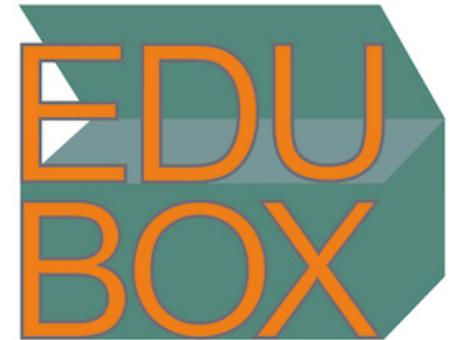


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# EduBox 03: Social and business networks and relations



Author: Prof. Dr. Adelheid Iken  
Project: EduBoxes for Hamburg Open Online University ([www.hoou.de](http://www.hoou.de))



# INTRODUCTION TO EDUBOX 03

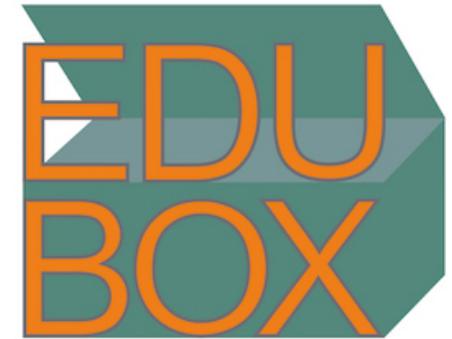
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One of the features of the socio-cultural and economic changes linked to globalisation and the digitalisation of communication is that we are increasingly entangled in a web of local and global relations. We not only need to understand these webs as networks and the impact these changes have on building and maintaining personal and business relations, but also have tools available to analyse and enhance these relationships both locally and globally.

Against this background, this EduBox introduces a network approach to the study of social relations and provides students with the basic principles of network analysis and net mapping. This EduBox thus enables students to make well-founded suggestions for interventions and decisions within networks, based on an appraisal of their complex structures and the relationships between the various network actors.

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# EduBox 03: Social and business networks and relations



## Session 02: Social relations – a network perspective

Author: Prof. Dr. Adelheid Iken  
Project: EduBoxes for Hamburg Open Online University ([www.hoou.de](http://www.hoou.de))



# STUDYING SOCIAL RELATIONS

## Introduction to Session 2

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Social relations are not only a complex phenomenon, but are also currently undergoing tremendous changes with regard to their structure, localisation and maintenance.

Understanding and perceiving a person as a networked individual is an approach which makes this complexity visible and thus helps us to understand them better, a basic requirement for any meaningful intervention.

The purpose of this session is therefore to highlight some of the changes in the structure of social relations and to introduce the perspective of a networked individual in order to enhance understanding of how social relations work.

# LEARNING OUTCOME

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-  Students argue why a network perspective helps to understand the growing complexity of social relations in today's world

# OBJECTIVES

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- At the end of these sessions, students will be able to
  - explain why we speak about a networked individual in the context of changing social relationships and in the context of growing mobility,
  - explain Wellman's model of the networked individual, and
  - apply the model

# STUDYING SOCIAL RELATIONS

## Topics

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- Learning outcome
- Objectives
- Lead-in
- Social relations and networks
  - Changes in social relations
  - Membership in collectives
  - The networked individual
- Summary and reflection
- Home assignment
- Sources

