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Cities, Migrant Incorporation, and Ethnicity: A Network Perspective on Boundary Work

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Abstract In this article, I am interested in the different types of boundaries emerging in a city characterized by a highly diverse population. The analysis of the personal social networks of 250 inhabitants of a small Swiss City—different types of migrants as well as non-migrants—supplemented by data from qualitative interviews brings to light the important categories for the creation of boundaries and the place of ethnicity among them. The inhabitant's network structures display specific network boundaries that are translated into symbolic and also social boundaries: four different clusters emerge among the population, pointing to their stratified social positioning in this city. Hereby an interplay of nationality, education, local establishment, mobility type, "race," and religion are the most important structuring factors. It becomes clear that the common ideas of assimilation cannot grasp the complexity of the "categorical game" at place in this city when it comes to migrant's incorporation.

Keywords Cities · Ethnicity · Boundary work · Social capital · Social networks · Switzerland · Transnationality

Introduction

Cities are, by definition, places of intensified diversity. People with different lifestyles and socioeconomic resources, diverse occupational, linguistic, religious, and national background meet, socialize, or maybe segregate. One of the main features of cities is that they are—and always have been—both locations and outcomes of immigration and integration. It is not by coincidence that migration sociology had its birth at the beginning of the last century in the rapidly growing city of Chicago, and that urban anthropology was founded by the last midcentury

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after anthropologists were obliged to follow “their” rural migrants into the growing cities of Africa. Since then, different generations of social scientists have been engaged in theorizing the issue of how cities are—or should best be—organized in terms of migrant incorporation. Until today, academics (and politicians) have conceptualized cities, in general, as composed of a mosaic of ethnic or nationally (and in the USA “racially”) defined groups, each with its inherent characteristics and its own dense fabric of ethnic organization and clearly demarcated boundaries. The question then, is either how the ethnically defined groups assimilate into the mainstream society (assimilation paradigm) or how the cultural specificities of such groups could be recognized and valorized, allowing an immigrant’s full participation in national societies as cultural minorities (multicultural incorporation paradigm).

Those common narratives have recently been challenged by different theoretical arguments. For our purpose, I would like to mention two: first, diversity in cities is nowadays enhanced by the restructuring processes of globalized economies and by more intensified forms of embeddedness of cities in transnational spaces (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2011). Vertovec (2007) coined the term “super-diversity,” meaning a condition characterizing cities today and distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increasing number of multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socioeconomically differentiated, and legally stratified immigrants. Hence, the issue of the “integration of difference in cities” under those circumstances becomes a new actuality. Second, such “community studies” came under fire for a while not only for their tendency to “groupism” (Brubaker 2004) by treating ethnic groups as substantial entities to which interest and agency can be attributed but also for their underlying methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). These objections underscore the constructed, relational, subjective, and interactional nature of ethnicity and refer to the classic works of scholars like Frederik Barth (1969) or Max Weber (1980 [1922]). Instead of essentializing “ethnic” immigrant groups by taking them for a quasi natural starting point for all investigations and as sole units of analysis, academics propose in this line of rationale to focus on *ethnic boundary work* (Alba 2005; Bauböck 1998; Wimmer 2008) or on the dialectics of *ethnic self-identification* and *external categorization* (Jenkins 1997; Duemmler et al. 2010). In this vein of reasoning, this article is interested in the types of boundaries emerging in a city characterized by high immigration. The aim is to demonstrate, through the prism of the social networks of the inhabitants—migrants and non-migrants—of Neuchâtel, a small Swiss city, which categories are brought up in such boundary work and the place ethnicity has among them.

Social network analysis is a framework that suits this research question very well: the focus is placed on the structure of social relations rather than on preliminary (ethnically) defined groups, and this encourages the exploration of multilevel and cross-cutting ties and allows “unbounding” problematic concepts like “ethnic or national groups.” I investigated 250 personal social networks of inhabitants of Neuchâtel to analyze their structures in terms of different types of boundaries. In a second step, I conducted in-depth qualitative interviews that complete the network analysis and enhance our understanding of classifications of the inhabitants relevant to the network boundaries.

The idea of boundary has come to play a key role in important new lines of scholarship across the social sciences (Pachucki et al. 2007). It is for this purpose that I distinguish between *network* boundaries, *symbolic* and *social* boundaries. *Network boundaries* are structures of membership, and therefore, exclusion and inclusion emerge out of the personal networks of the inhabitants. Following Lamont and Molnar (2002: 168–189), I understand *symbolic boundaries* to be conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, and practices. According to Lamont and Molnar, *social boundaries* are defined as objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources and social opportunities. I argue that the inhabitant's network structures display specific network boundaries that are translated into demarcated symbolic boundaries—sometimes leading to social boundaries. By this modality, the population of Neuchâtel is organized into stratified social positioning, where an interplay of nationality, education, local establishment, mobility type, "race," and religion are the most important structuring forces.

This article aims at contributing in three ways to the emerging theoretical agenda of the "boundary paradigm": first, while most studies dealing with questions of boundary making concentrate on the role of *ethnicity* (among others Wimmer 2008; Barth 1969), I maintain that we might ask which other categories emerge as relevant to social and symbolic boundaries and how these categories intersect with ethnicity. Second, I intend to advance the theoretical agenda by contributing to understand boundary work through the focus on social networks and by bringing in transnational and mobility aspects, applying therefore a kind of *post-ethnic approach*. And third, I propose to articulate the boundary idea with the question of migrant incorporation processes.

