Networks matter[1]

Scholars in exile in Germany and their relations to home and host communities

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According to the British Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA, 2017, p. 6), the years 2016–2017 marked the highest number of at-risk academic applicants since the 1930s, indicating strong pressure on academia on the whole. Scholars from war-torn countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, such as Syria and Yemen, felt pressured to flee. Researchers from Turkey after Erdoğan's heavy suppression of dissent (Aktas et al., 2018) also fled. Hundreds of academics went into exile, leaving their home country for indeterminate periods. It is assumed that being forced into exile affects the nature of social networks in many ways, creating new dependencies – but, possibly, also new opportunities.

This chapter explores how professional networks of academics in exile are constituted. Who do they consider important to advancing their career? With whom or what are these persons or institutions associated – the current host country, the home country that they left, or the transnational sphere? Further, the study examines the communication modes being used to connect with various people in the network. Can pervasive online communication help sustain transnational networks and overcome the rupture caused by exile?

I discuss the answers to these research questions herein, applying a qualitative network analysis (QNA) of fourteen academics in exile from Turkey and the Middle East who are now located in Germany. Some findings in this study on academics in exile correspond to those of the problems of other mobile academics (e.g., unsatisfying conditions at the home institution, lack

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of job security abroad, and dependence on a host). It can be argued, however, that being in exile adds the factor that scholars are "only conditionally accepted" (Kettler, 2011, p. 206), which comes with the "everyday concerns of asylum, livelihood, and isolation," "practical relations to the play of power," and "emotional stress" (p. 208) in the host society. Moreover, exiled academics often have "unfinished business with those they are compelled to leave behind" in their home nation, and the "consuming question of return" (p. 208) always looms.

A suitable analysis of academics in exile thus requires a broader context of the meaning of the restraints to academic freedom at both the individual and network levels. It also needs to consider how exile is connected to asymmetric power relationships and the resulting personal perception of belonging. In the next section, I demonstrate how this impacts networks.

The importance of networks for academics

Manuel Castells has shown in his seminal work, *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), that networks are pervasive. They have become even more important due to technological advances of the 1990s that facilitated links with others through the internet. In an academic system, the literature often distinguishes between formal and informal networks (Kreis et al., 2019, p. 302). Formal networks refer to networks developed through membership in a university, department, or professional association. Informal networks, on the other hand, are based on personal relationships. Informal academic networks often originate from previously formal contexts, such as conferences or research collaborations, and then develop more autonomously in terms of personnel and content. This means that formal and informal networks are strongly interdependent: an effect in one part of a formal network relationship could affect one's informal network downstream. At the same time, a specific position or relationship within an informal network may also help one's status within a formal network.

Although traditional power centers, such as the state, can be bypassed by using technology to form networks, networks are not free from asymmetric power relationships. In his *A Network Theory of Power*, Castells (2011) speaks of various aspects of power, including "network-making power" as "the power to program specific networks according to the interests and values of the programmers, and the power to switch different networks following the

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strategic alliances between the dominant actors of various networks" (p. 773). In the case of scholars who have been cut off from their formal networks due to war or political pressure, several institutions have been established to assist in network-making in times of risk and exile. This development began in the 1930s during the mass expulsion of scholars from Germany and Nazi-occupied territories in Europe. Britain, the US, and Switzerland created committees to aid emigration from risky places. They assisted in finding host institutions for threatened scholars and familiarized them with the different academic cultures (Löhr, 2014, pp. 231–232). Since then, many institutions have evolved, such as CARA, the US-based Scholars at Risk (SAR), and the Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF), which aim to provide support to displaced scholars at North American and European universities and support them and their hosts through training and networking events. They work together with universities or mostly Western national funding organizations, such as the German Philipp Schwartz Initiative (PSI) of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH). For example, from 2014 to 2019, PSI granted 196 fellowships to at-risk scholars in Germany. Of those, 116 went to scholars from Turkey alone (Brandstädter, 2019).

