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**They live there and we live here: spatial proximity of  
different socio-economic groups and opportunities for  
social integration in Santiago de Chile**

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## 1 Introduction – ‘new’ neighbourhood diversity in Santiago de Chile

Latin American megacities have developed under a specific set of cultural, social, geographical, and economic conditions (Gilbert 1996). The combination of formal and informal urban development patterns, weak land use planning, inequitable economic opportunities, and unequal social divisions has created divergent and highly localized patterns of socio-spatial differentiation in varying Latin American urban contexts (Sabatini 2003).

Also in Chile, Santiago is a city that has been residentially segregated for a long time. Since the mid-XIX<sup>th</sup> century – during the political decades of Vicuña Mackenna – socio-economic residential segregation patterns have been an essential part of the urban landscape (De Ramón 1978). Since the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, a so called ‘traditional segregation pattern’ on a higher spatial scale has been identified: the socio-spatial concentration of the higher income groups in the north-eastern area of the city (*‘cono de alta renta’* or *‘barrio alto’*), and the spreading out of middle and upper income groups in the rest of the city (Ortiz and Escolano 2007). Consequently, the urban landscape of Santiago de Chile has been clearly differentiated according to socioeconomic variables, even though other forms of residential segregation have been observed (racial, ethnic and educational differences) (Sabatini 2006, González and Rodríguez 2006).

Nevertheless, in the past two decades these patterns have been undergoing transformations on a geographical and a sociological scale showing ambivalent directions: On the one hand, forced segregation of economically disadvantaged residents, who remain concentrated on the urban fringe (Hidalgo 2007). On the other hand, ‘new spatial proximity’ due to voluntary segregation of well-off residents not located in their traditional areas of residence but rather closely to lower income neighbourhoods (Cáceres and Sabatini 2004; Sabatini and Brain 2008). In particular, the latter aspect – social mixing of deprived areas – is the centre of my ongoing research.

The issue that new social and physical borderlines have emerged plays not only an important role for the social mixing of otherwise evenly poor areas, but also for new opportunities of socio-spatial integration processes as well. According to Sabatini et al. (2001), the reduction of the geographical extent of segregation has introduced a process of integration which might bring about new possibilities and opportunities for the poor, both in ‘objective’ terms (employment, services, urban facilities) and in ‘subjective’ terms (the perceptions of one another).

Even though the debate about social integration by way of new spatial proximity in Santiago de Chile is still at the beginning of the generation of a theoretical model, its discussion is not new. Rather, there are many ambivalent and conflicting ideas about the relationship between segregation and integration into society. Musterd (2003) e.g. stated that there is no definitive

relationship between integration and segregation. In contrast, following Rosenbaum et al. (2002) the attributes of neighbourhoods and the experiences provided by neighbourhoods have profound effects on people's capabilities and their ideas about what they can accomplish. Therefore, their conclusion is that places matter. As a result, such a concern with social mix has become common in a number of discussions. Several of them are related to neighbourhood diversity and neighbourhood effects on social opportunities of residents (Ostendorf et al. 2001, Rosenbaum et al. 2002, Friedrichs et al. 2003) and some authors proposed the concept of 'geography of opportunity' (Galster and Killen 1995, Rosenbaum 1995). But finally, all these discussions have one common question in mind: Does socially mixed neighbourhoods influence individuals' opportunity? Or, could neighbourhood composition affect the opportunities for integration?

Against this background, the present research proposal is going to deal with these challenging overall research questions focussing on the effects of neighbourhood diversity and opportunities of social integration. It discusses the processes of desegregation in Santiago de Chile from the perspective of the contact hypothesis. Under this paradigm and focussing on a policy-relevant question, the question is not how to increase integration per se, rather how to promote a kind of integration which favours the creation of a more just and equitable society (De Alcántara 1995).

## **2 Research questions and hypotheses**

In this spirit, the general assumption of my PhD thesis is that intra-urban migration have led, in some municipalities of Santiago de Chile, to a new spatial proximity of different socio-economic groups changing socio-spatial segregation patterns on a smaller spatial scale (communal scale). The new social mix of some neighbourhoods may therefore lead to social integration on a longer period of time. Based on this assumption, the thesis discusses three related questions and associated hypotheses:

*Q1. How did the socio-spatial segregation pattern in Santiago de Chile change between 1992 and 2002 and at which scales does this affect the socio-economic composition of neighbourhoods?*

Ha. The social-spatial segregation pattern in Santiago de Chile has decreased between 1992 and 2002 in the higher socioeconomic groups at city level.