In the first section, a short description of the city of Neuchâtel is provided before some relevant concepts of network theory are introduced. The methodology is then briefly outlined, after which the network structures of the inhabitants of Neuchâtel are presented. It is later demonstrated, based on the results of the qualitative interviews, how the identified network boundaries are declined into symbolic boundaries. The final chapter discusses the lessons we might learn for migrant incorporation in cities when going beyond ideas of assimilation, applying such a boundary perspective and a network approach.

Neuchâtel: A City of Immigration

At first glance, it might be astonishing that a small city like Neuchâtel of roughly 32,000 inhabitants, located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, should be of interest for the larger public.[1] However, a brief look at its immigration history and at the composition of its population shows that this small city might be worthy of academic attention when it comes to discussing migration dynamics and incorporation.

[1] In comparison with European or North American cities, the number of inhabitants is very small. However, the reader should keep in mind that Switzerland is a country of roughly 7.5 million inhabitants with only five cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. The district of Neuchâtel has roughly 51,000 inhabitants.

From the seventeenth century onward, Neuchâtel was touched by economic globalization that incorporated the city and its surroundings in an increasingly transnational space: growing industrialization (bobbin lace and calico printing), later on the boom of the (famous) watch-making industry, and finally the far-reaching economic restructuring since the 1980s, with new industries (such as luxury watches, micro- and biotechnology, and medical technology) are the three most important developments. These developments sparked the immigration of workers—skilled and non-skilled—from other corners of the world, and Neuchâtel came to accommodate different types of migrants. First, at the beginning of the twentieth century and after World War II, it received French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese migrants seeking employment; then, in the latter half of the 20th century, Neuchâtel also became home to dissidents of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, refugees and asylum seekers from former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Given the multinational character of the new industries built up since the 1980s, they attracted (and still do) highly qualified workers with skills in management and in specialized tasks. This history of globalization has the outcome today that the population is highly heterogeneous with regard to the spectrum of national origins, but also with regard to the length of stay, the different types of residence permits, and the educational background of these migrants (see Table 1). Migration also had a strong effect on the composition of the population in religious terms. Historically, the population of Neuchâtel was Protestant—incorporated in the former aristocracy of Neuchâtel. As a result of the migration flows during the last decades, Catholics—mainly immigrants from Southern Europe—now represent 39% of the population and outnumber the Protestants who make up only 31%. In addition, 3% of the inhabitants are Muslims, migrants having arrived since the 1990s.

In this way, we can say that Neuchâtel is an immigrant city, similar to big cities. However, as a consequence of the small size of the city, it is organized differently from other urban areas. For instance, at first glance, neither the structure of neighborhoods nor the housing markets reveal tendencies toward separation along national or ethnic lines in Neuchâtel. Unlike big cities such as London or Paris, there are no suburbs populated almost exclusively by immigrants, nor do we find ethnic spatialization with regard to housing. There are some streets within a concentration of immigrant populations, but overall, diversity has to be structured within a densely inhabited territory. To give an example: there are streets where we find expensive apartments with a beautiful view of the lake and the Alps on one side, while the other side of the street is inhabited by people from popular milieu or of immigrant origin. This is because on the "other side of the street" the houses look out not onto the lake but only onto the backs of the houses that have *the view*.

Thus, we may ask how the population is structured in terms of social networks, network boundaries, and social classifications, and symbolic boundaries.

Some network theory assumptions

Network analysis is especially suited to my research question as it allows for theorizing the issue of boundaries, while at the same time it can empirically grasp it.

The basic premise of network analysts is that the social embeddedness of actors in a web of specific relationships says something about their position in society. Network researchers do not regard social systems as a collection of isolated actors with certain characteristics. Rather, their attention is directed towards examining the relations of the actors in a social network and the attempts to describe this pattern. In this way, one hopes to gain information about the possibilities and constraints that affect the actors' scope of action (Schweizer 1988). These patterns of embeddedness in social relations do not emerge by chance, but should be regarded as structural patterns and are therefore intrinsically linked with the possibilities, as well as the constraints of social action of actors; thus, they influence the resources available to these actors (Scott 1991).

With regard to network boundaries, two main themes are salient: first, the need to investigate the way in which embeddedness in social relations does implicate specific resources for the actors. Here, it is the guiding principle of *network social capital* that is decisive. Second, the exigency to elaborate on the way in which

Table 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of the overall population (2007) and profile of the sample (network study)

	Overall population NE in 2007	Profile sample network study	
	32,389 (100%)	250	100%
Sex			
Men	48%	129	52%
Women	52%	121	48%
Place of birth			
Switzerland	–	98	39%
Outside Switzerland	–	152	61%
Neuchâtel	–	27	11%
Outside Neuchâtel	–	218	89%
National category			
Swiss	69%	106	42%
EU/EFTA	20%	63	25%
Third-country nationals	11%	81	33%
Residence status			
Swiss	69%	106	42%
Annual permit	9%	57	23%
Residence permit	20%	81	33%
Other	2%	6	2%
Religion			
Protestant	31%	47	19%
Catholic	38%	72	29%
Orthodox	No data	13	5%
Muslim	3%	23	9%
None	20%	69	28%
Other	8%	26	10%

Source Data 2007: Statistical office of the Canton of Neuchâtel

embeddedness in social relations produces network boundaries along the so-called *homophilic principle*.