While these institutions are indeed important in lending scholars a helping hand at a crucial time of rupture in their networks, they are not without an "agenda," as Löhr (2014, p. 235) has put it. She argued that building these institutions in the 1930s was meant to strengthen the respective host university systems in a "dynamic interplay between the nationalization of educational systems and the simultaneous transnationalization of scientific communities" (p. 236). However, the intellectual transnational networks established could be strategically exploited to enhance reputation and gain support for national Western liberal systems of higher education and by referring to a national brain gain: "Help for refugee scholars meant to benefit from their talents" Löhr concluded (2014, p. 240). From a critical political-economy point of view, Cantwell (2011) argued that in this framework of "gaining brains," still today "the higher education sector, as a whole, and individual universities are viewed as instruments to attract and retain skilled knowledge workers around the globe in public policy designed to enhance economic productivity and competitiveness" (p. 428). Despite ostensibly "saving" scholars and providing them opportunities in exile, the described institutions are also part of what Fahey and Kenway (2010, p. 571) termed the "privileged receiving nation-states" within the "global geographies of power/knowledge."

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Thus, network-making power is definitively related to asymmetric power relations within which exiled scholars have to maneuver. Research on networks is also about inclusion and exclusion, opportunities and dependencies, and their related power dynamics. This includes a focus on both spatial and communicative dimensions. Regarding the spatial dimension, Vertovec (2002) noted that networks of skilled workers – to which scholars belong – are ultimately transnational in character. Indeed, transnational mobility is a requirement for scholars to foster collaborations in multinational consortia, disseminate research findings in conferences and workshops, or engage in prestigious fellowships and fieldwork abroad. Thus, from an early point in their careers, scholars are encouraged to build networks beyond their national borders. However, in the case of exiled academics, these networks are formed in the framework of asymmetric power relations between Western liberal systems and more authoritarian-controlled systems. The former are also characterized by stronger economic (funding) power. The degree of autonomy of academic systems and related funding opportunities in the different countries also strongly affect network formation. Thus, in this study, transnational relations and the relations to both the host country and the home country were analyzed.

Social networks cannot exist without communication. Hepp et al. (2016) highlighted the relevance of communication in networks and the role of "polymedia": the various kinds of media and communication providing network formation and maintenance extending from digital media communication to classical letters (p. 88). Networks, indeed, "are marked by patterns of communication or exchange of resources and information along with participation in sociocultural and political activities" (Vertovec, 2010, p. 573). The modes of communication, however, reflect power dynamics, as some modes might be more or less accessible, more or less controlled, or considered more or less relevant to different individuals.

An analysis of scholarly networks in exile is of utmost importance in adequately assessing the power relations in which the exiled scholars are located and perceive themselves. Both spatial and communicative dimensions need to be explored to more effectively understand scholars' networks.

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Methodology: A qualitative network analysis

I used QNA to investigate the professional network relations of scholars in exile and the communication modes they employ to form and uphold these relations. To date, few attempts have been made to utilize work with QNA on skilled migrants (see Bilecen & Amelina, 2017; Scheibelhofer, 2006).

As opposed to QNA, social network analysis (SNA) is more common in current research. While large networks can be reconstructed through SNA, the aim of QNA is different. Ahrens (2018, p. 1) explains that QNAs "apply a micro-perspective" and "prompt a focus on personal and social networks, for instance, friendships, family relations, or migration ties." QNA is thus a "useful technique to shed light on personal perceptions of reality and relationships individuals develop" (p. 3). QNA, according to Hepp et al. (2016, p. 89), refers to "[…] those forms of network research that render network structures and practices visible."

In QNA, personal networks are termed egocentric networks (Hollstein, 2016). In the literal center of such a network stands the person of interest, the ego, and around this ego, several alteri are positioned. To reconstruct the network as perceived by the ego, various techniques can be used, but the main instrument is an interview with the ego, or person.