# LEAD-IN

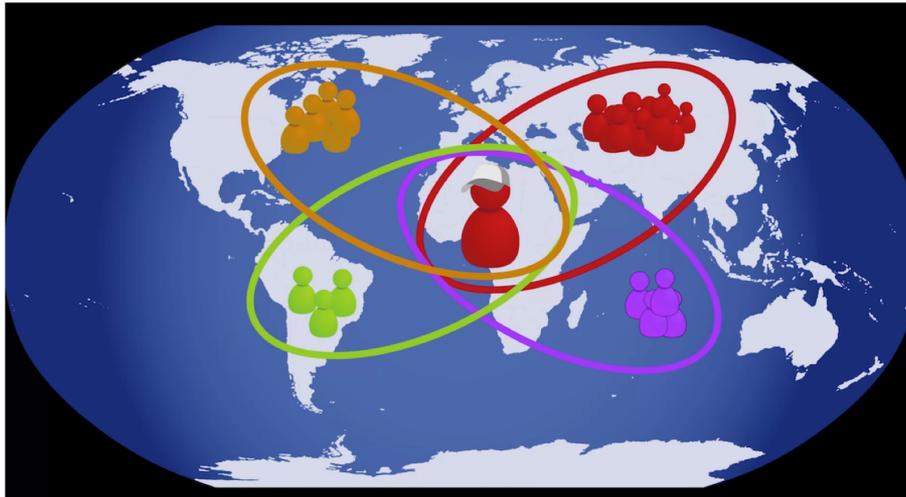


Watch the short Video about Emil and use his situation to recall the collectives that you belong to.

Do you have links across country borders?

Are you a member of any virtual communities?

What are the most important means of keeping in touch?



Click on the Image above or watch the Video here:

<https://blogs.hoou.de/eduboxes/eduboxes/edubox-03/session-02/>

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relationships

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### Bounded communities



CC BY-SA 4.0 „Agarez“ Source: [Adelheid Iken \(2015\)](#)

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relationships

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### Urbanisation



CC BY-SA 4.0 „Porto“ Source: Adelheid Iken (2019)

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

### Global migration and mobility

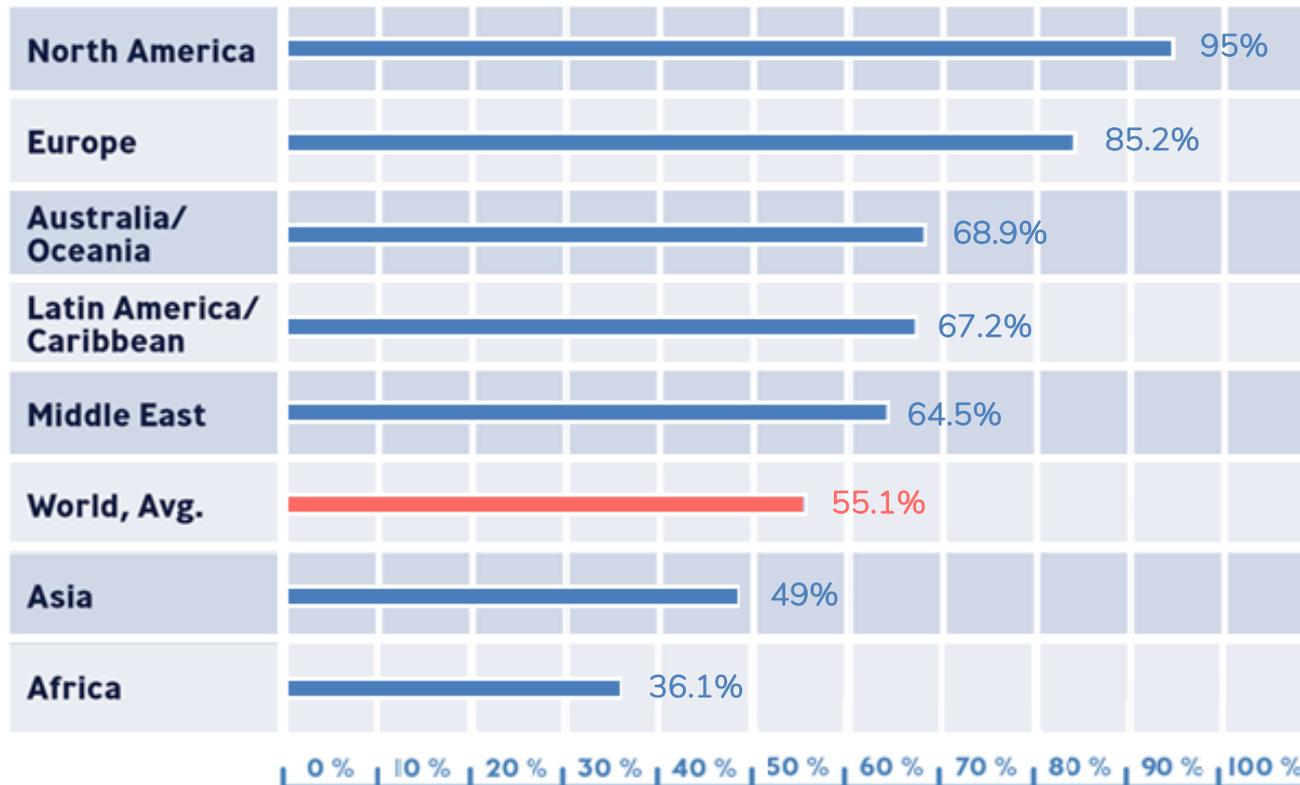


CC BY-SA 3.0 Source: Sander, Abel and Bauer <http://www.global-migration.info/> (6.9.2018)

