenerational friends. For example, Tommy, 76, gives an example of what he perceived as being expected of him as an older individual by others of his generation, but not by his intergenerational friend:

> I think that anyway, some of my people my age, like, they think that you might be out of place if you are there [in the pub] at one o'clock, two o'clock [laughs].

Exceeding age-categorical expectations, Tommy was granted increased opportunities for socialisation by his younger friends. Similarly, Leyla, 17, who had made friends with her mother's supervisor, had visited "adult areas" otherwise inaccessible for her, such as cultural events, a spa, and the friend's workplace. This kind of "generational boundary crossing" was not limited to spatial environments but often signified broadening social spaces and the development of new social ties, as involvement in an intergenerational friendship often meant getting acquainted with the friend's family and friends. To our young refugee participants, these "weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973) had provided summer jobs, useful practical advice and, importantly, the sense of belonging in a group or a community of native-born Finnish people.

Often enabled by a broadening of their social network, an important feature of intergenerational friendship to the older and younger participants was that their intergenerational friends provided other kinds of support than their peer friendships. Many of the older participants spoke of the assistance their young friends gave them with technology, which facilitated the older friends' connectivity to contemporary society. Valerie, 67, states:

> If anything goes wrong with my iPad, straight up to him [intergenerational friend]—or my phone, he will fix all that for me.

For young asylum-seekers and refugees, pronouncedly seeking inclusion in Finnish society, bridges to varied support and wider networks provided by their intergenerational friends were of extreme importance. Two of the refugee boys explain:

> I don't talk to my [same-age] friends if I worry about something because they have big problems themselves. But sometimes I talk to Marketta [intergenerational friend], and her friend Pirjo, and Marketta told me that I can talk to Pirjo too, so that is good, it is good that I talk to Pirjo, and to Marketta. (Abdullah, 15)

> Well, none of my [same-age] friends know [how to be and behave in Finland], and they can't, they don't know how, so it's good that I have Marko as my friend, he can help. Because he is a little old and he is Finnish, so he knows lots of things. (Farhan, 16)

These intergenerational friendships guided the young people in making sense of society, building attachments, and reworking its conventions. With and through their adult Finnish friends, the young people were able to experience their new living environment in spatial and social spheres that were broader than their close circle of same-age and same-ethnic friends. This also promised an expected continuation of friendship, unlike peer friendships, some of which were likely to end on becoming independent of state care:

> And when I move out [of the group home], then my [older] friend can stay as my friend, you understand? It is really important that you have a good friend, a best friend, then it is all good for you, it's all better. (Behnam, 17)

To the asylum-seeking young people, friendship with their Finnish "aunties," "uncles," and "grannies" was significant also because it guided them—and their Finnish counterparts—to address ethnic and cultural ignorance and prejudice, present on both sides, and helped them to realise the differences and similarities between peoples and cultures. This sense of inclusivity may initially develop with a close friend and then generalise into a broader group, as Hamasa, 15, pronounces:

> She is my Finnish friend, she always helps me, whatever I need… and I can help her too, I can play with [her daughters] and I can tell her what I know… and I like her and she likes me, and, then, I think Finnish people are nice.

4.4. Enabling Alternative Identities

Described as the "weak segments of population" by Conti and Sgritta (2006), the young and the old inherently carry the label of vulnerability. In our data, this stigma was especially evident among the asylum-seeking youths and some of the older people who, due to for instance retirement or illness, felt isolated and useless, "just sort of dropped out of society," as Brendan, 72, stated. He continued by highlighting the need to feel useful to someone:

> I suppose from a personal satisfaction point of view just feeling needed, and useful, and in demand, you know just in that friendship sort of way.

For the young asylum-seekers, who in their encounters with adults were almost exclusively labelled as "refugees" (Korkiamäki & Gilligan, 2020), intergenerational friendship offered a way of being recognised differently. Rashid, 17, who became friendly with an older man who shared the room when he was previously hospitalized, recounts:

> All the boys came [to visit]… and we took selfies, many selfies. And, first, the man said that we are refugees...then he just laughed and said: "You are just boys, you just play with your phones."

Amin, 17, embraces an agentic role of a "teacher" despite his position in society inflicting the role of being exclusively helped and taught by others:

> I tell him [intergenerational friend] about my home country and he is interested and he wants to learn, and I can help him and tell him everything.

The notion of being "vertically deprived" (Hagestad, 2008a), like Tommy who, without younger friends, would have missed out on important chances to socialize or stigmatised with a single identity (Korkiamäki & Gilligan, 2020) like Rashid and Amin, can "paralyze" and cause withdrawal from attempts to agentic positions (Warming, 2015). As the narratives above demonstrate, this can to some extent be overruled by the alternative identities introduced in intergenerational friendships. Being able to perform "ordinariness" and step out of a labelled category (for example "old" or "young") can be a meaningful way of constructing self-esteem and self-confidence

which, then, may lead to bolder societal and communal connections—and for these to be recognised by society.

5. Conclusions

Friendship is commonly understood as the most meaningful social relationship to young people and recently highlighted as a vital source for enjoyment and social connectedness in later life. In this article, we have focused on a less addressed "type" of friendship: friendship between people from different generational cohorts. The friendships explored in this article illuminate the characteristics of the intergenerational friendships of the generations at either "book-end" of the life span. In these narratives, intergenerational friendship aligns with the characteristics of friendship in general, but it also supports caring, enjoyment, belonging and inclusion in alternative ways compared to peer-aged friendships. Therefore, we argue that intergenerational friendship is an important conduit for social inclusion for, and between, younger and older generations.

The young and older participants concur on the qualities and benefits of intergenerational friendship, lauding the importance of fun and laughter, trust and confiding, and reciprocity and equality. Both book-ends agreed that intergenerational friends offer company, fun, and enjoyment in unexpected ways, providing new and varied experiences. Intergenerational friends can afford confidential emotional support where "more traditional" channels, such as peer support, are restricted or unreliable. In addition, the participants described how their older or younger friends provided access to diverse forms of support, such as practical advice or physical care, but both the young and the older stressed that this was never the sole motivation for forming an intergenerational friendship. Reciprocity and equality as crucial characteristics of friendship were not compromised because of age differences, or differences in experiences, skills, capabilities or what each friend had to offer in a relationship. Reciprocity as a component of intergenerational friendship challenges the "generational order" (Alanen, 2009) and contradicts the narrow perception in extant literature of intergenerational friendship as imbalanced, often portraying one generation as the "receiver" and the other as the "giver" of care, support, or advice. Moreover, intergenerational friendships challenge age-norms as in coming together in shared activities and pursuits and in forming friendships that are mutually meaningful and enjoyable, younger and older friends defy stereotypical understandings of what younger and older people "should" do and be.

Korkiamäki and Kallio (2017, p. 7) suggest that "whereas peer groups tend to connect people into socially and emotionally tight communities, the connections formed in intergenerational friendships are often more porous in nature, thus opening up opportunities to create alternative social relations and activities." Hence, intergenerational friendship may "lead to different kinds of spatial attachments and inclusionary relations compared with those created solely with peers" (Korkiamäki & Kallio, 2017, p. 7). The younger book-end participants in this research had access to broader networks which granted them increased inclusionary opportunities, such as summer jobs and practical advice not available in their close communities. Moreover, in the connections formed through their intergenerational friends, they experienced a sense of communal belonging which had potential to generalise into an experience of being included in a "foreign" society. At the other bookend, older people with their younger friends got involved in groups and communities that allowed them to socialise in ways that suited them, challenging generational norms and expectations. These narratives delineate intergenerational friendship as a broadened space for the recognition of solidarities and communal belonging (Bowlby, 2011; Korkiamäki & Kallio, 2017). Furthermore, they indicate that intergenerational friendships create opportunities for both generations to adopt alternative identities, such as being useful, "normal," and agentic. Elliott O'Dare et al. (2021) similarly argue that in transitioning to older age, people value and seek intergenerational friends to maintain an inclusive "anchor" to contemporary ways of doing and being, and to maintaining an "all-age" identity. Such identities can act as bridging experiential ties to broader communities and societies and, therefore, lead to increased experiences of social inclusion at a personal and societal level.

The many benefits of intergenerational friendship were outlined by the participants; however, some drawbacks also became evident. For instance, a young asylum seeker confided that his intergenerational friend did not know any of his peer-age friends, indicating that benefits such as the broadening of networks will not automatically flow from intergenerational friendship. Occasionally, a trusting relationship with an older person may even prevent a younger person from seeking friendship with other young people, which indubitably would be beneficial in terms of inclusion and integration. This type of tight bonding is famously argued by Putnam (2000) to be a downside of close friendships, and intergenerational friendship is no exception in this regard. Further research is clearly needed to identify potential additional "downsides" to intergenerational friendship, thus expanding the understanding of the topic.

Also, investigations into exchanges of knowledge and experience between younger and older people would provide vital information on how the potential benefits flowing from intergenerational friendship could be consciously advanced and promoted through policy and practice. Biggs (2018, p. 174) proposes the concept of "intergenerational complementarity," whereby individuals, while aware of their own generational position, put themselves in the shoes of the other generation and have "the relative ability to negotiate between generational positions." This complementarity challenges

the segregation of "young" and "old," and "family" and "friends," and facilitates care, support, companionship, and learning for all generations. We argue that in intergenerational friendship, intergenerational complementarity has the potential to thrive as the book-end generations choose to come together in a personal, non-kin, chosen, enjoyable, beneficial relationship, through a homophily of "doing and being" (similarity in interests and outlook). This is important as different types and degrees of friendship are accessible to people in different (political) contexts, societies, and situations. Access to diverse support and broader networks, and spaces for establishing alternative identities and a generalised sense of belonging, are particularly important to the book-end generations as horizontal relationships based on age homophily may bind them in closed and vertically deprived communities. Hence, further research on the topic of intergenerational friendship is imperative at both book-ends to highlight and to promote the importance of intergenerational solidarity and interaction to younger and older individuals, and to the societies that they live in.

The limitations of this study are those common to qualitative research with relatively small sample sizes and drawing partly from a very particular group of participants (in this research, young asylum seekers). In addition, the research was conducted separately in two individual countries, Finland and Ireland. While the intention of this research is not to compare the countries or generalise the findings to the general population, but to provide insights into the experience and meanings of intergenerational friendships at the book-ends, we acknowledge that more wide-spread research is needed to make comprehensive conclusions on the benefits (and potential disadvantages) of intergenerational friendship of the general population in different cultures and societies. Also, bringing together two distinct studies presents differences in population samples and methodological approaches to data gathering and analysis, but the authors consider these differences are outweighed by the conceptual and experiential insights provided by both book-ends without the aim of comparing the groups. We encourage other researchers to form similar feasible "cross-alliances" to expand the understanding of intergenerational friendships at a national and international level.

In this research, we were not afforded the opportunity to explore the views of the younger friends of the older participants, or the older friends of the young participants, which we consider a limitation of this study and an important topic for prospective future research. In conclusion, we call for research, policy and practices which bring the book-ends of young and old together in practice. In contemporary societies meaningful intergenerational interactions may not happen automatically, therefore action may be required to bring older and younger people together. This article highlights that generations are not necessarily far apart in their thoughts, views, hopes, and interests. By creating spaces and opportunities for intergenerational interaction, the formation and maintenance of intergenerational friendships can be promoted at the book-ends. Therefore, we conclude by calling on policy makers and communities to create such opportunities for inclusion through friendship for all generations.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the younger and older participants of the two research projects for sharing their lives and thoughts with us. We wish to thank the anonymous reviewers and the editor of the thematic issue for their proficient comments. We appreciate the funding by the Academy of Finland (project 285592) and the Irish Research Council (GOIPG/2016/525) for making the research possible.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Riikka Korkiamäki is associate professor in social work in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Tampere University. Her research interests include young people's peer relationships, friendships and intergenerational relationships; social support, social networks and social inclusion; communities and communality; vulnerabilities, care and recognition of young people, particularly of young migrants and care leavers. Her research is mostly qualitative, and she is interested in developing ethically sustainable participatory and creative research methods.

Catherine Elliott O'Dare is assistant professor in social policy in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin. As a social scientist, Catherine's research interests include ageing and ageism, intergenerational relations, gender, equality and social inclusion, health, housing and work, and qualitative research methods.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 315–326
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4486

Article

How Do the Support Networks of Older People Influence Their Experiences of Social Isolation in Care Homes?

Jennifer M. Ferguson

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling, UK; E-Mail: jennifer.ferguson1@stir.ac.uk

Submitted: 7 May 2021 | Accepted: 4 August 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Understanding how to better support older people living in care homes is imperative for improving their wellbeing and quality of life. Despite this, little research has explored how support networks are structured and composed for individual residents. This study aimed to explore how, and by whom, residents felt they were supported, and how this support influenced their experiences of social isolation within the care home. The study included 36 residents from seven care homes located in the Scottish central belt in 2018. This article uses egocentric network analysis to analyse the structure and composition of the support networks, while a thematic analysis of qualitative interviews resulted in themes exploring how a resident's support network impacts their social isolation within the care home. Findings indicated that residents' most supportive alters were adult children, while staff members were only nominated as providing support in one third of support networks, despite most residents needing specialised care every day. Ambiguous relationships within residents' support networks lead to feelings of social isolation, as well as adding to residents' isolating behaviour. This suggests that national care frameworks, such as person-centred care frameworks, which advocate for coordinated support between residents, relatives, and staff are not being implemented effectively and that more needs to be done to break down barriers to inclusion for care home residents.

Keywords
care homes; meaningful relationships; social inclusion; social isolation; support networks

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Meaningful social relationships are consistently identified as essential to residents' wellbeing and quality of life (Roberts & Bowers, 2015). Despite being surrounded by people every day, 22–42% of older people in care homes (CH) feel severely lonely, which is *at least* double the rate of their community-dwelling counterparts (Victor, 2012). Moving into a CH can lead to older people becoming isolated from the wider community, as well as having a more regulated social life through professional monitoring (Villar et al., 2021). Further, older people living in CHs have high levels of physical and cognitive impairment (Age UK, 2019), which can result in reduced social interaction, fewer meaningful relationships, and diminished wellbeing (Grenade & Boldy, 2008). One of the main aims of the CH industry is to increase older people's social inclusion to improve and maintain their wellbeing (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2019). However, how residents perceive their individual social support, and how a resident's support network may affect their social isolation is under-researched. This article examines how the support networks of older people can influence their social isolation, and therefore establish how the social inclusion of older people living in CHs can be improved.

2. Background

Social isolation is when an individual lacks a sense of belonging, engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts and has a deficit of quality

relationships (Nicholson, 2009). A person's support network is a key component to alleviating social isolation through the provision of resources, opportunities for social participation and other supports which a resident might not be able to access otherwise (Langford et al., 1997), as well as providing an embeddedness in a network characterised through norms and trust (Coleman, 1988). Social support is a potential function of a social tie (Wellman, 1981), where a tie can be supportive or not. A social network may exist around an older person; however they may not consider all actors as supportive (Bowling, 1994). Therefore, perceived support may have a larger effect on experiences of social isolation and wellbeing. Moreover, a ties' strength may determine what type of support is provided. Granovetter (1973) defines a strong tie through intimacy, extended time spent together, reciprocity and emotional intensity. Therefore, while strong ties are more likely to provide emotional support, weaker ties are more likely to provide new information and instrumental support which a person may not have immediate access to. Forsman et al. (2011) found that ties to close friends and family were more important for older people than the support of weaker ties to formal life. Thus, a resident's experience of social isolation may be affected by what type of support is being provided and whether they consider that tie to we strong or not. Further, Cornwell et al. (2008) found that older people living in the community were likely to combat shrinking social networks (e.g., death of partners and peers) with higher engagement with neighbours and organised groups. This may be problematic for older people who move into CHs and away from communities in which they received a lot of social support through these groups. Given the importance of meaningful social relations for the wellbeing of older people living in CHs, further examination of how these relations impact a resident's social isolation is warranted.

Research has explored how residents make and maintain relationships with staff (Canham et al., 2017), other residents (Abbott & Pachucki, 2016), and family and friends (Cook, 2006). However, few use a network approach to explore how social relationships impact residents' inclusion and wellbeing. In one of the few network studies investigating this, Cheng (2009) looked at how many people were in the support networks of older people living in CHs in Hong Kong. Cheng found that residents nominated an average of 2.6 people in their network from whom they felt they could receive support, with only 20% nominating another person in the CH, the majority of which being staff. This suggests that despite being surrounded by staff and peers, residents did not feel that they could receive support from them, or that they were important in their lives (Cheng, 2009).

In the UK, person-centred care (PCC) principles are synonymous with good quality care (Brooker & Latham, 2015) and evidence suggests that CHs that follow PCC principles have a better culture of care and better staff-resident relationships (Killett et al., 2016). PCC principles include recognising the individual needs of the person and acknowledging how their life experience and personality might impact their needs (Baker, 2015; Kitwood, 1997). Killett et al. (2016) provided evidence of better relationships between residents, staff, and relatives when staff knew the resident as an individual and showed that they really cared. This resulted in residents and relatives being more understanding of the staff's time and practice, increasing rapport and trust between all parties.

Close relationships are especially important for older people as they provide mutual trust and a sense of security and have been found to be far more important than more formal ties (Forsman et al., 2011). In particular, family and close friends help to maintain a resident's sense of identity through enabling staff get to know their relative (Davies & Nolan, 2006).

More recent work on the blurring of strong and weak ties for older people suggests that "elastic ties" exist where the relationship between two people does not conform to either a strong or weak tie (Torres, 2019). For example, Torres (2019) documented how older people who did not know each other well would share personal details and stories regularly, as well as reciprocating emotional support; however, many did not know each other's name. Although these older people would not have nominated each other as confidents, they informally supported each other through regular social contact. Similarly in CH research, Canham et al. (2017) showed how staff who voiced "family-like" feelings toward residents built stronger, more positive relationships with residents, which resulted in residents feeling more included in CH communities. Thus, it is not clear how resident's may use their support networks, stronger (family and friends), and weaker (staff) ties, to gain support and improve their social connectedness.

Close relationships can also harbour tension and disagreement, which can lead to increased social isolation if this leads to barriers to support or a change in relationship. In this sense, close ties can be ambivalent, where ties are not simply conflicting or supportive, but are nuanced by acknowledging emotional closeness while harbouring tension between two people (Lüscher, 2002). Hillcoat-Nallétamby and Phillips (2011) show how relationships between older people and their families provide important support but may also express feelings of indifference or tension. They describe one such relationship where an adult daughter felt the social expectation of having to care for her mother, while their relationship was often difficult. Thus, the social connections of older people have the potential to be a key facilitator of social inclusion through meaningful relationships, the provision of support and resources, as well as cohesion and cooperation between supporting actors. However, ambiguity within relationships may result in barriers to support and additional social isolation for CH residents.

The complex nature of social connections leads us to ask how, and by whom, residents think they are

supported in a CH environment, and how these supportive ties facilitate social inclusion? As such, this study aims to explore how CH residents' personal support networks impact their social isolation.

3. Methodology

Research design, data collection, and analysis were conducted by the author, a female researcher trained in social network analysis and qualitative methodologies. Data collection occurred between March and September 2018 in the Central Belt of Scotland.

3.1. Sample

CHs were recruited through the ENRICH Scotland network, an organisation connecting researchers with CHs wanting to participate in research (National Institute for Health Research, 2021). The project aimed to sample CHs from different areas of deprivation in the Scottish central belt, and under different ownerships (e.g., local authority/not for profit/private), in order to represent varying access to resources and support for residents. Seven, out of 12 CHs approached, agreed to help recruit residents as shown in Table 1.

The researcher asked CH managers to list residents who might have capacity to consent to research, and to consider anyone with mild to moderate cognitive impairment as potentially able to give consent to research. Thereafter the researcher assessed resident's capacity to give informed consent through a mental capacity assessment (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2021). Eighty-seven residents were approached across the seven CHs: 29 did not have capacity to consent, 17 declined to be interviewed, and 5 dropped out of the study. In total, 36 residents had the capacity to consent and agreed to be interviewed. Some participants had mild cognitive impairment (e.g., memory problems); however, all interviewed residents had the capacity to give informed consent throughout the interview process, which was established through a mental capacity assessment at the initial meeting and the principles of process consent throughout the research process (Dewing, 2007). As seen in Table 2, the majority of participants were female (81%) and the average age of the participants was 87 years old, ranging between 72 and 100.

Table 1. Care homes sample characteristics.

CH	SIMD[1]	Size (no. of beds)	Wider area	Funding type
1	7	68	Greater Glasgow	Private
2	9	35	Lothian	Not for profit
3	6	62	Lanarkshire	Private
4	5	80	Lanarkshire	Private
5	10	35	Lothian	Private
6	9	63	Lothian	Not for profit
7	1	66	Greater Glasgow	Local authority

Note: [1] The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) ranks small areas (data zones) from least (10) to the most deprived (1). For more information see Scottish Government (2016).

Table 2. Demographics of residents.

	Category	n	%
n		36	
Gender	Female	29	81
	Male	7	19
Funding category	Self-funded	25	69
	Partially funded	6	17
	Local authority funded	5	14
CH	1	6	17
	2	6	17
	3	5	14
	4	5	14
	5	8	22
	6	4	11
	7	2	5

3.2. Network Interview

This article focuses on older people's perception of support, and how support affects their experience of social isolation. Social isolation can be defined through the objective measure of social connectedness and subjective perceived isolation (De Jong Gierveld & Hagestad, 2006). Although this study captured the social connectedness of residents through their support networks, social isolation was captured through qualitative methods where residents would describe their perceived isolation within the CH. As this study aims to capture a resident's perception of social isolation, it took an exchange approach to social support, where I aimed to capture a subset of supportive actors who would arguably have a greater effect on a resident's experience of isolation. During the interview, respondents were asked about who supports them, and if those people knew one another. House and Khan's (1985) definition was used as a framework for support, and therefore I chose five name-generator questions which reflected three types of support: instrumental support (ties that provide resources, money or assistance), emotional support (ties that offer love or nurturing), and informational support (ties that provide knowledge, advice, and information). This name-generator approach is intended to highlight different supportive actors, who may offer different types of support to the participant (McCallister & Fischer, 1978). The name-generator questions used were:

1. Most people discuss important personal matters with other people. Who are the people with whom you discuss matters that are important to you?
2. Occasionally, people socialise with other people, for instance, they visit each other, go out for an outing or for a meal. Who are the people you really enjoy socializing with?
3. From time to time, people ask other people for advice when a major change occurs in their life, for instance, a change in location or a serious accident. Who are the people you usually ask for advice when such a major event occurs in your life?
4. Could you name anyone who has provided you with help recently?
5. Please list anyone who is especially close to you who you have not listed in one of the previous questions.

These questions allowed supportive alters from different social domains (White, 2008) to be nominated multiple times for different types of support (Crossley et al., 2015) and allowed the visualisation of a support network for each resident. Demographic information was collected about each alter, including their relation to the resident, and the resident was asked if alters knew each other to establish interrelationships. A network approach is appropriate as it goes beyond the single relationship between staff and resident, or family and resident. Instead, it tackles the embeddedness of social relations (Granovetter, 1985) by exploring how multiple relations interact and integrate (Holstein, 2014), which could be important for their wellbeing. Name-generator questions were restricted to five people per question, and some interviews were completed over two or three sessions to limit respondent fatigue (Abbott & Pachucki, 2016). This created a visualisation of a support network, which starts with an ego (resident), their nominated supportive people (alters) and the connections between those alters (Crossley et al., 2015). In total, 229 alters were nominated by the 36 residents, with a range of 1–17 alters per network.

During the network data collection residents gave rich descriptions of their network and offered reasons why alters were more or less supportive than others. If this had not occurred already, residents were prompted to discuss their networks in more depth after the network structure was established, allowing them to explain complexities and relationships in their network. For example, I asked them questions about why they thought alters supported them in different ways, what sort of activities they did with these alters, and examples of when these alters had supported them and under what circumstances. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

3.3. Analysis

Egocentric network analysis was used to create descriptive statistics of the composition and structure of networks, followed by visualisations of each support network (Perry et al., 2018). By linking an edge-list, which is a list of all alters which are connected to the ego, and an alter attribute list, which is a list of attributes associated with the alters, through R software, the networks could be created, from which all visualisations and measures were derived. A thematic analysis of the qualitative transcripts was undertaken (Braun & Clarke, 2020) using Nvivo. This was achieved by familiarising myself with the data (through completing interviews, transcribing, and rereading of transcripts), coding the data (by finding patterns and similarities between accounts), and building themes (through clustering codes into more meaningful wider patterns). A summary of themes has been displayed in Table 3 below and are discussed in the results section in this order. Themes are clustered by relation to resident as it was clear from the thematic analysis that residents treated these relations differently in terms of expectation and types of support provided, and thus different themes were apparent for these separate groups of relations.

Constructed themes were triangulated with the systematic patterns identified in the egocentric network analysis, resulting in a better understanding of how residents were supported and why residents turned to some alters over others. The use of meaningful and standardised name generator questions gave the structure and

Table 3. Themes from thematic analysis clustered by relation.

Tie relation	Themes
Family and friends	Meaningful family connections Providing multiple types of support The role of adult children Balancing reliance and autonomy Long term friendships Challenges of making new friends Gendered spaces and activities
Staff members	The absence of staff support Staff as safety net or service Time and resources Care home is not home Negative experiences Spending meaningful and extended time together Coordination and connection with family

composition of networks, while the qualitative description provided meaning and intent behind these connections. The qualitative data not only confirm the observed structures through triangulation and validation (Wald, 2014), but also contextualised them, and improved the interpretation of the network analysis results.

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Stirling General University Ethics Panel in January 2018 (reference GUEP292).

4. Results

It is important to emphasise that many residents had gone through extensive changes including increased physical and cognitive impairment, death of partners, siblings and friends, moving house, and sometimes moving to a new locality. Just one of these changes would have an impact on how someone would interact in their support network and wider community. However, for many residents many of these changes happened in quick succession. This often resulted in a shrinking of networks, where the number of people the older person could turn to for support became smaller. Due to the residents' increased physical or cognitive impairments, maintaining and making new contacts became more difficult resulting in greater feelings of social isolation. Also, residents were rarely allowed, or able, to leave the CH without a carer, except for few residents who had family members who were able to take them out for short excursions. Thus, for many residents, long-standing close ties were of acute importance given the potential shrinkage that had occurred through the events that led them to move into a CH.

4.1. Meaningful Family Connections

Family ties were found to provide the most support to residents, as they not only accounted for the majority of alters (53%), but also, were more likely to be nominated for multiple types of support. Residents described how visits from family were the most meaningful part of their day, and how their family role was a large part of their identity. They were fathers, mothers, brothers, aunts, grandfathers, and great-grandmothers:

> Well I think my life has meaning to my family, and to my grandchildren. I'm not sort of… isolated. My family are very interested to come and visit me, and they all do. (Resident 32, female)

Many residents felt that their families were the only people that mattered anymore, and without family, they felt they may be isolated. This was particularly evident as a third of residents only nominated family ties in their support networks.

4.2. Providing Multiple Types of Support

Network visualisations highlighted how family members were nominated for multiple types of support. However, it was also clear that the majority of networks only contained one or two alters who were nominated multiple times, and this included entirely family-based networks. These patterns can be viewed in the sociograms included in Figure 1, which shows each alter nominated for support and how many types of support an alter provided to the residents through the size of node. These highly supportive ties who are nominated for all domains of support are nearly always adult children of the residents.

4.3. The Role of Adult Children

Children not only provided more diverse and regular support than other nominated alters but were often the main coordinator for any contacts outside of the CH and staff. Children would often facilitate communication, arrange visits and outings, and act as an intermediary between the residents and their wider family:

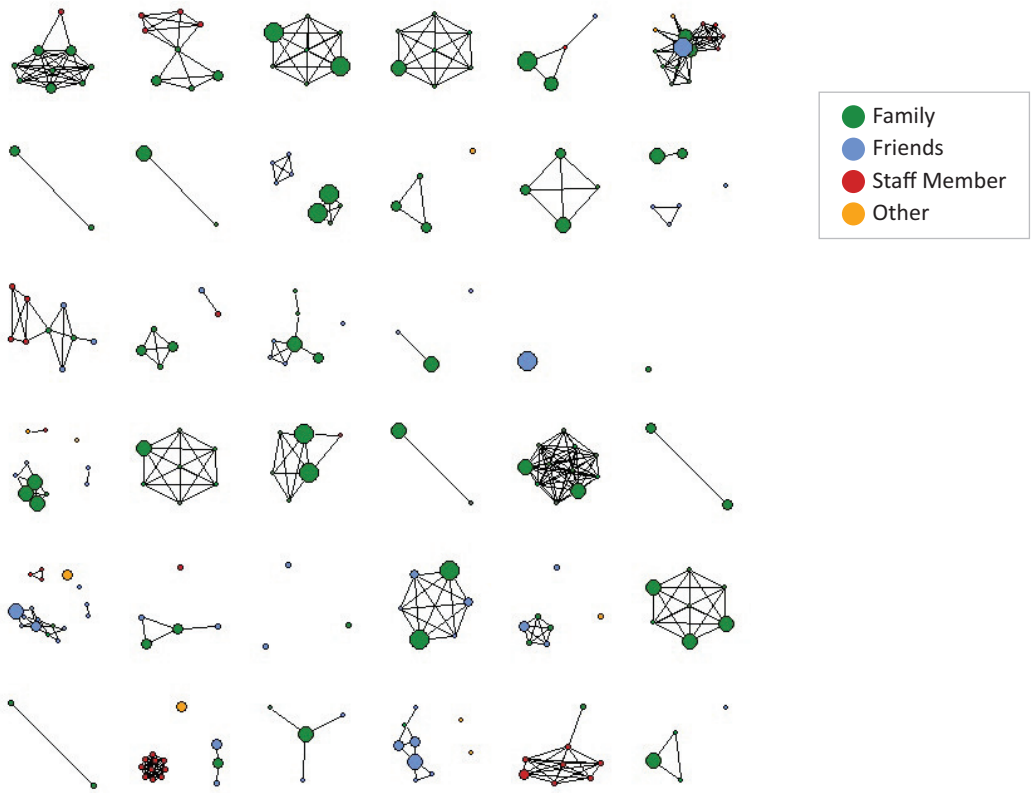

Figure 1. Support networks of 36 residents with relationship to ego in colour and number of support nominations as size of node.

> I'm going to spend the weekend at her [daughter's] house—her son's house—and the rest of the family will come there to see me. (Resident 16, female)

Some children would also coordinate with the residents' previous community to ensure that the resident still felt connected to the place that they had lived before moving. For example, one daughter organised for her mother, who could no longer read, to receive a local "talking paper" (which was an mp3 file on a USB delivered by post that she could play through her digital radio) which updated her about her local community's news every week. This innovative method of engagement partially mitigated the issue that the resident was no longer able to travel to this community. However, for most residents, their families were more focused on activities in the CH or family visits, rather than engaging with the community that residents had previously lived in. For this reason, most residents' social interaction was restricted to family and those within the CH.

4.4. Balancing Reliance and Autonomy

Family relations were sometimes complicated by the power imbalance between the resident and their children. Many residents still relied on family and friends for social contact and resources from outside of the CH, as well as emotional support and transport. With less engaged families, or those who visited less than the resident felt they should, residents would become frustrated:

> I just get wee bit upset. My daughter… has done a tremendous lot for me, but she doesn't come much to take me out in a week….So I get a bit distressed at that. But I don't want to have a row with her. (Resident 31, female)

This was particularly difficult as residents were often trying to balance their perception that their family should want to be with them, with their concern that they were being too demanding of their families. Therefore, if this relationship became strained, some residents would concede to the family member's opinion or schedule, and avoid upset, in order to maintain the relationship. Thus, although residents voiced their appreciation for family members, some residents were very aware of the control that family members had on their lives while in the CH:

> I'm always asking, "Please will you buy me a phone?" but I think she [daughter] thinks that I would be making a nuisance of myself by phoning up too often. But maybe I'll persuade her tomorrow. (Resident 54, female)

This control sometimes resulted in residents feeling as though they were a burden, lacked autonomy and should restrict their requests to only those that were "necessary." This became especially apparent for residents who only nominated family members for support, as they did not seem able to talk to others about important decisions in their lives. Even during this study, some residents did not wish to participate without "permission" from their families first. This was not because they needed permission, but because they relied so heavily on them, they felt the need to ask for permission for all decisions in their lives. Therefore, families tended to have a lot of influence and control over their lives which could restrict residents' independence.

4.5. Long-Term Friendships

Only one resident did not have any family and only nominated one friend in their support network. This friend was incredibly important to the resident and provided almost every type of support. Friends were also much more important to residents whose families lived far away or did not have children.

> I have to think of friends who come in—the same faithful people….Obviously your friends are your family….The great value of them of course is that they've known me a long time. They knew you at home, what you were. Your home, your lifestyle, everything about you. (Resident 53, female)

Further, friendships were especially important for maintaining links with community or church groups. Although the CHs did facilitate church visits on rare special occasions, this was often not possible because of the lack of resources/staff needed to go every week:

> I go [to church] every week. One of my friends [from her church] takes me to church every week, and she's very good. (Resident 24, female)

Residents had to rely on friends or fellow church members for transport to the church, however for many residents this was not an option as they did not have the social connections to facilitate this.

4.6. Challenges of Making New Friends

Just over half of residents nominated a friend in their support network (n = 17), however *none* of these friendships were new connections with other residents. Participants suggested that making new friendships with other residents was difficult; in particular, if the other resident was living with advanced dementia. Some residents would express pity for people living with dementia, while others would make fun of people who had difficulty communicating:

> They're so mentally disturbed that you can't really have a conversation. They're so beyond anything. You talk to them just to give them an interest. They just sit and stare in front of them. (Resident 32, female)

Residents noted that relationships with fellow residents had a negative impact on their day-to-day living due to awkwardness, dislike of being in their company, or resentment for the staff time they took up. Thus, residents who were interviewed felt that, rather than fellow residents forming a community around them, they could add to their isolation by making them more likely to spend time in their rooms; this had a negative impact on them pursuing interests and activities in the CH. Moreover, the possibility of fellow residents dying dissuaded residents from forming friendships with others as they did not want to be hurt if they died. Thus, this added residents' isolating behaviour, by making them more likely to spend time in their rooms away from other residents and making them less likely to pursue interests and activities in the CH.

4.7. Gendered Spaces and Activities

Further to this, men living in the CH seemed to be even less likely to make friends as many of the activities and communal areas were designed to please the majority of people, which were the females. For example, a lot of the activities were based around crafts, singing, baking and flower arranging. Despite this, CHs did try to engage male residents, but often these were small gestures or outings aimed at the men in a group:

> Interviewer: So you're away for pie and a pint today? Do they do that every week?
>
> Respondent: No, only once in a while. Maybe once a fortnight. (Resident 13, male)

Further, male residents often felt "outnumbered" and therefore they felt they could not use communal areas, which were mainly female dominated.

> And one time we were down there [lounge], me and the two other men, and we wanted to watch the football. But they [women] didn't want to, they all started [respondent makes moaning sounds]. (Resident 42, male)

Therefore, not only did men have less opportunities to make meaningful relationships with staff and fellow residents because there were less activities that appealed to them, but they sometimes felt excluded from communal areas, where they could potentially engage with different people. The male residents believed that this happened because these areas were often used for what most people wanted to do, and the majority were female residents.

Thus, having long-term, close connections were frequently mentioned by residents as being important for support, however family were valued most by the majority of residents. Adult children, in particular, were emphasised as key to facilitating inclusion into the wider family and sometimes with residents' friends and wider community. However, power imbalances between residents and their children sometimes created tension and ambiguity in relationships, which left the residents feeling frustrated and with less autonomy. In general, friends seemed to play a smaller role in residents' support, however those who did not have family relied heavily on friends for support. Further, informal support between residents seemed minimal due to residents' reluctance to make friends with other residents, or, for men in particular, a lack of appropriate activities and space aimed at them to socialise.

4.8. The Absence of Staff Support

To reiterate, two thirds of the older people interviewed did not nominate a staff member for support and staff members accounted for only 17% of all alters nominated. Many of the residents interviewed had complex care needs and therefore needed a lot of care from staff on a day-to-day, or even hourly, basis. Thus, not nominating staff for a type of support such as "providing help" could be considered troubling considering the aim of a CH. Equally not nominating staff members for "socialising" when they live and work in the same space everyday may be concerning for care policies, such as PCC, which encourage meaningful relationships between staff and residents. Patterns in support and qualitative descriptions gave an indication of why residents were less likely to nominate staff, and how this may relate to their social inclusion in the CH.

Although some residents felt they could nominate staff for support, the support they received from staff was more likely to be practical, rather than emotional support. Table 4 describes what proportion of the different types of support were given by what types of relationships. For example, for name-generator question 1, summarised as "Personal matters," 79.5% of the alters who made up those who would discuss personal matters with the resident were family.

4.9. Staff as Safety Net or Service

If we consider the type of support that staff members were nominated for, we can see that they were more likely to be nominated for providing help and as "other" close persons, which was a category used to capture alters which did not provide any of the previous supports but were still important to include in their support networks. This resonated with descriptions of staff relationships where residents treated the staff support as a service, or safety net, rather than an opportunity to build a relationship with that person:

> The only person that I would definitely go to [for help] would be my son and my daughter. But if I fell, or something like that in here then I would need help then. And it would just be whoever was on duty because they're all very well-trained people. (Resident 32, female)

Some residents mentioned that although they could theoretically go to staff for support, they would likely never do this or only go to staff in an emergency. Resident 34 was one such example as she felt she *could* go to staff, however she did not want to include them on her list of people who supported her; instead, she talked about how she appreciated the staff "giving me my own space" and how she thought it was "important that you've always got someone in the background." When probed about the role of staff in their lives, they often talked about how they did not really know the staff or, as with Resident 34, they were a safety net that they never needed to use. Additionally, residents would discuss how they would prefer to go to family for any issues, staff were demoted to not being nominated because they had never had the need for their support in the resident's view.

4.10. Time and Resources

For other residents, there were not enough staff in the CH which resulted in staff not having enough time to socialise or help them effectively, which resulted in them isolating themselves in their rooms or feeling frustrated with staff:

Table 4. The proportion of types of support by relation to the resident.

	What types of support are family, friends, staff and other types of ties providing? (% of type of support)				
	Personal matters	Socialise	Advice	Help	Other
Family	79.5%	59.7%	77.9%	44.7%	49.2%
Friends	11.0%	36.4%	13.6%	19.4%	29.5%
Staff	6.8%	1.3%	1.7%	31.4%	19.7%
Others	2.7%	2.6%	6.8%	4.5%	1.6%
Total = n (%)	73 (100%)	77 (100%)	59 (100%)	67 (100%)	61 (100%)

> Either there is not enough staff or there is not enough time, or their time is not being used effectively. (Resident 53, female)

This discontentment with staff, or lack of staff, seemed to fuel residents' reluctance to rely on them for support.

4.11. Care Home Is Not Home

However, for some residents, not nominating staff for support seemed to stem from them not wanting to live in the CH or feeling they were only living in the CH to alleviate their family of their care. Thus, by not nominating staff, they were distancing themselves from staff and reiterating that they did not actually depend on the staff for support because they were only living there to make sure their families were not worrying or did not want to place the burden of their care on their families:

> It's alright, Hen [Scottish term for girl], but it's not home but I won't ask my family to take me because, as I told you, I looked after my mother-in-law [and she remembers how taxing it was]. (Resident 16, female)

4.12. Negative Experiences

For some residents, not nominating staff or only nominating staff for practical support stemmed from negative experiences which left them deeply upset with how they had been treated:

> I'm really miserable. Maybe I'm watching something on the telly and I'm asking to go [to the toilet] and they say "not now" or something like that. They don't take me….They don't have enough staff. I mean sometimes it's every day, or you ring the bell and they don't hear it, or they say they don't hear it. You've just got to wait. (Resident 44, female)

This meant that although residents knew they needed the help of staff on a day-to-day basis, they did not necessarily trust staff, or viewed them as a necessary support, rather than people they wanted to spend time with.