I opted for QNA using interviews to obtain the data, including name generators and network cards. First, I developed an interview guideline that contained three major parts. The first part gathered information on the biography of the exiled scholar, asking, for example, about former and current job positions. The second and main part of the interview opened with the key question: "In a person's academic career several people and institutions are relevant to progress. Who is relevant in your professional network?" In order to stimulate the interviewee's memory, a name generator (Burt, 1984, p. 296) was used. A name generator is an empty list in which the interviewee is asked to put names, acronyms, or even numbers. In my case, this included persons or institutions that were considered relevant to the interviewee's professional career. In the next step, I asked the exiled scholar to order these names on a network card of concentric circles, explaining the relation to this person or institution. The concentric circles with the ego in their center symbolized the relative closeness of an alter to the ego as perceived by the ego. The network cards functioned as cognitive help in the interview to compare the position of several alteri; it also helped to stimulate discussion (Hollstein, 2016). In our case, we asked the interviewees to locate their identified alteri in one of

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three geographically defined sectors: the host country (i.e., Germany), in the home country (e.g., Turkey), or in the transnational sphere (i.e., anywhere except the host or home country). We asked the interviewees to explain their choice by locating a person in the different circles and to define the relationship with that person or institution in more detail, instigating this with the network cards. Furthermore, we asked the interviewees about their means of communication between the ego and the alteri. They were probed on the intensity of the communication and asked to reflect that by drawing thinner or thicker lines on the network card. Finally, the third part of the interview was a personal evaluation of the interviewee's current situation in Germany and visions of the future.

Interviews were done with the help of master's students from Freie Universität Berlin. We conducted interviews with 14 scholars in exile coming from different disciplines – mainly from the social sciences and humanities – from August to November 2019. Most interviews were conducted in English, some in German, depending on the scholars' preferences. The scholars were located in Germany – most in Berlin, a large metropolitan city with three universities that host a large number of scholars at risk in Germany. All interviews were conducted face-to-face, often in the offices of the interviewees, and lasted around an hour. A total of 12 scholars were originally from Turkey, one from Syria, and one from Yemen. Nine of the scholars were female and five were male. Their ages ranged from the mid-30s to early 60s, with most being from 40 to 50 years of age. Neither the country of origin, the disciplines, age group, nor gender of the interviewed scholars are representative. However, the sample reflects certain trends with regard to those scholars who have come to Germany. We also applied two conditions to allow a more homogeneous sample. The interviewee should have reached a senior or mid-career phase (hold a PhD and have held a position in academia in their country of origin) and have been exiled to Germany within the previous two to five years.

To find subjects for the QNA, we looked in the media reports for people who self-identified as scholars at risk, asked German scholars who worked as mentors to these academics, and went to SAR conferences. The potential interviewees were approached in various ways, for example, through personal contacts via the snowball method, by using email lists, or by contacting them at conferences. Although complete anonymity of the interviewee, including that of the person's alteri, was guaranteed, the response rate was rather low, and several attempts had to be made to convince interviewees to participate.

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Most likely, the time-consuming, in-depth method and the possible revelation of sensitive personal information were major reasons for not taking part in the study. In addition, the overall population investigated in this study was small – only a couple hundred people – so 14 interviews were a good result for an exploratory study.

All interviews were audio-recorded and condensed in written "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973). These descriptions highlighted the main findings, which were supplemented by final network cards containing the sectoralized relationships of the ego to the alteri. The analysis relied on these fourteen network cards and the comparative qualitative content analysis of the 14 interviews.

Presenting the networks of scholars in exile

In the following sections, I present the networks of the interviewed scholars as snapshots in time. Therefore, the respective context will be presented before I delve into a reconstruction of the networks regarding the spatial (i.e., sectoral dimension) followed by the communicative dimension.

The networks' contexts

All interviewees had originally been well settled in their home countries, and all but one had previously attained a permanent professorship that they had permanently left or that was on hold with only a minimal chance of getting back upon return. All the Turkish scholars had signed the Academics for Peace petition (see Özgür in this volume), except one who had not supported it. One had been imprisoned after signing the petition, another was in pre-trial detention, and many had faced court trials before they went into exile. The interviewed Turkish scholars had mainly fled for political reasons, while the two Arab scholars did not provide any details about the reasons for fleeing their home countries. The scholar from Yemen believed that the regime was monitoring scholars ("the walls have ears," Interviewee 13) and believed that he was forced into retirement because of his critical remarks about the regime and had no chance to continue in academia in Yemen.