The first set of theoretical orientations focuses on *network social capital*. In the past decades, social capital in its various forms and contexts has emerged as one of the most salient concepts in the social sciences. Lin (1999) and later Flap and Völker (2004) have outlined a network theory of social capital based mainly on the works of Bourdieu (1980) and Coleman (1988). Following Lin (1999: 35), in this article, *network social capital* is considered as one possible form of social capital and asset in a network and basically refers to the importance of resources present in ego-centered networks. The core idea of network social capital is that people better equipped with social resources—in the sense of their social relations and the resources of others that they can draw upon—will succeed better in attaining their goals. There is general agreement in the literature that network social capital varies with network composition, whereas the volume of and the variety within networks might be the decisive criteria (Burt 1983; Van der Gaag and Snijders 2004). The importance of the volume suggests that simply bigger or larger networks are beneficial for attaining individual goals. However, measuring network social capital only as the number of the ego's contacts requires the assumption that each of the ego's contacts equally increases the range of his/her contacts—an assumption that is—following Burt (1983)—obviously problematic. At this point, the variety and quality of contacts within a network is crucial: The idea is that the more differentiation is present in social relations, the better social capital it represents. This is where calculations of heterogeneity indices over the network come into play: Networks with *high* variety that include diverse ties (i.e. at the same time "strong and weak ties"), which represent different forms of capital (Granovetter 1973) do embody more network capital than networks that are characterized by low variety. This is also true for networks characterized by a broad range of ties with qualitatively different connections to diverse others (in terms of gender, ethnicity, class, or more general, in terms of status) but also in terms of roles (kin, friends, etc.).

Going back to the question of the network boundaries characterizing the population of the city in question, we may ask: are there clusters of inhabitants who display similarities with regard to the social capital embedded in their networks? And if this is the case, by which characteristics could these emerging boundaries between those clusters of people be described?

The second vital question is the following: do the networks of the inhabitants follow homophilic principles and therefore display network boundaries along certain variables? We speak of homophily when a more-than-coincidental similarity in characteristics and attitudes can be observed in people who are linked together by a certain kind of social relationship. Aristotle complained that people "love those who are like themselves," and this popular adage has been confirmed empirically by many studies. Homophily has far-reaching consequences for social action and cognition: The most important aspect is that homophily limits people's worlds and has powerful implications for the information they receive, the attitudes they form, and for their everyday interactions (McPherson et al. 2001). To put it differently, homophily implies that distance in terms of social characteristics translates into network distance and vice versa. In this way, the question we have to answer is: Who sticks (in terms of networks) together with whom and according to which criteria do

different segments of the inhabitants stick together? For this study, the principal issue is whether or not it is ethnicity or other variables (gender, age, education, etc.) that are most important for the grouping of the population.

In sum, two kinds of network boundaries can be tagged by these concepts: first, emerging boundaries between clusters of people possessing different compositions of network social capital and second, boundaries in homophilic terms of "groups sticking together."

Methodology

To understand the organization of the boundaries at stake in the city, the research design involved two stages. First, I empirically grasped the everyday networks of 250 inhabitants of Neuchâtel using a multiple name generator consisting of ten items, represented by ten different questions. The instrument included questions about persons with whom the interview partners discuss important things, with whom they spend their leisure time, or who gave them financial assistance. Further questions were designed to identify the persons who helped in finding a job or an apartment. In sum, the instrument was constructed in order to qualitatively grasp different ties, be it for social, emotional or financial support, or for more instrumental aims. For the analysis, all types have been taken into account. Using this name generator, the 250 persons interviewed mentioned a total of 3,014 reference persons.

Using "name interpreters," background information was collected about these reference persons. They were asked, for instance, about the sex, nationality, place of residence, profession, educational level, country of origin, and so on of the mentioned person. Assessing the quality of the relationship between the interview partners and the persons mentioned was also of interest: thus, the respondents were asked to indicate how they were connected to the persons named as well as the length of relation and the intensity and frequency of contact.

The sample was drawn from a list of names (people between 20 and 60 years old) delivered by the Residents' Registration Office in Neuchâtel. The Office keeps a record of every inhabitant living in Neuchâtel, with the exception of asylum seekers, protected persons without long-stay permits, diplomats, and obviously undocumented migrants. When sub-populations vary considerably as is the case here, it is advantageous to sample each subpopulation independently. Strata were defined by the criteria of national category: Swiss, EU/EFTA members, and third-country nationals. Then, random sampling was applied within each stratum. With regard to foreign citizens, I included only first-generation migrants (those not born in Switzerland) to avoid too diversified a sample.[2] The migrant population is over-

[2] It should be noted that Switzerland accords citizenship on a *ius sanguinis* basis, with the result that many of the people counted as foreign nationals were born in Switzerland, sometimes even of parents also born in Switzerland. However, these were excluded from the interviews in the beginning. Persons who had two nationalities (and were born abroad), Swiss and another one were classified in the Swiss category. Among the Swiss, ten people were born abroad: nevertheless, because of their long-term stay in Switzerland (in mean 22.5 years), they were included in the category of the Swiss.

represented in the sample (see Table 1), which is due to the selection process described and which was done intentionally to obtain valuable results with regard to fragments of the population that are less present in the city (such as non-European migrants). For analysis, the data have been statistically weighted, while the overall population of the city (see Table 1) served as approximation. Such procedure allows for generalization.