4.13. Spending Meaningful and Extended Time Together

Despite most residents only nominating staff for instrumental support, or not nominating them at all, there were some residents who did have an emotional connection with staff and did feel like they could rely on them. Of the few residents who had these positive relationships with staff, many only had this type of relationship with one staff member who was often characterised as good humoured, chatty and had worked in the CH a long time. These positive relationships were cultivated through spending extended periods of time not involving caring tasks. For example, taking the resident to see their local church or coordinating together to do something purposeful around the CH:

> And I help call round with Sasha [activities coordinator] quite a lot—she's great. She's a lovely person and she works so hard…. We'd been out at the cafe in the early afternoon. (Resident 31, female)

> I'm always coming out with jokes with her [carer]. (Resident 18, male)

4.14. Coordination and Connection With Family

These emotionally supportive relationships were often characterised with a coordination of support with family members too. A typical example of this was when staff tried to interact with other family members who visited the resident:

> Well, there was one day that they came in and [nurse] was bandaging me, and of course he [4 years old grandson] came in and he started watching and everything. And she said, "Are you going to help me Dr…?" And he said, "Oh yes." So he was bandaging me and bandaging me. Counting them up. Lovely boy. So he knows [nurse]. And they know her when he come to visit me. (Resident 41, female)

If the staff took time to get to know the resident's families, then the resident not only benefitted from a better relationship with staff, but they also felt that they could rely on staff and family to coordinate together:

> Well, there was one at our table who was just a bit strange always, picking on things. And I wasn't very happy. But I went to Fiona [daughter]. And she and the staff sorted it. So I was moved tables to another table. And that was fine. (Resident 63, female)

Residents who felt that the staff knew their relatives seemed to have more trust in the staff and have a friendlier relationship. Thus, cultivating this relationship between staff and relatives could be very important for improving relations between residents and staff, as well as encouraging a supportive environment in the CH in general.

5. Discussion

CH residents should have the opportunity to be socially included with close relations and their wider community. However, this study has shown how the social relations that surround an older person can be pivotal to their support but also impact their experience of social isolation.

Analysis of support networks showed that older people living in CHs valued the support of family members more than any other type of tie, resonating with Forsman et al. (2011) describing how family ties provide a sense of security and trust for older people. Adult

children were often nominated for multiple types of support, and residents described how children coordinated with staff, extended family, friends and sometimes wider community ties. Therefore, adult children are particularly important for facilitating support and inclusion for residents through other ties such as staff members or wider communities. However, these relationships can also become ambiguous when the residents' expectations of the familial role is not fulfilled, or if residents feel restricted by their children's decisions. This ambiguity not only created tension but meant that residents were less likely to make requests of their children and therefore were restricting their support networks and options for resources. Hillcoat-Nallétamby and Phillips (2011) found similar relationships in informal care relationships between older people and their children, which often resulted in less autonomy for the older people, thus adding to their experience of isolation.

There is a perception that older people living in CHs will have other residents and staff members to talk to, which could reduce the likelihood of loneliness (Dickens et al., 2011). Previous research has found that residents can, and do, make friendships in CHs (Brown-Wilson, 2008), however, this study found that no resident made a new friend with another resident in the CH. Residents did not want to interact with other residents because they did not want to be associated with people living with dementia, and residents had health issues preventing them from interacting often. This perhaps speaks to research which found that residents who made friends in assisted living housing tended to make friends with people of similar "cognitive status" (Abbott & Pachucki, 2016). Given that 70% of CH residents are estimated to have dementia in the UK (Alzheimer's Society, 2020), and residents are now arriving in CHs far later in their dementia journey, the creation of meaningful relationships between residents is less likely. This is concerning as friendships with other residents are an untapped source of informal support which residents could benefit from by being able to relate their experiences with people who are going through similar changes to them (Clare et al., 2008). Within CHs, older people eat together multiple times a day, spend time doing activities together and sometimes visiting local areas. Thus, these results bolster the findings of Torres (2019) which discussed how older people created "elastic ties" with people they did not know well, which resulted in them regularly sharing personal information and socialising with these people, but not considering them as confidents. With reference to this study, this could illustrate how fellow residents were treated by the participants as, despite spending extended periods of time in each other's company, residents tended not to want to nominate each other for support. CH staff can only do so much to encourage relationships between residents, however, more research into why friendships are less likely to be created in CHs and what can be done to encourage this potential source of support is needed.

The lack of staff nominations for support is particularly concerning for the CH industry as they aim towards PCC frameworks which encourage personal relationships between staff and residents where staff know the likes and dislike of residents, have a knowledge of their background, and understand their wishes and values (Baker, 2015). To learn this information, staff and residents are encouraged to build meaningful, reciprocal relationships with one another (Brown-Wilson, 2008). If these approaches to care were succeeding in CHs, we would expect to see supportive relationships between residents and staff, as well as residents being more involved in CH life.

Staff relationships that went beyond practical care tasks often took extended time (outside of care tasks) to emerge but resulted in more trusting relationships. Further, residents who had positive relationships with staff tended to feel that the staff were connected to and knew their families. In particular, the work of Brown-Wilson (2008) discusses the importance of staff, residents, and families working together to facilitate better care. She argues that reciprocal and responsive relationships result in the most positive experiences for all stakeholders. Further evidence-based recommendations of past research include that staff should consider families as partners and experts in their residents' care to provide the best care (Davies & Nolan, 2006). Furthermore, Killett et al. (2016) found that the best care was displayed in CHs where residents, families and staff worked together, and there was a sense of community in the CH. They provide examples of when staff really showed they cared about both residents and relatives, or when staff were more transparent about their day-to-day work and, therefore, residents and relatives were more understanding of the staff's time and practice. Thus, the current and previous research would suggest that staff members should be considering how to support family members and should include them in the care of their loved one, to create better day-to-day living for residents.

In many ways, the integration of network analysis and thematic analysis allowed a deeper exploration of complex relations within CHs and as such gives a more nuanced understanding of social relations in CHs. For example, this study defined, and captured, strong and weak ties through residents' descriptions of connections (type of support provided, closeness, and density) and relationships with supportive actors (qualitative descriptions). However, during analysis this was difficult to untangle given that ties that would be traditionally "weak" were sometimes integrated with "strong" ties, as well as described as providing supports traditionally from strong ties. Thus, although my operationalisation of ties strength was not ideal for defining firm distinction between strong and weak, it perhaps reflects the lack of duality between these two concepts.

Moving into a CH for the increased support of care needs should not limit or stop older people having access to a varied support network. Supportive relationships are

key to improving and maintaining the wellbeing of residents, and CHs should promote and invest in these relationships to ensure that future residents receive the support they need to thrive.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr Liz Forbat for her guidance, feedback, and encouragement during the writing of this article.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Jennifer M. Ferguson (PhD) is an ESRC-funded research fellow at the University of Stirling. Her research explores the systematic patterns observed in the social networks of older people with an overall aim to improve the wellbeing and social inclusion of older people living in care homes. She specialises in mixed-method egocentric network analysis to explore the complexity of relationships within networks and uses this methodology to critically examine the impact of care policies and practice on residents' social relationships.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 327–338
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4476

Article

The Impact of Life Trajectories on Retirement: Socioeconomic Differences in Social Support Networks

Francisca Ortiz [1,2,*] and Elisa Bellotti [1]

[1] The Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis, University of Manchester, UK;
E-Mails: francisca.ortiz@manchester.ac.uk (F.O.), elisa.belloti@manchester.ac.uk (E.B.)
[2] Millennium Institute for Caregiving Research (MICARE), Chile

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 4 May 2021 | Accepted: 29 July 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
In general, the literature about social support networks (SSNs) has been divided into two different statements: On the one hand, social support is a safety net that helps the ego confront disadvantages in life. On the other hand, studies have shown how SSNs could act as sources of constraints for ego, especially in poverty. In this study, we looked into the SSNs of older people over time and found how those two paths co-exist and depend on the socioeconomic status of ego. Then, this article aims to discover how cumulative social inequalities intersect with social networks in facilitating or hampering social support over time, impacting retirement experience. Specifically, we want to observe if and how the life trajectories of older people from different socioeconomic statuses affect how people build their SSNs in terms of structure and composition. This article presents a mixed-method project that collected qualitative life history interviews from 30 older women and men in Santiago, Chile. The results show that socioeconomic status plays a role in shaping individual experiences of retirement but that these experiences are shaped through SSNs structural and compositional characteristics. People identify salient life events and the relevant networks and conjointly discuss supportive and/or exploitative aspects of their networks. The amount of support they give to others or that they receive from their alters accumulates over time, resulting in a progressive social inclusion or exclusion mechanism. This article concludes that SSNs during retirement are shaped by the ego's socioeconomic status and life history.

Keywords
ageing population; life history; life trajectory; retirement; social support network; socioeconomic status

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Contemporary societies are globally undergoing a significant ageing phenomenon. The ageing of societies poses challenges for families, communities, markets, and governments, but social, cultural, and economic inequalities shape its effects. In this global context, Chile represents an excellent case study. It has one of the largest ageing populations in South America (ECLAC, 2015) and is one of the most unequal countries in the OCDE (OCDE, 2018). Furthermore, the current Administration of Founding and Pensions system is the worlds' first state-endorsed privatised pension system (Lear & Collins, 1991; Solinamo, 2017). This system has generated significant inequalities in the ageing population, especially considering their socioeconomic status.

In this specific context, we aim to discover how cumulative social inequalities intersect with social networks in facilitating or hampering social support over time, impacting retirement experience. Besides, we want to observe if and how life trajectories of older people from different socioeconomic statuses affect how people

build their social support networks (SSNs) in terms of structure and composition. The research was carried out from a mixed-method perspective. Fieldwork was done between October 2019 and January 2020 in Santiago, Chile. Thirty life histories of retirees and their SSNs were collected, which will be the primary data used in this article.

The goal is to clarify some of those disadvantages based on the ego's socioeconomic status over time and retirement. The results show that SSNs are embedded with life histories during retirement, affecting later life. We identified three trajectory types, and for each one SSNs means something different. Firstly, it could be a net of people and institutions allowing ego to have other opportunities available, as "trajectory of opportunities." Secondly, there are "trajectories of constraints," which mean that their SSNs constrains those opportunities limited by the accumulative disadvantages over the life course. Finally, for those cases nominated as "changing trajectories," their SSN is more flexibly defined as a possible net of opportunities, but also a constraint. These could vary through different periods of life, according to personal networks of ego and historical context.

2. Theoretical Framework

The question of how the socioeconomic status of a person influence their retirement has been a theme in gerontology since the early days of disengagement theory (Cumming & Henry, 1961) and in the criticisms of activity theory (Birren & Schroots, 2001; Diggs, 2008; Martins & Liberalesso, 2017), as the latter did not consider the finances of an older person. Some scholars from the theory of modernisation understand how changes in society's economy would impact the daily lives of older people (Aboderin, 2004; Achenbaum & Stearns, 1978; Powell & Hendricks, 2009; Rhoads, 1984). Kuypers and Bengtson (1973) established that vulnerability, health, and economic status are fundamental to understanding an older person's current situation. More recently, the critical gerontology theory has focused on how old age is socially constructed and determined by a political economy that pressures and constrains older people by class and age (Estes, 2008; Estes et al., 1982). Moreover, there is still some disagreement over how older people's experiences are different according to their socioeconomic status during retirement, to which this article seeks to contribute.

Older people's support during retirement could be considered a valuable resource to deal with any difficulties. A recent study in Canada (Menec et al., 2019) shows that loneliness in older people is related to their class, gender, and age. They also discovered that older people living in urban areas are more likely part of a low socioeconomic context, and therefore more susceptible to being socially isolated. If the person has a solid SSN, they are less likely to be isolated and lonely. There is evidence that family relationships are the most important ones to help with daily life and health-related issues (Cornwell et al., 2009). Also, personal networks' size increases or decreases in older age mainly because there are changes in their groups of family and friends (Bowling et al., 1995; Cornwell et al., 2009). The network size and composition impact the well-being of older people (Fung et al., 2001). For example, being retired with a spouse or a partner and have a pension increases the feeling of economic security (Litwin, 2009). Other research in the US identified that the frequency of socialisation with neighbourhood, religion, and volunteering is positively associated with the level of connectedness of the ageing population (Cornwell et al., 2008).

In general, SSNs are essential in daily life, especially when considering older people who have already accumulated some advantages and/or disadvantages throughout their lives. Besides, SSNs are not static as they change over time (Bowling et al., 1995), according to the type of social support enquiry. The social support could be material aid, intimate interaction, giving advice, physical assistance, feedback, or positive social interactions (McCarty et al., 2019). Besides, there are negative social interactions that act as anti-support, which are relevant to the analysis of SSNs (Offer & Fischer, 2018). This article only looks at material aid, which is anyone giving ego economical help (or vice versa). Even though studies primarily concentrated on ties of material aid, there is still discussion about how other factors intersect those personal networks. Some of those are adversities without control of the ego, which could differ from reciprocity norms (Offer, 2012), stigmatisation (Offer, 2012; Ray et al., 2016), power differentials among people (Lavee, 2016), and even exclusion from family networks (Lubbers et al., 2020). These factors can lead to the inability of older people to reach each other and therefore be socially excluded. The goal is to clarify some disadvantages based on the socioeconomic status of ego over time and their retirement.

3. Methodology

This research collected longitudinal data of 30 older people in Santiago, Chile, aged between 60 and 98, 15 men and women from different social classes, using a mixed-methods approach (Bellotti, 2015; Domínguez & Hollstein, 2014; Froehlich et al., 2020;). Table 1 presents a summary of participants' sociodemographic characteristics. All interviewees were retired at the time of the interview.

Data were collected from October 2019 to January 2020 in Santiago. Participants completed their life history, SSNs and timeline (Ortiz et al., 2021). Data collection followed these steps: First, each participant was asked about their complete life history, guided by the interviewer. After that we asked: If you had to decide, which were the most important events of your life (for you)? Older people usually choose 3 to 9 events. Afterwards, all participants choose the important people

Table 1. Summary of socio-demographics of the respondents.

	Sociodemographic information	%	Number
Gender	Female participants	50%	15
	Male participants	50%	15
Age	Average of age	—	80
	Range	—	60–98
Social class	High-class district	33%	10
	Middle-class district	33%	10
	Low-class district	33%	10

on that specific event. Then, the SSN questionnaire with the name generator tool was applied. Finally, at the interview, we asked for the SSN of each participant. All the data collected is retrospective, as it is constructive from the persons' perspective. People were interviewed more than once, and after all the interviews, the main researcher assigned pseudonymous (randomly) to participants.

SSNs were based on the questionnaire "Multiple Name Generators for Social Support" (Barrera, 1980; McCarty et al., 2019). In addition, negative social interactions were measured (Leffler & Gillespie, 1986; Offer & Fischer, 2018), as well as material aid, intimate interaction, advice, physical assistance, feedback, and positive social interactions. Even though all dimensions of social support were measured, the analysis concentrated primarily on material aid. This decision was made considering recent discussions about the relevance of social support in dealing with changes from having a salary to a pension (Osorio, 2007). Then, it was decided to only focus on one dimension, which is closer to the socioeconomic aspect analysed here. Also, all questions were asked to ego in both directions: from ego to alters and from alters to ego.

Finally, a narrative analysis was performed (Riessman, 2009) per life history (Ortiz et al., 2021) as well as an analysis of the structure and composition of each personal network collected (Bidart et al., 2020; Crossley et al., 2015; McCarty et al., 2019; Perry et al., 2018). Vennmaker, Nvivo12, and R were used to collect and analyse the data. The primary author did the coding in Nvivo12 in three steps: First, all the interviews were coded according to the topic of the guided interview. Those were broad codes, such as *school in childhood.* Second, detail codes were created as *hungry in childhood* or *presence of violence in childhood.* Finally, there was the last revision of all of them to give some coherence among coding. Each step was separated from the other one by a couple of days. After all that process, we constructed each person's timeline (Ortiz, 2021) using their interviews. Finally, we revised all the coding and timelines, which allowed us to identify the three types of trajectories discussed below.

4. Results

4.1. Types of Trajectory and Social Support Networks

We identified three types of trajectories among the older people interviewed. The "trajectories of opportunities" are those cases in which ego had the opportunity to decide their life path, as they came across different chances that help them. Events were provided mainly by people in their SSNs. On the contrary, the "trajectories of constraints" are egos living by the necessity to resolve their immediate adverse circumstances (constraints) throughout their lives, which is the main factor in how their life histories are constructed. In those cases, older people do not have so many options because someone close required their help. They do not have many options, rather than working informally (for example) to pay the rent. The main difference between opportunities and constraints is the direction of the material aid: In the first one, older people tend to receive material from others, and in the second one, older people tend to give material assistance. Finally, the "changing trajectories" refers to egos that transited from a trajectory of constraints to a trajectory of opportunities, or the other way around. Among the cases collected, the change between one and another trajectory was mainly because of changes at the macro-level of society. For example, the dictatorship makes some specific people earn more money. In total, the trajectory of opportunities had seven cases, trajectory of constraints had 18, and changing trajectory had five (see Table 2). Each trajectory will be explained in the following section, as well as how SSNs are associated with life histories and retirement. The supplementary material includes a table with a more detailed description of each case and to which trajectory they were identified.

4.1.1. Trajectory of Opportunities

The trajectory of opportunities refers to the life histories of people who had, as the name indicates, the chance to decide their life paths. They told us how they managed to make decisions over time, although their difficulties were not so intense to stop them from making their own

Table 2. Description of each trajectory and the percentage of respondents associated.

Type of trajectory	Description	Percentage of responders
Trajectory of opportunities	Life histories of people who had the opportunity to decide their life paths. Their difficulties are shadowed by their opportunities. Also, their SSN are an essential part of the social net of these people.	23.3% (n = 7)
Trajectory of constraints	They live guided by the necessity to resolve their immediate negative circumstances (constraints) throughout their lives. Those problems need to somehow resolve, and thus their SSN acquire a critical role, often as constraints rather than helpers.	60.0% (n = 18)
Changing trajectories	The changing trajectories are when a person transits from one of the trajectories to the other. Ego is changing from one trajectory to another by external circumstances (institutions, context, natural disasters, pandemics) to his/her decision.	16.7% (n = 5)

choices. Like any person, they had challenges, although their opportunities were more relevant for the establishment of their path in comparison with their difficulties. Thus, SSNs are an essential part of the social network of these people.

The fact that the SSN questions asked were based on the most critical events in the lives of older people, many positive events are included in the trajectories of opportunities. For example, these cases mainly choose marriages, childbirths, jobs, scholarships or university graduations, and moving home. Only in the case of Juan there was an adverse event, which was the death of his son in an airplane accident. Accordingly, the support in these instances is associated with these events.

Seven trajectories of opportunities were identified, in which four were older women and three were older men. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, all of the interviewees were living in a high-class district.

In general, the SSNs in the trajectory of opportunities had people nominated as necessary, although not all of them were giving/receiving support to the ego. It was common to see some specific people giving or receiving only one dimension of support, like having different people with different roles. That probably promotes a tendency to have more diversity among the support they received as ego. Moreover, the partner was very central to giving and receiving many different dimensions of support, especially material aid. The groups of family, work, and friends were very clearly separated in two different parts of the network and did not know each other. Those separations create less dense networks. The family acts as the primary source of intimate interaction, advice, and feedback. They usually contracted someone external such as a domestic worker to provide physical assistance and a therapist to provide advice and intimate support; both paid by the primary source of material aid in the house.

Most of those nominated as trajectories of opportunities had some common characteristics. The pensions were the highest in the sample. The majority do not live alone except for Juan, whose daughter was trying to encourage him to move and live with them at the time of the interview. David, Alvaro, and Juan have at least one additional property (to be rented and/or for holidays), and they were all working by choice as consultants in their areas of expertise.

The existence of cumulative advantages and disadvantages in the lives of older people has been argued in the literature (Dannefer, 2003, 2018). From that point of view, the trajectory here named "of opportunities" could be related to their idea of life mainly with cumulative advantages. Accordingly, those advantages are not decided by the same individuals, which happen independently of their merit. Reportedly, the trajectory of opportunities has much in common with those, looking into the tendency to accumulate specific characteristics (opportunities) over time, which has an impact on later life.

The case of Margarita is an illustrative example of this trajectory. She was 78 years old and living in a high-class neighbourhood at the time of the interview. Figure 1 illustrates her timetable.

The first event Margarita chose was a Christmas celebration in her childhood. At this time, the support flowed mostly from others to her; for instance, her father paid for everything. Money was not a topic of conversation in her childhood or adolescence. Margarita had negative ties with her cousins and played with neighbours.

Margarita's second event was her marriage. Her network had changed considerably. Now, she mostly received support from her family, although her relationship with her mother was conflictive. She met weekly with a group of female friends to pray. They provided positive interactions rather than other kinds of support. Her husband offers the primary salary.

When her children were grown, Margarita had an opportunity to work in a school. That was a significant and exciting change for her, which her support network represents. She started to socialize more at work and did not need to receive material aid from others (like sisters and parents). Although, her husband continued to

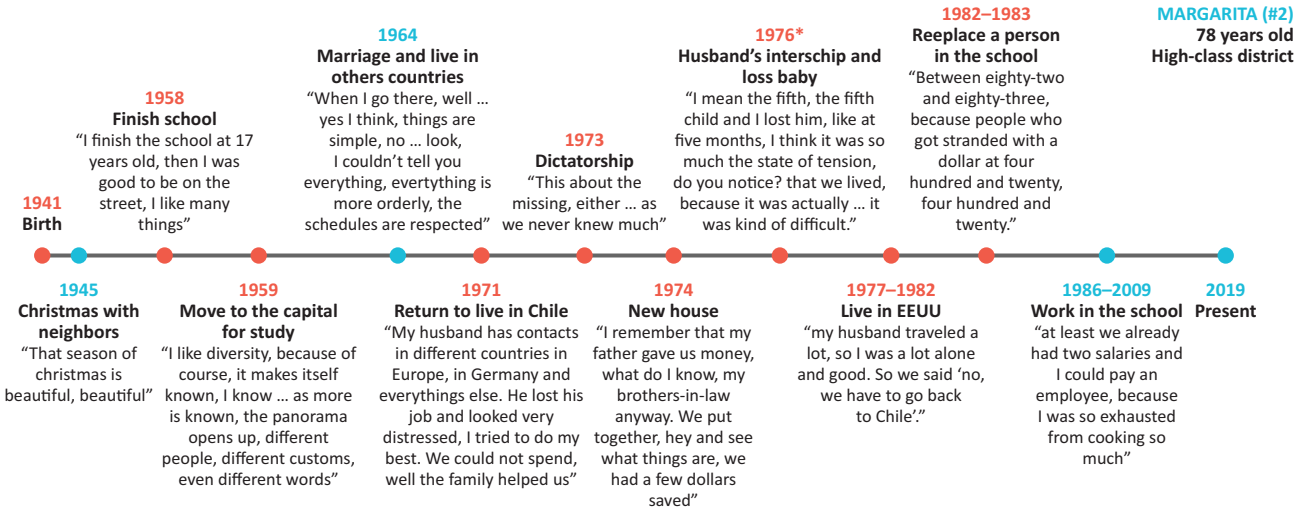

Figure 1. Margarita's timeline.

give significant economic support, feedback, and positive interactions. Her mother and a friend now support her intimately, and she lost contact with her prayer group of friends. Another positive change was having a salary for the first time. She mentioned this event as a proud moment, because she had the opportunity to help her family economically.

Her last network corresponds to the present (see Figure 2). Now, her support network is composed of friends, family, and two others. She meets again with the friends with whom she used to pray. Her therapist appears to be her most intimate support and provider of advice. She has a pension, which helps in the household. Her network shows that she receives many types of support from different people. Also, she is very active in her groups (prayer group) and values them enormously. Margarita represents a very organized, fluid type of life. She travelled to other countries, which gave her the chance to learn from others. The economic aspect was not central in her life course.

4.1.2. Trajectory of Constraints

Trajectories of constraints are when people are not able to manage their life paths on their own. Instead, they live guided by the necessity to resolve their immediate adverse circumstances (constraints) throughout their lives, which is the main factor affecting how their life histories are constructed. Those immediate circumstances are problems that they need to resolve somehow, and thus their SSN acquires a critical role, often as constraints rather than helpers. This approach is particularly close to

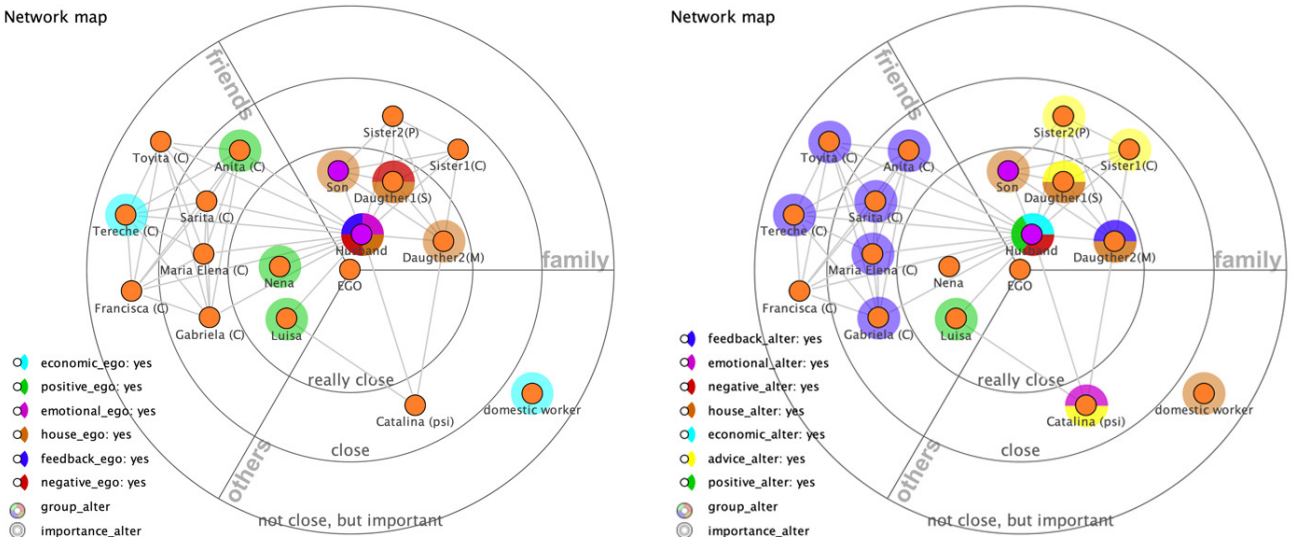

Figure 2. SSN of Margarita in 2019: The left network is the support from ego to alter, and the one at the right side is from alter to ego. Notes: We measured the material aid, intimate, advice, physical assistance, feedback, positive social interaction, and negative social interactions. Each type of support is represented with one color (in the same order): light blue, pink, yellow, brown, blue, green, and red.

what has been proposed by González de la Rocha (2004), studying different Latin-American countries. She used the terms or accumulative disadvantages to explain that there has been an impact from excluding the labour market into other aspects of social life. She demonstrated that the lower classes usually accumulate conditions of surviving in this context, leaving them in a more vulnerable situation.

As mentioned, the types of events chosen by the people interviewed marked in some way the configurations of their SSNs. In general, the trajectories of constraints were constantly interrupted by traumatic and violent events, not only from an emotional point of view but also from a physical sense. Approximately less than half of the events nominated were positive ones, including buying/constructing homes, marriages, jobs, and childbirths. The majority were adverse and traumatic events for the interviewed: sickness and death of someone close (parents, partners, children), accidents at work, job loss, economic problems, and health problems. Moreover, some of them identified events related to the dictatorships, such as having a son detained by the military and never reappearing.

In general, there were more life histories as trajectories of constraints identified in the complete sample of participants. Specifically, there were 18, comprised of ten older women and eight older men. Regarding the socioeconomic status of ego in this trajectory, ten were living in the low-class district and eight were in the middle-class community. Trajectories of constraint among older people living in the high-class district were not found, showing an association between socioeconomic status and trajectory type. At least 14 of these cases had pensions of less than the minimum wage. In the majority of those cases (more than 12), those pensions were state subsidised, and the participants did not have savings. Also, ten are widow(er)s and eight are not.

Their support networks commonly looked more connected and had fewer structural holes in between alters. The location where alters were living appears to be relevant. Many of the closest alters giving/receiving more support to/from ego were living in the same district, which implies needing less money to see each other. In fact, at times, it was in the same couple of blocks or land. Thus, there was a sense of community between them, as many lived in the same neighbourhood and shared the same histories. The family and close friends were the ones giving/receiving material aid, intimate interaction, advice, and feedback. The family composition suffered more changes over time in comparison with the other trajectories. Those interactions were also with people who were not so close, in contrast with the trajectories of opportunities. Moreover, we found less domestic worker presence for this type of trajectory. The groups of friends varied and changed over time, depending mainly on the type of activity that united them, such as a sport, club, or political affiliation.

In the trajectory of opportunities, an association with the idea of cumulative advantages is claimed. In the case of the trajectory of constraints, it would be the contrary, as it is associated with the concept of cumulative disadvantages proposed by Dannefer (2003, 2018). Again, we refer to a systematic tendency to accumulate certain adverse circumstances (constraints), such as those already recognised as part of the trajectories of constraints. In the following sections, some examples of cases categorised as trajectories of constraints are presented with their SSN over time, in which shows associations between the two can be seen.

An example of this trajectory is the case of Catalina (see Figure 3). At the time of the interview, she was living in a low-class neighbourhood and was 78 years old.

In comparison with Margarita, Catalina's tragic life events started very early, with many events in her childhood. Her first event was a very traumatic one, which shaped her whole life. When she was 20 years old, she started to work (for the second time) in another home as a domestic worker. In that work, she was drugged and raped by her boss's son. From that event, she got

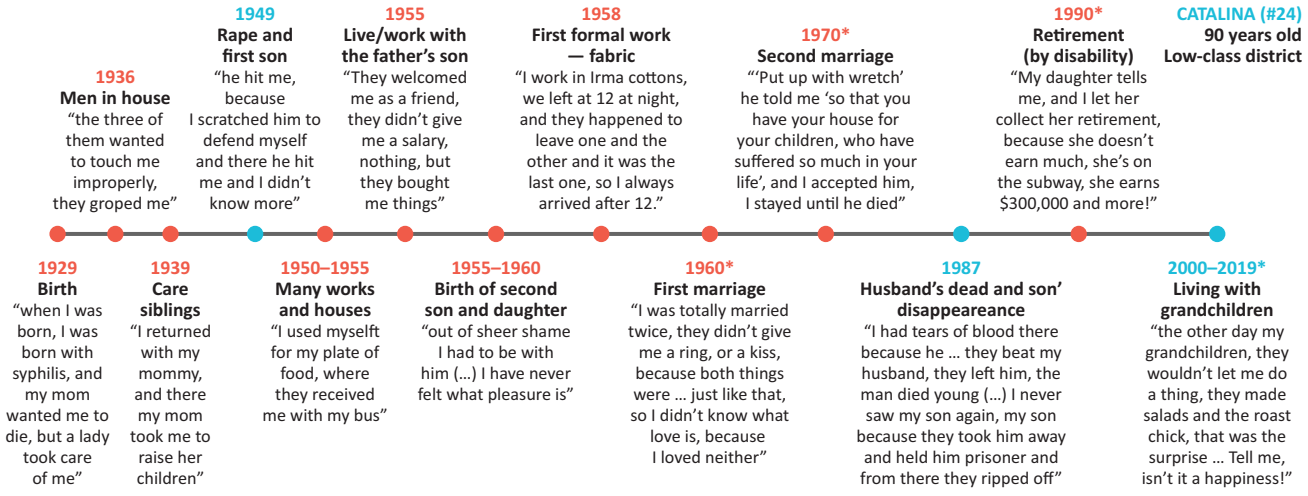

Figure 3. Catalina's timeline.

pregnant and had her first son. She had no support at all. Her mother was an alcoholic. She was the financial support of her siblings, and she had to work since she was ten years old. The only person who helped her in this situation, specifically during the pregnancy, was her doctor.

After having her first child, she returned to work almost immediately. For nearly ten years, she had many informal jobs, all as a domestic servant. It was difficult for her in these jobs for more than a year because the employers didn't let her be with her son. As a result, she never had someone to help her take care of him, and she had to generate enough income to support her son, herself, and her younger siblings. In addition, her mother spent many nights out due to drug problems, which made Catalina the most critical economic support for her siblings. That improved a bit when her son was able to start school, and her siblings were old enough to take care of themselves. She describes those years as very tough in economic terms; she didn't sleep much and never thought of having holidays, but still, she remembers it proudly.

The death of people close to her has shaped her whole life, something prevalent between older people living in the same district. She continues working as a domestic worker. She has more support from her family; however, she still needs to pay for the house, health, bills, and other necessities. Catalina was always the constant economic support of her family, among other kinds of supports. Her second event was when her son was missed (because of the dictatorship), which also happened to her husband. She had to keep going with the rest of her family, depending on her salary as a domestic worker. In the SSN of this event, she described her husband and son as the main worries of that year. She found out later that her husband died. Her son got the opportunity to go to another country. However, she lost contact with him. Currently, she knows that he died a couple of years ago.

The last event is her present (see Figure 4). She divided her groups into family and friends. Her essential support is her daughter and son. Also, she mentioned some grandchildren with whom she currently lives. She received a basic pension to pay for some food and two bills in the house. They do not need to pay rent because it was already entirely bought by her. She is also attending a communitarian centre at least two days a week—a place where she finds a constant group of friends as feedback and positive interactions.

4.1.3. Changing Trajectories

The changing trajectories are when a person transits from one of the trajectories to the other. For example, someone who started with a trajectory of constraints experiences an event (e.g., change of country, a job opportunity or a child increasing their salary) that changes their trajectory to one of the opportunities. The same could happen the other way around: Someone who has a trajectory of opportunity, but one event (e.g., job loss or health problem) changes the trajectory to constraints. In that sense, ego changes from one trajectory to another by external circumstances (institutions, context, natural disasters, pandemics) to their decision.

Those people identified as changing trajectories constructed their SSNs by their most important events. In this case, some were positive events, such as marriage, childbirth, and graduation, and only one event was adverse, which was the parents' death in two cases.

There were five changing trajectories (three upward and two downward), of which four were older men and one was an older woman. Regardless of their socioeconomic status, three were from a high-class district and

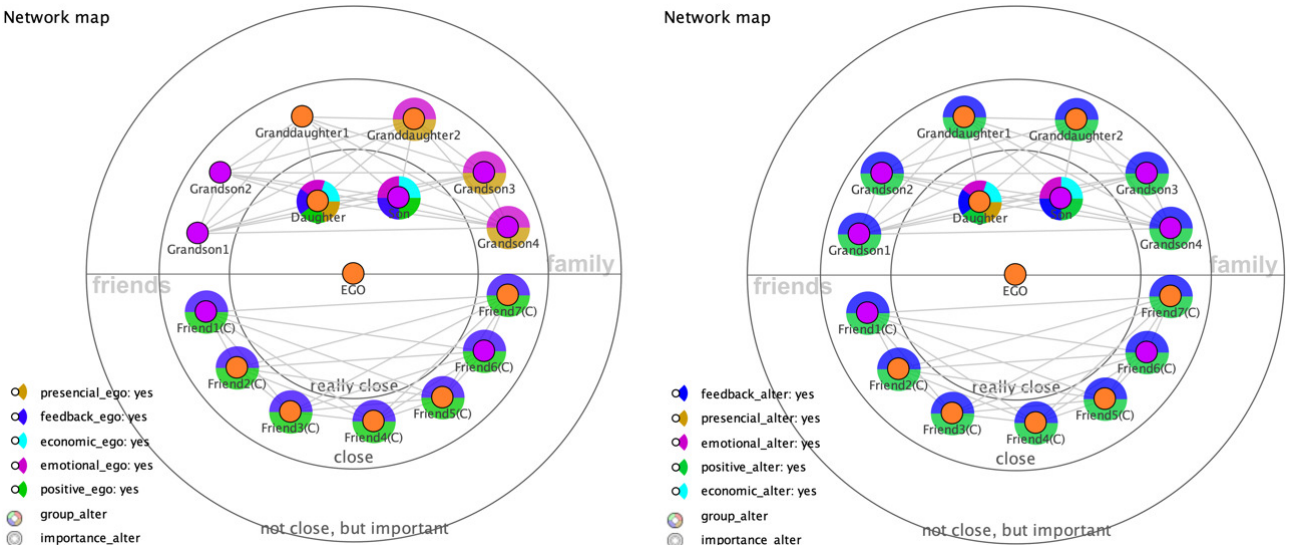

Figure 4. Catalina's SSN in 2019. The left network is the support from ego to alter, and the one at the right side is from alter to ego.

two from a middle-class one. There were no people from the low-class district identified with this trajectory type.

In general, the changing trajectories were associated with SSNs. As with the trajectory of opportunities, the family composition did not change a lot over time and was defined by kin. From these five cases, the four men had been giving material aid to many people over time, especially family members. At the core of the network were those kin-related people with whom they had shared more experiences throughout life, appearing in many different stages. The groups in which they had been part were varied, and there were changes between those events. In this trajectory, it was difficult to identify a tendency about the density and variety of dimensions of supports, as it was diverse. Finally, closeness (spatial and geographical) appears to be relevant to the everyday interactions of those cases.

These cases were participants who were not living alone and were from the middle and high-class districts. Felipe, Pedro, and José had pensions that were greater than the minimum salary. Felipe had two additional properties being rented and was working by choice as a consultant for the Chilean Investigations Police (PDI), the police institution for which he had worked his whole life. Felipe had the highest pension of all the participants. However, he did not finish school because of monetary reasons and had worked as a taxi driver and repairing cars, among other jobs. He had been living a life of constraints, but when the dictatorship started and he joined the PDI, his earnings started to rise, especially at the end of his career. Felipe's history shows us how the macroeconomic level changes. The dictatorship profoundly impacted his life and made his trajectory move to one of the opportunities (see Figure 6). Pedro was a similar case, although he had the opportunity to study engineering, which was the factor that spurred his career. Moreover, since the dictatorship in Chile, engineers have become one of the best-paid careers. Thus, Pedro also moved from a trajectory of constraints to one of the opportunities.

These three trajectory types were identified by the life histories of the older people interviewed, meaning that all are from their perceptions of their own lives. The changing trajectory is the only one that does not have an equivalent in Dannefer's cumulative inequality theory (Dannefer, 2018; Ferraro et al., 2009). The perception of each person to construct their ideas of disadvantages and advantages is also considered, even though nothing has been mentioned that is similar to the changing trajectory in that theory, at least from these authors. That has been framed as a cohort effect. This study was more focused on how the person tells their stories and their relational aspects over time.

In this case, the example is the timeline of Felipe (see Figure 5). He is 78 years old and was living in a high-class district at the time of the interview.

He was born in Maipu, his father was a taxi driver, and his mother used to take care of the house. When he was 18 years old, he finished school, worked a couple of years as a taxi driver, worked in a factory, and later started working on the PDI. One year after that, his daughter was born. He did not earn a significant amount of money in the PDI, so he starts working in a factory, where his salary was double. However, he began to miss the institution (PDI) and came back to work there until his retirement. After his retirement, he continued working in his own properties' agency until today.

Felipe mentioned many events, and all happened after he was 18 years old. However, he identified two events as the most important ones: his marriage and when his mother died. In the first event, he had economic support from his father. He and his wife live in his parents' house to reduce costs and have some savings for the first year. He recognized that his father was essential in terms of the money in that period because it was significantly challenging the first years on the PDI institution, as the salary was meagre.