All interviewees had a temporary fellowship – most of them from the PSI – and some had already passed the first phase of PSI and were now in the second round of temporary fellowships awarded by institutions, such as

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the Berlin-based Einstein Foundation. All of these fellowships are conditional upon a German host institution. This means a university or institute and a hosting professor at this facility are needed to obtain the grant, which places the fellow in a kind of dependent post-doc position. The funding is then channeled through this institution, thus providing a financial incentive for the host university to participate. The fellowship is in most cases for only two years, sometimes with the possibility of extending it to three years.

Having given up permanent (professorship) positions in their home countries and now being faced with a series of temporary contracts (on more of a post-doc level), all of the interviewed scholars stated that the most complicated aspect of their professional career in Germany was the uncertainty of their academic future. The scholars were explicit about that. One said, "I do not make any plans anymore. It is about survival now" (Interviewee 6); another noted, "I do not see myself as a professor here. I gave up this thought. I am exhausted" (Interviewee 12). All interviewees subscribed to a mentality similar to that of one interviewee who stated, "Because we spend most of the time applying for another position or project . . . this project type of working creates much stress and is not very productive. . . . I feel that we are like the guest workers in the 1960s although we are intellectuals" (Interviewee 1). This job insecurity was also apparently connected to a loss of reputation that many of the scholars felt: "I am just a post-doc now" (Interviewee 4).

Another interviewee added an insight into the complexity of their situation: "We are coming as academics, but we are moving here with the family. The academic part is only one part of the struggle. The other private part is the bigger one" (Interviewee 3). This emphasizes that a lot of time that could be spent on networking was actually spent on family affairs. Those from Yemen and Syria, and the Turkish scholars with an asylum status, named travel restrictions as harmful to their networks, as they were not allowed to travel beyond the 26 Schengen Area countries.

Notably, most of the scholars interviewed had previously been to Germany for a longer period of time or had other connections to it. Many years before, two had done their early studies in Germany, and another interviewee had a partner with German citizenship. For them, these aspects were impetuses to come to Germany in their difficult situation, but did not have an immediate effect on their professional network, since contacts from these former times were based on private, non-academic factors. One of those scholars mentioned that he had written "more than 50 emails" (Interviewee 14) to

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German professors asking them to be his host until he ultimately found one. He stated that it was only after arrival that "I reactivated my German network."

Others had completed their PhD work in Germany or had spent substantial time on scholarship in Germany during their nascent academic career. Their contacts with German academia had developed during these periods. These proved crucial to their professional careers and were of benefit during the tumultuous situation they had found themselves in before flight. Some interviewees mentioned that they actively contacted a former mentor, supervisor, or colleague at a German university for help in finding a host for a scholarship program (Interviewees 9, 12). The interviewee from Yemen had come almost every year to Germany for short-term visits and had made a lot of contacts "that were like bricks on which I could build a base now" (Interviewee 13). Others, like the interviewee from Syria, who had no previous experience with the German academic system and no established personal contacts, felt lost and had more difficulty settling into the new situation. In his case, SAR brought him into contact with possible hosting institutions and facilitated building new network relations. In general, the interviews showed how important previously established personal network contacts are to relocating in exile, although institutionalized networks such as PSI or SAR exist and occasionally can jump in.

Network relations in exile: Home, host, and transnational spheres

Home country

We reviewed the professional network maps from a sectoral perspective. When we distinguished between former home and current host country as well as the transnational realm, we found that the professional relationships with the institutions and their colleagues in their home countries were mainly cut off. A few interviewees retained substantial contacts with colleagues back home, but even then the network ties were stronger in other sectors. Only one interviewee said that she could go back home to her position at the Turkish university because "my university is a very open liberal place" (Interviewee 5). Most, however, had lost contact. Several of the interviewees articulated their disappointment with their home universities. They had been disciplined as a result of their research topics and teaching, thus making the venues with freedom ever smaller even before they had lost their positions.