Table 1 displays the main features of the people surveyed. First of all, the 250 interview partners were as diverse as the inhabitants of Neuchâtel in general. With regard to national category, 42% were Swiss citizens, 23% came from EU or EFTA countries, and 33% were citizens of countries outside Europe. The sample was made up of a total of 45 different nationalities. Furthermore, it was also heterogeneous with regard to the residence status, types of migration (asylum and labor market), education, and religion.

The objective of the qualitative in-depth interviews, which were conducted in a second step, was to investigate the social classifications, how the inhabitants identify with their city, and in general to grasp their social identifications and thus symbolic boundaries. In total, 18 people were interviewed during this second stage. Achieving variation and saturation were the main concepts concerning the selection of the informants while following theoretical sampling. I spoke to Swiss families, working immigrants, naturalized immigrants, and recognized refugees as well as highly qualified immigrants.

The network data were coded according to the characteristics of the interviewees and their reference persons, as well as to the relation between them, and analyzed with different procedures in SPSS. The data from the qualitative interviews were analyzed according to a content-reduction strategy introduced by grounded theory (Charmaz 2001). For analysis, data have been triangulated. Overall, the network data were used to inductively uncover the salient boundaries while the data from qualitative interviews were used in order to better understand those emerging network boundaries.

Emerging network boundaries

Network social capital

In this first part of the analysis, I investigate whether there are individuals or specific clusters of people characterized by high network social capital—and, at the other end of the scale, others who stand out because of low network social capital.

Network social capital was measured using three variables commonly used in network research (Flap et al. 2005; Van der Gaag and Snijders 2004; Moore 1990): The first two concern the question of variety within personal networks, the second the volume.

(a) *Variety I—the relative proportion of kin*: respondents were asked to indicate the ways they were connected to each of the persons named. The linkages were then classified into six categories: kin, friends/acquaintances, persons related to work/job, persons from an institution or a professional association, and others.

The higher the proportion of kin in the network, the higher the potential for solidarity and social support, but the less diverse the network—according to a commonly used network hypothesis;

(b) *Variety II—variation in strength of ties:* the distribution of different levels of frequency measures the variation in strength of ties for a discussion about the use of this proxy see Marsden (1990). Respondents were asked to indicate the intensity of contact with each named person using six categories: every day, a few times a week, every week, every month, every 3 months, or less frequently. Thus, variety is expressed by high values, meaning that in the network all categories (strong as well as weak ties) are represented, which enhances the network social capital.

(c) *Volume—overall network size* as total number of persons named.

I calculated differences in the three network variables[3] according to all available items (nationality, place of birth, gender, etc.). Data were weighted for these calculations using the SPSS Complex Samples procedure (simple contrasts for estimated means in the general linear model). In Table 2, the values for the three variables according to the items which emerged as statistically relevant are presented. The analysis shows that some means vary considerably between different items while not being statistically significant. This is why only those items showing statistically significant values are discussed.[4]

Which items go with high network social capital according to this perspective? Starting with *place of birth*, it reveals that people born in Switzerland have significantly lower proportions of kin in their networks and higher variation in strength of ties than people born in Southern Europe or outside Europe. On the other hand, persons who had built their lives in Switzerland or in central or northern European countries do not differ between them with regard to these variables. Concerning network size, the values of the Swiss contrast from those born in Southern Europe. In summary, people having their place of birth in Switzerland or in central or northern Europe have significantly higher volumes of network social capital than those born in southern Europe or outside Europe.

Furthermore, *mobility pattern* influences network social capital in two ways: Immobility (having lived exclusively in Switzerland) on the one hand, and enhanced circulation (having lived in different countries) on the other hand. Both involve high volumes of network social capital, while movements of one-way migrations (having lived in Switzerland and the country of origin) implicate low level of network capital. Similarly, *type of migration* is relevant: people having arrived in Switzerland as working migrants show higher proportions of kin and lower variation in strength of ties than persons without immigration experience, the latter possessing higher network capital than the first. Also, persons having arrived

[3] The statistical analysis shows that the three variables measure indeed three different aspects of network composition, hereby confirming the theoretically motivated choice of the variables. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient makes evident that the correlation between the three variables is small or medium.

[4] I did run crosstabs with all available items, and did choose those who showed a significant correction, those are shown in Table 2. I also ran some regression models to examine the factors that might explain network variety and volume. However, those results remained very unsatisfactory and I decided to use those complex samples procedures that are more meaningful.

