Executive Summary
RRC13 Migration and Ethnic Segregation

December 31, 2014

The aim of the project is to analyze the relationship between ethnic segregation in social networks, ethnic composition in current neighborhood, and migration. More generally, it is about relationship between network homophily, and current and past neighborhoods.

During the progress we slightly changed the initial focus (how migration influences segregation) and focus now on how neighborhood composition influences social networks. Migration is here a moderating factor we use as one source of causal inference. We present a simple theoretical framework that connects neighborhood ethnic composition to that of social networks. The framework proposes that ties are formed preferably with coethnics and with those living close-by. Accordingly, the local ethnic composition is reflected in the social network. Migrants, however, have not yet fully adopted to the new (from their perspective) environment and hence their networks correspond to the environment to a lesser extent.

We find both of these effect in the data: neighborhoods are related to networks, and the relationship is weaker for migrants. An additional analysis of local and distant ties confirms the theoretical ideas and suggest that ties indeed form locally and through this process they reflect the local population composition.

Our results suggest that spatial segregation may indeed lead to network segregation and fractionalized societies where different population groups rarely communicate with each other.

We have used the first two GDN one-third payments completely for data access. As we have not received any more payments since late 2013, our financial report has not changed since then. Note that one of the core datasets in this project, the cellphone-based social network data, was collected and made accessible to us only after we received the grant. We are very grateful to GDN for that.

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