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One interviewee said that "in my university I was told to not use certain words, for example regarding the [Armenian] genocide . . . or do not put this book into my syllabus. . . . And once they had this idea of filming our classes. I freaked out" (Interviewee 9). Often, the perceived cowardice of their home institutions led to immense disappointment and a complete severance of relations (Interviewees 4, 7). One even exclaimed: "The university administration can go to hell" (Interviewee 11). Likewise, the interviewee from Syria said that he cut off relations completely because "my problem in Syria was very political and related to academia" (Interviewee 8). The Yemeni argued that "it is so unstable there that you cannot do anything, so it is meaningless" (Interviewee 13).

Most scholars indicated that, beyond official ties, some contacts had remained in place on a personal level because some colleagues had become friends, but that this did not impact their academic career any longer. The networks that had been left behind back home were referred to as irrelevant by many of the interviewees. Some mentioned that they would still be able to contact their former supervisors and mentors in Turkey, but under the current circumstances, they would not be of much help. Even if joint projects were planned, it would be difficult to work together because of the distance: "You distribute the tasks, and after three months, you meet again via Skype and nothing is done" (Interviewee 7). One scholar explained that she had changed professional relations with people in Turkey. She would rather contract them as local researchers to collect information: "It is a need-based contact" (Interviewee 11). One explanation for this cut in ties can definitely be that they are trying to manage the new circumstances in a different country where the former networks are not seen as so relevant. However, in some cases, there was very clear distancing occurring due to this emotional disappointment.

Host country

In contrast to their home countries, the majority of the scholars indicated that their professional network was more extensive in their host country, Germany. Typically, a lot of significant contacts were project-related. Once a joint activity was planned, such as co-writing an article, planning a seminar together, or submitting a project proposal, the contacts became better established. Thus, they were highlighted as more important on the network maps. Although this might be seen as typical for academic work, some of the scholars suggested that because German academia has a limited number of

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permanent positions, much of the academic work is short-term and project-related, thus requiring personal contacts. These close contacts were mostly occurring in the exiles' direct environments with the host professors and other senior scholars at the host institutions.

Many of the interviewed scholars had held senior or close to senior positions in their home countries. In Germany, in all cases, the participants mentioned senior mentors and supporters in permanent, leading positions (e.g., directors of institutes or deans of faculties) as their closest and most important connections. It was not clear from the interviews whether all these connections were an academic exchange between equals or considered a hierarchical relationship in which the exiled scholar depended on help from the established German scholar. In any case, most of the interviewees did, indeed, praise their senior hosts for their support. Due to the competitive nature of the German system to obtain project-related funding, it is often important to rely on personal support and guidance from a senior scholar. This strategy had definitely been incorporated into the networking strategies of exiled scholars. One explained that "the German university system is highly closed. . . . So you need to know someone" to get into a project or position (Interviewee 14) and another one said her hosts "bring me into the system . . . They are connecting me" (Interviewee 11). There was only one exception to this dependency: the person from Yemen who argued that "I created my position out of nothing. . . . The people are supportive, but this is not enough. So, I contributed to it" (Interviewee 13). He had brought his international and company contacts with him. He was one of the few participants not researching in humanities and social sciences, but in engineering, which enabled him to also benefit from industrial contacts beyond academia.

For many scholars, institutionalized networks of support, such as PSI or SAR, played a role and were mentioned regularly in the interviews, albeit on the outer circles of their network maps. Some conveyed gratitude toward these initiatives. The Syrian scholar remarked, "SAR created a network for me in Germany" by finding someone interested in his profile (Interviewee 8). Another complained, however, that during PSI workshops, "I feel like a kid, like a primary school student" (Interviewee 12), so she avoided these seminars. One scholar, who seemed to have deeper contacts in these organizations, mentioned that, through a workshop, she found a like-minded scholar in her field with whom she could collaborate (Interviewee 4). She argued that she made a virtue out of necessity. Since her personal struggles had opened up

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a new research field for her, she was now engaged in promoting academic freedom by lecturing about her situation.