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

Internet world penetration rate by geographic regions 2018



Source: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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Migration, mobility and transnationalism



CC BY-SA 4.0 „Lübeck“ Source: Adelheid Iken (2013)

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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Skype mothers and facebook daughters



Source: Valerie Francisco <https://prezi.com/4znpbhawat/skype-mothers-and-facebook-daughters-how-technology-is-transforming-care-work-in-transnational-families/> / 12.9.2018, used by permission

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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### Facebook kids

„Before, I don't think about my posts. But one time she saw my pic, she said, because of what I was wearing. How improper! That's why this person doesn't like you! I think she feels that before...but its because of the technology that she sees it too. That's why now, when I post, I pretend that I wear something nice. I ,hide' other things from her so she doesn't see.“

Althea, 23, Daughter in Manila

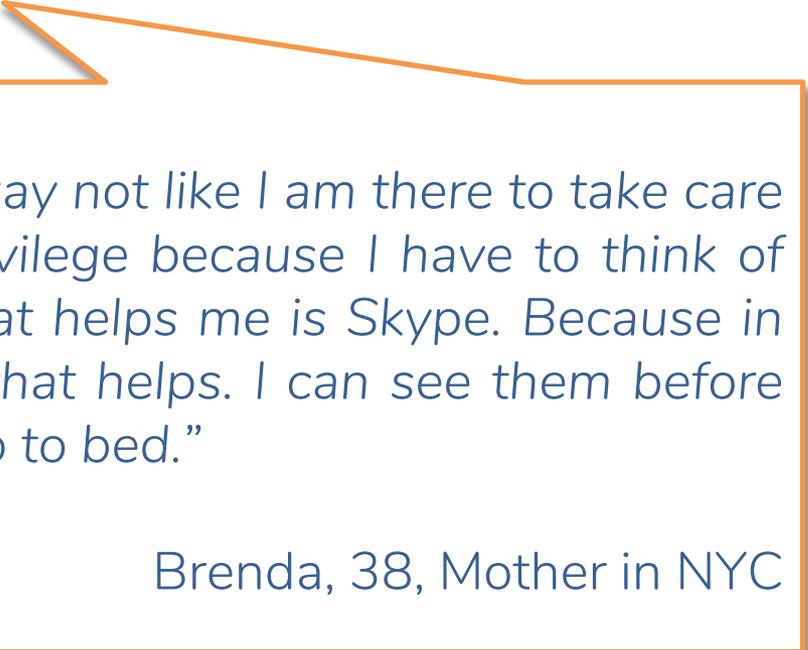
Source: Valerie Francisco <https://prezi.com/4znpbhaxiwat/skype-mothers-and-facebook-daughters-how-technologys-transforming-care-work-in-transnational-families/> 12.9.2018; used by permission

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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Skype mother



*„I am a good mother in a different way not like I am there to take care of them. I have to sacrifice that privilege because I have to think of them and their future. The thing that helps me is Skype. Because in Skype you can see your family so that helps. I can see them before they go to school and before they go to bed.”*

Brenda, 38, Mother in NYC

Source: Valerie Francisco <https://prezi.com/4znpbhaxiwat/skype-mothers-and-facebook-daughters-how-technologys-transforming-care-work-in-transnational-families/> 12.9.2018; used by permission

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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„You know when we're always online, you find out what's going on, you start to know what's happening every day. It makes me feel better when I know every day they are doing homework and taking care of each other. It's like I see they're maturing. You believe in yourself that you didn't fail as a mom.”