Table 2 Network social capital by variety and volume: contrasts and variations (data weighted)

	Variety I: Relative proportion of kin within the networks				Variety II: Variation in strength of ties (max. 6)				Volume: Network size			
The whole network	Mean % 38.9				Mean % 4.6				Mean % 12.4			
Place of birth												
	Mean %	Switzerland	Southern Europe	Central-Nord Europe	Mean %	Switzerland	Southern Europe	Central-Nord Europe	Mean %	Switzerland	Southern Europe	Central-Nord Europe
Switzerland	36.7		**		4.8		**		12.7		*	
Southern Europe	50.0	**		**	4.2	**			11.4	*		
Central -Nord Europe	32.9		**		4.6				12.2			
Outside Europe	43.5	*		**	4.1	**			12.2			
Mobility pattern												
	Mean %	Only in Switzerland	In the country of origin and in Switzerland		Mean %	Only in Switzerland	In the country of origin and in Switzerland		Mean %	Only in Switzerland	In the country of origin and in Switzerland	
Lived only in Switzerland	37.2		*		4.7		**		12.3			
Lived in the country of origin and in Switzerland	44.1	*			4.1	**			11.9			
Lived in more countries	36.8		*		4.7		**		13.1			
Type of migration												
	Mean %	Working migrant	Asylum		Mean %	Working migrant	Asylum		Mean %	Working migrant	Asylum	
Working migrants	45.8				4.0				11.8		*	
Asylum	53.0				4.0				14.3	*		
No immigration	36.7	**	**		4.8	**			12.7			

Table 2 (continued)

	Variety I: Relative proportion of kin within the networks				Variety II: Variation in strength of ties (max. 6)				Volume: Network size			
Educational degree[a)]												
	Mean %	Low	Medium		Mean %	Low	Medium		Mean %	Low	Medium	
Low	41.2				4.1				10.9			
Medium	44.8				4.4				11.7			
High	34.4		**		4.8	**	*		13.2	**	*	
Religious convictions												
	Mean %	Catholic	Muslim	Protestant	Mean %	Catholic	Muslim	Protestant	Mean %	Catholic	Muslim	Protestant
Catholic	46.3			**	4.3			**	12.0			*
Muslim	44.7				3.9			**	12.7			
Protestant	33.0	**			5.0	**	**		13.6	*		
No religious conviction	37.5	*			4.6		*	*	11.8			
Residence permit												
	Mean %	Annual	Residence	Swiss	Mean %	Annual	Residence	Swiss	Mean %	Annual	Residence	Swiss
Annual	42.6				4.3				11.5			
Residence	42.4				4.2				11.8			
Swiss	37.4				4.7	*	**		12.7			
Income												
	Mean %	0–3’500	3’501–5’500		Mean %	0–3’500	3’501–5’500		Mean %	0–3’500	3’500–5’500	
0 – 3’500 CHF	37.9				4.4				11.6			
3’501-5’500 CHF	41.3				4.7				12.8			
5’501-20’000 CHF	37.8				4.7				13.4	*		

Table 2 (continued)

	Variety I: Relative proportion of kin within the networks		Variety II: Variation in strength of ties (max. 6)		Volume: Network size	
Gender						
	Mean %	Women	Mean %	Women	Mean %	Women
Women	37.2		4.7		12.4	
Men	40.5		4.4		12.4	

[a] Low education: primary and secondary school; medium: federal vocational and training diploma and academic baccalaureate; high: University and university of applied science

*significant $p<0.05$

**significant $p<0.001$

through asylum have less network social capital than those without immigration experience.

Education is possibly one of the factors with the strongest influence on network diversification. This rule, confirmed in numerous network studies for instance, Meyer (2001), can be applied to this study as well: People with high education show higher values for network variety and volume than people with low (though not significant for proportion of kin) and medium education.

More astonishingly might be that different religious affiliations vary in network social capital: Catholics' network social capital is significantly lower for all three variables when contrasted with the Protestants. Also, with regard to variation in strength of ties, Muslims display significantly lower values than Protestants.

The picture emerging with regard to *residence permit* and *income* is more blurred: Persons holding either an annual permit or a residence permit show contrasting values with those of Swiss citizens concerning tie variation. Income structures personal networks only in one way: those earning the most money differ from those with the lowest salaries with regard to network size. And finally, the network structures do not significantly differ between *women and men* with regard to social capital, which is rather surprising given the results of other network studies (Moore 1990).

Who are ultimately the persons that display high volumes of network social capital? Being born in Switzerland or in central or northern Europe, possessing high educational capital, being Protestant, immobile (or on the other hand, highly mobile), and having a high salary are items that are associated with high values for network variety and volume. On the other hand, the following characteristics point to low volumes of network social capital: people from Southern Europe or outside Europe, working migrants or those having arrived through asylum, Catholics (and to a lesser degree Muslims), persons having experienced a one-way migration and lived in the country of origin or in Switzerland, and those possessing a residence or an annual permit.

In other words, I argue that we witness first—while still blurred—shadows of network boundaries. These network boundaries embody different volumes of network social capital and therefore do not give equal access to subgroups and resources.

Homophily

To affine the shape of arising network boundaries, the analysis of homophily is fruitful. As an expression of the strength of homophily, a correlation coefficient was used for the evaluation of the association between the corresponding characteristics of the interviewees and the mentioned associates.

The most important factors segregating networks are—in this order—nationality, regional origin, education and residence status (Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6).