It is important to note that a substantial portion of the strong network ties located in the German sphere were contacts with fellow nationals who were also in exile. Interviewee 9 said that at her Turkish home university: "most of my friends, around 80%, resigned or moved to other places" as she had. The most important colleagues in their field of research and those who shared their political and ethical positions also had to flee into exile. They had now been relocated to Germany or elsewhere; thus, a spatial transfer of relevant network ties had taken place. In particular, the Turkish scholars who were interviewed relied strongly on their BAK network, which now had a major branch in Germany, and they were well connected with most of the colleagues in this network through joint projects such as the Off-University.

One scholar pointed out that professional relations in academia and, in particular, in the social sciences and the arts, need to be based on mutual understanding and even friendship, noting that one cannot work or publish with a person who does not share the same basic convictions. Thus, she called those scholar friends her "allies" and added that "you have to have some confidence in this person" (Interviewee 5). This was also a viewpoint held among the Turkish scholars. The possibility of being able to form a network with other like-minded scholars abroad was specific to the Turkish participants. The two Arab scholars did not mention having these bonds. Typically, related disciplines, a shared political background, and the necessity for immediate solidarity created these strong ties. However, upholding the political aspect of being in exile and being within a specific politically motivated network could also create a burden. Interviewee 11 stated, "I do not want to spend my life with these activities like organizing demonstrations, but they [the Turkish government] push us. . . I am not loving it, but this is something that you have to do." However, another scholar who was involved in some BAK activities in Germany argued, "I actually cannot carry any more problems" and wanted to quit these activities because "psychologically it is heavy for me" (Interviewee 12). Thus, it appeared that such a community-like network can provide strong ties of support but is, simultaneously, a reminder of the fate of exile.

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Transnational sphere

The contacts mentioned in a transnational sphere (i.e., someone not located in the home country or Germany) were rather weak and dispersed. Only a few scholars indicated they had an effective transnational network. One interviewee explained that before exile, she had been writing almost exclusively in Turkish; she was only now adapting to the circumstances in Germany by giving lectures and writing in English (Interviewee 3). The section of transnational contacts on her network map was empty. Many other network maps looked similar, usually with only international network organizations, such as SAR, mentioned in the outer circles of the transnational sector. Obviously, for some scholars, these were seen as institutions that provided a gateway to networking, but for only a few did it result in substantial transnational contacts.

However, for three scholars, transnational relations dominated their professional networks or were as important as their contacts in Germany. In all these cases, this was the result of a previous longer stay at a university abroad, such as in the US or Italy. It was often connected to joint work, such as editing a volume or organizing a conference panel together. "I was already working with people abroad and not so much with people in Turkey," explained Interviewee 2, "so it does not feel like exile because there were already so many contacts abroad . . . and I can at least do my research." Importantly, he thought that this situation differed from that of many of the other Turkish scholars.

Some other interviewees considered contacts in the transnational realm as those to "well-known scholars in the field" (Interviewee 10). They had once met them in a particular setting, such as a conference, but still put these contacts at the outer circles of their network map, indicating less direct importance and weak ties. As Interviewee 9 explained, because of their international reputation in a certain field, these scholars were considered key to opening doors in their new Western academic environment, and she had approached the esteemed researcher to write letters of support for her. For her, this helped in getting a scholarship, but it also epitomizes the asymmetric power relations these scholars are in. Similarly, reflecting on this asymmetry, others indicated the desire to approach these distinguished experts for conference participation or a guest lecture spot, or because a particular person "might be helpful to introduce me to other people" (Interviewee 10).

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They noted that these people could not be considered strong ties in their networks, but hoped to be able to rely on them in cases of emergency.

Network relations in exile: Communication and activities

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became common knowledge that spatial distance has a tremendous impact on communication. This research was conducted before the pandemic, but it had already become clear that physical distance strongly affected the intensity and quality of communication. It was also found important by the interviewees whether a contact was considered professional only or a professional-friend relation. Moreover, the restricted communication in their home country was pertinent.