Hb. The reduction of the segregation scale in the higher socioeconomic groups at city level is related to intra-urban migration flows of this status group.

Hc. At communal level more differentiated trends of the segregation scale are expected. There exist side by side strengthening, constant and reducing processes.

*Q2. Which consequences does the new social mix at communal level have for social and / or spatial contacts of different socioeconomic status groups?*

Hd. The changes in the socioeconomic composition at communal level offers a condition for 'new' spatial proximity (vicinity) of different socioeconomic status groups which comes along with a partial overlapping of life-worldly spaces of different socioeconomic status groups.

He. The overlapping of spatial contacts influences the degree of heterogeneity / homogeneity of social networks (affinity). The often the overlapping of the life-worldly spaces the more heterogeneous are the social networks concerning the socioeconomic characteristic of the network members.

Hf. The overlapping of life-worldly spaces corresponds with an agreement of sharing the same neighbourhood. Therefore, a good condition for higher contact frequencies by different socioeconomic network members is taken for granted as well as the temporal stability of the contacts.

Q3. *What implications do the social and spatial contacts at communal level have for processes of social integration taking into account temporal and spatial aspects?*

Hg. Spatial and social contacts (vicinity and affinity) affect positively the degree of social integration. Social integration is given when a base for trust, sociability, participation and identification is provided. This means, the more often life-worldly spaces overlap and the more heterogeneous social networks are, the higher is the degree of social integration.

Hh. Among the spatial and social contacts, social integration is also linked to the temporal dimension. The longer the duration of residency, the higher the degree of social integration is.

### **3 Conceptual demarcation – relation between segregation and integration**

The question whether neighbourhood composition affects the opportunities for social integration has its theoretical starting point in the interrelation of social interactions and space. Thus, the theoretical opening of my conceptual demarcation is the *sociology of space*. Following the idea of Löw (2001), all spaces are social spaces with a symbolic and a material component. Since structural principles (i.e. class and gender) cross all levels of the constitution of space, the reproduction of social inequality is systematically possible and actually given at every level of space (Löw 2001). Thus, the allocation of individuals along a spatially structured order is what the notion of 'socio-spatial differentiation' describes. One form of socio-spatial differentiation processes is the distribution of social structure on urban space which is also named '*socio-spatial segregation*'.

#### *The notion of socio-spatial segregation – a brief discussion*

But, what does the notion of socio-spatial segregation mean? Generally spoken, socio-spatial segregation designates the occupation of urban space by distinct social groups,

meaning the degree to which two or more groups live separately from one another in different parts of the urban environment (Massey and Denton 1988). Therefore, segregation corresponds to the spatial agglomeration of families of a similar social condition (ethnicity, migratory origin, age, socioeconomic status, etc.), regardless of how we define social differences (Sabatini 2006, Häußermann and Siebel 2001).

Depending on the spatial scale, the effects of segregation can vary significantly (Häußermann and Siebel 2001). Following Sabatini (2006), if segregation occurs in a narrower spatial scale (like a small city) the negative effects of segregation can be less significant or non-existent. On the other hand, when segregation intensifies in broader scales – exceeding margins of ‘the walking scale’ and limiting the options of physical interaction between social classes – spatial segregation can become counterproductive, especially for the poor. According to this argumentation, spatial proximity and distance of different social groups have an impact on individuals’ opportunities regardless of its direction (positive or negative). However, at this stage of analysis only the ‘simple’ degree of heterogeneity or homogeneity of the immediate environment is analysed. Work focusing on the effects of spatial proximity (heterogeneity) should go one step further and have a detailed look on the spatial contacts / interactions of different social groups. In this regard, my PhD thesis describes the effects of spatial proximity in view of the ‘*contact hypothesis*’, which takes for granted a certain degree of heterogeneity or neighbourhood diversity.