The second event chosen by Felipe was in 2002. His mother had a stroke, and later the same year, died. That was a difficult moment for him, and he talks about it in

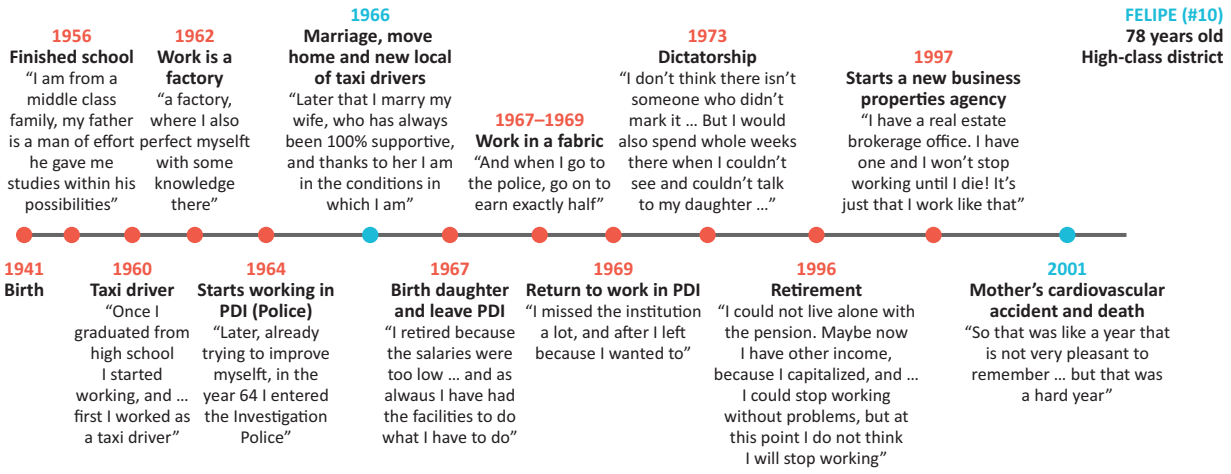

Figure 5. Felipe's timetable.

a very emotional way. Even though he lost many people from the institution (PDI), during the dictatorship, losing his mother was the most significant one. In that year (and today), he was in an ideal economic situation: He has a considerable amount of money from his pension and complements his earnings from his properties agency and two rented apartments. He had the opportunity to go on holidays to other countries of South America with the entire family. Also, he highlights that in that period (and currently), he used to financially help his daughter, wife, and two grandkids. He also mentioned that he could pay for services to take care for his mother and father, and this was possible due to his efforts to save and produce money. This support is shown in Figure 6. Felipe's case represents a life transformed from living in a low-class neighbourhood to living in a high-class area. This was possible due (as he argues) to his efforts. He was also able to overcome some struggles thanks to the support of his father and wife.

4.2. Differences by Socioeconomic Status

The retirement experience is shaped by the events that happen in the lives of older people. The main difference among the cases is between people who had the opportunity to decide their life paths and those constrained by the necessity to resolve their immediate circumstances throughout their lives, which ended up constructing their paths. In this particular study, the results suggest that the first path was associated with older people currently living in the high-class districts of Santiago (see Table 3). Meanwhile, it coincided that older people living in middle and low-class districts were closer to the second way of life. Of those in the changing trajectories, three were from the high-class district, and two were from the middle-class district.

Accordingly, some literature (Berkman & Glass, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000; Guiaux et al., 2007; Perry & Pescosolido, 2012, 2015; Taylor, 2011) described the SSN as a safety net, which helps whenever needed to cope with difficulties. Some alters of that network could have a solution to a problem, or considering the economic aspect, could be the ones with the money necessary to help. Also, some alters could help find a job or another opportunity to lead to a better socioeconomic situation for ego. In that sense, the SSN could allow for expanded opportunities available to ego. Although, from another point of view and as it has been presented here, the SSNsof ego could be a consequence of the accumulative disadvantages throughout life.

This section has presented how socioeconomic status shapes one's retirement. Some events were

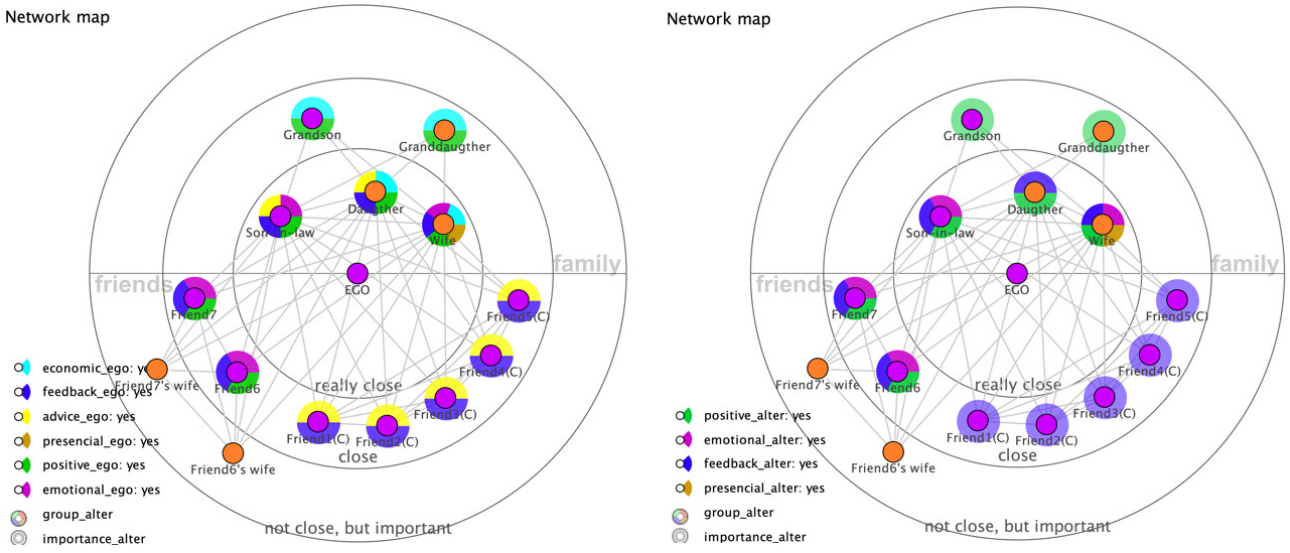

Figure 6. Felipe's SSN in 2019: The left network is the support from ego to alter, and the one at the right side is from alter to ego.

Table 3. Total number of participants by trajectory type and socioeconomic status.

		Socioeconomic Status of Ego			
		High-class District	Middle-class District	Low-class District	Total
Trajectory	Opportunities	7	0	0	7
	Changing	3	2	0	5
	Constraints	0	8	10	18

Note: $p < 0.001$ with Fisher's Exact Test with simulated p-value (based on 10,000 replicates).

experienced differently according to the person's socioeconomic status—for example, their first job experience. In the case of Margarita, she had the opportunity to choose whether to work later in her life. Conversely, Catalina had to renounce school to start working at ten years old to support herself and her family economically. Similarly, Luis needed a job to support his family, so he ended school earlier and started working when he was 13.

There are other aspects in these lives that illustrate the variances among these cases. For those living in low-class districts, it was common to have informal jobs during their life trajectories, as observed with Catalina and Luis. Another aspect was the role of childcare. On the one hand, taking care of children could be considered an option if there was enough money to contract a domestic worker. On the other hand, it could be seen as a non-option and more a necessity, implying the need to ask for support to take care of children. An additional difference was whether people had holidays and where they would go. The older people living in the low-class district had more traumatic events in their lives, which could be a measure of accumulated inequality.

5. Conclusions

Retirement is the termination of work, which implies moving from a salary to a pension. As it is argued that the pension system in Chile does not work, the focus was on how other sources of economic support may or may not help retired people. During retirement, the SSN of someone could be a net of people and institutions, allowing ego to have other opportunities available or constraints to opportunities limited by accumulative disadvantages throughout life. According to the personal network of ego and historical context, that could vary throughout different periods of life. As they are explored, all lives are found to be completely different. They have other actors, ties, forms of interactions, emotions, and experiences. Therefore, their SSNs are shaped by their life histories in different ways as well. The complexity of the topic sometimes makes it difficult to study properly. However, looking through people's life histories and their networks over time seems to be a helpful way to approach it, as has been already done by other researchers (Bidart, et al., 2020; Crossley et al., 2015).

Our main finding is that the trajectory type will impact a person's SSN and thus the experience of retirement. People identify events and discuss the characteristics of their networks at the time. Some SSNs are helpful, while some are exploitative. The support and exploitations seem to accumulate over time, resulting in paths spiralling up or down in economic self-sufficiency. Moreover, the trajectories are shaped by the socioeconomic status of ego, which eventually affects their retirement.

This research has established that SSNs during retirement are shaped by the ego's socioeconomic status and life history. The actual life history depends on the type of trajectory they have experienced: opportunities, constraints, or change. Therefore, the situation of older people can be fully understood considering their life course, including actors, relationships, emotions, narratives, and experiences the latter entails. Despite all that has been said, this research had the limitation of representativity, as it is a study case. Future research should look at this issue in longitudinal surveys with representative data.

Acknowledgments

Becas Chile funded this study from the Chilean Agency of Research and Development ANID [2018–72190281]. We thank the reviewers for their time reading our manuscript and their comments on improving the article. Also, thanks to Miranda Lubbers for coordinating this thematic issue of which this article is part.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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About the Authors

Francisca Ortiz is currently doing her PhD in The Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis, at the University of Manchester. She is also co-chair of the PhD and early career of Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing (MICRA), part of the council of Women in Network Science (WiNS). Her topics of interest are mixed methods (MM and MMSNA), personal networks, relational sociology, and social gerontology.

Elisa Bellotti is senior lecturer in sociology and member of The Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis, University of Manchester. She has published on applications of social network analysis and mixed methods in sociological fields, like criminal networks, scientific networks, and personal networks. Her recent work focuses on gender aspects of social network formations and outcomes and health networks. She has written the book *Qualitative Networks. Mixed Methods in Sociological Research* (2015) and co-authored *Social Network Analysis for Egonets* (2015).

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 339–349
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4526

Article

Two Sides of the Coin: The Link Between Relational Exclusion and Socioeconomic Exclusion

Verónica de Miguel-Luken * and Livia García-Faroldi

Department of State Law and Sociology, University of Malaga, Spain; E-Mails: vdmiguel@uma.es (V.D.M.-L.), lgarcia@uma.es (L.G.-F.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 15 May 2021 | Accepted: 10 August 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Social capital, derived from the individual embeddedness in a net of personal relationships that gives access to a pool of potential resources, is crucial in understanding how some people experience a higher risk of falling into social exclusion. In this article, we related some compositional and structural factors of egocentered networks to various measures on economic deprivation and social exclusion. We considered different explanatory dimensions: ego's sociodemographic characteristics and ego's social capital. Social capital was measured both in terms of expressive and instrumental support, and took into account network size, strong ties density, and alters' average job prestige, differentiating between inherited and achieved capital, a distinction that has deserved little attention so far. We used data from the Spanish General Social Survey 2013 (N = 5,094), a nationally representative database not applied for similar purposes up to the present. Results show how economic deprivation and social exclusion are associated with ascribed and achieved characteristics, both at the micro level (individual) and the meso level (network). At the micro level, women, immigrants, young people, less-educated people, the unemployed, and those who do not trust others have higher estimated values on the variables with regards to social disadvantage. At the meso level, social exclusion is associated with lower occupational prestige of achieved relationships, fewer contacts for obtaining economic or medical help (but more contacts for childcare) and smaller non-kin core discussion networks. In a familistic society with a limited welfare system, results help to disentangle the level of dependence people have on their own social resources.

Keywords
achieved social capital; deprivation; egocentered networks; inherited social capital; Spanish General Social Survey

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

The study of poor populations has a long history in sociology, but the association of deprivation with the social networks has received less attention than what should be appropriate, if we take into account that poverty is relational (Lubbers et al., 2020a). Among those authors who have paid attention to the role of networks in explaining poverty and social exclusion, a main focus of research has been social capital. Social capital is derived from the individual embeddedness in a net of personal relationships that gives access to a pool of potential resources (Lin, 1999a, 2000a). Empirical evidence has shown that poor people have networks of restricted range and fewer instrumental resources (Van Groenou & Van Tilburg, 2003; Wilson, 1987). Both strands of research—social capital and social support—have a long tradition: The social capital literature has been closely related to job-market issues, such as unemployment, earnings or job prestige, while the scholarship on social support has been linked to the study of poverty and social exclusion. In our case, we consider social capital

from the perspective of the analysis of personal networks (and not from the macro approach grounded on trust in people, institutions, etc.), which understands social support as an implementation of social capital.

In this article, we investigate how individual and network factors are related to poverty and social exclusion. We use data from the Spanish General Social Survey of 2013, a year of profound economic crisis, with high rates of unemployment and a population at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Our article contributes to the literature using a unique, representative Spanish survey, specifically designed to study discussion networks (formed by people with whom important matters are discussed) and social support. This survey was inspired by the American General Social Survey (Burt, 1984). As far as we know, this is the first work that uses these data to analyse how structural factors are linked to social exclusion. Furthermore, we distinguish between inherited resources (through parents, siblings, and other kin present from ego's birth) and acquired resources (all others), a distinction that is normally missing in the literature (Contreras et al., 2019).

The article is structured as follows. After this Introduction, the theoretical framework explains the empirical evidence about how social capital and social support differs between poor people and more economic advantaged sectors. The next section explains the methodology and database, while the fourth shows the main findings. The article finishes with a conclusion and discussion of the results.

2. Social Networks and Social Capital

Social networks have received far less attention than neighbourhoods and organizations when studying the causes of poverty (Lubbers et al., 2020a). Nevertheless, poverty is profoundly relational because "it is lived, managed, negotiated and reproduced in relationships with others" (Lubbers et al., 2020a, p. 8).

Among those authors who have paid attention to the role of networks in explaining poverty and social exclusion, a main focus of research has been social capital. This is not casual because as Pichler and Wallace (2009, p. 319) claimed "the formulation of the concept… is heavily influenced by its relationship to the reproduction of inequality." For example, Bourdieu (1986, p. 248) defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." On the same line, Lin (1999a, p. 30) defined social capital as "investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns." The concept implies two conceptualizations: The first emphasizes resources and the second emphasizes locations in a network (Lin, 2000b).

We can find a similar distinction in Wilson's reflection about the urban poor. For the author, this group has networks of restricted range and fewer instrumental resources (Wilson, 1987). Portes' (1998) definition of social capital also highlighted two dimensions—the structural element (the relationships with alters) and the resource element (the number and quality of resources possessed by these alters). As Hurlbert et al. (2008) suggested, Granovetter's (1982) discussion of poverty also echoed this division, because he argued that poor individuals' networks lacked weak ties (structural element) and, therefore, the access to instrumental resources that weak ties enabled.

As Li et al. (2005) noticed, there is a difference between the approach developed by Bourdieu and Lin, which focused on how social capital benefited individuals, and a second approach developed by Putnam (1993), more interested in how it generated collective goods. This second line of research studies how engagement in civic organizations increases cooperation and trust in others. For example, Li et al. (2005) demonstrated that civic participation generated social trust and that the more advantageous the individual's socio-cultural position was, the more likely they tended to trust others. Although this line of research is interesting, we focus on the first perspective because it is closely related to social exclusion, both at the micro and the macro level.

According to Lin (2000b), social groups have different amounts of social capital due to two phenomena: first, a structural process by which each society provides unequal socioeconomic opportunities to members of different groups defined according to race, gender, religion or other characteristics; second, a general tendency in networking to interact with others who are similar (social homophily) as a result of a selection effect (Mouw, 2003) and the interactions developed in homogeneous social foci (defined as entities around which joint activities of individuals are organised; Feld, 1981). As Lin (2000b, p. 787) argued, "these two principles, when operating in tandem, produce relative differential access by social groups to social capital." Various indicators of social capital have been proved higher in more advantaged status groups that have more heterogeneous networks, with the presence of bridging social capital in contrast with bonding social capital in lower status groups (Campbell et al., 1986; Pichler & Wallace, 2009; Van Groenou & Van Tilburg, 2003).

When analysing an individual's social capital, three dimensions have normally been taken into account (Flap, 2002; Lin, 2000a): the presence of alters, the resources of these alters, and the availability of these resources for ego. On the other hand, the outcomes of social capital could be divided into instrumental actions (gaining resources) and expressive actions (maintaining resources, such as gaining emotional support and sharing of sentiments; see Lin, 2000a, pp. 45–46). While expressive outcomes are not a result of access to higher occupational prestige members (Lin, 1999a; Van der Gaag et al., 2008), empirical evidence has suggested that instrumental actions are closely related to access to higher status positions.

One of the most analysed outcomes of social capital is related to labour market. The literature has demonstrated that job seekers are not necessarily helped by having social contacts per se, but by the resources of these contacts (the socio-economic composition of the network members). For example, Canduela et al. (2015) found that bonding relations (both in the primary and secondary sphere) were not associated with entering employment, but bridging social capital (measured as the availability of someone outside the household to help find a job) was related to it. In their analysis of which factors influenced the decision of youth on entering the labour market or continuing in education, Verhaeghe et al. (2015) analysed how inherited social capital (educational and class positions of the parents) affected children's decision to continue in education or to enter the labour market.

In this field, it is common to study the access and availability to alters in rewarded positions, measured in terms of socioeconomic indexes or through occupational prestige measures. De Graaf and Flap (1988) proved that the occupational prestige of the contact person that helped to find the first job had a significant positive direct effect on respondent's occupational prestige in the Netherlands, although the influence of social resources on earnings was largely indirect. Even if some evidence has been found that social capital adds to human capital for the explanation of the inequalities in socioeconomic status and income (Boxman et al., 1991; Campbell et al., 1986; Shen & Bian, 2018), some other studies have contested the causality of this relationship, pointing out the selection effects; thus, having friends in high positions makes it easier to reach a good position that, in turn, reinforces socialisation with people of the acquired status (De Graaf & Flap, 1988; Mouw, 2003). Therefore, we hypothesise:

> H1. Higher average job prestige of alters is associated with the access to better jobs and, consequently, with the achievement of ego's better economic positions and lower risk of social exclusion. Although this relationship will hold for both inherited and achieved members of the core discussion network, acquired ties in a meritocratic society are expected to be more relevant.

Granovetter's (1973) theory of the strength of weak ties contended that weak ties provided an important flow of information in contrast to redundant information facilitated by strong ties. Furthermore, actors whose networks can span social layers thanks to weak ties are more likely to be socially mobile, especially if their networks can bridge crucial "structural holes" (Burt, 1992). Lin argued that embeddedness in resource-rich social networks increased the likelihood of receiving useful information even if the person was not actively seeking such information, a phenomenon that the author called "the invisible hand of social capital" (Lin, 2000b, p. 792). The relevance of weak ties in finding a job has been corroborated in some countries (Boxman et al., 1991; Granovetter, 1973), but not in others (Lin, 1999b; for Spain see also Lubbers et al., 2019; Requena, 1991).

On one hand, Granovetter's theory and later empirical research have pointed to the beneficial impact of weak ties on labour market outputs. On the other hand, Burt's redundancy definition is identical to ego network density (when ties to ego are not taken into account; see also Borgatti, 1997). Thus, we expect:

> H2. Merging both ideas, strong ties density has a negative influence on income and social inclusion.

3. Social Support and Social Exclusion

One of the benefits of social capital is the achievement of social support, which can be defined as the "emotional, informational, or practical assistance from significant others, such as family members, friends, or co-workers'' (Thoits, 2010, p. S46). As explained by Lubbers et al. (2020b), three mechanisms govern the constitution and functioning of personal networks: the social foci, the homophily (partly induced by social foci), and social norms (obligation, reciprocity, autonomy, and equity). Taking into account these aspects, Lubbers et al. (2020b) expected that the support networks of poor people were smaller, resources scarcer, and with norms impeding social support mobilisation. Nevertheless, their qualitative results showed a great variation in network size (some individuals had lost contacts while others frequented new social environments) and in availability of resources, with important help given by acquaintances. Regarding network size and composition of poor households, previous studies (Canduela et al., 2015) found that living alone and lone parenting were more frequent among the poor, they more commonly rented their accommodation and they usually lived in households without another earner.

In their revision of literature on poverty and social networks, Lubbers et al. (2020a) highlighted that a large body of research had shown that poor people used extensive networks of kin and other close relationships. However, kin were not always available or were not even addressed in seeking help if those requesting it considered they were not going to be able to satisfy the norm of reciprocity or they expected to be judged from their lack of autonomy. This reduced presence of family in the safety nets is offset to some extent by the provider role that friends or acquaintances assume in harsh situations (Gazso et al., 2016; Grau Rebollo et al., 2019; Lubbers et al., 2020b). Yet some scholars have warned about this "myth of survival" (González de la Rocha, 2007) because some findings based on large-scale surveys have shown that poor people who most need informal support are the least likely to have it (for the European context see Böhnke, 2008; for the American one see Harknett & Hartnett, 2011). The network disadvantage reported in

this body of research is a result of both lower network access (which depends on the size and composition of support networks) and network returns (the poor may have similar access but obtain fewer benefits from their networks, according to Pedulla & Pager, 2019). In this line of thought, some researchers have drawn attention to the insufficient institutional coverage of the neo-liberal (Gazso et al., 2016) or the Mediterranean (Lubbers et al., 2020b) welfare systems, which are based on the questionable idea that family is the primary source of support.

In other aspects, empirical evidence has also shown mixed results about the association between poverty and social support networks. On the one hand, some quantitative studies (both cross-sectional and longitudinal) did not find that networks of the poor (particularly contacts to family and close friends) were reduced (Böhnke & Link, 2017; Canduela et al., 2015; Dahl et al., 2008; Letki & Mieriņa, 2015). These authors emphasised that other variables and not poverty explained patterns of sociability, such as labour market status or ethnicity (Dahl et al., 2008), or life events such as bad health, advancing age or the birth of a child (Böhnke & Link, 2017). On the other hand, some qualitative studies have focused on how entry into poverty means a reduction or change in social support networks (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011; Gazso et al., 2016; Lubbers et al., 2020b). Furthermore, these networks are smaller than those of the more affluent and their members comprise low-income individuals. Stack (1974) and Adler de Lomnitz (1977) showed that poor individuals developed and maintained elaborate exchange networks consisting primarily of strong ties (particularly kin). In their comparison of poor urbanites in the USA with the middle-class population, Hurlbert et al. (2008) found greater distinctiveness on the resource element of network capital than on the structural element (restricted geographic range, density, diversity, size, and voluntary organisation integration). Restricted network range constrains access to instrumental resources and emotional support in general (Boon & Farnsworth, 2011; Lubbers et al., 2019), and plays an important role in explaining the lack of resources in the networks of the poor (Hurlbert et al., 2008). Nevertheless, institutional and cultural contexts have to be taken into account. As Letki and Mieriņa (2015) demonstrated with their international comparison of 21 countries, while the poor in the non-postcommunist countries had smaller friendship and organisational networks, in postcommunist countries friendship networks were significantly larger than those of the wealthier people, suggesting that they maintained ties in order to gain access to the needed help.

As argued by Böhnke (2008) and Böhnke and Link (2017), two competing hypotheses can be distinguished regarding the association between poverty and social integration: while the thesis of compensation assumes that solidarity will increase and networks will become more tightly knit in the event of material disadvantage, the thesis of accumulation expects that economic disadvantage results in a feeble social network where social contacts are focused on the family. Thus, network size is important:

> H3. The larger the expressive and instrumental networks, the broader the options people have to rely on others, to obtain assistance from them and, thus, to escape deprivation: Particularly, with regards to instrumental support, larger networks are expected to be related to better achievement (H3A); regarding discussion networks, even if the relationship is expected to be similar to that for the instrumental support (the bigger the better), given the universal provider role associated to kin in a familistic society, the differences in ego's economic and social advantage will be mainly due to the size of non-kin core discussion network (H3B).

Although at the micro level informal networks could help in case of economic necessity, at the macro level they may produce cumulative disadvantage and amplify social inequality. Granovetter (1982, pp. 116–117) arrived to a similar conclusion when he suggested that "the heavy concentration of social energy in strong ties has the impact of fragmenting communities of the poor into encapsulated networks with poor connections between these units….This may be one more factor that makes poverty self-perpetuating." At the macro level, as Lin warned (2000a, p. 96), "inequalities in social capital explain the framework for inequalities in social stratification.''

As pointed out by Harknett and Hartnett (2011), the causal ordering in the link between personal disadvantages and personal safety nets is unresolved. Theory and prior research suggested that relationships were usually bidirectional and self-reinforcing. Personal disadvantages are likely to interfere with support relationships, and personal safety-net deficits, in turn, are likely to reinforce and entrench personal disadvantages (DiMaggio & Garip, 2012). In this article, we analyse the impact of social exclusion on other aspects of exclusion, the economic situation being the most important one.

In this article, we analyse the role of social networks in explaining poverty and social exclusion in Spain. This country has a Mediterranean welfare system in which the family assumes the primary caregiver role and social policies are limited. Furthermore, Spain ranks as one of the European countries with highest inequality and the economic crisis (2008–2015) exacerbated these inequalities. According to the EU-SILC data, the Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income for 2013 (the year of the data we analyse) was 33.7% (only Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Portugal surpassed Spain) and it increased to 34.7 in 2014. Spain was one of the European countries where the impact of the economic crisis in the labour market was higher (the unemployment rate was 26% in 2013) and, consequently, poverty increased during that period (from 19.8% of the population at risk of poverty

and social exclusion in 2008 to 22.2% in 2014, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics). Taking into account these features of the country, it is expected that social capital is unevenly distributed among the Spanish population and that less advantaged groups lack both emotional and instrumental social support.

4. Methodology

4.1. Data

We used data from the Spanish General Social Survey of 2013, which replicated the American General Social Survey of 1985 (Burt, 1984) and was especially focused on the collection of egocentered data. The questionnaire inquired first about the number of people with whom important matters had been discussed during the previous six months (core discussion network). If the respondent named more than five confidants, the first elicited five persons were selected for the next sections. Subsequently, ties between every pair of alters were collected in two ways: whether the two alters knew each other and whether they had a close relationship (strong ties). Finally, a battery of name interpreters was added, allowing data on many alters' characteristics to be gathered, although the current analysis only includes job prestige and type of relationship. The core discussion network section of the questionnaire was followed by some resource generator items, for which only the number of available alters for each proposed situation and the relation with the most important alter were collected.

The survey was nationally representative, reaching a total sample of N = 5,094 although we selected only people who were the household breadwinner, whose partner was the household breadwinner, or both (n = 4,118). In this way, we intended to avoid young people still dependent on their parents. Information on family income was available for n = 3,309 of those respondents.

4.2. Dependent Variables

We propose an approach to social exclusion from three different angles. The first one is through the *household equivalised net income*. By net income, we mean income after taxes. Since net income was collected at intervals, we used the average value of each interval.

For the second dependent variable (*household equivalised net income adjusted by housing expenditures*), the share of the income estimated to pay the rent or the mortgage was considered (data were obtained for each Spanish province from national housing appraisal and real estate companies), resulting in the total amount for net income, after housing expenditure was discounted. If an interviewee, for example, answered a net family income between 3,001€ and 4,500€ and her housing expenditure was 25% of the family income, the average value of 3750.5 was multiplied by (1–0.25 = 0.75). It must be taken into consideration that in Spain rents are normally higher than mortgages, so paying for a property impoverishes people less than paying for a rent.

The two variables were equivalised according to household composition and members were made equivalent by weighting each according to their age: 1 for the first adult, 0.5 for the remaining adults and cohabitants over 13, and 0.3 for each child under 14. This is the modified OECD equivalence scale to adjust for household size, previously used by other authors that have analysed poverty, such as Böhnke and Link (2017). This scale is also applied by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics. Then results were standardised (Min-Max normalisation) so the maximum was set to 1 and the minimum to 0 (highest economic deprivation).

Finally, other dimensions that have been previously proven to be related to social exclusion (Barnes, 2005; Böhnke & Link, 2017; Canduela et al., 2015; European Commission, 2004; Houston & Sissons, 2012; Pichler & Wallace, 2009) were considered to create a new index. These indicators were as follows: health (weighted 0: *very good*, 0.25: *good*, 0.5: *normal*, 0.75: *poor*, and 1: *very poor*), participation in any of the eleven types of associations and organisations included in the questionnaire (0: *yes*, 1: *no*), voted in the last general elections (0: *yes*, 1: *no*), received basic assistance from NGOs (such as food, clothes or money) in the past 12 months (up to four types of help were asked about from 0: *no assistance at all* though 1: *all types received*), and housing tenure (0: *property, totally paid for*, 0.75: *property, paying for a mortgage*, and 1: *rent*). The values for those variables were summed up and divided by five, and the result was assigned a 50% weighting. The remaining 50% was for the standardised household equivalised net income. The final index was the sum of both. Values ranged from 0 to 1, higher values meaning higher social exclusion. Weightings were changed in order to make some robustness analysis (results upon request) and conclusions were basically the same as for the models included in this article, where we have prioritised the relevance of income in the construction of the index.

Despite the fact that we have considered deprivation from the viewpoint of the household, in line with a strong current in poverty research and provided that inequality is normally increased when the perspective is on the family unit instead of the individual (Domínguez Domínguez & Martín Caraballo, 2006), our independent variables were measured at the individual level. The assumed extended homogamy in couples and overlapping of partners' instrumental support networks make our approach feasible. Nevertheless, the same explanatory models were run for the dependent variables built from the individual income and results were quite similar (results upon request).

4.3. Independent Variables

Sociodemographic variables were added as control variables: sex, place of birth (Spain, abroad), age-group,

academic attainment, employment status, living with a partner, number of children under 16 at home, and degree of urbanisation. Given that the Spanish General Social Survey included items to measure personality traits (the so-called "Big Five," see Goldberg, 1990) that have been proved to affect the creation and maintenance of social networks (Requena & Ayuso, 2018; Staiano et al., 2012; Swickert et al., 2002), we checked them as control variables. Interpersonal trust ("it is easy for me to trust people") and conscientiousness ("I do the things that must be done conscientiously"), both dichotomised to 1 (*totally agree*, *mostly agree*) and 0 (*unclear*, *mostly disagree*, *totally disagree*) were significant at some point. Some other psychological variables were finally omitted due to their lack of statistical significance: neuroticism, openness, and extraversion.

Discussion and instrumental *network sizes* were considered. For expressive support, total discussion network size and core discussion network size were tested. The latter was divided into kin and non-kin since characteristics of core alters were collected. The maximum size for the core network was limited to five because of the questionnaire's design. The idea was to distinguish between non-chosen or ascribed ties (kin) and chosen ties (all others, including the partner). Regarding the resource generator questions for instrumental support, the size of the different proposed scenarios was inquired about, but no characteristics were collected for the alters. Although five different resources were included in the questionnaire, just three proved significant in the models: potential available help to take care of the children (asked even in cases in which respondent has no children), potential available alters to ask for economic help, and potential alters who would accompany ego to the doctor or to the hospital. The other two (help to solve an administrative paperwork and help in case of illness) were excluded from the models.

Average alters' prestige (*network composition*) was studied. Subjective prestige for each occupation was obtained from a nationally representative survey of the Spanish population (study number 3004–2014 carried out by the Centre for Sociological Research). This information was used to calculate the range of alters' prestige, the maximum alters' prestige and the average alters' prestige (Van der Gaag et al., 2008), distinguishing between achieved (friends, acquaintances, partner, etc.) and ascribed or inherited associates (father/mother, brother/sister, and other kin known from birth). Although the three measures—prestige's range, average, and maximum—were significant in the models, the average was the variable with the strongest predictive power so the other two were finally omitted.

The questionnaire asked whether every pair of alters knew each other or not and whether the relationship between them was close (*strong-ties density*). Based on the structural holes' theory (Burt, 1992), we defined density as the number of observed ties between alters with a *close* relationship (I) divided by the total number of possible ties $n\times(n-1)/2$, thus: $2I/(n\times(n-1))$, if $n > 1$. Thus, this measure is not about alters with whom ego has a strong tie but about strong ties between alters.

4.4. Analytical Approach

Linear regression models were run to estimate the dependent variables, which were considered as continuous in Stata 14. Outliers and cases with an extremely high leverage were omitted from the analysis using the Cook indicator. Data were weighted for the descriptive results and the models.

In order to better address the hypotheses, in Table 1 we first show the estimated coefficients for the three variables related to the size and the structure of the discussion network: total number of alters with whom personal matters had been discussed in the previous six months (discussion network size, no limitation), kin and non-kin core discussion network sizes (the sum of both limited to 5 alters), and density of strong ties between every pair of elicited alters (again, limited to 5 alters). The three of them were correlated, so we checked them separately in different models. In these first models, no information about alters' occupational prestige was added. In Table 2, the complete models for the three dependent variables are presented. As for the information on discussion network, we just kept the sizes of kin and non-kin core discussion networks (density was no longer significant). For the sake of clarity, we do not include the estimators for the control variables, nor the instrumental support network size (from the resource generators) in Table 1, which are consistent with those observed in Table 2.

5. Results

Discussion network size matters (Table 1). In general, the larger the discussion network, the higher both estimated household incomes. Still, when core discussion network size is disaggregated into kin and non-kin, this positive association is just significant for non-kin. As for the index of social exclusion, for which the economic dimension is linked to other factors, all estimators on size are significant and point to the same direction: Broader support is linked to situations that are more favourable. The magnitudes of the values indicate the stronger intensity of the relationship of these variables with the index on exclusion. Density of strong ties among alters is barely illustrative in understanding poverty and exclusion even if the signs of the coefficients are consistent for the three models and suggest the expected relationship: bonding social capital seems to be detrimental in the terms considered.

Table 2 presents the complete models for the three dependent variables, with alters' occupational prestige measures included. In all the models, being a woman and being foreign-born is negatively linked to equivalised family income and positively linked to exclusion (in the case of women, these results are presumably affected

Table 1. Linear regression beta coefficients for *household equivalised net income*, *household equivalised net income adjusted by housing expenditures*, and *social exclusion*.

	discussion network size	core discussion network size: kin non-kin	density strong ties among alters
household equivalised net income	0.038*	0.020 0.042*	−0.029+
household equivalised net income adjusted by housing expenditures	0.039*	0.021 0.050**	−0.023
Social exclusion	−0.058**	−0.038* −0.098***	0.039*

Notes: *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, + p < 0.10; models are controlled for sex, age group, nativity, academic level, labour situation, partnership, number of children under 16 in the household, degree of urbanisation, psychological features, and size of instrumental networks.

by those households in which the woman is the only breadwinner). In relation to this, living with an intimate partner improves the economic condition of the family and prevents social exclusion, but the number of children under 16 at home aggravates the situation whichever dependent variable is observed.

According to age, the only group with a clear significant negative effect on income when the effort of paying for housing is not adjusted is 45–59 (Model 1), probably because it clusters people with children above 16 and still belonging to the household. When housing expenses are adjusted (Model 2), respondents between 60 and 74 have higher estimated family income, very likely due to the overrepresentation of houses that are owned and completely paid for in this age group. The relationship with age is not perfectly linear for the index on social exclusion (Model 3), but it is this group again (60–74) that seems to enjoy the best position whilst the youngest (up to 29) has the highest social exclusion estimated value. Two factors may help interpret these findings: (a) Spain is a country with high level of youth unemployment (unemployment rates in Spain in 2013 were 74.0% for the age group 16–19, 51.8% for 20–24, and 33.3% for 25–29), and (b) Spain is a country where people leave their parents' home comparatively very late. We have kept the calculations only for the people who are the main breadwinner and/or whose partner is the main breadwinner; therefore, young people that remain in the sample are presumably not dependent on their parents anymore. It seems that they are more at risk of being in a vulnerable situation: renters with low salaries, and individuals more unconnected to the assistance of NGOs and to political participation. The following age group is not far away from them.

As the academic level rises, the expected value for equivalised family incomes increases as well (Models 1 and 2, Table 2), and the estimated social exclusion diminishes (Model 3, Table 2). Concerning the labour situation, all categories have negative effects on income and a positive effect on social exclusion as compared to employed people, the unemployed being the group with the lowest estimated incomes and the highest estimated value for exclusion. Regarding psychological features, trusting others is positively associated with the family economy and negatively with social exclusion. The coefficient for considering oneself as conscientious is only slightly significant for the third model (Table 2), this being a trait that apparently favours inclusion.

Regarding instrumental support, once we control for socio-demographic and psychological variables, the fact of having a larger available network for taking care of the children is related to a reduction in the values for equivalised family income and for housing adjusted equivalised family income (Models 1 and 2, Table 2). This is the only situation where the sign of the estimator on size is not as predicted. The other two items proposed as resource generators, number of associates who could provide economic help and number of associates who could go with ego to the doctor or to the hospital, point to the expected direction: Larger networks are associated with better outcomes in all three dependent variables.

The core discussion network variables on size (kin and non-kin networks) lose their significance as information about alters' prestige is added to the Models for the equivalised household income and for the housing adjusted equivalised household income (Models 1 and 2, Table 2), suggesting that whoever the person is connected to is more important than how many connections this person has. Only non-kin discussion network size remains negatively related to social exclusion (Model 3, Table 2), giving strength to the idea that the number of relatives with whom important matters are discussed does not differentiate between population's performance as much as the number of available non-kin for expressive support.

Consistently, and even if both inherited mean-prestige and achieved mean prestige are positively related to better outcomes (Table 2), it is achieved prestige that has a stronger association with equivalised

Table 2. Linear regression models (beta coefficients).

	Model 1 family equivalised net income	Model 2 household equivalised net income adjusted by housing expenditures	Model 3 social exclusion
sex			
men			
women	−0.070***	−0.073***	.115***
nativity			
native			
foreign-born	−0.155***	−0.188***	.351***
age group			
18–29			
30–44	−0.018	0.003	−.029
45–59	−0.134***	−0.051	−.092**
60–74	−0.011	0.086*	−.235***
75+	−0.014	0.043	−.154***
academic level			
no completed studies			
primary	0.045*	0.041	−.086**
secondary	0.092**	0.119**	−.186***
non-compulsory secondary	0.251***	0.260***	−.291***
university	0.458***	0.466***	−.474***
employment status			
employed			
retiree	−0.173***	−0.134***	.109***
unemployed	−0.269***	−0.244***	.154***
other inactive	−0.180***	−0.159***	.080***
partnership			
living with a partner	0.255***	0.268***	−.169***
number of children <16 in hh	−0.212***	−0.203***	0.064**
degree of urbanisation			
10,001–400,000 inhab.	0.022	0.015	.019
urban: >400,000 inhab	0.023	0.008	.005
psychological features			
trust in people	0.056***	0.047**	−.096***
conscientious	0.018	0.012	−.027+
core discussion network size			
kin	0.004	0.004	−.014
non-kin	0.016	0.022	−.069**
instrumental network size			
childcare	−0.069**	−0.088***	.057*
economic help	0.049**	0.053**	−.055**
accompany to the doctor	0.036+	0.045*	−.057**
network composition			
mean prestige inherited	0.050**	0.040*	−.018
mean prestige achieved	0.119***	0.136***	−.133***
observations (n)	2,292	2,116	2,090
R-squared	0.487	0.457	0.459

Note: *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, + p < 0.10.

incomes and social exclusion. As stated above, these predictors about the composition of the core discussion network practically cancel out the effects of size shown in Table 1.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This article contributes to the existing literature through the discussion of the differential relationships between achieved and inherited social capital and various

measures of economic and social disadvantage, which has deserved little attention so far (Contreras et al., 2019). Furthermore, the research distinguishes between the size of discussion and instrumental networks, drawing on a nationally representative database not used for similar purposes up to the present.

Although our focus was on the influence of network indicators, and some of them have been proven to be significant in understanding deprivation and social exclusion, we have to admit that individual factors are more determinant predictors. Being unemployed, female, foreign-born, and having children under 16 relates to worse results, whilst higher academic level, the fact of living with a partner and being trustful and conscientious have a positive impact, consistent with previous findings (Böhnke, 2008; European Commission, 2004; Lubbers et al., 2020a; Van Groenou & Van Tilburg, 2003).

Regarding H3A and H3B, concerning the link of network size with material deprivation, findings partially confirm H3A. Having a larger instrumental network (measured in terms of economic help or company to the doctor) is positively related to higher income and less social exclusion. On the contrary, having a large network for childcare has the opposite effect. This could be due to two reasons. First, more geographically mobile people in Spain are often from upper employment status, so it could be that wealthier people more often do not have people close to them to care for their children and, furthermore, they can afford formal paid support. Second, previous studies found that the norm of autonomy (independence from household unit) has exemptions in the case of caring for young children (Lubbers et al., 2020b) and that having children in a family increases individual's recourse to family members in emergency situations (Böhnke, 2008).