By stating that the main characteristic of the everyday networks of people living in Neuchâtel is first marked by their *national* and *second regional homogeneity* (Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6), I mean, for example, that a large portion of Swiss people turn exclusively to other Swiss in daily interactions, with over 80% of the reference persons named by Swiss citizens in answer to the "name generator question" being

Table 3 Homophily by subgroups

Values				
		All	Men	Women
Nationality	Cramer's V	0.554	0.617	0.554
Regional origin (Swiss, Southern Europe, Central and Northern Europe, outside Europe)	Cramer's V	0.494	0.518	0.474
Education	Spearman's correlation coefficients	0.432	0.384	0.485
Residence status	Cramer's V	0.330	0.318	0.363
Age	Spearman's correlation coefficients	0.286	0.265	0.305
Length of stay	Cramer's V	0.239	0.231	0.286
Sex	Spearman's correlation coefficients	0.210	–	–

If we are dealing with dichotomous or ordinal scaled variables, the correlation according to Spearman is used as the association, while those with nominal variables, Cramer's V is used. The possible value of the Spearman's correlation coefficients ranges from −1 to +1, whereby the sign shows the direction of the association. Because Cramer's V is not sensible for the direction of the association, these directions were verified in cross tabulations which approved that these associations were also positive. All associations are significant on the level $p<0.001$

other Swiss people (meaning that 20% are non-Swiss). We even can say that the Swiss display the highest value with regard to this item. But also, Europeans from the South as well as third-country nationals interact in over half of the cases within their national

Table 4 Homophily by regional category of Alteri

Ego	Swiss	Southern Europe	Central and Northern Europe	Outside Europe	Total
Swiss					
Count	795	49	75	54	973
%	81.7	5.0	7.7	5.5	100.0
Southern Europe					
Count	151	236	15	11	413
%	36.6	57.1	3.6	2.7	100.0
Central and northern Europe					
Count	215	20	178	25	438
%	49.1	4.6	40.6	5.7	100.0
Outside of Europe					
Count	321	40	53	452	866
%	37.1	4.6	6.1	52.2	100.0
Total					
Count	1482	345	321	542	2690
%	55.1	12.8	11.9	20.1	100.0

Table 5 Homophily by education of Alteri

EGO	Low	Medium	High	Total
Low education				
Count	133	112	83	328
%	40.5	34.1	25.3	100.0
Medium education				
Count	118	350	281	749
%	15.8	46.7	37.5	100.0
High education				
Count	141	332	1011	1484
%	9.5	22.4	68.1	100.0
Total				
Count	392	794	1375	2561
%	15.3	31.0	53.7	100.0

categories (57% and 52%, respectively). Central and northern Europeans have a proportion of 41% of the network members also coming from this region; they mix with Swiss but almost never with people from Southern Europe or from outside Europe. Interestingly enough, the data also reveal that, for instance, people from Southern Europe do not stick together with the ones from Central and Northern Europe or from outside Europe: rather, in case the mentioned, associates do not belong to their own regional origin, they are mainly Swiss. This result is without doubt affected by baseline homophily, due to the demography of the potential tie pool there are more Swiss than others in Neuchâtel, around two thirds of the resident population, while for instance there are only 11% third-country nationals (see Table 1). Nevertheless, none of the groups flocks together with people from outside Europe.

Almost as important as the national category in structuring the everyday interaction networks of inhabitants of Neuchâtel is the *educational attainment*, this correlation coefficient being just slightly lower than that the one for regional origin: better educated people rely on other persons with a good educational level

Table 6 Homomphily by residence status of Alteri

EGO	Annual permit	Residence permit	Other	Swiss	Total
Annual permit					
Count	78	44	5	174	301
%	25.9	14.6	1.7	57.8	100.0
Residence permit					
Count	29	188	9	350	576
%	5.0	32.6	1.6	60.8	100.0
Swiss					
Count	15	65	11	804	895
%	1.7	7.3	1.2	89.8	100.0
Total					
Count	122	297	25	1328	1772
%	6.9	16.8	1.4	74.9	100.0

and stick together with them. 68% of the networks of people with high education are composed of associates also possessing high education; among the less skilled interview partners, 40% of their reference persons also have low levels of education.

Concerning the migrants, the *type of residence permit* reveals to be another important structuring criterion, although less marked. In Switzerland, as in many other countries, different types of legal permits imply different sets of social, economic, and political rights or, conversely, exclusion from such rights. If migrants remain in their daily interactions, for whatever reason, within the boundaries of their permit, the permit type can become a means of exclusion as the resources of the associates in the networks will be limited.

To summarize, the data shows that the heterogeneity of the population of this city is translated into different patterns of specific groups sticking together: these groups are *grosso modo* built upon the same items we identified for network social capital, producing therefore a kind of "double" network boundary. Nationality, regional origin and educational level are not only articulated with different amounts of social capital embedded in the networks as shown in the previous paragraph, but they also go along with cohesive forces among those who share the same characteristics within these categories, be it to be born at the same place or to being highly or lowly skilled. In other terms, having more or less network social capital is reinforced through homophily tendencies: Those with high network social capital stay among themselves and they can profit from the multiplier effect of social capital—those having modest network social capital stay with others with the same characteristics, turning mute this multiplier effect of social capital. It can therefore be assumed that persons with limited personal resources and capital—for instance, low education and/or residence permits with limited rights and low network social capital—turn to other people with similarly limited personal capital. Those persons have only limited possibilities for accessing the society's resources, at least through their social network. To conclude, I would argue that these results point to different hierarchical social positioning of these groupings in Neuchâtel.

Emerging types: clusters of people mirroring those network boundaries

Out of these results presented in the previous paragraphs it is possible to establish a typology in the sense of Max Weber (1991 [1904]). The aim of the typology is to identify specific clusters of persons (with high mobility, highly educated, born in Switzerland, and so on) who show different network boundaries. Theoretical considerations also guided this "inductive" search for patterns. On this basis, we can tentatively identify four different types of clusters of people reflecting different network boundaries and incorporating different compositions of network social capital. These groupings are differently positioned in the city and stratify the urban space.