#### *The contact hypothesis – a preliminary discussion on effects of heterogeneity*

As mentioned above, unevenly distributed population (homogeneity) over urban space may be problematic when it produces and reinforces social inequality and especially when it impedes the access of poorer households to urban goods and services (Kaztman 2001). Meanwhile inhabitants of homogeneous neighbourhoods may not have the opportunity to interact with others anymore and may become isolated and stigmatised (Musterd 2003), large heterogeneous residential areas of different population categories are seen as an opportunity for interactions. Thus, highly segregated areas impede the contact between different social groups and make social participation and integration into society difficult (Häußermann and Siebel 2001). Consequently, a higher degree of spatial proximity among different social groups is assumed to enhance not only their interaction, but also their knowledge about one another, their tolerance and adaptation (Friedrichs 1977). Within this ongoing debate, the contact hypothesis has been established. The hypothesis suggests that even deep-seated antipathies toward another group may be improved by regular interactions helping to reduce prejudice which is seen as a precondition for a more tolerant society (Dixon et al. 2007). Within this debate, authors like Skogan (1990) have argued that not only interaction, but also the visibility of certain neighbourhood characteristics has an impact on the attitudes and the behaviour of residents. Nevertheless, the question whether spatial

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contacts due to neighbourhood diversity or whether the idea of the 'contact hypothesis' really have effects on social integration still remain open. In order to find an answer for this challenging question, it is necessary to have a look on the notion of '*social integration*'.

*Social Integration – a preliminary approach to a normative concept*

Sociology has searched in many directions to define integration of modern societies. Currently, there is a broad spectrum of definitions of the term integration. In general, integration is understood as the coherence of different parts within a 'systemic' whole. The basis of integration is the interdependence of its parts and their mutual dependence (Esser 2001). This more or less general definition of integration points out that there are always two components involved: the 'system' as an entirety and the 'parts' which form it. According to this broad definition two different perceptions of integration can be distinguished: 'integration of society' and 'integration of individuals into society' (Esser 2001). The first one refers to a more 'externalist' perspective observing social practices from the outside. In contrast, the latter one refers to an 'internalist' perspective with the focus on actors' or participants' views and strategies (Mouzelis 1992). According to Mouzelis (1974), this distinction shows clearly the most fundamental split in sociology: "between those who place individual and/or collective actors at the centre of their analysis and those who relegate actors at the periphery and view society primarily in functionalist terms" (ibid: 395).

Under this scenario, in general terms the focus of my approach is related to the 'internalist' perspective: the individuals and/or collective actors (different socioeconomic groups in Santiago de Chile) and their views and strategies. Nonetheless, this is still a very macro-theoretical approach. Thus, I would like to engross these theoretical thoughts in the following paragraphs.

In consequence of the differentiation of society, at least three general forms of individuals' integration can be mentioned: material / economic, political and social integration (Münch 1995, Häußermann and Siebel 2001, Göschel 2001). The first form – material / economic integration – concerns the participation of the individual into the labour market and social security systems. Political integration refers to participation of individuals in democratic forms of political decision-making. Social integration describes the integration of individuals in informal networks of relationships, families, neighbourhoods, friendships and mutual voluntary assistance (Göschel 2001). In each of these forms processes of integration or disintegration are possible and in some cases there are linked to each other (see Friedrichs und Blasius 2001). Therefore, there is no such thing like 'an' integration, but rather there are different types of integration. Nonetheless, Münch (1997) has indicated that until now no theory can offer a comprehensive explanation of all aspects of individuals' integration and for that, specific questions can only be attempt by analysing one form.

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The most 'urban-related' form of individuals' integration is social integration, because of receiving its specific character by the urban phenomenon of density and spatial proximity – the city as integration tool for establishing informal networks (Göschel 2001). Therefore, thinking towards the relation between spatial proximity (vicinity) and social contacts (affinity), the concept of individuals' social integration into society seems to be the most appropriate micro-theoretical approach for my research questions.

In order to operationalise the notion of individuals' social integration I propose the following four dimensions which act as key components: interpersonal trust, informal sociability, participation and neighbourhood identity.

- a) There are several distinct literatures on trust and several ways to categorize them. Here the focus is on *interpersonal trust* – among strangers or relative strangers – which in turn is different from personal trust or institutional / organizational trust (Levi, 2001). Exploring the effects of micro-level dynamic in socially diverse neighbourhoods, Stolle et al. (2008) have outlined the ambivalent discussion on the relation between diversity of neighbourhoods and interpersonal trust: "While diversity itself (without contact) may push interpersonal trust downwards, interaction and actual experiences with members of other social or racial groups can have counteracting positive effects" (ibid: 61). As a result, possible interactions between different social groups in heterogeneous areas may foster interpersonal trust which becomes therefore a central component of social integration and cohesion.
- b) Complementarily to interpersonal trust is the second component of *informal sociability* which is generally understood as the disposition or quality of being sociable. According to Simmel (1917), sociability is a form of socialization generated by interactions among individuals on the basis of reciprocity and equality. Following Letki (2008), informal sociability opens up unselfconscious communication, interest in others' problems or points of view and stimulates mutual care, trust and understanding. Through informal sociability individuals build their social networks without any restrictions or organisational rules. Therefore it is closely linked to the idea of interpersonal networks and spontaneous interaction emphasizing the production of social trust. Consequently, this type of informal (social or individual) interactions has to be considered when analysing social integration.
- c) The third component which is strongly linked to the social networks dimension of social integration is neighbourhood *participation*. In general, two forms of participation are distinguished: On the one hand 'formal' participation understood as people taking part in the decision-making processes that influence their neighbourhood positively and, on the other hand, 'informal' participation characterized by voluntary membership and involvement in organisations such as associations, action groups or even sports clubs (Dekker 2007). Regarding the definition of social integration, in my dissertation