H3B is again partially confirmed because the size of the discussion network is only significant (the larger the network, the better) when alters' prestige is not taken into account. Instrumental support seems more relevant for a higher position than expressive support, consistent with previous research (Lin, 1999a; Van der Gaag et al., 2008). Furthermore, we have found that non-kin expressive support is more frequent in more socioeconomically-advantaged people and kin networks are similar across different layers of the society (as in Van Groenou & Van Tilburg, 2003). Previous research found that poor people tended to exchange support mostly with strong ties (basically relatives; see Adler de Lomnitz, 1977; Stack, 1974), and that especially in Mediterranean (and also postcommunist) countries they appealed to family more often in seeking help (Böhnke, 2008). However, our results are more in line with those of other authors that stressed the fact that the differences between wealthier and disadvantaged people were mainly found in the sorts of available resources, but not that much in the number of available alters (Hurlbert et al., 2008; Pedulla & Pager, 2019). As Böhnke (2008) suggested, in Mediterranean countries poor people are better socially integrated than in the rest of Europe because family solidarity is more widespread.

The general picture we obtain for Spain is that inherited social capital is less crucial in determining social status (in the proposed terms) than achieved social capital. Higher average job prestige of alters is associated with better economic positions and lower risk of social exclusion, as expected by H1, but findings show that achieved social capital is more important than inherited capital (in fact, ascribed is not significant when analysing social exclusion, and its significance diminishes when taking into account housing expenses). These results are expected in a society that, despite its strong economic inequality, is also characterised by the possibility of social mobility. According to the World Economic Forum (2020), four generations are necessary for a low-income family to reach median income, a figure similar to Australia, Canada, and Japan, and below some other countries in the OECD context, such as the USA, UK, France or Germany.

Finally, H2 is not clearly confirmed: Density of strong ties in discussion networks is very weakly related to economic deprivation (household equivalised net income) and slightly more related to social exclusion, but only if prestige is not accounted for in the models. Once average alters' prestige is controlled for, density is not significant anymore (results not shown). This unexpected result could be partially due to the limited number of alters for whom the survey provided relational information (a maximum of five). In any case, there is no significant evidence that bonding capital and the lack of structural holes (Burt, 1992) are related to individual performance.

Our research has some limitations. The first and most important one, the restriction on the number of alters of the core discussion network already mentioned affected the sizes of our kin and non-kin discussion networks and measures on job prestige. On the other hand, although the association between social capital and several labour market outcomes are well established, the causality could be questioned (Harknett & Hartnett, 2011; Mouw, 2003, 2006). As Verhaeghe et al. (2015, p. 176) put it: "Do social contacts' resources affect the occupational attainment or do privileged socioeconomic positions allow to become friends with people with more resources?" Longitudinal data are convenient in answering this question properly but even if our study is cross-sectional, the use of variables related to "inherited capital" helped disentangle the causality between social capital and socioeconomic situation.

Acknowledgments

This research is based on the results of project FEDER Andalusia 2014–2020, funded by the European Union (UMA18-FEDERJA-103), on research funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (PID2020–115673RB-I00), and research funded by the BBVA Foundation (35_2019).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Verónica de Miguel-Luken is associate professor of sociology at the University of Malaga (Spain). Her topics of interest are related to migration processes, both internal and external, family, and social capital. Methodologically, she is mostly focused on social research analysis and its applications to different sociological fields. She has published in international journals such as *Social Networks, Social Indicators Research*, *Social Policy & Administration*, and *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*.

Livia García-Faroldi is associate professor of sociology at the University of Malaga (Spain). She is interested in political identities, welfare states, and sociology of the family. She has published in international journals such as *Social Indicators Research* (2015), *Social Policy & Administration* (2017, together with de Miguel-Luken and Ayuso), *International Migration* (2017), *Social Politics* (2020), and *Journal of Family Issues* (2021, together with García-de-Diego).

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 350–362
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4585

Article

"She's Surrounded by Loved Ones, but Feeling Alone": A Relational Approach to Loneliness

Hugo Valenzuela-Garcia [1,2,*], Miranda J. Lubbers [1] and Jose Luis Molina [1]

[1] Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain;
E-Mails: hugo.valenzuela@uab.cat (H.V.-G.), mirandajessica.lubbers@uab.cat (M.J.L.), joseluis.molina@uab.cat (J.L.M.)
[2] Centre for Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation Research, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 7 June 2021 | Accepted: 7 September 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Loneliness poses one of the significant problems of our modern post-industrial societies. Current research on loneliness has been developed primarily by psychology, biomedicine, nursing, and other health-related disciplines, showing a surprising number of variables and risk factors involved in the experience of loneliness, along with positive correlations with premature mortality and morbidity. However, most of these analyses overlook the social interactions and context in which loneliness is experienced. Drawing on a subsample (N = 24) of Spanish "mothers" from impoverished families, the article proposes a mixed-method approach (both relational and interpretative) that may potentially complement quantitative approaches, showing relational and contextual factors that may contribute to a better understanding of the subjective dimension of loneliness.

Keywords
loneliness; mothers; poverty; social support; Spain

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

One of the most striking findings from our research on the socio-emotional impact of poverty in Spain after the 2008 crisis was a deleterious feeling of loneliness experienced by impoverished individuals. Most interviewees had small and unconnected social networks, and suffered various physical and mental health problems. When other poverty-related factors concurred (e.g., unemployment, family ruptures, etc.), the degree of isolation experienced was even higher (Valenzuela-Garcia et al., 2020). A survey administered to over 1000 respondents in 2020 in Madrid (Vidal & Halty, 2020, p. 125) also showed that, in the lower socioeconomic strata of the population, 77.0% suffered from loneliness (in contrast with the average in all strata, 34.6%), 33.2% experienced lack of company (2.8% in the upper stratum and 5.5% average), 50.0% had no friends (21.1% on average), and 75.0% considered their interpersonal relationships unsatisfactory (23.0% on average). This study also shows that the experience of loneliness was particularly notorious among poor women. Paradoxically, we also found that these Spanish mothers surrounded by dense kinship relationships frequently acknowledged a more intense feeling of loneliness than other individuals with less favourable economic environments and very fragmented social networks (e.g., single adult males, elders, or youths). In other words, the subjective feeling of loneliness did not always correspond with the objective quantity and quality of the individual's social relationships, as already stated by Weiss (1973).

How do social factors and context affect the experience of loneliness in the particular case of these impoverished Spanish mothers? When reviewing mainstream

contributions on the field, we found that most research on loneliness is quantitative, adopts a psychological or biomedical perspective, is individual-centred, and focuses on risk factors and outcomes' causality (youth, mental illness, etc.). When relational dynamics were considered, contextual factors (e.g., culture, gender, history, economic situation, etc.) were often overlooked. Thus, although factors triggering loneliness are well identified, most studies do not disclose "how/why" contextual and relational factors may interplay, causing the lived experience of loneliness (e.g., how/why loneliness affects more women than men, the poor rather than the wealthy, or the sick rather than the healthy).

This article aims to identify the main causes affecting the subjective experience of loneliness in Spanish mothers embedded in dense kinship networks through a mixed-methods approach based on the interaction between individual factors (e.g., adult women), contextual contingencies (e.g., poverty), and social interactions (i.e., egocentric network analysis). In line with Hersberger's (2003) methodological proposal to combine relational and interpretative appraisals, our approach may complement the extensive quantitative data available, contributing to our understanding of the nuances of loneliness's complex phenomenon.

The following section will present a brief state of the art of conventional research on loneliness, followed by the methodology, results, and conclusions.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Loneliness, a Vast Field of Research

Loneliness can be defined as "the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either qualitatively or quantitatively" (Perlman & Peplau, 1981, p. 3). Unlike *solitude* (i.e., the state of being alone), loneliness involves a *subjective* and *negative* experience (Russell et al., 2012; Yang & Victor, 2011). It is subjective because some individuals may experience loneliness despite high social embeddedness levels, while others may not feel it despite objective low frequency or quality of social contacts (Ozawa-de Silva & Parsons, 2020). It is negative because the perceived absence of satisfying social relationships involves suffering that may ultimately lead to psychological distress (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001, p. 245).

Attention to loneliness has recently become a prosperous field of research, producing a plethora of publications in the disciplines of psychology, nursing, and biomedicine (Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015a; Stek et al., 2005), for loneliness is associated with higher risks of premature mortality (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015) and morbidity (Waldinger et al., 2015). However, loneliness and health can both influence each other (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2020), and literature suggests an extraordinary breadth of risk factors and outcomes influencing some collectives more than others (e.g., women, elders and youths, disabled people, unemployed, and single adults) (Victor & Yang, 2012, p. 94; Vidal & Halty, 2020). Most research on loneliness also takes a quantitative approach (Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015a; Vasileiou et al., 2017) and is individual-centred. Data is usually gathered through surveys observing sociodemographic variables (e.g., age, gender, marital status, education, etc.) and the experience of loneliness is documented through closed answers, such as frequency of the feeling of loneliness ("sometimes," "always," etc.), frequency of being social ("once a week," "less than once a month," etc.), the context of socialisation ("at social events," "clubs"), availability of someone to talk to, and the like (Coyle & Dugan, 2012; De Jong Gierveld, 1998). Usually, answers are later aggregated into a composite index to detect correlations between risk factors and outcomes. Thus, although these quantitative approaches successfully detect "what" causes the feeling of loneliness (factors), they usually do not clarify "how/why" these mechanisms interact in a given context, or "how/why," under similar circumstances, some people experience loneliness while others do not. In a nutshell, most approaches fail "to address the *existential* aspect of loneliness" (Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015a, p. 212, emphasis added) and to understand "the fundamental meaning of the lived experience of loneliness" (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001, p. 245; see also Karnick, 2005).

2.2. Relational and Qualitative Approaches to Loneliness

Beyond the mainstream quantitative and correlational approaches to loneliness, we also found alternative relational and qualitative-oriented appraisals.

Weiss' (1973, 1974, 1998) seminal theory of social needs sustains that specific social provisions are critical protective factors against loneliness (for a synthesis see Cutrona & Russell, 1987). According to Weiss (1973), loneliness entails a complex set of feelings resulting from unsatisfied social relationships that may generate social (i.e., lack of integration into a meaningful social network) and/or emotional loneliness (i.e., absence of an attachment or emotional bond with another person). Weiss (1974) established six different social provisions (or functions) which, when lacking, may cause the feeling of loneliness: *attachment* (i.e., emotional closeness from which one derives a sense of security); *social integration* (i.e., a sense of belonging to a group that shares similar interests, concerns, and recreational activities); *reassurance of worth* (i.e., recognition of one's competence, skills, and value by others); *reliable alliance* (i.e., the assurance that others can be counted upon for tangible assistance); *guidance* (advice or information); and *opportunity for nurture* (or the sense that others rely upon one for their well-being). Later, psychologists produced several scales and instruments to measure social dispositions, demonstrating their validity and reliability (Cutrona & Russell, 1987).

According to Cutrona and Russell (1987, p. 40), Weiss' social provisions are very much in line with the contemporary use of social support in social network analysis, which considers three types of support—emotional, tangible, and informative (see Schaefer et al., 1981)—embedded in one's network through different kinds of relationships, e.g., intimates, relatives, friends, co-workers, etc. (McCarty et al., 2019; Thoits, 2010). From a relational perspective, it is assumed that high degrees of cohesion, network diversity, and reciprocity are crucial factors in reducing loneliness (De Jong Gierveld, 1998, pp. 74–75). However, overall network size by itself is not a consistent loneliness predictor in cross-sectional analyses (Kovacs et al., 2021, p. 1) since networks primarily composed of kinship ties present a higher risk of loneliness than those that are more heterogeneous (Dykstra, 1990). Cacioppo et al. (2009) also show that network density can have *negative* effects during periods of change (e.g., divorce). Thus, the extent to which network size, structure, or composition help protect against loneliness during periods of prolonged isolation remains understudied (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2020). Furthermore, these relational-oriented perspectives do not detail how social dispositions are distributed and interact (and to what extent) within a contextual setting, causing either emotional or social loneliness.

For relational approaches to loneliness to gain full potential, context needs to be considered beyond individual-centred perspectives:

> [Loneliness] is not just a matter of individual psychology or cognition, but [it is] inherently social, cultural, and relational… framed as an emergent relational process tied to social practices and places, themselves embedded in political economy, structural violence, and gendered cultural expectations, raced, and classed. (Ozawa-de Silva & Parsons, 2020, pp. 613–620)

In summary, loneliness has been mainly approached by quantitative and individual-centred perspectives from the health sciences. Although qualitative research on loneliness is gaining momentum, it is still scarce and limited to health and age group studies (Lindgren et al., 2014; Stanley et al., 2010; Yu et al., 2020) that frequently disregard contextual factors fundamental to unravel some of the complexities and nuances of loneliness.

Next, we will describe the methods, followed by the results of our analysis of subjective loneliness in the case of Spanish mothers, and will end with the conclusions.

3. Methods and Ethics

The article draws on two cross-sectional research projects about personal networks and poverty in post-2008 crisis Spain between 2016 and 2020. The first project was developed in Catalonia (N = 61) between 2015 and 2020 and focussed on households and livelihood strategies, including participants and non-clients of social and charity services. The second project was developed between 2019 and 2020 in four different geographical spots in Spain (N = 20), it was explicitly addressed to charity users, and particular attention was paid to the emotional effects of poverty. Criteria for case selection included being resident in Spain, an age of 18 years or older, and being income poor.

Both projects used non-probabilistic purposive sampling (to maximise diversity in gender, age, household composition, nationality, locality, and employment status). The whole sample consisted of 81 people, 47 women and 34 men, with an average of 48.2 years (range 19–80). Most were born in Spain (n = 66). Twenty-one respondents lived within nuclear families (e.g., couple with children), five in a couple without children, 11 were single parents with children, 30 were single, seven divorced, one widow without children, eight lived in three-generation households, and six lived in other types of households. At the time of the interview, 46 people were working temporarily, and the rest remained in a state of long-term unemployment, were retired, pensioners, or had other employment statuses. Nine had no formal educational training, 23 accomplished basic studies, 36 secondary or technical training, and 13 higher studies.

3.1. Sampling

For this article, we specifically focus on women (N = 24) embedded in family households of different kinds (nuclear families, divorced mothers with children, extended families, new family arrangements, etc.), which showed remarkedly similar characteristics in terms of contextual setting (poverty and economic needs), personal characteristics (women, mothers, embedded in family structures, with health problems and depression), and network volume, structure, and composition. For the sake of representation, we chose four typical cases (i.e., case studies) of wives embedded in nuclear families, a case that shows recurrent trends of the whole subsample. Differences and patterns among all the cases will be briefly synthesised in the results section.

3.2. Mixed-Methods Approach

Both research projects adopted a mixed-method approach consisting of multi-sited fieldwork (Falzon, 2009), face-to-face qualitative semi-structured interviews (with a length of between and 1.5 and 4 hours), and computer-assisted personal interviews. Anthropological fieldwork is a non-invasive technique of contextual observation that provides a considerable amount of data about the context (socioeconomic, cultural, physical environment, sensory aspects), the processes and actors involved, the nature of the interactions, and all those seemingly tiny details which are often taken-for-granted but nevertheless may explain the different reactions of

individuals exposed to the same phenomenon. The fieldwork was carried out in the charitable care centres and their various dependencies, in public spaces, workplaces, and, when possible, in the informants' homes. The semi-structured interview consisted of three parts: The first collected primary sociodemographic data (age, marital status, number of children, level of studies, etc.) and the second explored the individual's life history focusing on labour, health, household practices, and family situation. The final part explored the emotional aspects involved in the experience of poverty and isolation. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed, applying codes and contextual data, with the prior consent of informants.

3.3. Interviews, Data, and Coding

The semi-structured interview consisted of four main parts, exploring: (a) life history (e.g., socioeconomic background, academic and professional experiences, potential poverty triggers, etc.); (b) change of habits and deterioration of social relationships (leisure, nature of relationships, type of support received, etc.); (c) interaction within the charity context (e.g., access, support, network, etc.); and (d) emotional aspects of poverty (e.g., feelings, perceived social deficiencies, the experience of loneliness, stigma, etc.). We further explored qualitative aspects of the relationships and feelings between ego, primarily family, distant relatives, neighbours, and friends based on the network graphics. Elicitation and introspection were fundamental during the interviews, using the network graphs as a guide to gain qualitative depths (Hersberger, 2003). All the interviews were carried out in friendly and quiet spaces, without time limitations, to allow the interviewee to introspect and thus transmit her experience in her own words. As Stein and Tuval-Mashiach (2015b) show in the case of Israeli veterans, the process of sharing their emotional load with someone ready to pay attention without judgment was a pivotal element to explore these feelings and emotions: "We all need to sense that others experience, feel, think, evaluate, and altogether view the world as we do… this is what motivates people to tell stories of those experiences" (Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015b, p. 13).

3.4. Network Analysis

For personal network analysis, we used the open-source Egonet software, which integrates questionnaires, analysis, and visualisation (McCarty et al., 2019), allowing the empirical study of the current social relationships the individual (ego) maintains with the rest of the network members (alter). Data was gathered according to the type of support received and the characteristics of the alter (age, sex, role, socioeconomic status, etc.). Respondents were presented with free-list "name generators," which are questions to elicit a list of people with whom respondents felt close, who gave them emotional, financial, and material support. Next, we asked about the attributes of each nominee: for example, the type of relationship, the emotional closeness, or the perceived relative financial situation (*would you say that the financial situation of* [nominee's name] *is* "much better," "a little better," "more or less the same," or "worse" *than yours*?). For the cases here selected, we draw on the following data: sex; type of relationship with ego ("father," "friend," "professional worker," etc.); perceived degree of proximity ("I feel close," "I feel very close," etc.); interaction frequency ("I meet very often," "often," "rarely," etc.); duration of relationship ("less than 1 year," "between 1 and 5 years," "more than 5 years," etc.); the perceived financial situation of the alter from the ego's point of view ("better than me," "same as me," "worse than me"); and occupational background ("high," "medium," "low professional profile"). Finally, to visualise the network, we gathered information on the relationships between the alters (*does Y1 know Y2, Y3, Yn?*). For further details see Lubbers et al. (2020).

3.5. Ethics

Both research projects comply with the ethical research standards with human subjects. Names and direct identifiers were anonymised, and sensitive information was removed. All participants were informed about the study's objectives and procedures, their voluntary participation, and their right to leave the interview at any time. All individuals who participated in the research were provided with an informed consent document that both parties signed, and the UAB ethics council approved the research proposal.

4. Results

4.1. General Patterns and Trends

Before engaging in detail with four cases selected from the subsample (N = 24), we will summarise some main trends and patterns: In the subsample, 13 women were wives/mothers embedded in nuclear families; seven were divorced mothers (one widow) with children; two were part of extended families (husband, children, and other members, such as mother or mother-in-law); and two lived in couple without children. The average age was 50.2, with a minimum of 26 and a maximum of 67 years. Twenty-two women had children (an average of 2.5 children per woman, a maximum of six and a minimum of one), and most had suffered a process of downward mobility and impoverishment from the 2008 crisis onwards. In most cases, material support, when provided, came from charities, siblings (brothers and sisters), and cognates (parents and parents-in-law), with emotional support usually being provided by husbands, older children, and close female friends, where available.

Compared with men, the manifestation of loneliness was much more frequent among women. In the two cases of extended families (with the presence of elderly family members who economically contributed to the domestic unit) and couples without children, loneliness was not explicitly reported, probably because they were embedded in wider social networks. Besides, despite living in a delicate economic situation, women who did not express loneliness usually felt "supported" by their husbands, children, friends, and other family members. The presence of work, their networks' heterogeneity (in terms of components), emotional stability with husband and children, and the presence of friends seemed to counteract loneliness.

Loneliness was widespread among divorced mothers with children and unemployed wives/mothers integrated into nuclear families. Nineteen out of twenty-four women reported feeling lonely and expressing the need "to talk with other people." For them, emotional support seemed more relevant than material aid and advice. These women had some trends in common: They were unemployed or underemployed (although many had previously had more stable jobs); showed a high prevalence of physical health problems (chronic pain, anaemia, osteoarthritis, anorexia, obesity, along with other severe diseases such as cancer), depression and stress; suffered the extra burden of caring, housework, and responsibilities; lacked spare or personal time, and had little interaction outside the domestic unit (they used to interact sporadically with neighbours and school parents through WhatsApp, and new charity acquaintances rarely ended up in friendship). In most cases, women searched for support and assumed the primary responsibility for domestic and family care, prioritising their children's well-being. Being the depository of emotional load and problems also contributed to feelings of loneliness.

All these facts not only compromised the autonomy, mobility, and sociability of these women but also had a negative emotional impact on them which was exacerbated by feelings of guilt (for not keeping up with the house or not being able to take care of their children when working), tensions with the husband and children, and their pessimistic and hopeless vision of the future.

4.2. Emotional Loneliness and Spanish Mothers Embedded in Family Households

This section will present the findings, taking four cases as a proxy of the subsample of mothers embedded in impoverished family households. The four cases assemble a great deal of the subsample's diversity and backgrounds: families that bring together three generations; extended families lead by single/divorced mothers; nuclear families linked to extended relative networks; ordinary nuclear families that suffered downward social mobility; and the figure of a wife/mother in the social networks as the primary breadwinner and emotional support provider. In the results, we will also include references to Weiss' (1974) social provisions for the sake of coherence with the theoretical background. After using these four examples to disclose the relational and ethnographic context in which loneliness is experienced, we will summarise general traits in network structure, context, factors, and individual characteristics.

4.2.1. Encarna

Encarna is a 62-year-old married mother of six. Her family managed a small business that did not resist the 2008 crisis' impact, so she and her husband stopped paying the mortgage and were evicted. As she puts it, "as we are gipsies, when the owners see the last name, they do not want to rent us." After a few months of being unemployed, her husband had a heart attack, and she, with a 30% disability, was unable to manage the business, so their finances completely fell apart and she started suffering depression:

> I want to be alone. There are days when one wouldn't get out of bed, but you do it for your children and grandchildren….My husband stays at home the whole day watching TV, and even his grandchildren bother him. And he argues all the time.

The whole family (parents, children, in-laws, grandchildren) had previously met every weekend and ate together, but circumstances (i.e., health problems, lack of resources, listless mood) now prevented them from participating in social events. However, Encarna still is the family's central emotional pillar. "All problems come to me," she says, since she cares for her ailing husband, often travels to visit her 86-year-old mother, and their divorced son and his two children moved in with them a few months ago. The complex interplay of all these factors explains her deep sense of loneliness:

> About these things [her depression, her problems with her husband, her loneliness] I can't talk to anyone except the social worker… my children already know the situation, and I'm not going to burden them yet more. With my husband, I avoid talking because we argue. I'm alone; I can't turn to anyone, neither friends nor family.

Encarna's network (see Figure 1) is relatively large (17 members) and dense (i.e., many know each other); apart from a friend and the social worker, it is mostly made up of close family members: her children and husband. The husband occupies maximum centrality, closeness, and betweenness but, as she says, "I cannot count on him" (i.e., he does not support her emotionally). Manuel, the eldest son, is also a source of moral support, but "he has his problems." Her network is markedly homophilic (that is, all members share a similar socioeconomic status), and she does not report relevant relationships nor leisure activities outside the household.

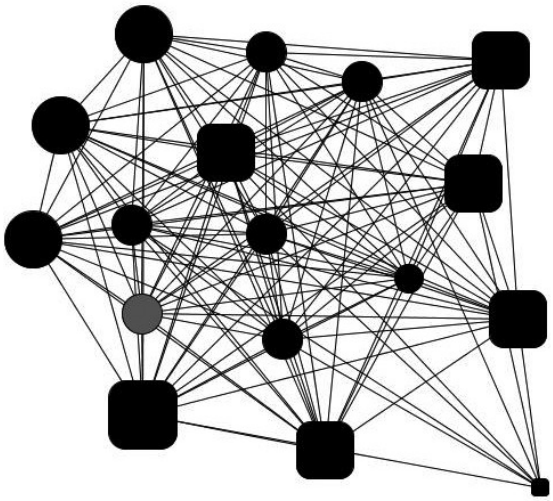


Figure 1. Encarna's personal network. Notes: Node size indicates relational role—size 1 (biggest; closest family: parents, brothers/sisters, and sons/daughters), size 2 (in-laws), size 3 (friends, neighbours), size 4 (distant relatives), size 5 (smallest; social worker, "others"); node shape indicates gender—circle (female), rounded-square (male); node colour indicates proximity: black ("very close"), dark grey ("close"), light grey ("not very close"), white ("not close at all").

4.2.2. Amparo

Amparo, a 54-year-old divorced mother of five with absent fathers, was raised in a humble context. She suffered meningitis, left school early, and began to work in temporary agricultural jobs. Her appearance revealed deprivation (e.g., tangled hair, worn clothes, teeth missing), she was diagnosed with a severe chronic illness a few months ago, and takes antidepressants because "my day-to-day life is difficult." Her youngest son suffers a mental disability, and she visits him once a week at the hospital. She also takes care of her elder mother.

Amparo shares her tiny house with her long-term unemployed adult children and in-laws. She is the primary breadwinner but:

> Despite being surrounded, I feel very lonely….Sometimes I'd like to take a never-ending trip and forget many things.

Amparo lives in a tiny rural town, so she has many acquaintances "but few friends," besides a couple of female childhood friends with whom she communicates on WhatsApp, but rarely meets. Although her household environment is tense, she does not leave home much because "I have neither the money nor the habit."

Her dense network is made up of strong ties, yet she "does not feel very close" to some of them, a fact that suggests personal conflicts. She only talks about her problems with her aged mother, her older daughter (who lives away), the social worker (on the right-bottom corner), and with one "not very close" distant female relative (upper-left corner; see Figure 2).

4.2.3. Laura

Laura (see Figure 3) is a 26-year-old married mother of two daughters. Her husband is unemployed, and she was engaged in a labour reconversion program. She has twelve siblings from different mothers, although "our relationship is very good," she says. She has a central caregiver role—taking care of her younger siblings and stepbrothers, her mother-in-law (suffering from some psychological ailment), and her twenty-four nephews: "They bring them home to me, I'm like the mum of all. And this has made me mature a lot because from the age of seven I already had responsibilities." Laura also decided to seek help because her husband ("who's somewhat depressed at home") was ashamed to do so. When asking if she practised any hobby, she replied:

> Before I practised sport. I went to the gym and had friends. Now I have no time or money but other concerns and worries…[Laughing] Furthermore my husband doesn't like much that I go out with new friends [co-workers], especially if they are boys: He is a little jealous!

Laura's network is comparatively extensive (25 members) and dense: However, 70% are family members (with whom she feels "close" and "very close"), and the rest are friends and neighbours notably embedded in her network (i.e., "many know each other") and "new friends" (recently met co-workers). Although her husband (lower side) is relevant in her network, maximum centrality, betweenness and closeness are occupied by her sister (Cristina) and her in-law (María). Homophily is also high: 72% of her contacts show a low socioeconomic status and educational background.

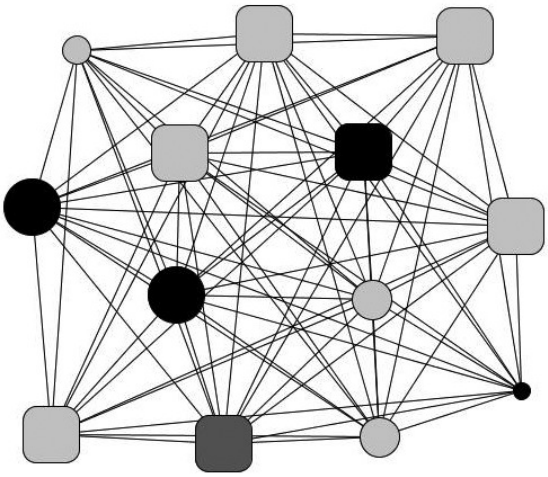


Figure 2. Amparo's personal network. Notes: Node size indicates relational role—size 1 (biggest; closest family: parents, brothers/sisters, and sons/daughters), size 2 (in-laws), size 3 (friends, neighbours), size 4 (distant relatives), size 5 (smallest; social worker, "others"); node shape indicates gender—circle (female), rounded-square (male); node colour indicates proximity: black ("very close"), dark grey ("close"), light grey ("not very close"), white ("not close at all").

4.2.4. Isabel

Isabel (see Figure 4), a 55-year-old married mother of four sons (30, 26, 22, and 20 years old), managed a greengrocery that collapsed after the 2008 crisis. As in Encarna's case, Isabel recurred to social services and found a professional who "listens to you, supports you, and makes you see your problem is not that big" (i.e., emotional support). Her husband lost his job too and, depressed, began to drink more than usual until he found a job as a night taxi driver, which did not help improve the couple's communication. Isabel suffers from chronic pain in her arms and legs, which she attributes to all her suffering. Although the couple maintains a good relationship with their respective families, they did not dare ask them for help: "I don't like to explain my sorrows… everyone has problems." And she adds: "And in the case of friends….I am not confident enough to explain my life."

Isabel's network is also quite extensive (18 members). Her husband occupies maximum centrality, but other contacts (her older son, female friends, relatives, and the social worker) show high degrees of betweenness and centrality. She feels "very close" to 55% of her contacts and "close" to 38%. In comparison to the other networks, Isabel's is less dense and homogeneous (27% are friends) and shows a lower degree of homophily

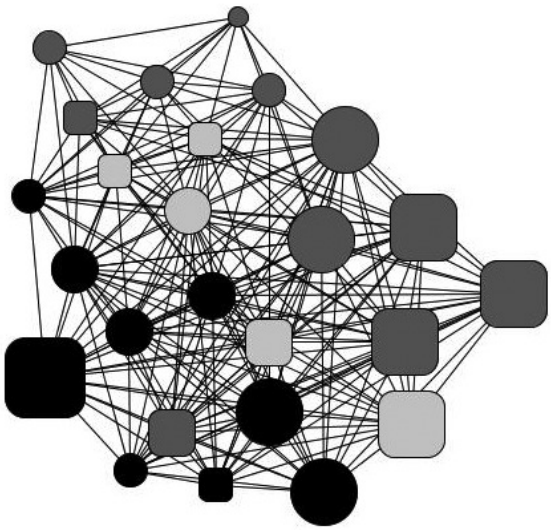


Figure 3. Laura's personal network. Notes: Node size indicates relational role—size 1 (biggest; closest family: parents, brothers/sisters, and sons/daughters), size 2 (in-laws), size 3 (friends, neighbours), size 4 (distant relatives), size 5 (smallest; social worker, "others"); node shape indicates gender—circle (female), rounded-square (male); node colour indicates proximity: black ("very close"), dark grey ("close"), light grey ("not very close"), white ("not close at all").

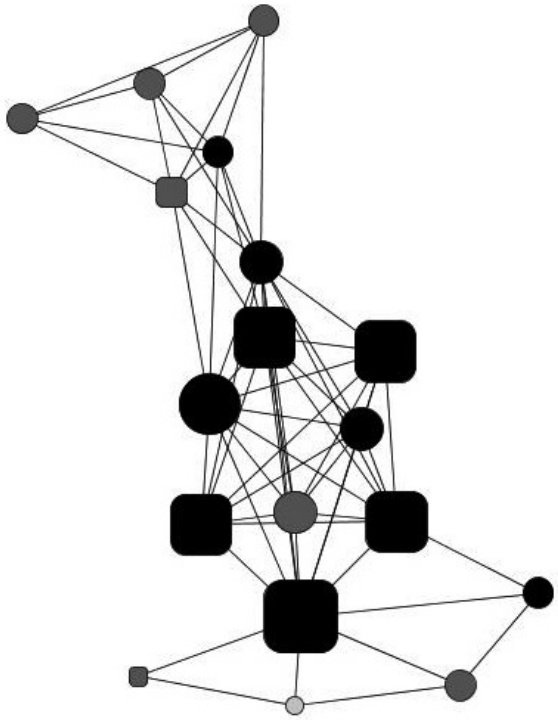


Figure 4. Isabel's personal network. Notes: Node size indicates relational role—size 1 (biggest; closest family: parents, brothers/sisters, and sons/daughters), size 2 (in-laws), size 3 (friends, neighbours), size 4 (distant relatives), size 5 (smallest; social worker, "others"); node shape indicates gender—circle (female), rounded-square (male); node colour indicates proximity: black ("very close"), dark grey ("close"), light grey ("not very close"), white ("not close at all").

(50% have a high educational background and she perceives that 77% are in a better socioeconomic situation than herself), showing a typical case of downward social mobility that still provides some class resources and social capital (i.e., embedded resources in social networks; see Molina et al., 2019). Although she feels lonely, she gets emotional support from her sister, her oldest son, and a friend. Despite all these difficulties, her priority was to ensure their children's education attainment or, in other words, to secure their cultural capital—understood as being non-economic social assets (education, skills, knowledge) that provide a higher status within society and allow social mobility in broader terms (Bourdieu, 1984).

4.3. Networks

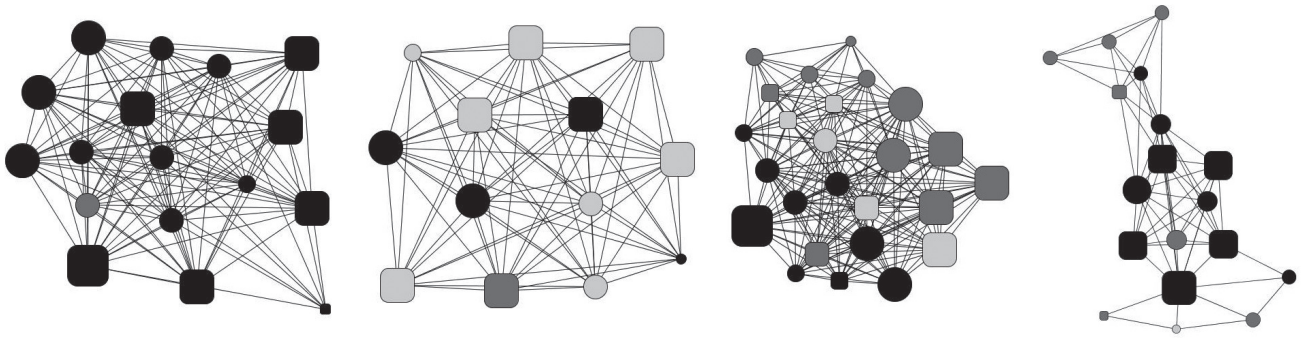
In most cases, personal networks are very dense ("almost everyone knows each other") and relatively large (mean: 18.25) compared with other poor populations (Bichir & Marques, 2012) and considering that average individuals' closest "intimate psycho-social nets" include from 20 to 30 people (Pattison et al., 1975). Most networks show just one component (or relational sphere), meaning that the individual lacks other relevant social spheres (e.g., labour). These women are, therefore, encapsulated within a single homogeneous social world made of relatives with a high degree of proximity (e.g., Encarna feels "very close" with 94% of her network members) and homophily (i.e., ego and alter share similar attributes; see McPherson et al., 2001).

4.4. Homophily

Homophily cannot be considered a trigger of loneliness by itself. Nevertheless, when all relationships involve individuals with low economic (i.e., material resources and income) and cultural capital (i.e., education), access to new opportunities, resources, and chances are radically restricted. Here cumulative disadvantage plays against these women: Their low economic and cultural capital makes it difficult for them to expand their dispositions and interests, preventing engagement with other social groups beyond the family domain, i.e., Weiss' (1974) "social integration."

4.5. Weak Ties

All networks show just a few weak ties, which are very relevant in linking different groups and provide, therefore, information, mobility, and opportunities (Granovetter, 1973). The low frequency of socialisation beyond the household, which signals social isolation, is the result of their lack of resources and time, as well as the fact that they prioritise caregiving over socializing. Although we found a few confidants outside the domestic milieu, they are often embedded within the same kinship network (e.g., female family members). Alternative means



Encarna's network *Amparo's network* *Laura's network* *Isabel's network*

Figure 5. Comparison of the four personal networks. Notes: Node size indicates relational role—size 1 (biggest; closest family: parents, brothers/sisters, and sons/daughters), size 2 (in-laws), size 3 (friends, neighbours), size 4 (distant relatives), size 5 (smallest; social worker, "others"); node shape indicates gender—circle (female), rounded-square (male); node colour indicates proximity: black ("very close"), dark grey ("close"), light grey ("not very close"), white ("not close at all"); edge shape: line ("know each other"), square with rounded angles ("maybe know each other"), no edge ("don't know each other").

of communication (WhatsApp, Facebook, email, telephone) is not as effective as face-to-face as it does not allow an adequate level of intimacy or confession. While sometimes people confide highly personal matters to people they are not close to, and at times barely even know (Small, 2017), there is *no one to talk to*. In other words, in Weiss' (1974) terms, "attachment," "social integration," and "reliable alliance" seem to be compromised.

4.6. Toxic Ties and Weak Emotional Support

It is generally assumed that someone surrounded by relatives enjoys high emotional support. But in our cases, the situation may be oppressive, as relatives become *toxic links* (Del Real, 2019) that subtract resources and generate conflict and stress. The partner frequently was a barrier to socialisation due to jealousy, apathy, their need for attention, etc., and women felt emotional support "was not there" when most needed. Furthermore, asking close relatives for help was usually avoided because they did not want to burden them (e.g., "everyone has their problems"), and social workers provided primary emotional support, but necessarily professional, temporal, and limited. Thus, the availability of "reliable alliance" or "guidance," in the sense of Weiss (1974), was deficient in most cases.

4.7. Dependency

In all cases, autonomy, self-care, and leisure were severely neglected due to domestic duties and caring tasks, which notably increased the pressure and degree of emotional fatigue and drastically reduced social networks (Juratovac & Zauszniewski, 2014). This fact is very relevant because it implies a paradoxical finding concerning Weiss' social provisions: In these cases, there is no lack of "opportunity for nurture" (the sense that others rely upon one for their well-being), but on the contrary, an excess that ultimately undermined their self-esteem, limited their autonomy, and prevented other social provisions such as "social integration," "reassurance of worth," "reliable alliance" and "attachment."

4.8. Gender

In connection with the previous point, a remarkable gendered dimension of loneliness operates in our cases (see Hochschild, 1997; Jiménez Ruiz & Moya, 2018). In general, women are exposed to pressuring gendered roles in terms of mothering obligations and duties (e.g., to be a "good mother," marriage vows that encompass a promise to support each other "in sickness and in health," etc.), which may be even more critical in marginal contexts (Gillies, 2007). As we have observed, by prioritising the well-being of others or inverting traditional gender roles (e.g., adopting the breadwinners' role to make ends meet), more stress and pressure is added to the subjective experience of loneliness.

4.9. Inwardness

Loneliness is often related to dissatisfaction with existing social interaction, expressed through the sense of misunderstanding (e.g., "they don't really understand"; see Vasileiou et al., 2017) that leads to feelings of void, hopelessness, isolation, and despair (in this case, we observe a lack of what Weiss would call "reassurance of worth" which may be intensified with the suffering of stigma; see Weiss, 1974).

4.10. Multiple Stigmas

These women carry on their shoulders the stigma of being poor and lonely and the weight of so-called *courtesy stigma* (i.e., stigma by association, which burdens

closely affiliated people; Goffman, 1963). This has also been reported in the case of caregivers of mentally ill family members (Ali et al., 2012; Vasileiou et al., 2017), mothers of children with ADHD (Norvilitis et al., 2002), or families supporting adult members with substance misuse (McCann & Lubman, 2017). Stigma may lead to a dual isolation in which the stigmatised avoid contact with others, who in turn, avoid contact with them too.

4.11. Lack of Resources

In our case, poverty is a significant predictor of loneliness (Refaeli & Achdut, 2020). For these women, in our increasingly commodified world (Marquand, 2004), the lack of economic resources not only precludes the possibility to outsource housework and caring, but it also limits their access to mainstream leisure, often involving costs in the form of fees, purchases, and tickets, e.g., cinemas, theatres, bars, restaurants, gyms, or various associations. As most of the household members are unemployed, isolation and consciousness of social exclusion tend to be more significant.