The first type is composed of people born in Switzerland with no migration experience. We are speaking here of the immobile ones, having high network social capital and "sticking" together according to the analysis of homophily. Those entering into this group have mainly lived in Switzerland and are often Protestants. Out of this description, I would like to formulate the hypothesis that it is local and historically anchoring, which is the main driving force of both the specific network

composition and the appearing network boundary. They are "the local old established."

Another type that displays high network social capital may include persons born in central or northern Europe who lived in different countries, have high educational background, and earn considerable salaries. It is their enhanced mobility and their high cultural capital that distinguishes this type from the others. Interestingly enough, the values for the network variety are in this case of "the highly skilled mobiles" similar to those of the "local established"; however, the structure of networks of these ideal types might differ with regard to several fundamental modalities. Whereas the "local established" constitute their social capital through "locality"—being born and raised in Neuchâtel and having no migration experience, the "highly skilled mobiles" constitute theirs through high education and mobility.

The third type could be described as follows and lies with regard to network capital between the former two and the last one (which will be described further down): immigrants, born in Southern Europe, Catholics, working migrants who have a residence permit, characterized by low education, persons who lived either in their country of origin or in Switzerland but at no other place, display network with relatively low variety values. Being familiar with Swiss immigration history, it reveals that we are dealing here with characteristics of the traditional, so-called guest workers who arrived after the Second World War and have settled down in Switzerland. What distinguishes these "established guest workers" from the "highly skilled mobiles"—besides their more homogeneous networks—is their settled character, one-way migration and their lower educational background.

Finally, the last type includes persons who are born outside Europe, often Muslims, having arrived in Switzerland seeking asylum, and then obtaining an annual permit . The network structure of these "recently arrived outsiders" points to modest social capital and they keep to themselves in quite a cohesive manner: and as the associates in their networks are in a similar situation, the multiplier effect of social capital will in this case be mute.

In the next paragraph, these types shall be described in more detail based on the results of the qualitative interviews.

Symbolic boundaries reinforcing and (re)producing network boundaries

By including theoretical reflections and results out of the qualitative interviews, we are able to better understand the formation and boundaries of those clusters of people. It reveals that the salient network boundaries identified in the last chapter are mirrored in social classifications and distinctions—symbolic boundaries.

In designating the first type with the notion "established"—"the local established"—I refer to the theory of figuration of Elias and Scotson (1965). They pointed to the importance of old established groups when newcomers arrive, and demonstrated how the established groups close ranks and reinforce internal cohesion, to keep the newcomers at the bottom of the social hierarchy and out of their circles. The means of exclusion are the cohesion of the group, as well as stigmatization, humiliation, and gossip. Based on the network structures and the results of the qualitative interviews, I shall maintain that something similar is

occurring in this small city: Old established native families not only close ranks against newcomers, but they also seem to be able to profit from historical grids of power relations and closing their ranks toward newcomers as the data shows. Thus, even in a globalized world "locality"—meaning the concrete local and historical constraints and structural opportunities—retains its influence on the organizational patterns of the inhabitants of this city. Their potential for accessing diverse resources and their social capital is grounded in traditional continuity and local advantage.

But the "established transnational guest workers" also have this characteristic of being locally anchored—at least when compared to the newer immigrants. They also make use of both demarcation and closure to maintain their positions. In other terms, they are similarly "established" in its double sense of a (short) historical anchorage and as a means of excluding others. The immigrants from Italy, Spain, and Portugal arriving since 1950 have experienced upward mobility; they have accommodated themselves with their families in Neuchâtel and have children of the second or third generation. Conversely, I would formulate the hypothesis that these immigrants have been able to establish themselves locally not least by passing on to others the ball of marginalization and discrimination that was theirs in the 1960s and 1970s and by closing their ranks toward the new immigrants. One of the Italians interviewed, who has lived in Neuchâtel for 30 years, said: "We, the Italians, also experienced terrible things, discrimination, and so on. Now, this kind of thing is happening to the newly arrived."

When these immigrants arrived they were at the bottom of Swiss society, but they experienced upward mobility as they were replaced by new groups of immigrants. It becomes clear that they do not mix with the newly arrived not only from the network data (see Homophily) but also from the qualitative interviews. Most first-generation Italians and Portuguese interviewed told us that they do not have anything to do with those who arrived more recently—Turks, Africans, and so on. Similar processes of demarcation between new and old immigrants have been reported by other research in Switzerland—which not surprisingly, follow similar lines (Wimmer 2004) and can be understood as a process of boundary closing. All refugees interviewed, representing the "recently arrived outsiders," mentioned that stigmatization emanates from the old immigrants, rather than from the Swiss. Here is just one voice to illustrate this: "The paradox is that racism in Neuchâtel is something that often comes from the old migrants: the Portuguese and the Italians versus the Africans, the Arabs, or the Turks."

It should be emphasized, however, that stigmatization of the "recently arrived outsiders" emanates not only from the established guest workers, but also from most of the people interviewed—be they Swiss, highly skilled or established immigrants. In response to our question in the qualitative interviews about whom they would prefer their children *not* to marry, the majority of the interviewees answered that they would not like their children to marry a Muslim or a black person. In other words, they mentioned the characteristics ascribed to the members of this fourth type. Thus, "race" and "Islam" serve as a means of stigmatization, conceptual distinction, and external categorization, closing the network borders and segregating the "recently arrived outsiders" from the rest of the inhabitants of Neuchâtel—we observe a social boundary.