Typically, the more important a contact was based on their position on the network map, the more frequent and the more diverse the modes of communication were. The participants described these contacts as significant because they were perceived as mentors. These people functioned as hosts and/or worked on joint projects with them. Communication occurred in personal meetings (often in person), as well as by means of telephone, messenger, and email. Without the possibility for personal meetings, the ties in the network became weaker, which was observed in relation to the home country but also in the transnational sphere: "Connections to my home country are getting harder, because you need to meet face-to-face. For private contacts it works, but when it comes to work you need to see each other, Skype meetings don't do it" (Interviewee 7). Even those who had a substantial number of contacts in the transnational realm communicated less frequently with them than with their colleagues in Germany. Only in those cases in which a joint project was being carried out were these transnational colleagues contacted more often and via phone (Interviewee 6). Normally, infrequent email was the means of this communication. One scholar mentioned about a colleague in the US that "if I really had to ask something, he would be there" (Interviewee 12), and another said, "these people are so busy" (Interviewee 5), indicating that they were perceived as too important to be contacted frequently.

Many interviewees noted that as soon as personal contacts go beyond a purely professional relation, messenger services were used to stay in contact both in the German and transnational spheres. Whether or not this blurring of private and professional or informal and formal communication was happening depended primarily on the setting between the ego and its alteri.

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As Interviewee 13 stated, "If it is more private communication, or an urgent matter, I can WhatsApp, but for professional contacts, it is mainly email," adding that sometimes phone calls could be used, which applied most often to the host professor. Within the BAK network, the use of messenger services was much more common.

In the interviews, many scholars stated that academic freedom, including freedom of speech, was the best aspect of their exile. In particular, those who researched sensitive issues, such as the genocide of the Armenians in Turkey or LGBTIQ issues, mentioned that they enjoyed the freedom in Germany. Despite the difficulties in job security, several scholars said that they felt freer to conduct their research in Germany.

However, juxtaposed with this freer environment in exile were other factors: having family back home who might face repression, having insecure resident status after their scholarships ended, and the slowly closing door of possibility to return one day to their home country. This affected their private and, in some cases, professional communication: "If I communicated with someone back home, I might put him in a bad political situation," the Syrian scholar explained (Interviewee 8). Many of the Turkish interviewees also noted the need to be careful in their conversations with Turkish friends and colleagues, in particular, regarding topics that were politically sensitive: "Turkey is not like China, but it [communication] is watched . . . I would not contact very often people in Turkey, although I do not suspect the Turkish authorities to monitor my WhatsApp. But I would not mention very critical things via WhatsApp" (Interviewee 2). Although almost all the interviewees denied direct self-censorship, even in an academic context, one scholar stated that "I censor my speech according to those who listen" because of a court case still pending. She gave the example of once being at a conference in Germany and seeing a person from the Turkish government taking notes, "So you become more careful" (Interviewee 3).

Conclusions

A QNA of 14 exiled scholars in Germany revealed that only two interviewees – the engineer from Yemen and, perhaps, one interviewee from Turkey who still maintained a position at her Turkish home university – perceived themselves as having the "network-making power" theorized by Castells (2011). All the other interviewees indicated a strong dependency on their host professor.

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Consequently, this relationship was perceived as the most important in their network. Although this dependency was probably not intended by the host professor, the differing academic environment of Germany, in which permanent positions are rare and competition for limited resources can be intense (see Vatansever in this volume), did become a main factor that influenced the exiled scholars' networks. With their funding schemes and conditions, the support networks seem to reinforce this dependency and perceived power asymmetry, although their intentions might be different.

Obviously, in an imbalanced global knowledge production system, previous network relations to colleagues and mentors remaining in the home countries often became irrelevant for these scholars, even though digital media facilitated communication. Most networks had to be built anew such that the exiled scholars often felt dependent and had limited capacities to be "network-makers". Help from institutionalized networks in the host country was appreciated and often, well used, but it became clear in the interviews that many were tired of being considered a scholar at risk who had to be "saved." Yet, many of the Turkish scholars succeeded in forming networks in which like-minded exiles in Germany became their most important contacts. Perhaps in the long term, these scientists will obtain network-making power on their own terms. Networking is also a potential source for bringing otherwise unavailable knowledge, ideas, and experiences into the German system, thus enriching it with truly distinct perspectives. However, due to the strong structural dependencies of the German academic system and the inability to exploit its home and transnational contacts in a more substantial way, the networks of these scholars in exile remain vulnerable.

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