4.12. Health

Most of these women suffered depression and other types of psychological distress along with a wide array of physical ailments that preclude social interaction and mobility, adding to the feeling of social and emotional loneliness.

4.13. Personal Variables

Of course, individual characteristics also play a role in the experience of loneliness. Being women, aged, sick, uneducated, etc., influence the experience of loneliness. However, these personal variables are often attenuated by other interplaying socio-cultural and relational factors rarely considered in the experience of loneliness, e.g., physical appearance (e.g., Amparo), ethnic origin (e.g., Encarna's gipsy origin), or stigma due to downward social mobility (Isabel).

4.14. Emotional Loneliness

Most of these women acknowledge *emotional loneliness* (Weiss, 1973), meaning that a high density of relationships does not necessarily reduce the feeling of loneliness (Cacioppo, et al., 2009). Despite being surrounded by cognates and close relatives, although they affirm that they feel lonely, it does not mean loneliness is an individual-centred feeling, for the phenomenon cannot be fully understood without referring to their social interactions and context. In all these cases, we could argue, emotional loneliness is probably caused by a lack of "attachment" along with a lack of "social integration," "reassurance of worth," "reliable alliance," "guidance," and, in particular, *excessive* "opportunity for nurturing." Nevertheless, the way and extent to which such social dispositions interact, causing the feeling of loneliness, for the case of impoverished Spanish women, is hardly understood without minimal references to the context, as we have tried to show.

5. Conclusions

Loneliness is a complex, multifactorial, and multicausal feeling. Perhaps, for this reason, there is no consensus on the concept (Stein & Tuval-Mashiach, 2015a), and while some researchers distinguish between loneliness, solitude, social withdrawal, and social isolation, others entirely disregard the distinction and use these terms interchangeably (Karnick, 2005, p. 11). Quantitative research has shown a vast amount of risk factors and outcomes related to its experience. However, most research fails to unveil the complexities of the subjective experience of loneliness despite the causal associations.

Our main argument is that loneliness is, by definition, a *relational category* that needs a specific mixed-methods (relational and interpretative) approach to be understood in all its full complexity. This article analyses the experience of loneliness by Spanish mothers of impoverished families through a relational-contextual perspective that reveals interconnections that are not always straightforwardly evident through conventional research. Thus, to the usual individual variables (e.g., woman, mother, adult, poor, ill, etc.), we added less tangible (but maybe more complex) variables (ethnicity, appearance, stigma, experience of class mobility, etc.) within the framework of their social networks and interactions (e.g., homophily, lack of weak ties, toxic ties, relationships of dependency, etc.), alongside interiorised socio-cultural principles (stigma, unemployment, gender constructions, mothering duties, etc.) in a specific socioeconomic context (i.e., poverty). This provides a more accurate and complex comprehension of the lived experience of loneliness for this specific collective. Thus, in order to fully disclose the lived experience of loneliness, both relational factors and context matter, requiring specific non-quantitative and holistic methods and techniques (participant observation, fieldwork, introspective interviews, elicitation, etc.) to support quantitative data.

While in traditional societies, social exclusion and ostracism are rare and usually regarded as a *severe* punishment for socially deviant behaviours and attitudes (Söderberg & Fry, 2017), in our (post)modern industrial societies, loneliness has become a significant problem "worthy of attention in its own right" (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006, p. 712). Understanding this expanding phenomenon in our modern societies poses an urgent and fundamental challenge due to the large number of harmful effects associated with it. It is striking the mounting frequency of lonely deaths in *advanced* countries such as Norway (Hauge & Kirkevold, 2012), the US (Twenge et al., 2019), or Japan (Allison, 2013). What

is more, loneliness is here to stay, as many contemporary processes suggest: the COVID-19 pandemic's confinement and social distancing (Matias et al., 2020); the spread of remote working (Valenzuela-Garcia, 2020); the collective addiction to personal technologies (Savolainen et al., 2020); population ageing (Golden et al., 2009); increasing rates of divorce and the transformation of traditional family models (Silverstein & Giarrusso, 2010); the dissolution of community bonds (Putman, 2001); and the ever-expanding anomy and individualisation of our modern societies (Zhao & Cao, 2010). Furthermore, poverty, in particular, is a strong predictor of loneliness (Refaeli & Achdut, 2020), for social networks of poor individuals tend to be smaller than those of the non-poor (Bichir & Marques, 2012).

In summary, we have provided an alternative, mixed-methods approach, to loneliness with may in itself present obvious limitations but could complement other quantitative approaches, attending to both *relational* and contextual data. A more profound comprehension of these factors in the feeling of loneliness could better inform policies and actions aimed at combating it, envisaging a future society where there is no place for (unwanted) loneliness.

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful for the generosity of the participants in this study, as well as the support of FOESSA, the Red Cross, and Caritas. This work was supported by the Spanish Government, Programa Estatal de I+D+i Orientada a los Retos de la Sociedad, del Plan Estatal de Investigación Científica y Técnica y de Innovación 2017–2020 (PID2019-111251RB-I00 (2019-2023)) and by Recercaixa (2015ACUP 00145 (2016-2020)).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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About the Authors

Hugo Valenzuela-Garcia is an associate professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology and a member of the Research Center in Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation (CREIS) of the UAB, Spain. As an anthropologist, he has conducted fieldwork on fishermen in Malaysia, peasants in Mexico, and Asian entrepreneurship in Barcelona. His main fields of interest are poverty, precariousness and work, consumption, and other classical issues in cultural ecology and economic anthropology.

Miranda J. Lubbers is an associate professor in social and cultural anthropology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, and the director of the Research Group of Fundamentally Oriented Anthropology (GRAFO). In 2021, she was granted a European Research Council Advanced Grant and the ICREA Acadèmia Award. Her research addresses social cohesion and social inclusion. In particular, she analyzes the role that formal and informal social relationships and settings have in the production, mitigation, or exacerbation of exclusion and segregation.

José Luis Molina is a full professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology (UAB). He is an economic anthropologist interested in livelihood practices in a globalised, digitalised, and unequal world. His approach is through mixed methods with an emphasis on ethnography and personal network analysis. Southeast Europe and Romania, in particular, are his main areas of interest.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 363–374
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4478

Article

People, Place, and Politics: Local Factors Shaping Middle-Class Practices in Mixed-Class German Neighbourhoods

Heike Hanhörster [1], Isabel Ramos Lobato [2,*] and Sabine Weck [1]

[1] ILS–Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development, Germany;
E-Mails: heike.hanhoerster@ils-forschung.de (H.H.), sabine.weck@ils-forschung.de (S.W.)
[2] Helsinki Institute of Urban and Regional Studies, Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki, Finland; E-Mail: isabel.ramoslobato@helsinki.fi

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 6 May 2021 | Accepted: 9 September 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
This article takes a nuanced look at the role played by neighbourhood characteristics and local policies in facilitating or limiting the ways in which diversity-oriented middle-class families interact and deal with people of lower social classes in mixed-class inner-city neighbourhoods. The study draws on interviews and social network analysis conducted in neighbourhoods with different socio-economic characteristics in the German cities of Hanover and Dusseldorf. A comparative view allows us to analyse how neighbourhood characteristics and local policies influence middle-classes' interactions across social boundaries. Our aim is to contribute to ongoing debates on urban policy options: In discussing the conditions encouraging cross-boundary interactions of specific middle-class fractions, we argue that the scope of local-level action is not fully recognized in either policy or academic debates.

Keywords
middle-class families; mixed-class neighbourhoods; network analysis; social boundary-crossing; social interactions

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Much has been written in previous years about middle-class (dis)affiliation practices in mixed-class environments (Bridge et al., 2012; Vincent et al., 2004). While there is overwhelming evidence of such boundary-drawing and disaffiliation practices—spatially, socially, and symbolically—our study explicitly aims to identify specific local factors, such as neighbourhood characteristics and/or local policies, able to influence middle-class interactions across social boundaries. We thus argue in favour of a more detailed analysis of the drivers and dilemmas of those middle-class fractions who act against the grain (Reay et al., 2007) and reveal diverse social networks and inclusionary daily practices—at least to some degree.

At a time when the main discourse is on universal, structural forces of gentrification (Lees et al., 2016), there seems to be little room for manoeuvre to promote mixed-class neighbourhoods. However, our analysis aims to examine the sphere of influence local politics, including housing, school, and urban development still have on neighbourhood diversity and individual neighbourhood practices and routines. Our research is guided by the following questions: How do respondents' *valuation of diversity* translates into *living with diversity* and into *boundary-crossing practices*? How are these practices influenced and shaped by place (here understood as settings for social interrelations) and local politics?

By adopting an individual perspective, we illustrate the ways in which more diversity-oriented middle-class fractions interact with people of lower social classes.

A comparative research design based on interview data collected in three inner-city neighbourhoods with different socio-economic characteristics in the German cities of Dusseldorf and Hanover allows us to reflect upon neighbourhood-specific factors and local policies enabling (or hindering) inclusionary/exclusionary practices. We deliberately selected households whose daily activities are generally oriented towards their immediate surroundings: middle-class families with small children whose family responsibilities and routine activities entail a close relationship with their neighbourhood (Goodsell, 2013, p. 848). Our focus is on a specific middle-class subset: diversity-seeking middle-class families (Hanhörster & Weck, 2020). We are interested both in individual attitudes and practices regarding social diversity and neighbourly interaction, and in place-specific (neighbourhood) factors and local policies influencing and mediating middle-class practices. Identifying the factors allowing this particular middle-class fraction to act in greater accordance with their integration values could help support more integrative and diverse neighbourhoods.

2. Cross-Class Boundaries: Evidence of Middle-Class Interaction in Housing, Public Space, and Education

The question of middle-class formation and reproduction processes in socially diverse neighbourhoods has been widely investigated. These processes are intrinsically interlinked with the "boundary work" of middle classes towards their lower social class neighbours (Atkinson, 2006; Bridge et al., 2012; Butler & Robson, 2003; Ley, 1996; Watt, 2009). The disaffiliation of middle-class households in socially diverse neighbourhoods becomes obvious in their selective use of neighbourhood infrastructures, a withdrawal into socially homogeneous residential enclaves, or symbolic processes dissociating them from households of lower social classes. Described by Atkinson (2006), this "colonisation" of neighbourhoods is expressed, for example, in a withdrawal into (more or less physically) gated communities. Such withdrawal can be a challenge when implementing the urban planning principle of achieving the right social mix, guided by the aim of creating and maintaining socially stable occupancy structures. This principle has gained relevance in Germany and includes strategies to create inclusive spaces to foster cross-class interactions in diverse neighbourhoods (Atkinson, 2006, p. 831; Hoekstra & Pinkster, 2019).

Acknowledging the empirical evidence on middle-class boundary-drawing practices—also witnessed in our study—we deliberately adopt a different perspective in this article, building on literature looking specifically at cross-class alliances in mixed-class neighbourhoods, and looking for factors possibly supporting encounters and relationships across social boundaries in urban neighbourhoods. Going against the tendency to avoid people of lower social classes in the broader context of middle-class positioning and reproduction, the formation of such cross-class alliances has occasionally been reported in studies (Brown-Saracino, 2009; Lawson et al., 2016). For the social fields under study here—housing, public space, and education—there is a certain amount of evidence on the conditions needed for establishing contacts and interaction across social boundaries. For instance, spatial and social opportunities such as public events and repetitive routine contacts are among the factors forging links between different groups and people (Amin, 2002; Wilson, 2014). Even in the field of education, reportedly of key importance for middle-class reproduction (Butler & Robson, 2003, p. 144), some middle-class parents deliberately send their children to local, socially diverse schools (Byrne, 2006; van Zanten, 2013; Vincent et al., 2004), emphasising the "real world" experience and benefits of mixed-class schooling for their own children, such as intellectual and cultural enrichment (Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007). However, even those parents embracing diversity in other social fields may perceive it as a threat when it comes to their children's education (Boterman, 2012), often facing the dilemma of having to decide between being a "good citizen," i.e., striving for equal educational opportunities, and being a "good parent," i.e., giving priority to their own child's future position (Frank & Weck, 2018; Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007).

As argued in several papers, families might take a moral stand and deliberately seek to preserve a place's social diversity and authenticity (Brown-Saracino, 2009; Hanhörster & Weck, 2020). While scholarly literature tends to see these practices as individual choices and exceptions to the rule, the question has rarely been discussed as to how far local policies (broadly defined here as formal and informal political actions or practices of local governance) have an influence on individual and collective (place-specific) practices. We hypothesise that middle-class mixing and control are contingent upon the close interplay between households' individual strategies, neighbourhood characteristics, and local policies shaping cross-class social interactions.

Considering the above-mentioned studies and our own empirical findings, we argue that not all middle-class parents avoid social diversity or feel comfortable with the marginalization of lower classes in upgrading neighbourhoods. Although such parents are certainly not a majority in the neighbourhoods studied, they are a critical fraction in terms of the social outcomes of local policies facilitating cross-class interactions. While in the current academic discourse the focus is mainly on structural and universal factors explaining gentrification, displacement and middle-class homogeneity across places (Lees et al., 2016), we additionally want to draw attention to the scope for action and the local factors shaping cross-boundary interactions. Except for the notable studies of Butler and Robson (2003), Boterman (2012), and Andreotti et al. (2013), few contributions trace middle-class practices across different fields and neighbourhoods. This article aims to reveal how individual preferences and values, as well as place and policies, influence

social practices in dealing with difference, putting a focus on both narratives and practices from different social fields.

3. Research Design

The research findings stem from a five-year-research project (2013–2017) looking at mixed-class inner-city neighbourhoods in Dusseldorf and Hanover. The two chosen cities are similar in terms of their status as federal state capitals; both are also university and trade fair cities. Compared to Hanover, Dusseldorf is better-placed in terms of economic development, is located in a wider metropolitan region, and has a tighter housing market. We chose these two cities for reasons of accessibility and based on local knowledge and statistical analysis, but also because they both represent "ordinary" German cities, in contrast to other, more prominently researched cities, such as Berlin, or hot market cities, such as Munich. The fieldwork started in Hanover, with the research in Dusseldorf explicitly used to reflect and contrast earlier findings in Hanover. More recent literature on growing gentrification occasioned us to review our empirical findings, systematically cross-analysing the factors influencing middle-class practices in our sample of socially diverse neighbourhoods.

Table 1 below shows the status of the cities and chosen neighbourhoods at the end of our empirical research. Since then, housing prices and pressure on inner-city areas have continued to rise in both cities, as in most big cities in Germany. Current developments, e.g., the upgrading of infrastructures, are embedded in a different political climate at both city and neighbourhood level. While in Hanover gentrification processes are critically observed and discussed in neighbourhood committees, the local tenants' association, political bodies, and the media, this is much less the case in Dusseldorf, a city tending to pursue neo-liberal policy goals. For example, urban politics' influence on the regulation of the rental housing market (e.g., through "milieu protection regulations" [*Milieuschutzsatzung*]) was neglected until 2019 (Zimmer-Hegmann, 2020).

3.1. The Researched Neighbourhoods

We chose the neighbourhoods based on neighbourhood statistics and local insights. They are similar as regards their (inner-city) location, being former regeneration areas and publicly debated as being subject to gentrification. At the same time, we deliberately looked for contrasts to investigate how middle-class strategies and practices differ from one neighbourhood to the other. Whereas the Hanover neighbourhood, where we started the empirical data collection, is close to the city average in terms of unemployment and persons receiving welfare benefits, we chose the neighbourhoods in Dusseldorf deliberately to widen our sample and the range of neighbourhood characteristics. While the Dusseldorf inner-city neighbourhood Northville (all neighbourhoods in this article are pseudonymised) has recently seen a high influx of middle classes, the two adjoining neighbourhoods (Southville and Highsprings) have experienced only selective middle-class in-migration.

Located in the inner city of Hanover, Limeton is composed of two wards (North Limeton and South Limeton). As they have similar characteristics, they are considered as one neighbourhood. Close to the University of Hanover, Limeton is a vibrant area with a socially and ethnically heterogeneous population. In the 1980s, it gained a reputation as home to left-alternative groups, especially from the punk scene. Over the last years, it has experienced an influx of middle-class households, steadily pushing up rents and property prices and engendering a strong local discourse on gentrification. According to neighbourhood statistics, the percentage of inhabitants receiving social security benefits and the share of non-German residents have decreased over the last years.

Table 1. Key figures on the cities and the researched neighbourhoods at the time of our empirical research (2017).

	Dusseldorf	Hanover
Total population	639,407	541,773
Unemployed/persons receiving welfare benefits (in %)	8.6/12.3	6.8/15.6
Research neighbourhoods: total population (absolute numbers)/ unemployed (in %)/persons receiving social welfare benefits (in %)	Northville: 24,617 9.9/13.8 Southville: 10,319 14.6/23.3 & Highsprings: 30,391 12.8/19.4	North Limeton: 17,829 7.4/16.9 & South Limeton: 16,619 7.7/18.4

Source: Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf (2020) and Landeshauptstadt Hannover (2018, 2021). Note: The data is comparable within the cities, but not strictly between the cities.

Northville, Dusseldorf, has a high share of recently renovated, late 19th-century buildings and inviting streets full of corner stores, art galleries, and cafés. Housing prices have shot up over the last years, and even affluent middle-class families can now hardly afford to rent or buy adequate housing. Northville represents the most gentrified and least socially diverse neighbourhood type in our sample, with just few working-class or poor inhabitants left.

Southville and Highsprings, Dusseldorf, are located adjacent to Northville but are neighbourhoods with very selective signs of upgrading and a relatively small influx of middle-class households. Both neighbourhoods are considerably more diverse in terms of social and ethnic composition (see Table 1). We selected them as "contrasting" neighbourhoods, with comparably high indicators of socio-economic disadvantage. In the following, Southville and Highsprings are discussed as a single neighbourhood, not only because they have common features but also because the identified group of diversity-seeking middle-class households (compared to disaffiliating middle-class households) is too small in these neighbourhoods to discuss them separately. Indeed, this constitutes a first finding with regard to differences between the three case study neighbourhoods.

3.2. Methodology

Our research findings are based on semi-structured interviews with 59 middle-class households, 28 in Dusseldorf and 31 in Hanover. Our sampling strategy for identifying respondents used various approaches: We contacted childcare centres and child-related institutions (associations, music schools), used personal contacts, and regularly visited neighbourhood playgrounds and talked to parents in situ (the most fruitful approach). In addition to household interviews and expert discussions, we included a participatory observation documenting encounters in different public spaces for several months. All respondents had children of primary school age and below and were defined by us as "middle class," mainly based on educational qualifications and occupational data, i.e., using higher professional/university education as the threshold for speaking of middle class (Blokland & van Eijk, 2012; Ley, 1996). Due to changing occupations, labour market and income distribution, defining class has become increasingly difficult (Devine et al., 2005). Class is often defined in terms of occupation or income. Due to data availability, the definition for our article is based solely on parents' educational attainment and their occupation. However, since class is becoming more cultural (Bennett et al., 2009), defining parents' social status solely by their educational attainment and occupation might be a good approximation (Blokland & van Eijk, 2012)—in particular in Germany, where both play a crucial role for social positioning.

Characterising the overall sample of 59, and in line with the cities' different economic profiles, more respondents in Dusseldorf worked in senior business positions (engineer, product manager, architect, project manager, IT professional, doctors). By contrast, more respondents in Hanover worked in social professions, i.e., social workers or youth workers, or were on parental leave. These differences reflect neighbourhood sorting, with the specific neighbourhood history and social climate in Hanover attracting persons with higher cultural capital. Table 2 below provides insights into the profile of the overall sample.

The interviews were semi-structured. We looked for empirical evidence of boundary-making and -crossing at three different levels: respondents' social (egocentric) networks, usage of neighbourhood facilities and settings (from kindergarten/schools to leisure activities), and storytelling about the neighbourhood. Name generator questions helped to qualify the respondents' social (egocentric) networks. The generator included different questions to explore forms of emotional and functional support given by the respondents, ranging from with whom they would talk about personal issues to questions aimed at identifying more instrumental forms of support through, for instance, lending tools or looking after children. We also collected information on respondents' usage of (child-related) infrastructures and activities in a standardized way (what places or infrastructure they used, how frequently, and whether these were located within or outside the neighbourhood). Moreover, the interview guidelines contained qualitative open questions about perceived neighbourhood characteristics or plans to move out of the neighbourhood. Combining data from the open qualitative parts of the interview with the standardized data on respondents' spatial activity patterns and social networks allowed us to distinguish between and confront respondents' narratives with their actual practices. The interviews were carried out from

Table 2. Characteristics of interviewees: Overall sample.

Overall sample	Dusseldorf	Hanover	Total
Total number of interviews	28	31	59
Female/Male	22/6	22/9	44/15
Ownership/Renting	7/20*	7/24	14/44
Migration background/none	8/20	6/25	14/45
Years of residence: 1–3/4–10/11 +	8/15/5	8/14/9	16/29/14

Note: * (1 unknown).

spring 2013 to spring 2014 in Hanover and from spring 2015 to spring 2016 in Dusseldorf. All interviews were conducted in German using the same interview guidelines. All were recorded and fully transcribed. The software MaxQDA was used for in-depth text analyses.

Adopting a non-ethnic approach (Wimmer, 2008, p. 71), we focus exclusively on the class dimension (see above) when referring to mixed neighbourhood contacts. According to our network analysis, nearly half of all respondents had no inter-class contacts at all in their neighbourhood. Such a contact is—to give an example—between a person with a university degree and one with secondary education as their highest educational qualification (excluding family members). Eleven respondents had several (two or more) such contacts, while the rest had only one.

3.3. Specific Interviewees

For this article, we carefully selected three interviewees from the overall sample to illustrate what we found to be typical for the practices, arrangements, and arguments of the wider boundary-crossing middle-class fraction in the specific neighbourhood. All three were diversity-seeking in their narratives, though this only partly translated into inter-class neighbourhood networks and the usage of mixed spaces. Our focus on these three protagonists allowed us to track their routines and interactions across the different social fields (housing, public space, and education). The three had features in common, such as renting their apartments, being parents of children below school age, and living in dual-earner partnerships.

Sara (female, migration background, two children, self-employed) had known Limeton, where she lived with her partner, their new-born baby, and their three-year-old child, for about 20 years at the time of our interview. Originally moving to Hanover to study, she is representative of many others in Limeton, feeling a very strong sense of belonging and not contemplating living anywhere else in Hanover, especially not in a more peripheral or gentrified neighbourhood. After finishing her studies and living abroad, she returned to Hanover in 2006. She enjoyed the neighbourhood's vibrancy and its amenities, but also its familiarity and living close to people she knew. Of her 10 network contacts, seven were located in her neighbourhood, while three local contacts had lower educational qualifications. She had supported two of them in finding a good kindergarten, new job or flat, and helped one of them with emotional support.

Jan (male, no migration background, one four-year-old child, public sector employee) had been living for seven years with his partner in Northville at the time of our interview, having moved there before the recent "neighbourhood hype." Attached to Northville, he specifically valued the aesthetic layout and design of the streets and houses. While critical of the ongoing gentrification, he was aware of the benefits linked to the upgrading, such as the variety of cultural activities, cafés, restaurants, which he used frequently. Jan was ambivalent about living in a gentrified neighbourhood, but for the moment stayed put in a "safe" position, benefiting from a moderate rent as a long-term tenant. Of his ten network contacts, four were located in his neighbourhood. One of them had lower educational qualifications, with the regular interaction linked to mutual child-related (care) activities.

Leila (female, migration background, one four-year-old child, socio-cultural sector) was born and raised in a neighbouring inner-city area in Dusseldorf, had left to study and moved back three years ago at the time of our interview. Moving to Highsprings with her partner was a decision based on the relatively low level of rents and proximity to the main station. Though clearly open to diversity and herself working in projects promoting disadvantaged children, the daily encounters with disadvantage were sometimes "a bit too much" for her. In her local spatial activities and networks, she was more selective than Sara and Jan. Of her 19 network contacts, three were located in the neighbourhood, all people with degrees like herself. Her overall network was however socially diverse, featuring contacts to less-educated people, most of whom she had known for a long time, through family or her own childhood, and with whom she regularly interacted and supported both emotionally and instrumentally.

It should be noted that, even though two of these interviewees had a migration background, they had been socialised in Germany. Moreover, they were not identifiable as migrants on account of their physical presence (skin colour, wearing a headscarf) and language.

In the following sections, we analyse the three respondents' narratives on housing, public space, and education, illustrating how their valuation of diversity translates into *living with diversity* and *boundary-crossing practices*, and how these practices are influenced and shaped by place and local policies.

4. Neighbourhood Choice and Housing: Searching for a Diverse Neighbourhood and Actively Practiced Neighbourhood Life

All three interviewees sought an affordable "middle" middle-class residential location, yet near to places of everyday life. Our interviewees' narratives showed that neighbourhood diversity was expected to be part of an actively practiced neighbourhood life instead of just "social wallpaper" (Butler, 2003), as evidenced by numerous quotes showing that most of the contacts in their immediate surroundings went well beyond a cursory staircase "hello."

Like many other interviewees in Limeton, the sample neighbourhood most characterised by a left-wing alternative milieu, Sara spent most of her leisure time in the neighbourhood. She loved the togetherness of different social groups and the feeling of public familiarity engendered by regularly re-encountering acquaintances

and friends on the streets. In her narratives, Sara clearly distanced herself from the upper middle class, appreciating the neighbourhood for not (yet) being gripped by gentrification: "There are no people with a pretentious lifestyle living here….It [remains] a left… an alternative neighbourhood." Like many other interviewees in Limeton, Sara had a clear picture of the neighbourhood's authenticity which she wanted to see maintained (Brown-Saracino, 2009). The close living-together of different social groups is embedded in and encouraged by city politics, with the Hanover city administration providing various niches for mixed-class subsets such as housing projects and controlled upgrading as well as social housing developments, and even tolerating alternative housing forms such as squatted houses. Neighbourhood redevelopment in the past years has been carried out by the public administration and a non-profit, city-owned building company, with the aim of keeping rents at a reasonable level, allowing people to stay in the neighbourhood after redevelopment and maintaining the local inhabitant structure through co-operative, community-oriented housing companies. Despite some conflicts with her immediate neighbours (about noise or garbage), Sara loved the neighbourhood's overall social climate and would not consider moving away. This finding was in line with the "ethos of mixing" described by Wessendorf (2014, p. 103), an expectation of mutual co-existence and an "implicit grammar of living in a super-diverse area."

By contrast, developments in both case study neighbourhoods in Dusseldorf were much more influenced by profit-oriented players. Jan, our interviewee in Northville, the most gentrified neighbourhood in our sample, had moved into his rented apartment before gentrification and the accompanying significant increase in rents. He criticised the influx of upper-middle-class residents with a more consumption-oriented lifestyle and the changing business infrastructure: "Something noticeable is the obvious influx of higher socioeconomic groups… and the corresponding boutiques and hairdressers. The process began to intensify in 2008… such a process of displacement….Northville has basically evolved into a 'hype neighbourhood.' " This quote demonstrates Jan's ambivalent feelings towards a process of neighbourhood change, with the infrastructure becoming more orientated towards the (upper) middle-class. This did not encourage Jan to remain in Northville, instead evoking feelings of alienation. Obviously, diversity seekers like Jan are in search of that fine balance between neither living in an overly disadvantaged neighbourhood nor in a too posh and fancy one. He would have appreciated more interaction with socially diverse groups. The main reason for staying put was the comparably low rent and living conditions that would be hard to find elsewhere in Dusseldorf's tight housing market.

While both Sara's and Jan's narratives of symbolic boundary-drawing were primarily directed towards drawing boundaries vis-à-vis the upper middle classes, the interviewee in Highsprings, the most diverse and least gentrified neighbourhood in our sample, highlighted various aspects. Leila had chosen her residential location not primarily based on neighbourhood characteristics, but on the lower level of rents and the location close to the main station. Like the other interviewees, Leila emphasised that she appreciated an ethnically and socially mixed living environment. However, the neighbourhood offered hardly any facilities oriented towards the middle classes and their conscious wish for a green consumption infrastructure such as organic shops or cafés. Leila's locational choice was thus ambiguous: "We moved here, actually with some… heartache, because the neighbourhood is quite different….I would put it that way: We have come to terms with it." This quote seems to refer to what Watt (2009) and Pinkster (2013) describe as narratives of "good value for money." However, different to the findings of these scholars, our interviewees showed no indifference towards the neighbourhood. Instead, Leila's narratives illustrated her ambivalence, torn between her strong appreciation of diversity and the question of how much contact with socially disadvantaged groups she could tolerate in her daily life:

> I believe that you just need to find the right balance… somehow you think: [Let's get] out of the academic enclave! Out of the Latte Macchiato-Yoga-Montessori world!'… In this neighbourhood, I always have the dilemma… this decision for my personal life: 'Do I want to have this in my everyday life?'

At the same time, it became clear that Leila's position and status as one of the few "middle-class pioneers" in the neighbourhood had a special charm for her. She wanted to make a change by actively participating in local neighbourhood life.

Unlike our interviewees in Limeton and Northville, Leila was not yet sure about whether to stay put or to leave the neighbourhood. Like all our other interviewees in Highsprings, her decision to stay put was dependent on whether other young middle-class families remained and on whether she was successful in finding a housing "niche" giving her a feeling of being at home and offering a secure environment for her children. Leila expressed her wish to have more intense social interactions in her immediate surroundings: "Sure, I would like to live somewhere with… more 'docking stations,' something more than just anonymous rent payments." The quote illustrates the wish for more fine-grained forms of affiliation. In neighbourhoods with a significant share of inhabitants with a lower social status like Highsprings, such "docking stations"—focal points drawing people with the same lifestyle together— can strengthen middle-class families' feeling of local belonging and facilitate actively practiced neighbourhood life (Karsten, 2014).

Interviewees from Highsprings pointed out the positive effects of middle-class households' small-scale concentration in some housing blocks or buildings. However,

this finding should not be understood as a plea for middle-class-focused housing developments or gated communities. Rather, the research underlines the need to concentrate efforts on creating public or semi-public spaces open to and attractive for different social groups, and stimulating their active use.

Looking at previous research, it was not surprising that Leila, our respondent from a quite homogeneous low-income neighbourhood, was most ambivalent in her narratives and practices. Discontent was also expressed by Jan, our respondent in Northville, the most gentrified neighbourhood, with the continuing influx of upper-middle-class residents and the loss of social diversity evoking feelings of alienation, a process also described by Jackson and Butler (2015). He longed for a socially more diverse, "ordinary" neighbourhood, distancing himself from middle-class fractions not "doing diversity" but rather consuming it as part of their yuppie lifestyle (Jackson & Butler, 2015, p. 2362). In this respect, the case of Hanover-Limeton is interesting since, in contrast to Dusseldorf, local housing policies have had a positive influence on the fact that groups with different social backgrounds feel locally rooted in the neighbourhood.

5. Encountering Diversity in Public Spaces

Our three protagonists valued neighbourhood encounters with friends, acquaintances, or strangers in public or semi-public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, libraries, shops or cafés. However, the selected neighbourhoods offered very different opportunities for such interaction.

Interviewees in the Hanover-Limeton neighbourhood were very rooted in their neighbourhood, as witnessed by Sara whose activities and social networks were almost exclusively located in the neighbourhood. The public spaces she viewed as relevant for herself were the same as those mentioned by the other Limeton interviewees. This in turn led to high rates of re-encountering other (middle-class) residents as well as to a feeling of security about what to expect from certain spaces (described as public familiarity by Blokland & Nast, 2014).

Two kinds of public spaces were highlighted in Sara's narrative. First, she described the main shopping street as a space she liked, and which met her needs: a vibrant street full of shops, eateries, and cafés with different price levels. This diversity drew different social groups to the street, allowing people "to rub shoulders" (van Eijk, 2010). Settings such as the ice-cream parlour or the drugstore seemed to create a basis for "meaningful contact… a respect for difference [that] can be produced from particular kinds of purposeful, organized micro-public encounters" (Valentine, 2008, p. 334). The second place was the church square located just a short distance away from the main shopping street. For her, the square functioned as an opportunity for casual encounters or for meeting up with her friends in the cafés and restaurants: "[It has] an almost Italian atmosphere… and it is nice with the kids, you walk by, and you meet people." This quote well reflected the much-appreciated effortlessness of combining functional and social activities.

Narratives of diversity in public spaces were much more positive in Hanover than in Dusseldorf. We attribute this to the balance of mixed and segregated spaces and neighbourhood spaces frequented by all neighbourhood groups. In addition, the long-term political climate of tolerance towards subcultures might have contributed to inhabitants learning to deal with "otherness," with the Hanover city administration providing space for alternative housing co-operatives and civic initiatives. This public example of tolerance and acceptance of diverse lifestyles within the neighbourhood has now become part of the neighbourhood's (self-)image, determining the ways people use their neighbourhood.

A different relationship to public spaces and infrastructures can be found in the more gentrified Northville in Dusseldorf. With the overall development in Dusseldorf much more influenced by profit-oriented players, our interviewees' evaluation was more ambiguous, as witnessed by Jan in relation to the pub, café, and restaurant infrastructure. On the one hand, he appreciated the new facilities—such as healthy restaurants—established as a reaction to the influx of higher income groups. On the other hand, he was not as embedded in the neighbourhood as his Hanover counterparts and actively sought socially mixed spaces outside it. While Sara stressed that she saw "no need to go to the city centre or to other neighbourhoods," Jan perceived his neighbourhood as too gentrified, leading to him looking elsewhere: "I just consider it very interesting, I like to walk along there—the train station atmosphere around that square and also all those Turkish and Arabian stores. I find it really attractive." He also selectively frequented more mixed settings in adjoining neighbourhoods generally known for their higher tenant turnover and low-income groups. This strategy contrasted with the bridging-out strategies to better-off places primarily described in the literature (e.g., Butler & Robson, 2003; Pinkster, 2016).

Living in Dusseldorf Highsprings, Leila saw the public spaces, streets, and squares as providing few opportunities for the interactions appreciated by her. She constantly felt that her family's way of life did not resonate with the neighbourhood, with her and her family personifying the "others," as exemplified by narratives of critical situations at neighbourhood playgrounds:

> And then I sometimes become aware, especially with a small child, of situations in the playground where kids are being hit or kicked or screamed at and none of the other parents seem to care. I think 'That's an atmosphere that is going to depress me in the long run.' I just don't know whether we will carry on living here.

In contrast to Jan's positive perception of Turkish and Arabian shops (in a neighbourhood he did not live in),

Leila felt out of place in Highsprings, being the only one not speaking Arabic in certain streets and shops. When visiting public settings, she preferred to do so in groups of people she knew beforehand. The only spaces where she perceived interactions with previously unknown people as being positive were embedded in a larger network of settings, with the kindergarten at the centre. The network consisted of groups of people with common values, e.g., belonging to a neighbourhood club connected to a shop for organic produce, an urban gardening project or a neighbourhood café. Such selective belonging draws symbolic boundaries around middle-class enclaves, as described by Atkinson (2006).

Bridging-out is a strategy used by Leila to cope with neighbourhood aspects she does not feel comfortable with: "I don't do much in the neighbourhood [in my free time]. There is simply no place… where you can just hang around as a young family… that combination of cafe and playground, it's just not there." However, Leila did not perceive homeless people or junkies in public spaces primarily as a threat or nuisance, stating that these challenging encounters were also important as a learning experience for her child, "a city kid growing up between organic shops and syringes and whatnot." A positive example of casual interaction for Leila was a family-run bakery chain store which gave her a feeling of community she otherwise missed. The repetitive contacts in this setting enabled class- and ethnicity-bridging interactions as described by Wilson (2014), providing a daily, effortless combination of functional and social purposes: "What I find immensely charming, what has been a glimpse of hope for me, is the bakery at the corner… run by a really nice Greek family… with whom we have developed a kind of village-like relationship." Leila spoke of the important emotional support she received from the bakery's non-middle-class staff, referring for example to how the family "had been with her" during her two pregnancies.

In this respect, our findings resonate with other studies: The more the middle-class subset perceives itself as a minority in the neighbourhood, the more selective belonging becomes apparent. Thus, the previously mentioned niches or "docking stations" in the neighbourhood can generate comfortable and predictable social interactions, thereby strengthening feelings of local belonging and familiarity and making it easier to accept and endure negative encounters with diversity. Leila's wish for anchor points in the neighbourhood which she can actively shape does not go along with a deliberate strategy of distinction from people of lower social classes.

6. Diversity and Education: Similar Aspirations, But Neighbourhood-Specific Practices

Parents in all three neighbourhoods appreciated the diversity in education. However, as already illustrated by previous studies on middle-class parents' choice of school (Boterman, 2012), it was also more often perceived as a threat than in other social fields.

In contrast to their choice of housing and the use of public space, diversity in education was in general a more sensitive topic for all our interviewees. However, we were able to clearly identify neighbourhood-specific practices linked strongly to local/regional policies. Facilitated by liberal local policies sheltering their founders from red tape, Hanover has a comparatively high number of parent initiatives, making the deliberate choice of childcare centres based on ideological and lifestyle considerations easier—and thereby enabling middle-class parents to stay in Hanover's diverse inner-city neighbourhoods. For her choice of childcare, Sara thus focused on the quality of care, as measured by a good staff-children ratio and a shared understanding of parenting practices and education between parents and staff. Giving her participation and decision-making rights, private childcare centres set up at the initiative of parents and run by them were the right choice for her. The homogenous middle-class composition seemed not to be the primary reason for her choice; it was rather a logical consequence of the required commitment and similarities in lifestyles and parenting. Like other parents in Limeton, ideological and lifestyle considerations such as organic nutrition determined choices more than a deliberate strategy of distinction—albeit with the (unintended) result of distinct networks.

This was completely different in Dusseldorf. While childcare costs are means-tested in most German cities, meaning that there is little difference between public and private childcare facilities for high-income groups, public childcare centres in Dusseldorf are free. As a result, even high-income parents give them precedence. Theoretically, this should lead to a higher level of diversity in public childcare. De facto, however, this instead intensifies careful selection and parental rumours about childcare centres and their composition. The scarcity of public childcare places in combination with the non-transparent admission process not only creates uncertainties but also generates middle-class advantages in choosing and accessing certain childcare centres—even though these parents frequently present their admission as the luck of the draw.

Jan clearly appreciated the social and religious mix in the childcare centre his daughter attends:

> I really like it a lot [the diverse composition]….And all the other religions here; it's great that she can see that there are other groups, other people, who live differently to us. Nevertheless, it is obvious that these differences sometimes lead to different groups even in our childcare centre. And the kindergarten teachers put a lot of effort into thinking about how to bring everyone together, again and again. I think that is really good.

The quote illustrates clearly that successful social mixing—whether in childcare or different social settings—requires a certain level of mediation and

intervention. Jan was aware of the higher level of negotiation needed to deal with the childcare centre's diverse composition, but was nevertheless satisfied, clearly contrasting the centre to the parent initiative close by where "there are only people like us." Although he seemed somewhat uncertain as to whether the quality of care in other, more homogenous childcare centres was higher, he stressed his luck to have obtained a place in a public childcare centre. Living in the least socially mixed neighbourhood in our sample facilitated his acceptance and reduced his concerns about his daughter attending a more diverse childcare centre.

Living in a far more socially mixed neighbourhood, the presence of interested and committed middle-class parents was Leila's chief concern when searching for childcare. She managed to get a place in her first-choice centre, an "incredibly homogenous" middle-class parent initiative which she deliberately chose over the neighbouring centres attended by children of a "less interested" clientele. Like Sara, Leila valued similar notions of education and lifestyle among parents and staff and attached importance to co-determining the centre's daily routines. In her case, however, the search for such similarities was closely interlinked with her own social life and her attempts to build up a local social network in Highsprings:

> I appreciated the idea of a parent initiative since it brings you into closer contact with the other parents. And I thought it nice to see who else was living here and how we could put down more roots in this neighbourhood.

With the aim of building up relationships with "people like us" in a quite diverse neighbourhood, the choice of the "right" childcare centre was more important for her than for Sara and Jan.

Local/regional policies in combination with place-specific factors also play a significant role in explaining parents' choice of primary schools. Most interviewees in Limeton seemed to generally accept and appreciate the local schools. This could be determined by the education system where primary school catchment areas exist (Noreisch, 2007). Sara's quite exceptional choice of a primary school outside the neighbourhood was based solely on the chosen school's offer of Polish lessons—one of the very few signs of an intersection between our interviewees' social and ethnic background.