What about the last group, the "highly skilled mobiles"? We can depict out of the interviews that these highly educated mobiles are strongly embedded in transnational networks (see also Dahinden 2009a): furthermore, they are delocalized and are not

anchored very well in the city. From the interviews the image of a kind of "satellite" emerges: They do not know the city very well, they are not even in a position to say anything about the composition of Neuchâtel's population. In the interviews, the people representing this ideal type were often unable to answer the question asking them to describe the city. This is a global elite circulating and integrated in transnational networks and not incorporated into the local structures of the city.

Going beyond assimilation?

The network perspective puts forward the idea that the inhabitants of Neuchâtel are organized and structured along certain dimensions, reflecting clear boundaries that result from an interplay of regional origin, education, local establishment, mobility type, religion and "race". *Network boundaries* are reinforced by *symbolic boundaries* and translated into *social boundaries*, pointing to social stratification of four clusters of people which are differently placed in this city. Those patterns are historically grown, complex, transformative and interactive. The questions that need to be addressed in this conclusion are twofold: first, is there a way that such complex processes could be grasped with the concepts of assimilation? And second, what potential new insights could we gain from such boundary and network perspectives on migrant incorporation processes, or more generally, what are the possible policy implications out of these results?

In fact, the network idea is not alien to assimilation theory. The degree to which members of immigrant groups forge primary relations with native-born members of other ethnic groups constitutes the linchpin ideal in traditional assimilation theory (Gordon 1964:70). Newer conceptualizations recast the role of networks within the assimilation process in a more differentiated way (i.e., Portes et al. 2009). For instance, they postulate that communities with closed ethnic networks can provide social support and social capital (Zhou 1997), counterbalancing thus the idea of "straight-line assimilation" that being embedded in ethnic networks would always and automatically be a sign of non-assimilation. Nevertheless, I argue that assimilation theory still has important shortcomings and it cannot fully grasp what is at stake in this city.

The first deficiency of assimilation theory is that it still sticks to what has been called a "container-model of society," confining assimilation to the boundaries of a given nation-state (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). This presumption has important corollaries. One is that incorporation into *a transnational* space—as it is the case for the "highly skilled mobiles"—cannot be analytically taken into account. In other terms, the results show the need to *transnationalize* assimilation theory. Globalization modified the conditions for assimilation, and incorporation and transnationality are interrelated processes (and not a *zero-sum-game*) which cannot be thought exclusively along "national boundaries." However, the "national lenses" of assimilation theory are not just too *narrow* to give adequate consideration to transnational aspects, but they are, at the same time, paradoxically too *broad* to grasp "locality." Local opportunities and constraints—in political, social but also discursive terms—always include a national dimension, but go clearly beyond it. Local anchorage and locally grown historical conditions are important elements for the boundaries and the stratification which have been depicted in Neuchâtel. For instance, the fact of being born and bred in Neuchâtel, established and Protestant

means having certain advantages and, also established immigrants draw a clear boundary towards newcomers. Such "locality" varies among different cities and need to be taken into account in theorizing incorporation processes.

A second pre-assumption of assimilation theory is that it considers one-way migration followed by sedentariness as the "courant normal." However, the results of the study show that different types of mobility and movements have indeed different effects on incorporation and boundary processes. Assimilation theory unintentionally ignores an important part of the social realities taking place in a transnational and interconnected global world. And obviously, it is a challenge—theoretically but also on a policy level—to deal with enhanced mobility, for instance, of the highly skilled: although they are not integrated into the local context of Neuchâtel—the same might be true at other places—it would make no sense to speak of non-integration, given their high network, economic and cultural capital.

Finally, assimilation theory incorporates the idea that "ethnic" or "ethno-national" groups are the natural starting point for investigation. Going back to our study we might ask, what role does ethnicity play in the boundary processes observed in Neuchâtel? And indeed, it appears that ethnicity is very relevant for the construction of the depicted symbolic and social boundaries and for the network structure: in other words, ethnicity and nationality matter—but I argue that they matter in another way than what assimilation theory presumes. They are not the starting point—the essence—for social processes as assumed in assimilation theory, but they are already the *outcome* of social processes to which a range of different actors contribute. The nation-state is one of the most powerful actors in imposing ethnicity: Nation-states admission policies rely always on a kind of "ethno-national sorting" of potential migrants. They define which foreigners of which nationalities are allowed to enter the territory and with which rights, producing ethnicity (for Switzerland Dahinden 2009b) by channeling migrants into ethnically drawn paths, which has a direct impact on the incorporation processes—a fact mirrored in the four emerging clusters. Even more, the results show that ethnicity is relevant within a boundary perspective solely *in combination* with other categories—for instance, with education, establishment or residence permit. Such results raise the question whether or not the identified social positioning within this city could be better understood by the dynamics of establishment, more than by ethnicity or culture: While the former newcomers—i.e. Italians—climbed up the social ladder, they are replaced by others, and they themselves close their boundaries towards the new outsiders. Such results could be fruitfully taken into account in integration policies as well as in theory formation as they show the need to de-ethnicize the question of assimilation by pointing to other mechanisms at stake.

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