

Ties that Protect? The Distribution of Informal Social Protection among Migrants' Transnational Networks

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According to previous research in migration and family studies (Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Sørensen & Olwig 2002), international migration serves family members by securing diverse resources ranging from material to social. As migrants social life-words become transnational their practices of protection tend to transform over time and space.

This paper presents preliminary results of the ongoing project “Transnationality and the Unequal Distribution of Social Protection”, which seeks to analyze the use of informal social protection by migrants and their extended families living across several borders, including childcare, care of the sick and elderly as well as financial remittances. In order to cover the broadest possible range of variations of transnationality, this project focuses on three different transnational social spaces: Germany-Turkey, Germany-Poland, and Germany-Kazakhstan.

First, the paper briefly introduces in the projects goals and foundations. Second, it illuminates the conceptual basis, which includes theories of transnationality (Faist 2000; Levitt & Glick-Schiller 2004), intersectionality (Anthias 2001) and social protection (Ali-Ali 2002; Orellana et al. 2001).

Third, it elaborates the main research questions:

(1) whether and in what ways *transnationality as marker of heterogeneity* shapes the access migrants have to informal social protection and how it is used;

(2) in what manner does *transnationality* intersect with other markers of inequality, such as gender, ethnicity, class, age as well as religious affiliation or legal status and results in social inequalities throughout the migration process.

Fourth, to adequately deal with these research questions, the paper discusses the research design, which is based on the key assumptions of multi-sited ethnography (Mazzucato 2008). It draws on ego-centric network analysis combined with semi-structured qualitative interviews (which are conducted in both Germany [n=60] and the migrants' countries of origin [n=45]).

Finally, the paper presents the preliminary results of the ego-centric network analysis, including the ways how social protection is organized across borders. In particular, it analyzes the potentially relevant intersections between transnationality and other markers of social inequalities in the field of informal social protection.