By contrast, in the federal state of NRW where Dusseldorf is located, primary school catchment areas have been abolished. Consequently, choosing a primary school other than the local one is comparatively less queried than in Hanover. Interestingly, many respondents in Northville nevertheless chose a local school. Strategies of avoiding schools with the "wrong" social and ethnic composition were not mentioned as being relevant for Jan's choice, with him instead focusing on spatial proximity and the quality of schooling offered. However, when asked directly, Jan self-critically expressed his doubts about whether his choice criteria would still be relevant if he lived in a more diverse neighbourhood with more diverse primary schools:

> I live in Northville, and there are two schools in my immediate vicinity, both of which have a good reputation. I guess, I just do not have to be concerned so much with that [a school's composition]… as I would have to be if I lived in Highsprings or Southville, where the next primary school is a very different one.

Aware of the segregating role middle-class school choice strategies have, Jan was therefore glad that the comparatively homogenous schools in his neighbourhood allowed him to be less concerned with a school's composition and more with other criteria—even though education policies allowed bridging-out strategies to be pursued.

By contrast, this was something that Leila could not "afford." Nevertheless, she did not categorically rule out the neighbourhood's primary schools, emphasising that she was "really looking for social mix. I do not search for a homogenous structure at all." Despite knowing about the neighbourhood schools' poor reputation among parents, she deliberately gathered her own information, talked with teachers, and clearly questioned the segregating effects of her own school choice:

> I do not want to create homogenous structures, but it is hard to create the kind of heterogeneity I want. And that's exactly the moment when you ask yourself: 'Do I really want to be one of the first who sends her child to this school in order to create a higher level of mix, or should I instead play safe?'

However, the social ideal of a socially and ethnically mixed school collided with the wish to give one's own child a good start in life (a dilemma also described in Raveaud & van Zanten, 2007) when it came to Leila, living in the most diverse neighbourhood in our sample. She doubted whether the latter was possible in a school where a high proportion of children not speaking German properly might command teachers' full attention. Her concerns seem to be justified: in reaction to free school choice, several primary schools have started developing specific profiles. In neighbourhoods like Highsprings, this has resulted in a focus on promoting German language skills, which, as reflected by Leila's concerns, in turn encourages (German) middle-class parents to choose a school outside the neighbourhood (see Ramos Lobato, 2017; Ramos Lobato & Groos, 2019)—a practice even encouraged by local school staff:

> On the one hand, I think 'great school, good teachers, and they need people like us to send their children there so that things change.'… But then you remind yourself that your child will be prepared for

> secondary school there and the teacher tells you in no uncertain terms: 'To be honest, the problems we have here have nothing to do with preparing children for secondary school.'

As we know from previous research (Jennings, 2010; Noreisch, 2007), acting as a professional in a meritocratic education system and feeling encouraged to "protect the educational careers of the brightest students" (van Zanten, 2013, p. 93), some teachers even discouraged middle-class parents from choosing schools in Highsprings.

The abolition of primary school catchment areas in Dusseldorf thus facilitates bridging-out strategies, thereby further strengthening distinct middle-class networks. However, whether parents make use of free choice depends on specific local factors, such as the neighbourhood itself.

7. Conclusions

The aim of our research in two German cities was to analyse the inclusionary/exclusionary daily practices of a specific fraction of middle-class households in their interrelation with place-specific neighbourhood characteristics and policies. We argue that, in order to understand differences in middle-class practices and routines across neighbourhoods, the close interplay between households' individual strategies, neighbourhood characteristics, and local policies shaping inter-group social interactions needs to be considered.

In line with other research, we found evidence that middle-class households follow different strategies to fence themselves off from "undesirable others" in the fields of education, housing, and leisure time, but not consistently across all fields. However, even in neighbourhoods with comparably high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, a specific fraction of the middle class does not strive for social and spatial enclaves, instead seeking "docking stations," non-excluding spaces which help reduce anonymity and facilitate neighbourhood life.

The perceived necessity for social and spatial distinction is shaped not only by individual resources and preferences, but also by the degree to which middle-class households feel encouraged to actively shape and create local settings and whether they perceive themselves as active agents and part of local community life. We have shown that a specific fraction of the middle class perceives gentrification neighbourhoods, characterised by middle-class infrastructures, as dull and less stimulating. Taking Limeton/Hanover as an example, we were able to demonstrate the long-term influence of the local political culture on the social climate of tolerance and political support for local engagement. Meaningful contacts—which potentially facilitate resource transfers across different social groups—are embedded in a public-political discourse in the neighbourhood and the city as a whole. The positive social climate, as perceived by all our interviewees, not only attracts further households with similar values, but also renders distinction strategies less necessary. In short: city and housing policies can ensure framework conditions helping inhabitants to handle diversity.

As expected, distinction strategies in the field of education are much more prominent than in the fields of housing or the use of public space. However, even educational choice is clearly shaped by federal state and city policies: The non-transparent allocation of childcare places in Dusseldorf minimizes household agency, creating clear advantages for alert middle-class households and in turn contributing to further educational segregation and less opportunities to "rub shoulders."

Drawing specifically on the example of Limeton, we argue that neighbourhoods do not necessarily follow a predefined path of gentrification, inevitably leading to less local solidarity. Relating observable differences in individual routines and practices to local factors helps us to identify the role and potential influence of local policies and the scope of action for city administrations. With their influence on local housing, neighbourhood and education policies, city administrations can modulate place-specific limits and opportunities for cross-class interaction. Importantly, successful social mixing in social settings such as childcare centres or the immediate housing environment requires a certain level of mediation and intervention. While it is essential to recognize the powerful structural forces shaping urban development in contemporary times, it is equally important not to lose sight of existing opportunities to intervene in neighbourhood change processes, paying greater attention to the influence of local policies.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the academic editor and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this article. We are grateful to our former colleague Sabine Beißwenger, who has contributed to interviews and discussions this article is based on.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Heike Hanhörster is senior researcher at the ILS–Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development in Dortmund, Germany. Her research interest covers place-based processes of social inclusion and exclusion, and people's encounters with difference. Her recent research includes social networks of households in low-income neighbourhoods, institutional discrimination, and exclusionary processes on the housing market, middle-class disaffiliation strategies, as well as neighbourhood choice and affiliations of Turkish middle-class households.

Isabel Ramos Lobato works as a post-doctoral researcher at the Helsinki Institute of Urban and Regional Studies, University of Helsinki, and is part of the Geographies of Education and Divided Cities (GED) research group. Her research interests are broadly rooted in urban and social geography, with a focus on social inclusion and exclusion in the fields of education and housing. In her PhD, she examined parents' choice of primary schools and its impact on school segregation in Germany.

Sabine Weck heads the Urban Social Space Research Group at the ILS–Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development (ILS) in Dortmund, Germany. She focuses on themes of socio-spatial inequalities, social cohesion, and spatial justice. She has published articles together with colleagues on inner-city neighbourhoods and middle-class disaffiliation strategies, poverty and social exclusion, as well as place-based development strategies in disadvantaged areas.

COGITATIO

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 375–387
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4520

Article

When Spatial Dimension Matters: Comparing Personal Network Characteristics in Different Segregated Areas

Éva Huszti [1], Fruzsina Albert [2,3], Adrienne Csizmady [2,4], Ilona Nagy [2] and Beáta Dávid [2,3,*]

[1] Institute of Political Science and Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Debrecen, Hungary; E-Mail: huszti.eva@arts.unideb.hu
[2] Institute for Sociology, Centre for Social Sciences, Hungary; E-Mails: albert.fruzsina@tk.hu (F.A.), csizmady.adrienne@tk.hu (A.C.), nagyilona4918@gmail.com (I.N.), bea.david@ella.hu (B.D.)
[3] Institute of Mental Health, Semmelweis University, Hungary
[4] Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Szeged, Hungary

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 14 May 2021 | Accepted: 29 July 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Living in segregated areas with concentrated neighbourhood poverty negatively affects the quality of life, including the availability of local jobs, access to services, and supportive social relationships. However, even with similar neighbourhood poverty levels, the degree and structure of spatial separation vary markedly between such areas. We expected that the level of spatial segregation aggravates the social exclusion of its inhabitants by negatively affecting their social capital. To test this hypothesis, we identified three low-income neighbourhoods with high poverty rates (78%) in a medium-sized town in Hungary, with different levels of integration in the city (based on characteristics such as the degree of spatial separation, infrastructure, and availability of services). The three neighbourhoods were located in two areas of differing degrees of integration in the fabric of the city: fully integrated, semi-integrated (integrated into the surrounding residential area but isolated from the city), and non-integrated. 69% of the 394 households in these areas were represented in our sample (one respondent per household). We interviewed respondents regarding the size and composition of their personal networks. Our results, which also distinguished between Roma and non-Roma inhabitants, showed that those living in the spatially more integrated area not only have the largest and most diverse networks but seem to have a strong, "bonding-based" cohesive community network as well. Even the non-Roma who live there have ethnically heterogeneous—in other words—Roma network members. The disintegrated area, on the other hand, is characterised by both spatial and social isolation.

Keywords
bonding and bridging; ethnic homophily; policy intentions; Roma; segregation; social capital; spatial homophily

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Social capital is embodied in interpersonal relationships (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998). The availability of social support is particularly important for poor people since it can decrease the negative impacts of their disadvantaged economic circumstances (Saegert et al., 2001). The stigmatising nature of poverty, together with social networks, that are characterised by homophily (McPherson et al., 2001), result in lower resource-strength networks, as these networks are more likely to consist of similarly disadvantaged people. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between interpersonal social networks and poverty (Albert & Hajdu, 2020; Böhnke & Link, 2017; Eckhard, 2018) and found a negative link between them (e.g., the quantity and

quality of interpersonal relations). This finding supports the so-called accumulation hypothesis and warns of the "downward spiral of social exclusion" (Mood & Jonsson, 2016, p. 637).

However, research on social networks and poverty does not always take the spatial context into account. Traditionally, international research has been limited to describe relationships within a well-defined area (e.g., colleges; see Doreian & Conti, 2012; Faust et al., 1999) or to study the spread of disease (social and spatial clustering of disease; see Emch et al., 2012; Logan et al., 2016). Our study is in the context of urban sociology rather than following these lines of inquiry. Spatial separation and barriers to spatial mobility often hinder social mobility and may result in ethnic segregation. Spatial integration is just as important concerning a stable social position as, for example, labour market integration (Massey, 2001), and we may expect that spatial separation reduces the chances of social integration by marking physical boundaries for inhabitants of segregated areas and thus producing more homogenous interpersonal networks.

In our article, we analyse how the physical and social characteristics of a neighbourhood can shape the structure of the social networks of its residents by analysing the network characteristics of people living in three segregated areas of a medium-sized Hungarian town. We also study whether there are network differences between the non-Roma and the Roma people living together in the same area. We expect that, in general, spatial segregation facilitates the formation of certain ties but hinders others. We suppose that the spatial dimension influences network size and composition more than ethnicity. Our data facilitates the evaluation of how "far" personal networks can reach both spatially and ethnically.

The novelty of our analysis is that it focuses on both the ethnic and spatial homogeneity of the ego-networks in three deprived areas of the same city, which at the same time differ in their level of integration into the city fabric. We found subtle differences concerning the degree of spatial disintegration.

2. Theoretical Background

Social relations are an important dimension of social integration (Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1985). A lack of social integration does not only mean limited access to resources, but it may also cause anxiety and depression, decrease well-being and lead to increased morbidity and mortality (Putnam, 2000; Wilkinson, 1996).

In terms of integration, bonding and bridging ties function differently. The former creates relatively closed and socio-demographically homogeneous groups with shared resources and information, high levels of intimacy and trust. Weaker but more heterophilic ties with more distant individuals (bridging ties) connect the ego to different social groups, even from greater social distances, contributing to the structural mobility of the individual (Lin, 2008).

Network analysts identify two basic types of homophily: baseline and inbreeding (McPherson et al., 2001). Baseline homophily refers to the fact that we have a limited pool of potential ties defined by our demographic characteristics and foci of activities (e.g., as in our case, ethnicity, or place of residence) and the main source of these ties is geographical space. Inbreeding homophily is conceptualised as any other kind of homophily. As a result, we form and maintain ties more easily with those who are geographically close (Wong et al., 2006). Bidard et al. (2020), building on Fischer (1982), point out that strong ties are more resistant to distance, which means that in general, in personal networks, strong ties are more dispersed in geographic space than weak ties. Those who live in closer proximity have to spend less money and time to meet; thus, supportive ties, which are especially important for the poor, may form faster and more easily and can be maintained over long periods more efficiently (Emch et al., 2012). Proximity remained an important characteristic despite the spread of info-communication technologies (Mok et al., 2004).

Researchers have long studied the relationship between social integration and urban structure. Roberto and Hwang (2017) argue that there is a causal relationship between the physical separation of urban spaces and the formation and sustainment of segregation. People living in areas that are difficult to reach and less integrated into the urban fabric have limited access to transport and urban space, and their social integration is hampered. Physical barriers such as railway tracks, motorways, industrial areas, forests, fences, etc., create clear divisions among various areas. Some of these barriers are natural; others have been created artificially, often to clearly separate deprived areas from those populated by more affluent residents. At the same time, these barriers also physically limit the growth of areas populated by low-status residents not only with regards to the number of available housing units but also the scope of available services, thus sustaining social and spatial isolation and increasing social inequalities.

Tóth et al. (2021) found that the physical arrangement of residential areas in a city is connected to social network fragmentation: Existing inequalities are exacerbated by physical barriers, significant distances, physically concentrated amenities, which make social networks more fragmented. Thus, through social networks, the geographical characteristics of a place compound economic inequalities.

Spatial segregation can also have benefits, including a cohesive community organised on a geographic basis, making it easier to navigate the world and everyday life. However, living in spatially isolated, segregated neighbourhoods and the associated stigma both hinder assimilation (Massey, 2001). According to previous research (see Massey & Denton, 1988), a high level of segregation isolates minority groups from the services and opportunities that can contribute to raising their quality of life

to the level of the majority population. Thus, any movement towards concentrating poverty in an isolated neighbourhood increases the likelihood of socio-economic failure within the segregated group (e.g., teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, low educational attainment, low income, criminality, and victimisation). Therefore, municipalities should handle poverty and spatial exclusion together to intervene successfully (Massey, 2001).

Roma people are the most numerous and most disadvantaged ethnic minority groups living in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary. Ethnic identity is considered a private matter, and, for data protection purposes, it is not included in the mandatory national data reporting in Hungary.

According to the 2011 census, the latest available official data on the number of minorities living in Hungary, approximately 3% of the total population identified themselves as Roma (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [KSH], 2014). While the widespread stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices concerning the Roma minority suggest the existence of a homogenised group, the actual population meant by the category of Roma varies, not only among the non-Roma majority but also among the Roma. Data on self-categorisation show a smaller number of Roma than data resulting from categorisation set by outgroup members (Csepeli & Simon, 2004). Thus, it is not possible to measure the size of the Roma population, but it is estimated to be 600,000–700,000 (Bernát, 2014). The age composition of the Roma population is significantly younger, and their at-risk of poverty and social inclusion index is three times higher compared to the non-Roma population, which means that the majority of Roma people in Hungary are affected by poverty and social exclusion. Roma people have more children, lower education attainment (the share of Roma with at most primary education is still four times the level for non-Roma), and higher unemployment. They tend to live in small settlements, often in less developed regions (Bernát, 2019; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2016).

Most Roma are concentrated in underdeveloped areas of the country, representing a significant territorial disadvantage (Kertesi, 2005; Nemes Nagy & Németh, 2005). There are 10 districts of settlements where their ratio is between 30 to 40%, 62% lives in towns and 38% in villages, primarily in small ones, with a population of less than 2000. In towns, their numbers grow mostly due to immigration. In the villages, their proportion increases due to the out-migration of the non-Roma and their higher fertility rates (Pénzes et al., 2018). In big cities, most of the Roma live in segregated areas.

Based on the most recent available survey result (from 2010) and the last census (from 2011), there were 1633 poor and ethnic ghettoes and segregated areas in Hungary with 280–300 thousand inhabitants, which is 3% of the Hungarian population. These areas are concentrated in the North-Eastern and Southern regions of the country, to 26% of its settlements (820 municipalities and 10 districts of Budapest out of 22). 39% of these areas are in towns, 2% in Budapest, the capital city, and 32% in villages. 20% of them are in or close to the centre of the settlement, 66% are on the periphery, and 14% are outside the settlement limits (Domokos & Herczeg, 2010). The spatial distribution pattern of the Roma population has remained essentially unchanged since 1980 (Pénzes et al., 2018). The ability or willingness to move is strongly correlated with demographic characteristics, occupation and regional position of residence (Hárs & Simon, 2015) and financial situation. The Hungarian population is less mobile than the European average (3–4.5% move house every year). Willingness to move is also low. According to KSH (2016), 79% of the population do not plan to move. This proportion is slightly higher among Roma (83%). In fact, they would be willing to move only if there were significant financial benefits (Varga, 2020). Hungary is one of the CEE countries with a private homeownership rate above 90%; Hegedüs et al. (2016) point out that homeownership has a strong attenuating effect on domestic moving decisions.

In Hungary, socially disadvantaged people have very few opportunities to move to a more spatially integrated area. They live in social housing units (mostly municipally-owned) with poor quality. The spatial mobility of Roma has become increasingly limited as the number of social housing units has started to decline significantly since 1990. The share of these housing units is very low (2.6%; KSH, 2016).

According to Hungarian studies, although Roma had ethnically homogeneous networks of contacts in the early 2000s, their family ties were stronger, and they had more friends than members of the majority society (Albert & Dávid, 2006). The ethnically homogeneous network was even more characteristic for those who belonged to an ethnically closed community and identified themselves as Roma (Messing, 2006). However, more recent research reveals a change: Roma people no longer have a richer network of contacts. Their circle of friends has been significantly reduced and has become even more ethnically homogeneous, and the proportion of relatives among their confidants has decreased. Despite improving educational and economic indicators in general, only a small fraction of people established contact resources. Isolation from each other and mainstream society continues to be present (Dávid et al., 2020).

In segregated areas, social network characteristics vary and contribute to sustaining the existing power relations. Some of the few Hungarian studies on the topic highlighted that relational characteristics of poor and deprived segments of the population are quite different in various settings/regions (Dávid, 2010; Messing, 2006; Messing & Molnár, 2011), which provides the rationale for our study to compare the network characteristics of people living in poverty and social exclusion in different territorial segments of the very same city. Katona et al. (2020), analysing segregated areas in four Hungarian and

four Romanian settlements, found that the integration of local communities can only be realised if they receive support to build ties to form external contact networks and then they actively use those contacts on their own.

3. Data and Method

In 2019, we surveyed the living conditions in two segregated areas of a Hungarian city, which included a detailed module on interpersonal network characteristics. According to Government Decree 314/2012 (8.XI), "a segregated area or an area at risk of segregation [is] a contiguous area where families of low social status are concentrated or show signs of social status decline, and therefore community intervention is required in the area" (NYITS, 2014, p. 44). The identification of segregated areas was based on the segregation indicator (the proportion of people of working age with no more than primary education and no regular income from work) produced from the 2011 census data of the KSH (total number of segregated areas is 1633, where 280,000–300,000 people, roughly 3% of the total population, live).

Interviewers reached 271 households in these two segregated areas (S#1 and S#2). The number of social housing units owned by the local government in these two areas is 394 (131 in S#1, 263 in S#2), with a total population of 1374 people (525 in S#1, 849 in S#2; see Nyíregyháza City Integrated Settlement Development Strategy, 2014). Based on this, and considering the number of housing units, the response rate was high (Huszti, 2019; Takács & Huszti, 2019). We analyse our data in three main dimensions: spatial, network, ethnicity.

3.1. The Areas in Focus

The segregated areas in our study are situated far from the city centre, occupy relatively small space, and are far from each other (see Figure 1). Most of the apartments are social housing units with relatively low rent owned by the local government. Both areas are marked by medium-level ethnic segregation (with a mix of Roma and non-Roma poor population), but they have different potentials regarding social integration.

As shown in Figure 1, the smaller S#1 is less isolated; therefore, we label it as spatially integrated. It is only 1.5 km away from the city centre, situated between two main roads, near the former city limits. Despite the development of the city and the wider neighbourhood, its segregated character remained. Given its location along main roads, residents have good transportation access to public services. The bus service is frequent and regular, and the inner city can be accessed by bicycle. The 4-flat housing units were built in the early 1960s with minimal conveniences. They are still without any modern amenities. They only have electricity and are in a very run-down condition. Households have the most members in this area, with an average of 4–6 people per household and 2–4 people per room. The surrounding public roads are in good shape but getting around within the area among the buildings is more problematic since there is no rainwater drainage system. Inhabitants predominantly have low educational attainment, which limits their employment opportunities. As the city centre and another housing estate are close by, several educational institutions are available. General practitioners are available in the city centre, outpatient clinics and emergency care are only a couple of minutes away. Social workers and district nurses are actively present.

The larger segregated area (S#2) became part of the city fabric after the 1850s; it primarily functioned as a military base for cavalry. Its population changed in the 1960s; the more affluent military and administrative elite were replaced by Roma people moving into the city. The average household size is 3.7 (N#1) and 3.8 (N#2). The average density is 3.4 (N#1) and 3.2 (N#2) people per

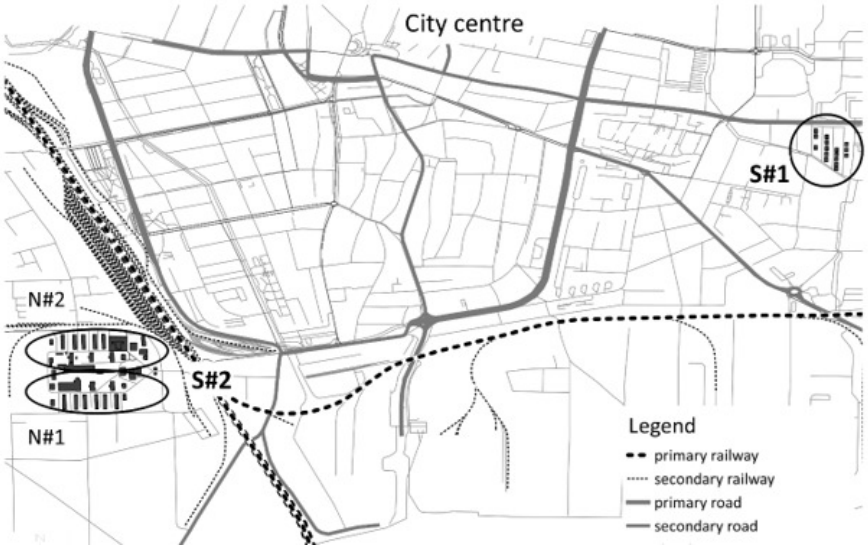

Figure 1. Segregated areas (S#1 and S#2) and different neighbourhoods (N#1 and N#2) within S#2.

room. The segregated nature of the area is well-indicated by its spatial characteristics: The railway lines separate it from the major parts of the city, the neighbouring, more modern city area can only be accessed on foot. Public services provision can be considered good, as there is a crèche, kindergarten, and primary school in the area. However, children from S#2 attend these mostly. It is also possible to send children to other educational institutions in the city. Family and child welfare services are available locally, together with day-care provision for the old. Various social, healthcare, religious, and civil organisations provide in-kind support for the inhabitants.

Within S#2, we identified two neighbourhoods based on various characteristics (the degree of spatial separation, infrastructure, availability of services, etc.) as shown in Figure 1. The spatially semi-integrated neighbourhood (N#1) is more integrated into the surrounding residential area but isolated from the city. The spatially non-integrated neighbourhood (N#2) is less integrated, as the railway cuts off direct transit routes to other areas on three sides of the area, and only one street connects it to the rest of the city. Spatially it is well-separated from the semi-integrated part. It is closed off from other residential areas by the railways and industrial plants on the northern side.

3.2. Social Capital: Bonding and Bridging Ties

We consider confiding relations to be bonding ties, which we elicited by a core discussion network-generated question (McCallister & Fischer, 1978). The following name-generator was applied: "Most people sometimes discuss important matters with others. If you consider the past 12 months, who are the people with whom you discussed the most important things, your problems, sorrows, complaints (e.g., personal and/or family matters, questions concerning work, etc)?"

We followed up by asking questions concerning the listed alters, including gender, age, educational attainment, type of relationship, length of knowing each other, living distance, type of support given, and ethnicity. The maximum number of alters was limited to five. In the analysis, we focus on the kin and non-kin composition of these networks and their ethnic and spatial characteristics. We consider weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) to be bridging ties, which we elicited by a position generator containing 30 different occupations: actor/actress, administrator, banker, chief executive, civil welfare office administrator, clerical officer in local government, dress shop owner, driver, engineer, entrepreneur, farmworker, hairdresser, health visitor, housing administrator, interior designer, journalist, NGO worker, nurse, paediatrician, politician, sales/shop assistant, scientist, security guard, skilled worker, social worker, solicitor, surgeon, teacher (secondary), unskilled worker, waiter.

If the respondent knew somebody with the named occupation, we asked the person's gender, if they lived in the same area, and their ethnicity (Lin & Dumin, 1986). In the analysis, we include the number of weak ties and their ethnic and spatial characteristics.

3.3. Ethnicity

Csepeli and Simon (2004, p. 134) wrote:

> There are two theoretical ways of Gypsy identity construction: as an imposed and as an adopted identity, i.e., the labels used by the majority or as a procedure of self-identification performed by the Gypsies themselves, based on their being culturally different.

For our research purposes, we defined Roma ethnicity based on self-identification.

Based on Leszczensky and Pink (2019), we considered the relationships ethnically homogeneous if the respondent identified himself as Roma and described the other person identified as Roma as well. We also considered the relationships ethnically homophilic where the respondent did not identify himself as Roma and described the other person identified as not being Roma.

3.4. Empirical Strategy

We examined whether there is a difference between segregated areas according to network characteristics taking into account socio-demographic control variables. Since these control attributions generally do not have a significant effect on dependent variables, we analysed the links between network characteristics and place of residence using discriminant analysis. We calculated the percentage that our dependent variable, living in one of the segregated areas, can be estimated by the independent variables. Since bigger and more diverse interpersonal networks may enhance social integration more effectively, we tested whether those living in a spatially more integrated area are more integrated socially based on their interpersonal network characteristics. The variables we included in our analysis are core discussion network size, number of weak ties, rate of ethnic and spatial homogeneity, ego's ethnicity, and the length of residence in the given area.

4. Results

4.1. Description of the Segregated Areas

68.6% of the sample are women: 45.7% are at most 40 years old and the average age is 43.5 years. The rate of women is higher in N#2 (74%) than in the other two areas. The rate of ages 40 years or younger is higher in N#1 and N#2 (47.6 and 46.6%). The average age is the highest in N#2 (45.2 years). Most of the sample have low educational attainment. 77.3% has at most primary school education (8 years of schooling). The share of those with a higher educational level than primary school is the highest in N#2 (28.8%). 67.9% of the sample did not work

at the time of data collection. There is no significant difference among the three surveyed areas in terms of sex, age, educational attainment, and economic activity.

The analysed population is a homogenous group based on their basic socio-demographic characteristics, but there are significant differences based on ethnic composition and length of residence (see Table 1). The overall rate of Roma respondents is 57.9%, but it is significantly lower in N#2 (41.1%) compared to the other two areas. A total of 19 (only 7% of the total sample) were born in the area, the highest rate is in area S#1 among Roma residents. Residents in S#1 have lived there on average for 21.9 years, while in N#1 for 12.6 and N#2 for 9.9 years. In S#1, there is a difference between the Roma and non-Roma population: the Roma moved there at a younger age than the non-Roma (18.1 vs. 26.5 years).

4.2. Social Capital

4.2.1. The Number and Composition of Bonding Ties

Respondents, on average, mentioned 1.41 bonding ties in the core discussion network name-generator situation (min 0; max 5). In line with our expectations, those living in the spatially more integrated area have significantly more ties (on average 2) than those from N#1 (1.23, $p < 0{,}001$) and N#2 (1.16, $p = 0{,}001$). There is a difference within the areas regarding ethnicity. In the spatially non-integrated part (N#2), Roma respondents had fewer bonding ties than the non-Roma (1.00 vs. 1.28; see Table 2).

We found no statistically significant differences regarding the number of bonding ties concerning the sex,

Table 1. Some characteristics of respondents (N = 271).

	S#2 S#1 (n = 70)	N#1 (n = 128)	N#2 (n = 73)
	%	%	%
Ethnicity			
Non-Roma	34.29	36.72	58.90
Roma	65.71	63.28	41.10
Born in area			
Non-Roma	12.50	2.10	0.00
Roma	26.10	3.70	0.00
	Mean	*Mean*	*Mean*
Length of residence in the given area	21.96	12.55	9.97
Non-Roma	22.79	13.64	10.14
Roma	21.52	11.91	9.72
At what age the respondent moved to the given area	21.09	30.59	35.27
Non-Roma	26.50	30.00	36.26
Roma	18.14	30.94	33.83

Note: All effects are significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Size and composition of bonding ties

	S#1 (n = 70)	S#2 N#1 (n = 128)	N#2 (n = 73)
	Mean	*Mean*	*Mean*
Bonding ties	2.00	1.23	1.16
Non-Roma	1.75	1.30	1.28
Roma	2.13	1.19	1.00
	%	%	%
Composition of bonding ties 0 kin 0 non-kin	20.00	10.16	24.66
Only kin	50.00	75.00	50.68
Only non-kin	14.29	10.94	13.70
Mix	15.71	3.91	10.96

Note: All effects are significant at $p < 0.05$.

age, educational attainment, and economic activity status of the egos.

When analysing the composition of the bonding ties, we differentiated four groups: Respondent has (1) no bonding ties, (2) only kin bonding ties, (3) only non-kin bonding ties, and (4) both kin and non-kin ties (see Table 2). We found a significant difference in this composition by residential area (p = 0,002). The share of those with no bonding ties was the highest among those living in N#2 (24.7%). The most diverse, "mixed" composition was most prevalent in S#1 (15.7%). The highest rate of people with only kin bonding ties was found in N#1 (75%).

4.2.2. Ethnic and Spatial Homophily of Bonding Ties

Table 3 shows that the bonding ties of the Roma are ethnically and residentially more homogenous than those of the non-Roma, irrespective of their place of residence. For non-Roma respondents, we found a significant difference in in the three areas: The core networks are ethnically more homogenous in the non-integrated neighbourhood (N#2, 67.59%) and the most heterogeneous in the case of the non-Roma living in the integrated area (S#1, 25.69%). The ethnic homophily of the core networks of the Roma and non-Roma is quite different in S#1: The core networks of the non-Roma are ethnically heterogeneous, while those of the Roma are homogenous.

Most of the alters live in the same area as the ego, that is, they are spatially very close, either from the same household, street, or at least from the same segregated part of the settlement. This is most pronounced for those living in N#2, as 82.76% of their core ties live in the same area. There is a significant difference between the Roma and non-Roma in S#1: Non-Roma have more spatially and more heterogeneous bonding ties and several ties that live further away, while Roma have more ties to their residential area (see Table 3).

4.2.3. The Number, Ethnic, and Spatial Homophily of Bridging Ties

Respondents have an average of 8.43 weak ties, which is significantly influenced by their age and activity status. First, younger respondents (those younger than 40 years old) have more bridging ties than older respondents (9.58 vs. 7.57 persons, p = 0.003); and second, those who were employed at the time of data collection have more weak ties than those who did not have a job (9.53 vs. 7.91 people, p = 0.067).

There are significant differences in the number of bridging ties among the three areas (see Table 4): On average, respondents from N#1 had the most ties (9.71) and those from N#2 the fewest (6.21). This is true for both the Roma and non-Roma. We found no statistically significant differences within the areas between the Roma and non-Roma, although Roma people tend to have more bridging ties in all three areas (see Table 4).

There is no difference based on which area they live in for non-Roma as far as the ethnic homophily of weak ties is concerned. Non-Roma have predominantly non-Roma weak ties, which is not that surprising since non-Roma people are over-represented in the occupations listed in the position generator. The ethnically homogenous ties of the non-Roma poor may enhance their social integration. In the case of the Roma, there is a significant difference in their bridging ties based on which area they live in. Roma people living in S#1 have the smallest proportion of Roma weak ties (13.14%). Thus, their more extended network is ethnically heterogeneous, containing a large number of non-Roma people, indicating greater social integration. In this respect, they differ significantly from both N#1 and N#2, where the share of Roma weak ties is higher (34.2 and 31.76%). The spatial heterogeneity of bridging ties is more pronounced for those living in S#1, in other words, their weak ties are the most spatially dispersed, and for those living in N#1, they are the most homogenous, limited to their residential area.

Table 3. Ethnic and spatial homophily of bonding ties.

	S#1 (n = 70)	S#2 N#1 (n = 128)	N#2 (n = 73)
	%	%	%
Ethnic homophily	64.79	69.42	72.42
Non-Roma	25.69	60.61	67.59
Roma	81.84	74.88	81.58
Residential homophily	74.82	75.51	82.76
Non-Roma	63.43	71.97	79.91
Roma	79.79	77.70	88.16

Note: All effects are significant at p < 0.05.

Table 4. Network characteristics of bridging ties.

	S#1 (n = 70)	S#2 N#1 (n = 128)	N#2 (n = 73)
	Mean	*Mean*	*Mean*
Number of bridging ties	8.41	9.71	6.21
Non-Roma	7.54	8.85	5.77
Roma	8.87	10.21	6.83
	%	%	%
Ethnic homophily	38.16	50.81	67.84
Non-Roma	87.80	78.48	87.57
Roma	17.43	35.52	39.93
Residential homophily	14.47	29.37	23.68
Non-Roma	17.47	20.64	17.97
Roma	13.14	34.20	31.76

Note: All effects are significant at $p < 0.05$.

4.3. Spatial Segregation and Social Capital

We analysed the links between the structure of social networks and the level of spatial integration using discriminant analysis. Classification results show that 69.3% of the cases from the original three neighbourhoods were correctly classified by linear discriminant functions, which, in fact, indicates a strong relationship between the two types of integration. The first distributed function explains 77.5% and the second 22.5% of the explained variance between groups ($p < 0{,}001$).

The first function (see Table 5) is where positive values embody several bonding ties, a long period of residence in the given area and spatially heterogeneous bridging social capital. The second function is where positive values refer to richness in bridging social capital, the dominance of ethnically heterogeneous weak ties and the Roma ethnicity of the respondents. The first function indicates some kind of local embeddedness, thus named "bonding-based non-Roma and Roma," while the second, characterised by the heterogeneous bridging ties of the Roma, is called "bridging-based Roma."

The three group centroids are significantly different from each other (see Table 6 and Figure 2). The spatially more integrated area (S#1) is characterised dominantly by the first function: several bonding ties, strong attachment to the area (living there for the longest time), and spatially heterogeneous bridging ties. The so-called "bridging-based Roma" function mostly characterises the spatially semi-integrated neighbourhood (S#2 N#1)

Table 5. Structure matrix of the discriminant analysis.

	Function 1	Function 2
Number of bonding ties	0.65	−0.12
Length of residence	0.52	0.25
Spatial homophily of bridging ties	−0.34	0.20
Ethnic homophily of bonding ties	−0.06	−0.05
Number of bridging ties	0.00	0.61
Ethnic homophily of bridging ties	−0.32	−0.56
Ethnicity of ego	0.19	0.55
Spatial homophily of bonding ties	−0.05	−0.16

Table 6. The discriminant functions in the three areas studied.

		Functions at group centroids	
		Bonding-based non-Roma and Roma	Bridging-based Roma
S#1		1.401	0.050
S#2	N#1	−0.510	0.334
	N#2	−0.379	−0.738

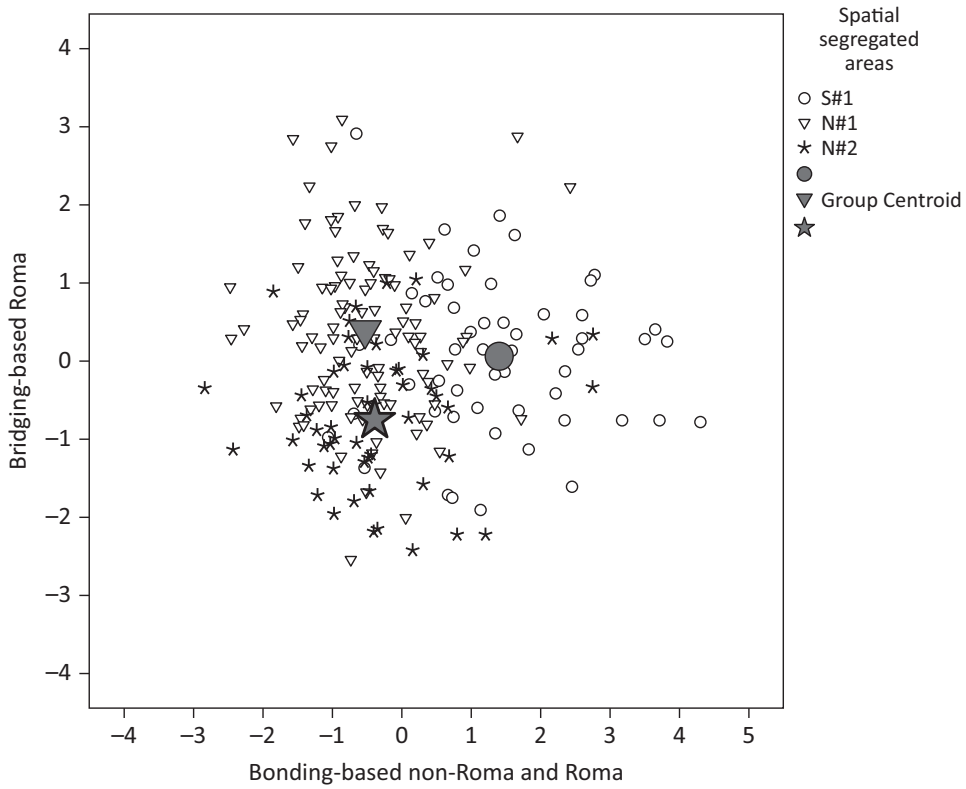

Figure 2. Plot of discriminant functions.

where mostly the Roma respondents are the ones who have more numerous bridging ties, preferably non-Roma and locally bounded. In this neighbourhood, the "bonding-based non-Roma and Roma" function is the weakest. The spatially non-integrated neighbourhood (S#2 N#2) is where the first function is also weak, along with an extremely disadvantaged position on the "Bridging-based Roma function": Most of these respondents are socially isolated from the fabric of the city.

5. Conclusion

The population groups in our analysis do not differ in the three areas based on their socio-demographic characteristics, yet the characteristics of their social networks differ in meaningful ways. Moreover, even inside a seemingly homogenous spatially segregated area (S#2), we may find significant differences regarding social capital. Those living in the more spatially integrated area (S#1) have the most bonding ties, and the number of these ties decreases with the level of spatial integration of the given area. Ethnic differences are also clearly visible: the Roma in the spatially non-integrated part (N#2) have fewer bonding ties than the non-Roma. Those living in the spatially non-integrated area (N#2) are the most bounded locally.

The number of bridging weak ties varies greatly by space and ethnicity: Those from the spatially semi-integrated area (N#1) have the most, while those in the spatially non-integrated area (N#2) the fewest. Roma respondents tend to have more weak ties than non-Roma respondents. The number of weak ties of non-Roma respondents does not differ spatially by the area in which they live. However, in the case of the Roma, the network of those living in the spatially integrated area (S#1) is more diverse both ethnically and spatially; that of the spatially semi-integrated area (N#1) is more locally bounded. The discriminant analysis supports our original claim. The level of spatial integration matters and is reflected in the characteristics of the interpersonal network structures: Those living in more spatially integrated, less segregated areas have somewhat larger, more spatially and ethnically diverse networks, both in terms of their strong and weak ties, while the opposite is true for those living in less integrated and most segregated areas. Those who live in the spatially semi-integrated area (N#1) are "halfway" in both respects: Their mostly kin-based core networks are supplemented with wide but predominantly locally bound weak ties.