(Source: Francisco, Valerie 2015:185; used by permission)

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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*„I still have many friends in Ukraine. And regardless of the distance we can still communicate. Skype is amazing. Once there was the birthday of my mate. They were at my friend’s apartment drinking beer. So they called me on Skype, put the laptop in the middle of the room and I was drinking beer with them. This technology allows me to spend time with them while I am a couple of thousands of kilometers away. So the contact is still very close.”*

Viktor, 21, came from Ukraine to the Netherlands in 2009 as a student

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Changes in social relations

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„My life is very good here, but what I see is that much of my social life is still in Brazil. Nowadays, 90 per cent of my contacts are on the internet, in emails or on Facebook are in Brazil. So in this sense I realize much of my life is still there. [...] I have friends here, of course, but it is a different friendship, a more distant relationship, in Brazil I have closer friendships, people whom I talk with more frequently, via Skype, Facebook or email. In short, my friendships from Brazil are closer to me than the ones from the Netherlands, besides my family, of course.”

Beatriz, 45, migrated from Brazil to the Netherlands in 2002 to live with her Dutch partner

Source: Dekker, Rianne & Godfried Engbersen 2012: 9-10

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives

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- Activity 01:  
The following images show four different collectives, a collective of friends, family members, colleagues from work or university and one linked to neighbours. Think about the people in your collectives and note down
  - Who they are
  - Where they are
  - How you usually keep in touch
  - And what characterises your relationship with them.

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives

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### Neighbours



# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives

---

### Family



# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives

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### Friends



# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives

Colleagues /  
Fellow students



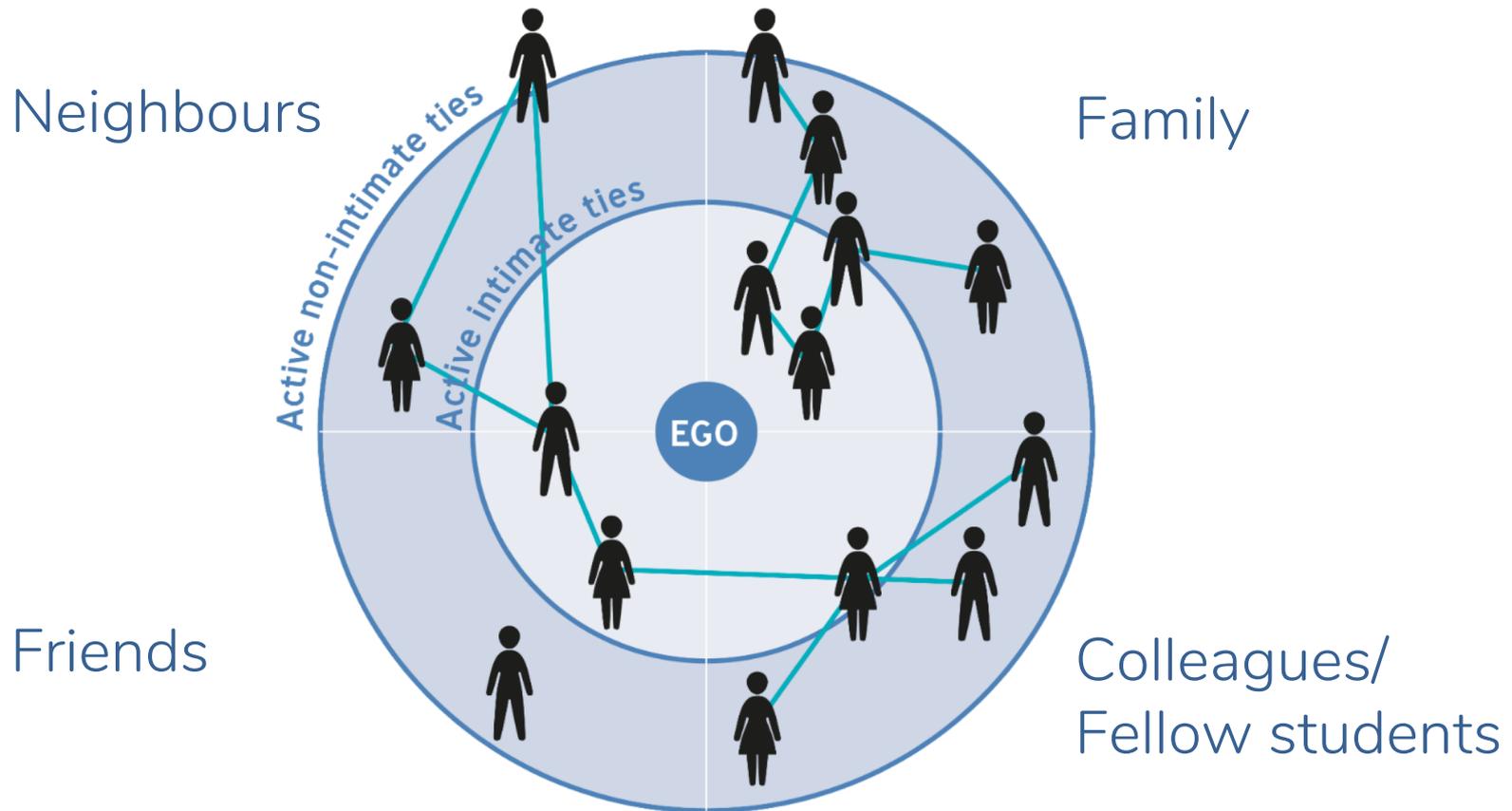
# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives



# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## The networked individual



# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## Membership in collectives

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- Activity 2:  
Use the worksheets from the previous activity to develop a pie chart indicating your active-intimate and non-active intimate ties with regard to friends/neighbours/colleagues or fellow students and family.
- Start with you/ego at the centre and place people according to their position in your network indicating whether you maintain active-intimate or non-active intimate ties with them.
- Then link those who know each other.
- Share the results with your neighbour and discuss the implications any differences may have considering information flow, information sharing, decision making and support systems.

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## The networked individual

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- A network approach makes patterns of relationships in communities and collectives visible
- A network shows the links between the actors irrespective of geographical proximity
- A network provides an understanding of complex interactions and relationships at a certain point in time
- A network analysis allows us to analyse the relationships between the different actors and their behaviour

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## The networked individual

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- Activity 03:

Imagine you are going to be an intern in an international company. Think of some activities that might help to establish relationships and thus a network with your colleagues and note them down. Then think about the following questions:

- If you wanted to get to know someone you had never talked to before, how would you approach them?
- What would you like to know and ask first in your conversation with them? Note down some appropriate topics/questions and no-go's. Who and why would you (never) ask this?
- Where and how does culture come into play and how could you accommodate possible cultural differences?

# SOCIAL RELATIONS AND NETWORKS

## The networked individual

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- In your work and social environment: With whom would you like to network more intensively? Why? How would that affect your questions, e.g. in terms of personal questions?
- How would you differ in your body language, tone of voice, gestures etc. when talking to the CEO of the company vs. another intern?
- How would you try to make a good first impression? How would you show interest during a first conversation?
- Take a look again at the networking activities you noted down. How would the different situations affect your behaviour towards new people? E.g. would you behave differently during an after work event, a sports class or a coffee break?

# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Summary

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- In today's world social relations and relationships are less localised than they were 30 years ago because families and family structures have changed but also because we have become members of other collectives due to increasing mobility and access to modern communication technologies
- The complexity of social relations today is therefore created by the increased mobility, the opportunities that modern communication systems offer and a growing interconnectedness
- Social relations today usually cut across geographical boundaries and need to be considered as open systems which are characterised by flexibility and the readiness to change
- Understanding ourselves as well as others as networked individuals who are members of many different collectives helps us to understand and thus manage the complexity of social relations

# SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

## Reflection

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How can the understanding of yourself as a networked individual help you to analyse the social relationships you have and help you to influence the quantity and quality of links? What might be your reasons for doing this?

# HOME ASSIGNMENT

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- Home assignment 1:  
Read the working paper by Prof. Dr. Adelheid Iken and Dr. Peter Witchalls on 'Social relations under the influence of globalisation, towards a social network approach' and carry out the following tasks in writing.
- What are major arguments for thinking in terms of networks with regard to social relations? What are the advantages of doing so in a globalised world?
- What is meant by a network approach to social relations?
- What is meant by a kinship network and why is that so special?
- When analysing a network, the structure as well as the density of ties is important considering the flow of resources. How might you visualise this aspect?

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