Although we could detect relevant differences, the populations of all three segregated areas are primarily locally bounded, segregated communities and are much less spatially integrated than other residential areas of the city. Those living in the spatially more integrated area (S#1) not only have the largest and most diverse networks but also seem to have a strong, "bonding-based" cohesive community network as well. Even the non-Roma who live there have ethnically heterogeneous, that is, Roma network members. The disintegrated area (S#2) is characterised by both spatial and

social isolation; the network resources of the population cannot enhance their social integration as their spatial exclusion coincides with their social exclusion. Moreover, it seems that even the neighbourhood cannot function as a community.

The survey was part of a project initiated by the local government aiming to ensure the social inclusion of people at risk of social exclusion at the community and individual levels. Specific objectives, such as strong community cohesion at the neighbourhood and municipal levels, promoting social inclusion, overcoming long-term disadvantages for children and increasing access to public services, guide the implementation of the project. The city's long-term plans include the eradication of S#1 and the creation of a habitable housing environment and increased opportunities for social inclusion in S#2.

The project staff will build on the existing resources of the population, taking into account the principle of "do no harm" (Charancle & Lucchi, 2018) to local social resources. In light of the foregoing, our policy recommendation for local urban planning authorities is to consider that populations in segregated areas may have different needs based on their different network resources. The more deprived and spatially and socially segregated area (S#2) has nothing to build on, while the more spatially integrated area (S#1) has resources both within the community and "external" links that could be exploited for more efficient social integration.

The positive or negative qualities of the existing relations should be taken into account in executing a move from the part of the settlement with poorer infrastructure (#S1) to a more modern and comfortable area (S#2). The more favourable network indicators of the territorially integrated part of the settlement (S#1) should be considered when the settlement is dismantled: Strong family and neighbourhood ties should be prioritised as potential resources when they are moved to the new residential area. To ensure a positive outcome and avoid conflicts, these should be built upon as a priority in neighbourhood and community activities. Both the strong local cohesion and the change in perspective are well illustrated by the fact that people in settlement S#1 were initially reluctant to move, despite the promise of better housing. However, currently, those who have not yet moved are looking forward to the move and taking their children to see their new home. The desire to move also reflects the importance of strong ties: People are keen to move to where their trusted relationships and familiar support system are located.

In the other part of the settlement (S#2), in addition to infrastructural improvements, efforts should be made to increase the network resources of the population, to promote the development and maintenance of core relationships, and to raise awareness among the programme staff of their significant role as bridging ties in the social integration of the inhabitants of the settlement. The number, geographical extent and ethnic composition of core and weak-ties of the people living in the settlement area are also increased and enriched by the community activities organised as part of the project (joint landscaping, joint organisation of events, sports events with members of the majority community, the storytelling-based "Meséd" programme, Lego building), neighbourhood discussions, involvement in training courses and activities.

The COVID epidemic and the resulting restrictions have disrupted community activities and slowed the hard-won progress. The effectiveness of the programme and the organised activities, the involvement of residents and their need for social interaction is reflected in the fact that the May 2021 opening was eagerly awaited by the inhabitants of the municipality. Thus, the programme can rely on the results achieved before the onset of the COVID epidemic and continue effectively.

Acknowledgments

The research was supported by the National Research, Development and Innovation Office—NKFIH, K124940, and the Közösen a Kiútért (Together for Integration) project no.: TOP-6.9.1–16-NY1–2017-00001.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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About the Authors

Éva Huszti is a sociologist and she works as an associate professor at the Institute of Political Science and Sociology of the University of Debrecen. Graduated in sociology (2003) and received her PhD in sociology in 2013. Her research interests include personal social network (quantitative and qualitative research methods), social integration, and ageing.

Fruzsina Albert is a research chair and head of the research department on families and social relations at the Institute for Sociology of the Centre for Social Sciences. She is also a professor of sociology at the Institute of Mental Health, Semmelweis University, Budapest. She is an expert at the European Social Policy Network. Her research interests include the study of interpersonal networks, including family and friendship ties by both quantitative and qualitative methods, social inclusion, gender, and ageing.

Adrienne Csizmady is the director of the Institute for Sociology at the Centre for Social Sciences (Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellences), and associate professor of sociology at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Szeged. Graduated in sociology (1995) and received her PhD in sociology in 2001. Her main research interests are urban social problems including social consequences of urban renewal, over-tourism, sustainable social environment, culture and heritage, suburbanisation, and integration strategies of people moving from town to country.

Ilona Nagy works as a demonstrator at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and takes part in projects at the Centre for Social Sciences (Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellences). She graduated as a geographer (MSc) specialised in urban and regional planning. At present, she studies mathematics, survey statistics, and data analysis at ELTE. Her main field of interest is the spatiality of social phenomena with an interdisciplinary approach and quantitative methodology.

Beáta Dávid is a professor and director at the Institute of Mental Health, coordinator of the sociological doctorate program of mental health sciences, and vice-dean of Scientific and Educational Affairs at the Faculty of Health and Public Services, Semmelweis University, Budapest. She is research chair at the Centre for Social Sciences, president of the Hungarian Network for Social Network Analysis, and trustee board chair of Home Start Hungary. Her research interests include social network analysis, social capital, sociology of health, family, and ethnicity.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 388–398
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4591

Article

Interpersonal Antecedents to Selective Disclosure of Lesbian and Gay Identities at Work

Julian M. Rengers [1,2,*], Liesbet Heyse [1], Rafael P. M. Wittek [1] and Sabine Otten [2]

[1] Department of Sociology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands; E-Mails: j.m.rengers@rug.nl (J.M.R.), l.heyse@rug.nl (L.H.), r.p.m.wittek@rug.nl (R.P.M.W.)
[2] Department of Psychology, University of Groningen, The Netherlands; E-Mail: s.otten@rug.nl (S.O.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 10 June 2021 | Accepted: 1 October 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) employees' sexual identity may be considered a concealable stigmatised identity. Disclosing it to others at work could potentially lead to discrimination and rejection, hence threatening their inclusion. Therefore, they may hide their sexual identity instead, which may then come at the cost of, e.g., guilt for not living authentically. However, disclosure is a continuum—rather than a dichotomy—meaning that LGB workers may decide to disclose selectively, i.e., telling some, but not all co-workers. Most literature on disclosure focuses on the interplay between intrapersonal (e.g., psychological) and contextual (e.g., organisational) characteristics, thereby somewhat overlooking the role of interpersonal (e.g., relational) characteristics. In this article, we present findings from semi-structured, in-depth interviews with nine Dutch lesbian and gay employees, conducted in early 2020, to gain a better understanding of interpersonal antecedents to disclosure decisions at work. Through our thematic analysis, we find that LGB workers may adopt a proactive or reactive approach to disclosure, which relates to the salience of their sexual identity at work (high/low) and their concern for anticipated acceptance. Other themes facilitating disclosure include an affective dimension, being in a relationship, and associating with the employee resource group. We demonstrate the importance of studying disclosure at the interpersonal level and reflect on how our findings relate to literature on disclosure, authenticity, belonging, and social inclusion of LGB individuals at work.

Keywords
authenticity; belonging; disclosure; identity management; inclusion; LGB employees; social relationships; thematic analysis

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) employees, whose sexual identity can be considered a concealable stigmatised identity (Jones & King, 2014), run an increased risk of being discriminated against, harassed, or socially excluded at work compared to their heterosexual co-workers (Webster et al., 2018). They therefore carefully manage their sexual identity in social interaction with others (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014). Disclosing their sexual identity may potentially generate both costs (e.g., experience discrimination) and benefits (e.g., live authentically; Clair et al., 2005), as does concealing (e.g., feeling guilt for not being true to oneself vs protecting oneself against stigmatisation; Pachankis, 2007). Disclosure decisions, or choices about (non-)disclosure in particular situations (Ragins, 2008), therefore play a central role in the lives of LGB workers (Ragins et al., 2007).

Two particular characteristics of disclosure decisions make it unlikely that LGB employees are completely uniformly "in" or "out" of "the closet" (Ragins, 2008). First, disclosure decisions reappear with each new social interaction or context (e.g., King et al., 2017); they constitute a continuous, lifelong process (Legate & Ryan, 2014). Second, disclosure decisions are situated on a continuum, ranging from full concealment to full disclosure (Berkley et al., 2019). Along this continuum, LGB employees have a range of behavioural strategies at their disposal (e.g., "fabrication," "signalling," "normalising"; see Clair et al., 2005); they may *selectively* disclose their sexual identity and may differ concerning how "out" they are to different people at work (Legate et al., 2012). In fact, a majority of LGB employees likely engages in selective disclosure. In a survey by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (2020), 37% of about 60,000 employed participants had disclosed to no one at work, 26% to a few, 16% to most—but not *all*—and 21% to all co-workers. Even if selective disclosure is common in practice (see also Griffith & Hebl, 2002), perhaps more so than full concealment or full disclosure, it is often not studied in detail empirically.

This study addresses this gap by providing a more detailed understanding of LGB employees' selective disclosure decisions at work. We ask: How do interpersonal characteristics play a role in LGB employees' selective sexual identity disclosure decisions across social relationships with different colleagues? We argue that it is necessary to go beyond prevailing explanations predominantly focusing on the interplay between intrapersonal and contextual characteristics. Instead, we adopt an interpersonal approach, by studying lesbian and gay employees' dyadic social relationships at work, within which disclosure decisions occur (see Compton, 2016).

2. Theoretical Background

Existing literature predominantly focuses on intrapersonal and contextual antecedents to disclosure decisions. Among individual-level variables, the effects of the degree of self-acceptance, disclosure goals, identity centrality, identity confusion, internalised heterosexism, job satisfaction, personality variables, and private outness on disclosure decisions at work have been noted; contextual variables that have been studied concerning disclosure decisions at work include perceived heterosexist discrimination, LGBT supportive practices, organisational supportiveness, and workplace climate (e.g., Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010; Fletcher & Everly, 2021; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; Reed & Leuty, 2016; Wax et al., 2018). Disclosure decisions are guided by two potentially opposing fundamental psychological needs (Clair et al., 2005; Jones & King, 2014). Individuals are motivated to find a balance between the differentiation of themselves from others, thereby fulfilling their need for *uniqueness*, while simultaneously feeling sufficiently embedded within a social group to satisfy their need for *belonging* (following Brewer, 1991). As fulfilment of the needs for belonging and authenticity—the expression of one's "true self," as a more broadly applicable concept than uniqueness—also determines individuals' perceived inclusion in social contexts (Jansen et al., 2014), LGB employees' disclosure decisions are closely related to their perceived social inclusion at work. Taken together, it is clear that disclosure decisions result from a highly complex process (Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010).

In our study, we slightly shift focus compared to most literature, by approaching disclosure decisions at a within-person level (Jones & King, 2014). This approach aims to understand how the same person may manage their identity differently in accordance with situational characteristics of a specific setting (e.g., King et al., 2017), for example across different social relationships with co-workers. A within-person approach is necessary to understand why an LGB employee may fully disclose to one colleague, whilst avoiding the topic altogether with another (Legate et al., 2012)—i.e., selective disclosure.

We argue that two factors particularly affect an individual employee's disclosure decision towards a specific other. First, the perceived level of "anticipated acceptance" (Jones & King, 2014): the extent to which an LGB employee believes that an interaction partner would be accepting of their concealable stigmatised identity, should they disclose it. People with a high level of anticipated acceptance are more likely to elicit disclosure, and people with a low level of anticipated acceptance are less likely (for preliminary evidence see King et al., 2017). Previous research suggested several interpersonal characteristics that may increase anticipated acceptance, and thus disclosure likelihood: others who are perceived as having knowledge, being sympathetic, or being similar (e.g., possess the same stigmatised identity; Clair et al., 2005); relationships characterised by high degrees of (emotional) closeness and interpersonal trust (Derlega et al., 1993); others being a sexual minority, a woman, or lower in the hierarchical structure (King et al., 2017).

The second factor concerns the assessment of how disclosure might affect costs and benefits in terms of belonging and authenticity. The need for belonging consists of the motivation to create and maintain stable and strong social relationships; this can be fulfilled by having positive and recurring interactions with others in a group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). If LGB employees have positive, recurring interactions with colleagues, they may feel that they belong. In such cases, they may safely disclose, which helps resolve their need for authenticity. This could also occur in reverse: The need for authenticity consists of the motivation to stay true to oneself (Kernis & Goldman, 2006), which can be fulfilled by feeling allowed and encouraged to be oneself within a social environment. If LGB employees experience this in a relationship with co-workers (for example because they constantly talk about their love for *RuPaul's Drag Race*), this may facilitate disclosure. Doing so may ease building a (strong) relationship, thereby satisfying the

need for belonging. Finally, these processes may also negatively influence one another: LGB employees who have mostly negative or ambiguous interactions with co-workers may feel dissatisfaction regarding their need for belonging. This may hamper disclosure, which may endanger satisfying one's need for authenticity. Similarly, if one does not feel allowed and encouraged to be oneself, disclosure becomes less likely, which may create relational strain, since one may have to put up a facade (e.g., Pachankis, 2007). Concealment, however, can create a downward spiral and further decrease feelings of belonging and acceptance (Newheiser et al., 2017), partially because individuals will feel less authentic during social interactions (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014). Taken together, anticipated costs and benefits regarding the fulfilment of the needs for belonging and authenticity within a social relationship may inform the choice of relational disclosure strategy, which may lead to selective disclosure at work.

In conclusion, characteristics of interaction partners—as well as characteristics of their relationships with LGB employees—have not been extensively studied in disclosure and identity management literature (King et al., 2017). Therefore, to address the relative dearth of such an interpersonal focus, we study the social relationships that LGB employees have with their co-workers in depth. Within and across these relationships, we investigate which factors affect (selective) disclosure decisions, and how exactly they may do so.

3. Methods

3.1. Study Context and Participants

This research was conducted at a large logistics company in the Netherlands, a country generally seen as relatively LGBT-friendly. It ranks relatively highly (12th out of 49 countries) on the annual Rainbow Index of the European branch of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (2021), which delineates the legal and policy position of LGBTI people across European countries. Moreover, 92% of the population think homosexuality should be accepted by society (Pew Research Center, 2020). The company has been actively working towards creating an inclusive workplace. For example, they annually administer a diversity index measuring how well they are doing, and they invite external parties to evaluate their diversity and inclusion policies. Their diversity programmes received awards and the organisation is generally considered an inclusive employer. Especially interesting is that the company has one main office, as well as several warehouses, distribution centres, and depots across the country. This may make it challenging to ensure an equal commitment to, and implementation of, the centrally established diversity and inclusion policies across all layers and locations. Nonetheless, in an internal survey, 89% of LGBT-identified workers indicated that they feel accepted at work (R. Takken, personal communication, October 22, 2018).

Nine employees participated, seven of whom identified as male and gay, and two as female and lesbian; no one in our sample identified as bisexual. At the time of interviewing, two participants were married, four were in a committed, monogamous relationship, and three were single. All participants were native Dutch, had completed (at least) a bachelor's degree at university level, and their ages ranged from mid-20s to mid-50s. Most participants were full-time stationed in the company's main office, while some also worked in other locations. One participant worked in delivery. Other jobs held by participants were in IT or sales and ranged from project management to product development. Table 1 provides an overview of participants' relationship status, organisational tenure, disclosure antecedents, and their inductively created grouping.

Participants were recruited through the gatekeeper strategy paired with snowball sampling (see Hennink et al., 2011). We established contact with the company's employee resource group (ERG), which sent out a recruitment call via their mailing list and Facebook page. After participation, interviewees were also asked to forward the research details to other potentially interested colleagues.

3.2. Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis

As part of a larger data collection, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. The main advantages of this were (a) the possibility to establish rapport between researcher and interviewee, to discuss the potentially sensitive topic of sexual identity, and (b) ensuring that key questions were asked, while simultaneously allowing interviewees to bring up topics themselves (Hennink et al., 2011). The first author served as the interviewer in this research. All interviews were conducted face-to-face between January and March 2020. Opening questions addressed participants' demographics, work career, job content, and contact with colleagues. Key questions related to their sexual identity management, in general and at work, and in specific social relationships at work. To collect social network data, we adopted the hierarchical mapping technique (Antonucci, 1986), whereby people were prompted by the word "colleague" and invited to write down names, in descending order of closeness. The aim was to establish differences in disclosure behaviours vis-à-vis specific co-workers, to generate insights into interviewees' selective disclosure patterns. Finally, participants were asked about general work experiences—being a lesbian or gay employee working at this company—and how they thought their employer was doing in terms of diversity and inclusion. Interviews were audio-recorded following participant consent and verbatim transcripts were made, which were anonymised and pseudonymised afterwards. The study protocol was

approved by the Ethics Committee of Sociology of the University of Groningen.

Data were analysed following thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytic method provides a systematic approach to identify, analyse, and report patterns—or *themes*—across the data. Thematic analysis is an ongoing iterative process, which requires constantly moving between data and analysis; the first author familiarised himself with the data during interviewing, transcription, and multiple (re)readings of the transcripts. During this stage, he took notes to denote interesting aspects of the data. Herein he adopted an experiential lens, prioritising meanings that participants attach to their lived experiences. This approach fits within a critical realist framework, wherein individuals' meaning-making of their experiences is acknowledged, and that these processes are embedded in a broader social context (e.g., Willig, 1999). A combined deductive (i.e., theory-driven) and inductive (i.e., data-driven) approach was followed in identifying and developing codes and themes. Although data were analysed following specific theoretical ideas (e.g., focusing on interpersonal aspects of disclosure decisions), the data content could simultaneously inform and develop our analysis (e.g., the distinction between proactive and reactive disclosure). This approach led to several data-driven codes, based on which the first author identified patterns that could be developed into themes, particularly within the realm of disclosure. Thick descriptions of each case were made, and after in-depth discussion with one of the co-authors to further refine the themes, we conducted cross-case comparison, comparing a single code ("disclosure"; Hennink et al., 2011). This process led to our inductive grouping (see Table 1), which prompted a comparison by inductive subgroups, to explore differences within each group. Both interview guide and codebook are available in the Supplementary Materials.

4. Findings

We present four main findings: First, one participant's story demonstrates how different antecedents may be pivotal at different stages of the disclosure process. Second, participants preferred either a more proactive or reactive approach to disclosure. Third, we relate these approaches to participants' needs for authenticity and

Table 1. Participant details, groupings, and disclosure antecedents.

Name (pseudonym)	Relationship status	Tenure at company	Grouping	Disclosure antecedents		
				Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Contextual
Arnold (M)	Committed relationship	>15 years	Achieving authenticity; proactive disclosure	High sexual identity salience	n/a	Supportive environment
Willem (M)	Married	>10 years	Achieving authenticity; proactive disclosure	High sexual identity salience	n/a	Supportive environment*
Corné (M)	Single	>5 years	Achieving authenticity; reactive disclosure	Low sexual identity salience	Contact, closeness	No barriers
Iza (F)	Committed relationship	2 years	Achieving authenticity; reactive disclosure	Low sexual identity salience	Expected future relationship	Supportive environment*
Leo (M)	Committed relationship	>20 years	Achieving authenticity; reactive disclosure	Low sexual identity salience	n/a	No barriers*
Boudewijn (M)	Single	2½ years	Striving for belonging; conditional disclosure	Conditionally open	Scanning for social norms	Supportive environment
Madelief (F)	Married	4½ years	Striving for belonging; conditional disclosure	Conditionally open	Scanning for comfort	Supportive environment
Stijn (M)	Single	>10 years	Striving for belonging; conditional disclosure	Conditionally open	Scanning for acceptance	Supportive environment
Tijmen (M)	Committed relationship	>20 years	n/a	Struggled to find self-acceptance	Trust is key	Familiar environment*

Notes: F = female, M = male; * = engagement in activities for ERG facilitated disclosure "by association" (see Section 4.5).

belonging and find that their sexual identity salience at work, as well as scanning for anticipated acceptance, play a key role in these processes. Fourth, we highlight several crosscutting themes that further exemplified other elements related to disclosure.

4.1. A Processual View of Disclosure: The Exemplary Story of Tijmen

Eight out of nine participants were largely "out" in their personal lives when they started working for this organisation. One participant, however, went through this process of self-acceptance while he worked here. His story powerfully demonstrates the processual nature of disclosure and illustrates how various antecedents on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual levels can be more or less prevalent across different stages of this process.

Tijmen was in a committed long-term relationship with a woman—although he did have sex with men since long before that. He did not call himself gay, because he did not dress or behave like the gays he saw on TV. Hence, he kept this identity hidden for a long time. At some point, she found out, however; they broke up and he struggled to find self-acceptance as a gay person. When he first joined the company, he had not yet accepted his sexual identity privately and found it therefore difficult to disclose to others. At some point, he disclosed within his tight-knit team of four people, but only after he trusted them sufficiently. One of them later outed him to a new colleague, which he did not appreciate because he did not sufficiently trust that person yet. Indeed, at that time, he "considered trust, as if I am sharing a secret" to be the key ingredient to disclosure. After relocating to another department, where he became manager, he generally did not disclose, which was motivated by (a) seeing his sexuality as a secret, (b) the hierarchical distance between him and his colleagues, and (c) his team members gossiping about his sexual identity. He only disclosed to one person, then: a woman with whom he felt a close emotional connection—whom he therefore trusted. He moved back to his former department and, strengthened by two pivotal moments in his life—these being (a) having a committed relationship with a man and (b) participating in the company's ERG—he felt confident enough to start living openly as a gay man. Since then, he has been very open about his sexual identity at work, and he now "find[s] it difficult to behave differently than how [he] feels." In principle, he now does not give it much thought, which is illustrated by his appearance in an interview with the ERG in the company newsletter, effectively telling everyone: "I am gay; share it with the whole country, I am fine with it!"

4.2. Disclosure as Proactive or Reactive

A key finding, and an essential distinction to make in studying selective disclosure, is the approach participants took to discussing their personal life—including their sexual identity—at work, which can be either more proactive or reactive. Some participants (n = 2) preferred a proactive form of disclosure, bringing up these topics of their own volition, rather than waiting for others to ask. They voiced a strong need for authenticity and saw not being fully authentic as an unbearable cost that they were unwilling to carry; it was simply not an option for them to compromise who they are. Most participants (n = 6) however, preferred a reactive approach; they would not be likely to bring up their personal life themselves but preferred waiting to be asked about it. They did this for several different reasons, on which we elaborate in the following sections.

4.3. Achieving Authenticity, Yet in Different Ways

Following our theoretical framework, we propose that several participants' experiences can be seen in light of their need for authenticity, paired with varying degrees of sexual identity salience at work. Identity salience generally refers to the relative importance of a certain identity within a given social context (following self-categorisation theory, e.g., Turner et al., 1987). Whereas Arnold and Willem found their sexual identity highly salient at work, Corné, Iza, and Leo indicated low workplace sexual identity salience.

4.3.1. High Sexual Identity Salience and Proactive Disclosure: Arnold and Willem

Two participants expressed the salience of their sexual identity and their need to be authentically themselves as gay men. This high sexual identity salience shone through in their preference for proactive disclosure, as they neither scanned for anticipated acceptance nor made their disclosure dependent on interpersonal factors.

Before Arnold started working here, he worked at several other companies where he did not disclose because these had a more masculine, classical organisational culture. Moreover, since no one else was openly gay, he did not feel the need to disclose. After joining this organisation, he entered a department where he recognised many co-workers from gay bars, so he found it easy to disclose instantaneously. After having transferred to another location, he was a bit more cautious, but he found that the company offered a safe environment, and therefore he felt free to tell others. This co-occurred with him joining a gay association, where he gained a lot of confidence, up to the point that he no longer cares about what others think (of him being gay). He does not want to adapt to others and he will no longer make concessions because this is who he is—"and if others have a problem with that, it is their problem." He holds authenticity as the greatest good, which translates into a preference for a proactive approach to disclosure: He chose to "very actively, at new jobs, new job interviews… mention it from day one. It is also on [his] CV," as well as on his LinkedIn and Facebook pages.

When Willem first joined the company, he had not yet met his current husband—this happened a month later. In the beginning, he was looking for a natural way to disclose to others, which was greatly facilitated by being in a relationship, as well as by his involvement with the company's ERG. Nowadays, he tends to explicitly say he is "married to [his] husband Dirk" when he meets new colleagues, "because they may otherwise have wrong expectations." This means that, much like Arnold, he has adopted a proactive approach to disclosure. He considers it a subtle way to correct people's (heteronormative) assumptions and to make homosexuality visible. His predisposition to disclose proactively is predominantly motivated by "find[ing] it, in the end, nice for others to know who [he is], what keeps [him] warm, and what [he does]." Moreover, being authentically himself helps establish a genuine connection with others, something Willem finds very important.

4.3.2. Low Sexual Identity Salience and Reactive Disclosure: Corné, Iza, and Leo

Three participants emphasised that their sexual identity was not relevant to them at work. They would reactively disclose if asked but did not feel a need to disclose proactively to be authentically themselves. They would like to be viewed as "more" than their sexual identity and aim to achieve their authenticity in other ways. All three indicated that they would talk openly about their personal life outside of work, for example during drinks, which would be further facilitated by working together a lot with someone and knowing them personally.

Corné started working at this company when he was already comfortably out in his personal life. After a rather difficult process towards self-acceptance, he nowadays does not consider it an issue anymore, especially not at work: Even if he never felt a barrier to disclose, it is simply irrelevant there, he reckons. He would not be likely to just bring it up out of the blue to everyone he meets, and he would not introduce himself by saying " 'hi, I am Corné, I am gay,' because that has nothing to do with [the] job." He also points out that, e.g., during work-related meetings, where everyone is simply there to discuss topics x, y, and z, and not their personal life, it is not necessary to disclose. Indeed, he also does not know of those colleagues e.g., "where they live, whether they are married, whether they are LGBTQI," and does not need them to know this about him either. Nonetheless, with the colleagues with whom he works together a lot, has a lot of contact with, or knows a bit better, hence has a somewhat more personal—as opposed to a business-like relationship—he tends to be very open about his sexual identity.

When Leo first joined the organisation, he was still figuring out for himself whether he was maybe into both men and women. Therefore, in the beginning, he was not very open about his sexual identity—although he did disclose it during his job interview. After relocating after several years, with both himself and society having developed in that time, he started being more open about being in a committed relationship with a man. He does so by simply talking about, e.g., what they did during the weekend when prompted by his colleagues about that, and he has never experienced any barrier that prevented him from talking about his boyfriend. However, he considers work to be work in the first place, and he simply finds his sexuality an irrelevant part of his identity there: "The first thing at work is not 'I am Leo and my boyfriend is called Marco.' The first thing is 'I am Leo, and this is my job, and let's get started." Outside of work, e.g., in a bar, if someone were to ask him about his personal life he would answer truthfully, and he would be happy to talk more in-depth, but he does not see the need to discuss it at work.

When Iza first started working at the organisation, she joined a team of six. At a certain point, during lunch, as they started to get to know one another, she was very open about her sexual identity—and nowadays, "basically everyone" at work knows. However, "when you first enter, and everything is still new, you are obviously asked 'do you have a boyfriend'? It is a very common question." Her gut reaction is often to respond "no," thus technically telling the truth. This response tends to be more common when she only expects to see them for five minutes. However, sometimes she will say: "No, but I do have a girlfriend." Such a response is more common when she expects to be working a lot together in the future; in such cases, she will elaborate. Either way, she ascertained that "if you were to ask about it, [she] would always answer truthfully." She would be unlikely to bring up her sexual identity at her own volition, however, because she does not want to be seen for just her sexuality and the label that she may then have. Instead, she wants to be judged based on how she is around others, and for how she is as a person. This also makes her somewhat hesitant to talk freely about her personal life—not only her sexual identity—around others who are higher up in the hierarchy, as she is afraid they might get a "bad" impression of her.

4.4. Striving for Belonging Through Anticipated Acceptance and Conditional Disclosure: Boudewijn, Madelief, and Stijn

The remaining three participants talked about how they make some of their disclosure decisions conditional on cues by others that indicate anticipated acceptance. What they considered important cues, however, differed between them. They gauged either the prevalent work culture and social norms (Boudewijn) or their interaction partner (Madelief, Stijn) for cues that indicated whether they would feel comfortable disclosing their sexual identity in this situation. In line with our theoretical framework, their hesitation could be seen as a perceived necessity to safeguard their belonging: They are uncertain of whether disclosing could potentially harm

their relationship with others, and therefore first evaluate whether others would be accepting.

Boudewijn entered the company after having had to lower his workload due to mental health issues. He realised that the more open he is—whether this concerns his sexual identity or his mental health issues—the more recognition others will have. Hence, generally speaking, he is very open about what is happening in his life. However, he would not bring it up himself; there has to be a cause for it, for example when someone asks him about his personal life. This happened in one of the depots where he works: Someone asked whether he has a girlfriend, and "it is a very normal thing to say" for him, so he "never doubted about making that into a big deal." Since others also talked openly about their personal lives and issues, he felt free to do the same. However, in another depot, they only asked why he was working there, so he told them about his mental health issues. His sexual identity, on the other hand, was never a topic of inquiry. Since he noticed in conversation with others that they also did not talk about their personal life themselves, he did not see the need to say anything about it either: It is simply something these colleagues do not know of one another. Hence, Boudewijn scanned his environment carefully to gauge the prevalent social norm within the different contexts and adjusted his behaviour to the particular setting in which he was working.

When Madelief started working at the organisation, she immediately told her team of five men about her sexual identity—possibly on the first day even; she recalls now that "it does not feel like it was a thing." She then moved to her current location, where she again immediately told her co-workers—maybe not consciously, but when they asked her, she would tell them. However, she does notice a difference here: With her co-workers with whom she shares an office, she is very open. They work together every day and there is a very informal atmosphere. In the warehouse adjacent to her office building, however, which she regularly visits for work, she finds it much more difficult to tell others. She did not mention it to everyone there because she did not necessarily feel comfortable doing so, as she felt a bit more distant from them. Additionally, since colleagues there tend to have a lower education level, or be of different cultural backgrounds, she feared that they might be less open towards homosexuality, or know less about it—hence, she feared that they might potentially view her sexual identity as problematic. Even if these are somewhat stereotypical assumptions based on the other's group membership, her initial trepidation felt more justified when she heard comments like "you are probably married [to a man]" or "at your age, you have to be married [to a man]." Such comments made her think: "Never mind, at least I will not tell them myself." She thinks that if someone in the warehouse were to ask her whether she has a boyfriend, she would say "'no, but I do have a wife.' But [I would] not [tell them] of my own accord."

Stijn had only been out privately for a year when he joined the organisation, so he had only just started his journey of self-acceptance. In addition, since he was new, and employed on a temporary contract, he did not disclose for the first two years. He was afraid that other people may think of him negatively and feared that coming out as gay may taint his image, so he pretended to have a girlfriend. However, living that lie did eat away at him, and he was actively looking for a natural moment to disclose. When a colleague somewhat pressured him into giving the name of his "girlfriend," he took that as an opportunity to have his first coming out at work—something he now regrets not having done earlier. After having moved to a different location, he had to disclose again; this was facilitated by the birth of his son, which prompted him to bring *beschuit met muisjes* (a Dutch treat that parents of new borns hand out to celebrate the birth of their baby) to work. When colleagues asked him how his wife was doing, it was another perfect, natural moment for him to say that this is not his wife: He effectively disclosed to all his colleagues—nowadays everyone knows he is gay. He now prefers disclosing as early as possible (but not too early), to not give people the wrong impression, since "otherwise there will be a discrepancy between who people think you are and the real you… and the longer you wait, the more difficult it becomes." However, sometimes disclosure "is not worth the investment"; to gauge such situations, he scans his interaction partners for signals that may convey acceptance, measuring whether disclosing would somehow harm others' perceptions of him. He found this especially valuable while working in international settings, since "you don't know how people think about gays." He reckons that when conversations get more personal, if others possess a certain degree of openness, and if he feels a connection with them, he feels comfortable to disclose.

4.5. Crosscutting Themes: Relationship Status as a Facilitator to Disclosure, the Importance of an Affective Dimension, and Disclosure by Association

Besides the findings presented above, we noticed several crosscutting themes. First, several participants (n = 4) found that being in a relationship—rather than being single—makes it easier to disclose one's sexual identity. For example, Willem reckons that disclosing is trickier when you do not have a partner:

> [If] you are not in a relationship… what do you have to say about it then?...When you do have a partner, it is easy: 'I have a boyfriend.' But when you do not, you have to say 'but I am into men,' which I find a bit weird.

Iza echoes this sentiment; for example, when introducing herself, she would say: "I am Iza and I live in…" Then, if she expects to have a long-term working relationship with them, she would add: "I live together with [followed by a female name]." The same applies to being married,

she argues: During an introduction, one would naturally say "my husband," or "my wife." Simultaneously, if she were single, she would not say "I am into women" while introducing herself, "as there is no particular reason to do so then." Finally, Boudewijn first disclosed—at a previous employer—once he was in a committed relationship with a man because he "found that a good moment to tell others—just as anyone else would."

Second, several participants (n = 4) referred to the importance of an affective dimension, related to feelings and emotions, that facilitates disclosure. Examples of facilitating factors—which have also been found in other research (Derlega et al., 1993; Webster et al., 2018)—included perceived (emotional) closeness, interpersonal trust, and mutually sharing details about one's personal life. For example, Corné mentioned: "With the group of colleagues with whom I'm closer… you tend to talk about 'what did you do on the weekend'… or 'how is your relationship going'… that's fine." Similarly, Boudewijn found that with "colleagues who are also open themselves, [he] automatically [has] a natural connection…[he has] more to talk about." Finally, Madelief's story demonstrated how having a better relationship with others facilitates disclosure: When she first met her new Muslim colleague, she "found it trickier to tell him immediately." She first needed to determine what his opinion on the topic was and asked herself: "Can I be myself or not?" After she got to know him better, she disclosed to him: "I do really have a lot of contact with him, and I just know he is a sweet man… so at some point, we got to talking about it, and then it is good."

Third, participants (n = 4) talked about how, by engaging with the company's ERG, they implicitly had their coming out. Such "disclosure by association," where one does not actively voice one's sexual identity, but rather leaves it up to others to deduce it from associating with the ERG, occurred in several distinct ways. Willem, for example, through his work with Pride Amsterdam, confirmed his manager's suspicions that he was gay. Tijmen gave an interview for the company newsletter on behalf of the ERG, thereby effectively making his membership of the LGBTQ+ community public. Leo's face is still on a Pride poster that was made several years ago and which is reused now and again, such that others may recognise him as a member of the community. Finally, Iza recalled a story of some colleagues seeing her on the company boat during Pride Amsterdam, which prompted them to ask why she was there. Such "disclosure by association" may have, to a certain extent, replaced their explicit coming out, as well as generally lowered the threshold to disclose to colleagues.

5. Discussion

5.1. Contributions and Implications

In this study, we set out to identify how interpersonal characteristics play a role in selective disclosure of an LGB identity at work, thereby answering a call for more empirical research on understanding disclosure from a within-person perspective (King et al., 2017). We proposed that disclosure decisions to a specific other effectively result from two processes, namely the degree of anticipated acceptance and a cost-benefit assessment of one's need for belonging and authenticity. Our main contributions to disclosure literature are twofold. First, the distinction between a proactive and a reactive approach to disclosure has, to the best of our knowledge, not been reported previously. This finding further illuminates the linkages between disclosure and the needs for belonging and authenticity (see also Fletcher & Everly, 2021; Newheiser et al., 2017), and, hence, to LGB employees' perceived inclusion (following Jansen et al., 2014). For some, the need for authenticity as an LGB person is so central—and their sexual identity so salient—that they disclose proactively, regardless of interpersonal (e.g., relational) characteristics, thereby leaving little room for selective disclosure. They do not gauge for anticipated acceptance and would possibly accept lower satisfaction of their belonging need, since being an authentically LGB person is key to them.

A reactive approach to disclosure was more common, however, albeit for different reasons. Several participants voiced a low identity salience at work, effectively rendering their sexual identity irrelevant in that domain. They preferred achieving authenticity by focusing on other aspects of their identity. This translated to them not bringing up their sexual identity of their own volition; they preferred waiting to be asked about it, upon which they would disclose. This reactive approach was also preferred by other participants who were somewhat concerned that their disclosure may potentially not be met with acceptance and therefore showed a tendency to scan their environment first. During this process, we found that different people might pay attention to different kinds of cues, thereby contributing to our understanding of anticipated acceptance (Jones & King, 2014). LGB employees may choose to do so to be in control of determining who—and who not—to tell about their sexual identity. Reactive disclosure, which could be called "conditional" in this case, can then be an instrument to further deepen already existing relationships or to safely establish new ones. In a sense, these workers accept a temporarily lower satisfaction of their need for authenticity to make sure that, once they disclose, this will not hurt their belonging need.

Second, we primarily set out to study interpersonal antecedents to disclosure decisions. We do indeed find indications that this level may be relevant for LGB workers, given how an affective dimension facilitates disclosure for some participants, as well as how others scan their social environment for cues indicating anticipated acceptance. As such, our study resonates with previous qualitative work showing how disclosure studied from an interpersonal perspective is a dynamic, multifaceted process (e.g., Galvin-White & O'Neal, 2016). Our study

especially highlights, however, the intricate manner in which intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics interplay throughout different stages of the sexual identity disclosure process at work (cf. Tijmen's story). As such, this study proposes that (a) an interpersonal approach adds valuable information to the study of disclosure decisions at work and (b) that the interpersonal level should feature more explicitly—in conjunction with the intrapersonal and contextual levels—in future research.

5.2. Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

Several limitations should be noted. First, we recruited LGB workers in one particular organisation, which is known as an inclusive employer, situated in the Netherlands, which is a relatively LGBT-friendly country. Second, the social contexts wherein our participants worked were relatively homogeneous: most worked in the main office, with relatively little variation in co-workers' educational level. Several participants alluded to the different reality, e.g., in warehouses, where working with co-workers from a range of cultural or religious backgrounds may make disclosure an entirely different process (Madelief's story). Third, all participants were generally very open about their sexual identity, which made studying selective disclosure somewhat more difficult and limited the added value of the social network mappings to our study. Those who generally prefer to conceal may, for example, pay more attention to interpersonal antecedents. A final limitation that should be mentioned is the small sample size of our study, which means we have to be cautious in interpreting the claims that we are putting forth in this article. Nevertheless, even within this small, relatively homogeneous sample, several participants described hesitations concerning disclosure, partly concerning interpersonal factors.

These limitations also open up opportunities for future research. Our study could be extended to other organisations in other countries. Especially when organisational climates are less optimal for disclosure, interpersonal antecedents driving disclosure are likely more salient; in such cases, and among LGB workers who are less uniformly open about their sexual identity, copying our hierarchical mapping technique may uncover exciting new intricacies around selective disclosure. Future studies could also delve deeper into what contributes to "anticipated acceptance." Correspondingly, our study calls for large-scale empirical substantiation of the identified themes, and their relation to potentially relevant (intrapersonal) characteristics. Herein one can think of concepts such as identity salience, centrality, valence, and authenticity concerns. Another potentially interesting avenue is to sample bisexual workers, who may have different considerations about selective disclosure, especially when they are in a same-sex relationship. Finally, disclosure literature would be vastly enriched if we also include a focus on disclosure recipients. Interesting research questions here relate to, e.g., how active or passive their role is in this process.

6. Conclusion

Our study further elucidates how disclosure of LGB workers' sexual identity is a dynamic, context-dependent, multi-dimensional process, affected by interpersonal antecedents—as well as intrapersonal and contextual factors. Even if work environments are safe and supportive, and even if LGB workers are generally open about their sexual identity, interpersonal processes may still play a role in disclosure decisions. Altogether, we highlight that managing a concealable stigmatised identity is an ongoing process. Accordingly, there is still a long way to go towards equality and justice for LGBTQIA* people. Continuing to study their lived experiences and lift their voices is a necessary step to achieve that.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank their contact person at the company's ERG for establishing contact with the participants, as well as Gonneke Ton for providing an invaluable sounding board. This study is funded by the PhD Scholarship programme at the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, the Netherlands, and is part of the research programme Sustainable Cooperation—Roadmaps to Resilient Societies (SCOOP). The contributions of L. H. and R. P. M. W. are (partially) funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) in the context of its 2017 Gravitation programme (grant number 024.003.025).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the authors (unedited).

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About the Authors

Julian M. Rengers (MScRes 2017, University of Groningen, the Netherlands) is a PhD candidate at the Departments of Sociology and Psychology at the University of Groningen. In his project, he studies under which conditions people with a concealable stigmatised identity disclose their identity to others at work, with a specific focus on LGB workers. Moreover, he studies how this relates to their perceived workplace inclusion.

Liesbet Heyse (PhD 2002, Leiden University, the Netherlands) is associate professor of Sociology at the University of Groningen. She studies how public, non-profit, and private organisations address societal challenges through their operations, studying their governance structures, organisational practices, and performance. She applies these questions—in close collaboration with stakeholders—to specific settings, such as Dutch municipalities and NGOs working on the labour market integration of refugees and in the youth care sector, using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Rafael P. M. Wittek (PhD 1999, University of Groningen, the Netherlands) is professor of theoretical sociology at the Department of Sociology at the University of Groningen. Moreover, he is the scientific director of the interdisciplinary research and training centre Sustainable Cooperation—Roadmaps to Resilient Societies (SCOOP). His research focuses on problems of sustainable cooperation and how to prevent and solve them. His areas of expertise are the sociology of organisations, economic sociology, social network analysis, and social theory.

Sabine Otten (PhD 1991, University of Münster, Germany) is professor of intergroup relations and social integration at the Psychology Department of the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. In recent years, her research has mostly focused on identifying the characteristics, determinants, and outcomes of psychological inclusion in diverse groups, thereby specifically focusing on cultural diversity.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183–2803)
2021, Volume 9, Issue 4, Pages 399–412
https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i4.4507

Article

Online Networks and Subjective Well-Being: The Effect of "Big Five Personality Traits"

Félix Requena and Luis Ayuso *

Centre for Applied Social Research, University of Malaga, Spain; E-Mails: frequena@uma.es (F.R.), luis.ayuso@uma.es (L.A.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 12 May 2021 | Accepted: 29 July 2021 | Published: 15 December 2021

Abstract
This article provides an empirical examination of how online social networks affect subjective well-being, namely enquiring if networks mediate the effect of personality on subjective well-being of the individuals who use those networks. We use the theories of complementarity of face-to-face and online networks, preferential attachment, and the "Big Five Personality Traits" to test the following hypothesis: Given that online and offline networks complement each other as integrative factors that generate happiness, greater use of online networks would imply greater happiness. We also hypothesize that networks mediate the effect of personality on subjective well-being. Data was compiled from interviews of 4,922 people aged 18 years and older, carried out by the Centre for Sociological Research of Spain in 2014 and 2016. The results confirm the hypothesis and show how online networks, when controlled for personality traits, have a significant and even greater effect on subjective well-being than face-to-face networks.

Keywords
face-to-face networks; happiness; ICTs; online networks; personality; subjective well-being

Issue
This article is part of the issue "In Good Company? Personal Relationships, Network Embeddedness, and Social Inclusion" edited by Miranda J. Lubbers (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain).

1. Introduction

With the development of ICTs, attention must be given to digital relationships as sources of happiness for people. Digital social constructs and new scenarios involving digital/face-to-face interaction should be considered alongside face-to-face relationships, which are no longer the sole source of integrative processes in communities (Requena & Ayuso, 2019). This article reports on how the use of online social network sites (SNS) affects well-being, specifically happiness, mediating the effect of personality traits on subjective well-being.

The extant literature on this topic contains some interesting analyses that demonstrate a positive relationship between online networks and happiness (Kim & Lee, 2011; Lee et al., 2011; Manago et al., 2012; Wang, 2013; Webster et al., 2021). For example, adolescents with large online networks tend to have higher levels of well-being; maintaining relationships with close friends through online networks has also been found to generate greater psychological well-being (Manago et al., 2012; Orben, 2020). Other studies, however, demonstrate a contradictory or clearly negative relationship between the use of online networks and happiness (Appel et al., 2019; Arampatzi et al., 2018; Helliwell & Huang, 2013; Lin & Utz, 2015; Locatelli et al., 2012; Lönnqvist & Itkonen, 2014; Saigioglou & Greitmeyer, 2014).

Clearly there is an ongoing debate regarding the connection between the use of SNS and subjective well-being, as online networks have both positive and negative impacts on relationships. Thus, the influence of context is very important. Context is a fundamental aspect to understand the new processes of social inclusion. The balance between online networks and

happiness probably varies according to the characteristics of a group, the setting the interactions takes place, the context in which these networks are used and who is using them. Online networks generated by SNS have a different effect on happiness than face-to-face networks (Arampatzi et al., 2018). This highlights both the significance of analyzing the relationship between online networks and happiness and the need to compare the mediating traits of people who use online networks.

How online networks are linked to personality traits is an area of great interest in current literature (Bollen et al., 2011; Kennon et al., 2011; Masur et al., 2014; Reinecke et al., 2014), so our objective is to provide evidence of the effects of various personality traits to determine how those traits affect online and offline networks and whether they are capable of generating happiness and subjective well-being.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Online Relations and Happiness

Durkheim was the first of many to demonstrate that social relations, closeness, and personal contact generate happiness (Durkheim, 1897/1951). Since the mid-twentieth century, literature on well-being has shaped a solid profile of a happy person as a "young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, extroverted, optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job morale and modest aspirations, of either sex and of a wide range of intelligence" (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 1436; see also Diener et al., 1999). Social connections are strongly correlated with happiness, which signals their importance in *generating* happiness (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004) and supports the use of happiness as a very robust proxy indicator for subjective well-being. However, there is a current need to include the variable of "online networks" in the profile of a happy person, in a way that makes it possible to demonstrate how online networks can, in certain circumstances, add depth to that profile. For example, among college students, the number of friends on Facebook—in other words, the size of their online networks—has a positive effect on happiness (Kim & Lee, 2011). Nonetheless, the relationship between these two variables is not always positive, so there is an important debate regarding the relationships maintained on the internet and well-being (Orben et al., 2019; Orben & Przybylski, 2019).

2.2. Complementarity Theory of Face-To-Face and Online Networks

Diverse online environments such as Youtube, Instagram, Facebook, among others, can become sites for virtual communities. These SNS are not communities as such, but they function as social places in which communities can be formed (Requena & Ayuso, 2019). Because SNS involve sociability expectations such as connection with others, empathy, support (Parks, 2011), virtual communities are not as virtual as they seem. Although computer-mediated communication supposedly frees individuals from the limitations of physical proximity, social connections in online communities generally rely on face-to-face contacts (Foucault et al., 2009). Internet-based communication in many cases serves and reinforces pre-existing groups that formed in other contexts. This is the idea of "connected presence" suggested by Licoppe (2004). Internet-based communication complements our everyday interactions with others (Requena & Ayuso, 2019), and the complementarity of online/offline networks gives rise to interesting questions.

2.3. Dimensions of Personality and Well-Being

Personality traits have been shown to affect well-being directly and indirectly. The relationship between psychological well-being and the "Big Five Personality Traits," or personality dimensions (Rammstedt & John, 2007), provides a working basis for the study of personality and its effects (McCrae & Costa, 1991; van Aken & Asendorpf, 2018).

Nonetheless, the current literature on social networks largely overlooks the role of psychological mechanisms (van Aken & Asendorpf, 2018; Zhu et al., 2013) and pays little attention to motivation, cognition, and personality. Thus, research on social networks runs the risk of showing results that undervalue human experience. Examining the link between personality and social networks promises to enrich our understanding of how social networks function and how they affect well-being (Burt et al., 1998; Kalish & Robins, 2006; Totterdell et al., 2008). Personality captures the relatively stable patterns of thought, emotion, motivation, and behavior (see Table 1); it influences perceptions, attitudes, and values in an individual's responses to people and situations (McAdams, 2009). In virtual social networks, personality traits play a very important role in the development and maintenance of social relations (Ilmarinen et al., 2019; McCrae, 1996; Reitz et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2015).

Indeed, several personality traits have been linked to important results concerning network functioning, including proactivity in building network ties (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Lambert et al., 2006; Totterdell et al., 2008). While these studies provide useful information on personality traits in the configuration of social relations, results for effects on well-being have been incomplete. The relationship between personality and happiness through social networks has not been thoroughly explained (Zhu et al., 2013). Thus, it is important to give attention to the role of personality traits in social networks and in generating happiness.

2.4. Preferential Attachment Theory

Users of online networks tend to connect preferentially with other users who have similar levels of happiness

Table 1. The "Big Five Personality Traits" in relation to social networks.

Personality trait	Definition	References	Relation to social networks
Extraversion	The degree to which an individual is optimistic, sociable, energetic, enthusiastic, and has a cheerful outlook.	John and Srivastava (1999) McCrae and John (1992) Ilmarinen et al. (2019) Forret and Dougherty (2001)	A positive association has been demonstrated between extraversion and diverse aspects of social networks. People with high extraversion are more likely to develop networks in new environments. Sociometric status predicts extraversion in the case of adolescents in schools.
Agreeableness	A tendency to demonstrate a positive attitude towards others, altruism, modesty, trust, empathy, and concern for others.	Digman (1990) Graziano et al. (1996) Ahadi and Rothbart (1994) Jensen-Campbell et al. (2002) Klein et al. (2004)	Tendency toward larger friendship networks and better chances of being chosen as friends.
Conscientiousness	Socially prescribed impulse control that facilitates task- and goal-directed behavior. Conscientious people tend to be dutiful, organized, disciplined, hard-working, reliable, and achievement-oriented. They tend to have higher qualifications and better job performance.	John and Srivastava (1999) Costa and McCrae (1992) Judge et al. (1999) Anderson et al. (2001) Doeven-Eggens et al. (2008)	Social networks tend to overlap more with family networks; greater motivation towards relationships with others.
Openness	Describes individuals who are curious, flexible, receptive to new ideas, and motivated to seek novelty and explore new environments.	Costa and McCrae (1992) Woo et al. (2014) van Aken and Asendorpf (2018) McCrae (1996)	Openness may facilitate the development of new relationships because people who are curious and open-minded have an interest in getting to know others and seek out interactions with new people.
Neuroticism	The individual tendency to experience substantial and frequent mood swings, to exhibit poor emotional control, and to display negative emotions such as anger, hostility, impulsiveness, and irritability.	Costa and McCrae (1992) Turban and Dougherty (1994)	Expressed in greater sensitivity to the negative aspects of social relations, fear of rejection, and less likelihood of initiating relationships.

Source: Adaptation from Zhu et al. (2013).

(Bollen et al., 2011). As an online social network grows, new connections may be inclined toward similar people. Thus, it makes sense to speak in terms of preferential attachment theory, a process that assumes that personality traits are contagious. In other words, the happiness values of connected users tend to converge over time (Bollen et al., 2011). Similarly, being connected with unhappy users can make one feel less happy, and vice-versa. This suggests that people can control their level of happiness by choosing a specific group of online friends. People can also influence the happiness of their friends by creating strong social ties and expecting happiness

to "spread." Bollen et al. (2011) also point out that users of online networks can evaluate or express their own happiness based on that of their friends. As an online user's environment becomes happier, it can influence the expression of feelings related to his or her own happiness.

Given the increasing prevalence of online networks, their propensity to connect users with similar levels of happiness can provide an important tool for better understanding how positive and negative feelings are propagated through online social ties (Bollen et al., 2011). This underscores the importance of paying attention to basic personality traits in the process of forming online networks and to the happiness they generate.

3. Hypotheses

Prior theses have indicated three important processes in the relationship between online networks and happiness: the complementarity of online and offline networks; the effect of personality traits on those networks; and how all of these affect the generation of happiness (Vriens & van Ingen, 2017). Together, these three theoretical ideas lead us to propose a theoretical model that links personality, online networks and happiness.

Based on the above, we tested the following hypothesis:

- H1: If virtual networks complement face-to-face networks and the latter are an indicator of integration and sociability, then greater use of on-line networks is associated with greater subjective well-being of individuals.

From this, two sub-hypotheses can be formulated:

- H1a: This relationship mediates the relation between personality traits and happiness whereby greater extraversion and openness are associated with greater use of virtual networks and therefore greater subjective well-being.
- H1b: Personality traits predict and configure both online and offline networks.

These hypotheses should be interpreted only as statements, since no causal conclusions can be drawn between the variables analyzed, as longitudinal data are not used.

4. Data and Variables

4.1. Data

The data was extracted and combined from Barometers 3038 and 3128 of the Center for Sociological Research of Spain (CIS), two nationally representative surveys carried out in September 2014 and February 2016, respectively (all technical details and data are available online at the CIS website). The total sample analyzed was of 4,922 people of both sexes (49% men and 51% women), aged 18 years and older. Sample sizes are N = 2,444 for the September 2014 survey and N = 2,478 for the February 2016 one. The estimated combined error of the least favorable case was about ±1.4%. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in the homes of those interviewed. The data collection procedure was through questionnaires in paper-pencil format. The barometer questionnaires contained several questions related to the online and face-to-face personal networks of those interviewed.

4.2. Dependent Variable

Happiness was measured by the survey question on this topic, using a scale ranging from 0 ("completely unhappy") to 10 ("completely happy"). Prior analyses have demonstrated the strength of this scale for measuring happiness (Requena, 2016; Sarracino, 2012).

4.3. Mediator Variables

4.3.1. Online Networks

These dummy variables refer to the answers on the question regarding the frequency of use of online social media. The following variables were considered: Constantly connected (= 1), otherwise (= 0); connected several times a day (= 1), otherwise (= 0); connected several times a week (= 1), otherwise (= 0); connected less than weekly or almost never (= 1), otherwise (= 0); no virtual networks (= 1), otherwise (= 0). We used "no virtual networks" as the reference for comparison with all other variables related to connection (see Table 2).

4.3.2. Face-to-Face Networks

The size of personal face-to-face networks was measured by the following survey question:

> Now think about how many people you usually have contact with on a normal day, including the people you live with. We are referring to people with whom you have personal or face-to-face contact, those with whom you talk or interact in person. Only include people you talk with in person.

The interviewees responded by indicating the number of persons with whom they interacted face-to-face.

4.4. Independent Variables

Scales were included to measure basic personality traits, as personality can influence the predisposition to use online and/or offline networks. The aim was to see how each of the basic personality traits affected use of digital and face-to-face networks. Thus, we measured

the relatively stable personality traits that might influence perceptions, attitudes, and individual behavior using the "Big Five Personality Traits" model. This widely used model groups individual personality differences into five basic areas: openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism. Our analysis is based on the version of the model proposed by Rammstedt and John (2007) and used by the CIS.

4.5. Control Variables

The control variables were organized into three groups—demographics, social position, family situation—consisting of nine items.

The demographic variables considered as dummy variables in the analysis were: female, age intervals, rural, semi-urban, and urban.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the variables in the regression models.

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard deviation
Dependent Variable					
Happiness	4897	0	10	7.53	1.682
Independent Variables					
Personality					
Neuroticism	3931	0.00	8.00	3.1994	2.19678
Extraversion	3958	0.00	8.00	4.9192	1.95360
Agreeableness	3642	0.00	8.00	5.7271	1.58671
Conscientiousness	4833	0.00	8.00	6.2744	1.73826
Openness	3003	0.00	8.00	4.6973	2.02218
Mediator Variables					
Frequency of use of social media (dummy)					
Having no virtual networks	2555	0.00	1.00	0.6008	0.48983
Connected less than weekly or almost never	2555	0.00	1.00	0.0031	0.05588
Connected several times a week	2555	0.00	1.00	0.0051	0.07116
Connected several times a day	2555	0.00	1.00	0.2552	0.43605
Constantly connected	2555	0.00	1.00	0.1358	0.34266
Size of personal face-to-face networks	4836	0	300	16.16	22.517
Control variables					
Demographics					
Female (dummy)	4922	0.00	1.00	0.5148	0.49983
Age intervals in years (dummy)					
18–24	4922	0.00	1.00	0.0847	0.27850
25–34	4922	0.00	1.00	0.1587	0.36541
35–44	4922	0.00	1.00	0.1977	0.39829
45–54	4922	0.00	1.00	0.1841	0.38758
55 or older	4922	0.00	1.00	0.3748	0.48413
Rural/urban (dummy)					
Rural: less than 10,000 inhabitants	4922	0.00	1.00	0.3881	0.48736
Semi-urban: 10,001 to 100,000 inhabitants	4922	0.00	1.00	0.3941	0.48872
Urban: more than 100,000 inhabitants	4922	0.00	1.00	0.5148	0.49983
Social position					
Educational level (dummy)					
No studies	4914	0.00	1.00	0.0600	0.23757
Primary education	4914	0.00	1.00	0.1750	0.38001
Secondary education	4914	0.00	1.00	0.3826	0.48607
Vocational studies	4914	0.00	1.00	0.1764	0.38123
University undergraduate studies	4914	0.00	1.00	0.0867	0.28141
University graduate studies	4914	0.00	1.00	0.1193	0.32412

Table 2. (Cont.) Descriptive statistics of the variables in the regression models.

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Standard deviation
Monthly income of interviewee	3797	0	7000	779.6387	748.08703
Sector (dummy)					
Agriculture	4835	0.00	1.00	0.0759	0.26487
Industry	4835	0.00	1.00	0.1663	0.37238
Construction	4835	0.00	1.00	0.1011	0.30154
Services	4835	0.00	1.00	0.6567	0.47487
Work situation (dummy)					
Working	4913	0.00	1.00	0.4024	0.49043
Retired or pensioned	4913	0.00	1.00	0.2502	0.43314
Unemployed	4913	0.00	1.00	0.2243	0.41716
Student	4913	0.00	1.00	0.0462	0.20995
Non-remunerated domestic work	4913	0.00	1.00	0.0757	0.26457
Other work situation	4913	0.00	1.00	0.0012	0.03493
Family situation					
Number of persons living in the home	4915	1	14	2.90	1.277
Cohabitation situation (dummy)					
Married (reference)	4845	0.00	1.00	0.5414	0.49834
Single	4845	0.00	1.00	0.2528	0.43468
In a relationship but not cohabitating	4845	0.00	1.00	0.0912	0.28796
Unmarried but in a relationship and cohabitating	4845	0.00	1.00	0.1146	0.31851

Source: Authors' own, calculated from Barometer 3038 (Sept. 2014) and 3128 (Feb. 2016) from CIS (2014, 2016).

Social position was measured using the following variables: educational level (as a set of dummy variables including no studies, primary education, secondary education, vocational studies, university undergraduate studies and university graduate studies); net monthly income of the individual after taxes (continuous variable measured in euro); work activity sectors (dummy variable) of agriculture, industry, construction and services; and work situation (dummy variable), which included working, retired or pensioned, unemployed, student, non-remunerated domestic work, or other work situations.

Family situation was composed of dummy variables referring to cohabitation arrangements: married, single, in a relationship but not cohabitating, unmarried but in a relationship, and cohabitating (see Table 2).

5. Analysis Strategy

To explain how personality traits affect offline/online networks and subjective well-being, two multivariate analysis techniques were developed to study and test the stated hypotheses. One was a multiple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model that allowed us to observe how personality, online and offline networks, and the control variables affected the dependent variable (happiness). This analysis strategy helped us to explore how personality traits affect the use of online networks and how those factors together contribute to happiness. The second technique was a causal analysis based on a causal diagram, namely structural equation modelling showing the effects of the personality traits on online and offline networks and on happiness. We used this model to observe how the "Big Five Personality Traits" affect online and offline networks and the relations of those networks on happiness. SPSS 25 software was used for these analyses.

6. Results

6.1. Online Networks and Happiness

A first look at the correlation between the use of online networks and happiness shows a positive relation in which happiness tends to increase with greater use of online media. People who were constantly connected had a more significant correlation with happiness (Figure 1).

To add more detail to the figure above, the ANOVA test (Table 3) shows how the level of happiness varied substantially according to the level of online network use. The extreme categories ("constantly connected" and "no virtual networks") presented the highest significance (compared to the other groups). Happiness was 9% lower for people with no virtual networks and 10% higher for those who were constantly connected. Thus, we see how digital networks substantially increase the happiness of the people who use those networks.

The implications of the effect of personality trails and online and offline networks on subjective well-being can be observed in even greater detail in Table 4. Equation 1 shows the personality trails effects on happiness. The next two equations show separately the combined effects of personality variables, online (Equation 2) and

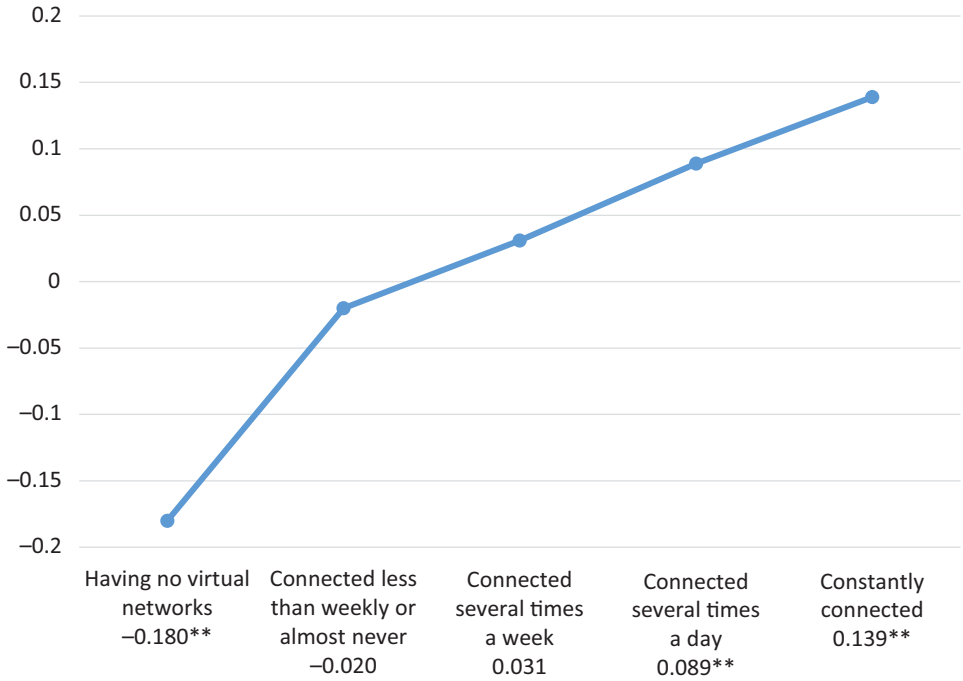

Figure 1. Correlation coefficients for the frequency of connection to digital networks and happiness. Level of significance: **0.01 (two-tailed), *0.05 (two-tailed). Source: Authors' own, calculated from Barometer 3038 (Sept. 2014) and 3128 (Feb. 2016) from CIS (2014, 2016).

offline networks (Equation 3) on happiness. The effect of online networks on happiness was greater than that of offline networks, whatever the personality trait, though the effects were significant in both cases. People who are constantly connected to online networks (Equation 2) had higher levels of happiness, as did those who were connected several times a day (compared to the other groups). In contrast, those who had no virtual networks had lower levels of happiness (compared to the other groups). This confirms that, in general, the use of digital networks positively affects levels of happiness. Face-to-face networks also had a positive and significant effect on happiness, though much smaller than that of online networks.

However, these effects become more subtle when the model include personality variables, demographics, social position, and family situation; as the literature has shown, these factors are very important (Appel et al., 2019; Orben, 2020; Webster et al., 2021). Table 4 shows how the explained variance increases with each group of variables that is added to the regression model. As we look at the process in detail, we see that personality, demographics, social position, and family situation help explain the variance in happiness. Equation 4 shows the effects of online and offline networks together with personality traits. Here, the explanatory power of the model increases 1.09 and 1.75 times respectively compared to the model that only includes personality trails with online (Equation 2), and offline networks (Equation 3). There is a significant negative association between neuroticism and subjective well-being and a positive association in relation to conscientiousness. The model clearly shows that neuroticism is not beneficial to social relations; rather, it provokes a lack of self-control and mood swings that can be detrimental to social relations. In contrast, conscientiousness benefits social relations

Table 3. ANOVA results for frequency of connection to social media and happiness.

How often virtual networks are used	Subjective well-being			
	Mean	Mean	F	Significance
	Yes	No		*p* =
Does not have virtual networks	7.12	**7.77**	84.423	0.000
Connected less than weekly or almost never	6.75	7.38	1.026	0.311
Connected several times a week	8.15	7.38	2.489	0.115
Connected several times a day	**7.65**	7.29	20.403	0.000
Constantly connected	**8.00**	7.28	50.303	0.000

Source: Authors' own, calculated from Barometer 3038 (Sept. 2014) and 3128 (Feb. 2016) from CIS (2014, 2016).

Table 4. Impact of personality trails and social media on subjective well-being, OLS regression coefficients.

Independent variables	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3		Equation 4		Equation 5	
Personality										
Neuroticism	−0.080	(−4.496)***	−0.098	(−3.585)***	−0.078	(−4.395)***	−0.097	(−3.501)***	−0.128	(−4.005)***
Extraversion	0.073	(3.791)***	0.077	(2.585)*	0.071	(3.626)***	0.067	(2.233)*	0.055	(1.599)*
Agreeableness	0.003	(0.137)	−0.043	(−1.120)	0.011	(0.425)	−0.039	(−1.017)	−0.031	(−0.692)
Conscientiousness	0.096	(4.420)***	0.093	(2.854)**	0.087	(3.989)***	0.087	(2.656)**	0.074	(1.931)**
Openness	0.039	(2.085)*	0.029	(1.021)	0.037	(1.960)*	0.026	(0.907)	0.030	(0.932)
Mediator variables										
How often virtual networks are used (dummy)										
Does not have virtual networks (reference)										
Connected less than weekly or almost never			−0.864	(−1.187)			−1.221	(−1.662)**	−7.235	(−4.554)***
Connected several times a week			0.709	(0.974)			0.844	(1.041)	1.039	(1.127)
Connected several times a day			0.490	(4.033)***			0.427	(3.462)***	0.134	(0.670)*
Constantly connected			0.740	(4.496)***			0.692	(4.138)***	0.382	(1.460)*
Size of face-to-face networks					0.005	(3.635)***	0.007	(2.983)**	0.005	(1.594)*
Control variables										
Demographics										
Female (dummy)									0.291	(2.064)*
Age intervals in years (dummy)										
18–24									1.239	(2.950)**
25–34									0.818	(2.621)**
35–44									0.473	(1.745)*
45–54									0.209	(0.807)
55 and older (reference)										
Rural/urban (dummy)										
Rural less than 10,000 (reference)										
Semi-urban 10,001 to 100,000									−0.223	(−1.430)*
Urban more than 100,000									−0.267	(−1.566)*

Table 4. (Cont.) Impact of personality trails and social media on subjective well-being, OLS regression coefficients.

Independent variables	Equation 1		Equation 2		Equation 3		Equation 4		Equation 5	
Social position										
Education by educational levels (dummy)										
Without studies (reference)										
Primary education									0.341	(1.478)*
Secondary education									0.306	(1.182)
Vocational studies									0.621	(2.119)**
University undergraduate studies									0.175	(0.476)
University graduate studies									0.221	(0.626)
Monthly income of interviewees									0.000	(0.841)
Activity sector (dummy)										
Agriculture (reference)										
Industry									0.131	(0.542)
Construction									−0.165	(−0.652)
Services									−0.056	(−0.259)
Work situation (dummy)										
Employed (reference)										
Retired or pensioned									0.450	(1.763)*
Unemployed									−0.124	(−0.572)
Student									0.014	(0.034)
Non-remunerated domestic work									0.114	(0.369)
Other work situation									−2.307	(−1.438)
Family situation										
Number of people living in the household									0.040	(0.692)
Cohabitation situation (dummy)										
Married (reference)									−0.732	(−4.373)***
Single									−0.140	(−0.520)
In a relationship but not cohabitating									−0.153	(−0.559)
Unmarried but in a relationship and cohabitating										
Constant	6.672	(31.139)***	6.704	(20.893)***	6.621	(30.789)***	6.695	(20.808)***	6.323	(11.525)***
R^2	0.040		0.075		0.047		0.082		0.199	
F of the model	16.050***		8.531***		15.575***		8.314***		4.654***	
N	1935		959		1899		941		693	
Comparison with prior model										
Times increased							1.75		2.43	

Notes: Students' *t* appears in parenthesis beside the respective estimated parameter; level of significance: ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05. Source: Authors' own, calculated from Barometer 3038 (Sept. 2014) and 3128 (Feb. 2016) from CIS (2014, 2016).

by inducing greater happiness. Conscientious people are responsible, have more self-control and therefore tend to be more successful, which in turn generates higher levels of happiness.

In the most complete model, based on Equation 5, the explained variance increased to 19.9% and was 2.43 times greater than in the previous model. It shows the combined effects of online and offline networks with personality traits and the other control variables of demographics, social position, and family situation. With this model, personality traits are found to predict strong effects of happiness when controlling for the other control variables.

6.2. Causal Model

Thus far we have introduced the effects of online and offline networks on subjective well-being controlled for structural and personality predictors. We will now build a causal model in which we will study the particular effect of each of the "Big Five Personality Traits" on online and offline networks and their effect on subjective well-being. This will allow us to see both the direct and indirect effects of these variables on subjective well-being. The causal model constructed for this study (Figure 2) is a path analysis. This is a method for studying direct and indirect effects. Of course, we should consider the theory or knowledge associated with the object of study. In this case we considered as one of SEMs which is composed of all observed variables, without using latent variables (Jeon, 2015). Here, the path analysis shows the three-way relationship of personality, online networks and happiness that was identified in the theoretical framework. This causal process indicates the basic personality traits that directly affect online/offline networks. In our findings, online networks were affected by extraversion (beta = 0.085), openness (beta = 0.103), and neuroticism to a lesser degree (beta = 0.091). The personality traits that most affected offline networks were extraversion (beta = 0.043), followed by a negative influence of agreeableness (beta = −0.045) and then conscientiousness (beta = 0.084).

These differentiated effects reveal several interesting features. Firstly, the personality traits that affected online networks were not the same traits that affected face-to-face networks, except for extraversion, which affected both networks. The effect of extraversion on online networks was almost double that of offline networks, although the significance was higher in face-to-face networks. Secondly, it is also interesting

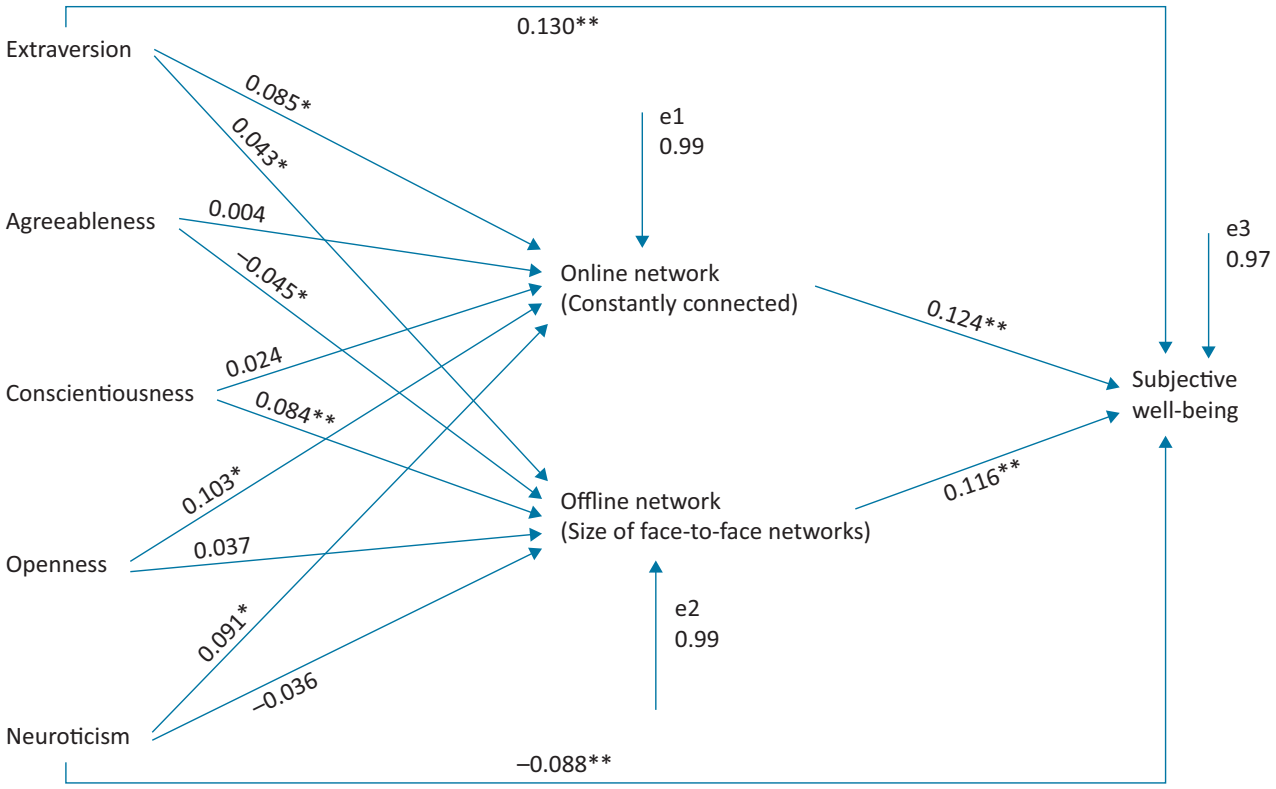

Figure 2. Causal model of subjective happiness. The structural equations have been constructed as follows:
1: Online net = x1 Extraversion + x2 Agreeableness + x3 Conscientiousness + x4 Openness + x5 Neuroticism + error 1;
2: Offline net = x1 Extraversion + x2 Agreeableness + x3 Conscientiousness + x4 Openness + x5 Neuroticism + error 2;
3: Happiness = x1 Extraversion + x2 Neuroticism + x3 Online net + x4 Offline net + error 3.
Notes: $^{+}$ p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.001. Source: Authors' own, calculated from Barometer 3038 (Sept. 2014) and 3128 (Feb. 2016) from CIS (2014, 2016).

to note that agreeableness had a negative effect on face-to-face networks. In any case, it is very informative to know which personality traits have the greatest effect on online/offline personal networks. It is very important to observe that both online and offline networks had a positive and very significant effect on happiness. Notably, the effect of online networks was slightly higher than that of face-to-face networks.

The model shows the generally positive effect of extraversion (beta = 0.130) and the negative effect of neuroticism (beta = −0.088) on happiness. Personality traits affected each type of network differently, with a somewhat greater effect on online networks, and subsequently also affecting happiness. Among the indirect effects, it is interesting to point out that neuroticism had a negative effect, both directly (−0.088) and indirectly through offline networks (−0.036 × 0.116 = −0.004), but a positive indirect effect on well-being through online networks (0.091 × 0.124 = 0.011). This might be explained by the theory of connected presence, which implies the need for people to know they are connected at all times. This need might be more intense in people who present higher levels of neuroticism because they have less capacity for self-control, which would surely imply a need for greater online connection. Additionally, the positive effect of extraversion on happiness through online networks was seen both directly (0.130) and indirectly (0.085 × 0.124 = 0.011). The analyses therefore confirm the hypotheses presented above.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

This article has analyzed social well-being and its relationship with personality and online social networks. In doing so, it has shown the multiple research flows between sociology and psychology, considering the underlying processes between social networks, social well-being, and personality traits. As aptly pointed out by Zhu et al. (2013), social well-being is a broad psychological phenomenon that includes people's emotional responses, situational satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Happiness has been used as a proxy for subjective well-being. We have seen how personality traits affects online and offline social networks, which in turn affect happiness. Personality traits have been shown to directly affect positive and negative tendencies in personal networks, which indirectly affect well-being. The various personality dimensions clearly have patterns of association that differ qualitatively according to the type of personal network. Once socio-demographic and structural factors are accounted for, we can conclude that neuroticism leads to diminished well-being, both directly and through offline networks. In contrast, extraversion generates greater well-being directly and indirectly, through online networks. Our results contradict those of McCrae and Costa (1991) in the case of agreeableness, which in our study had a negative effect on online networks and therefore a negative indirect effect on well-being. Our findings show that conscientiousness always had a positive effect on both online and offline networks, and therefore a positive indirect effect on happiness. The role of extroversion and neuroticism in well-being was clearly revealed. Our results should be interpreted within the current debate concerning the influence of digital social networks on the adolescent population (Boer et al., 2020; Spottswood & Wohn, 2020).

Findings from our analysis, based on data from the adult population in Spain, confirmed the original hypotheses. Our results for the effects of agreeableness and conscientiousness diverge from those of authors who used different mechanisms to study young American students. However, the same effects were observed for extraversion and neuroticism. We have also demonstrated that online networks do not substitute offline networks as generators of happiness. Rather, both have a similar effect, which is somewhat greater for online networks. According to Spanish data, the answer to the question put forward by Arampatzi et al. (2018), based on Dutch data, regarding whether online networks substituted face-to-face networks in providing happiness is that both types of networks are necessary to achieve higher levels of happiness. Complementarity between the two types of networks was clearly observed, which leads us to confirm our H1: Virtual networks do complement face-to-face networks, and happiness increases with increased use of online networks. In addition, as proposed in (H1a), the relationship strongly mediates that of personality traits on happiness, which determine (H1b) the effect on each type of personal network.

Finally, the debate will continue, because the positive or negative dynamics between online networks and happiness vary according to the contextual data used. Our data from Spain indicates a positive association between online networks and happiness, which contradicts the work of Sabatini and Sarracino (2017) based on data from Italy. The same is true for the case of the complementarity of online and offline networks: The study using data from Italy proposes that the use of SNS implies a conflict with face-to-face networks regarding the generation of subjective well-being. Although it is true that Sabatini and Sarracino (2017) use life satisfaction as a dependent variable and we use happiness as a proxy, in our data the Pearson correlation between life satisfaction and happiness is $r = 0.626$, significant at two-tailed $p < 0.001$, so we can assume some equivalence in the functioning between the two variables. This may be explained by the societal capacity to adapt to new technologies which, although initially perceived as negative, eventually become indispensable, even for our sociability.

This study does have some limitations that can be studied when longitudinal data for Spain becomes available. The data used is cross-sectional, and thus the study of causality would be more robust if the data were longitudinal. In this way, there would be no doubt that, for example, happiness could have affected online/offline networks, that is, reverse causality. This issue is avoided

by studying longitudinal data, which currently does not exist for Spain.

We will conclude by pointing out the significant finding that demonstrates the importance of context in the relationship between online networks and happiness. The national context from which the data were extracted and the specific characteristics and features of the interviewees produce variations in the effects online networks have on happiness. Our findings demonstrate that personality has many important effects. Future research will add greater detail to the association between online networks and happiness in diverse contexts.

Acknowledgments

This research is based on the results of the FEDER Andalusia 2014–2020 program funded by the European Union (UMA18-FEDERJA-103), the research project PID2020-115673RB-I00 funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation, and the 35_2019 project funded by the BBVA Foundation. The authors would like to thank the reviewers and the editors of *Social Inclusion* for their valuable comments and suggestions.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Félix Requena is full professor of sociology at the University of Malaga, Spain. He has represented Spain in the Social Protection Indicators Committee in the European Commission (Brussels, 2001–2002) and was the president of the Spain's Centre for Sociological Research during 2012 to 2016. His research focuses on social network analysis and social capital. His last publications include *Teoría Sociológica Aplicada* (Anthropos, 2016, with Luis Ayuso) and *Estrategias de Investigación en las Ciencias Sociales* (Tirant lo Blanch, 2018, with Luis Ayuso). He is currently the director of the Centre for Applied Social Research at the University of Malaga.

Luis Ayuso is associate professor of sociology at the University of Malaga, Spain. His lines of research have focused on sociology of the family, the third sector, and social welfare. He was the director of the Research Department of Spain's Centre for Sociological Research during 2017 to 2018. He is currently deputy director of the Centre for Applied Social Research at the University of Malaga.

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