participation is defined as activities undertaken by residents with the aim of positively influencing social networks and therefore to take advantage of cultural opportunities and to contact other people. When people identify with a neighbourhood and feel part of it they are more inclined to participate (Galster 2003). Consequently, these mainly informal activities are an important component of social integration.

- d) *Neighbourhood* (or urban) *identity* as the last component of social integration is very strongly connected to territory where every individual creates its own history becoming part of one's identity. Thus, neighbourhood identity is the total sum of relations and affections that tie us to our neighbourhood environment (Marquez and Perez 2008). Applying Tajfel's (1981) idea of social identity on neighbourhood identity, at least two components are required: the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social group and the importance of that group membership of to one's self. Thus, when a person is identified as belonging to a particular neighbourhood he becomes, at the same time, a recognisable member of the community as a whole (Cohen 1982). When such a neighbourhood identity is made salient, group members may be more likely to think of themselves as 'one unit' rather than two separate groups (Brewer 1997). That's why people's 'attachments to place', one's 'sense of belonging' and 'group belongingness' are indispensable components of social integration.

To sum up, the degree of spatial and social contacts (vicinity and affinity) in combination with the social integrations' components of interpersonal trust, informal sociability, participation and neighbourhood identity provide an insight into possible effects of neighbourhood diversity on social integration.

#### **4 Research design and methods**

The research design of my PhD thesis comprises both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In order to respond the presented research questions five methodological steps were applied:

- a) *Analysis of secondary statistical data such as census data for the period 1992 and 2002:*  
The dynamics of segregation patterns are likewise very closely related to significant intra-urban migration flows. Therefore, the idea was to analyse how the socio-spatial segregation pattern did change and at which scales does this affect the socio-economic composition of neighbourhoods. Educational attainment was selected as indicator for analysing intra-urban migration flows. It is an indicator of human capital and is strongly related to the economy's income distribution and household income disparities. Therefore it serves as proxy for the metropolitan territorial inequality and segregation.
- b) *Selection of study cases on the base of statistical results and literature review:*  
On the base of the obtained statistical data analysis and a vast literature review three study areas were identified: the municipalities of Huechuraba (northern urban fringe), Lo



Barnechea (north-eastern urban fringe) and Peñalolén (eastern urban fringe). All these municipalities are characterized by new spatial proximity of different socio-economic groups due to new real estate developments in these formerly poor neighbourhoods. Within these three municipalities a limited sector for the analysis was selected.

c) *Household survey in study areas for deepening the knowledge about social and spatial contacts between different socio-economic groups:*

To answering the second research question a household survey was applied in November 2008. For this survey, social or spatial contacts were measured by two methods: (a) socio-spatial analysis by asking and mapping important points of interest like commercial centres, public spaces, public transport, churches etc. and (b) an egocentric network analysis for analysing networks of and between different socio-economic groups, neighbourhood and family participation. While the first method may deepen the understanding of spatial interaction of different socio-economic groups the egocentric network analysis may clarify social contacts between different social groups. In total 645 households<sup>1</sup> of different socioeconomic strata were interviewed.

d) *Household survey in study areas for deepening the knowledge about implications of social and spatial contacts for social integration:*

The same household survey was used to understand implications of social and spatial contacts for processes of social integration. Thus, social integration was measured on two spatial levels (block and neighbourhood) over time. As a result, the four components of social integration were included in the household survey as follows: (a) level of confidentiality in terms of neighbourhood problems, feeling of insecurity in the residential area, lack of trust between different social groups; (b) level of sociability considering exchange schemes of symbolic support, physical proximity and opportunities for interaction; (c) participation and membership in social groups and organizations, in church parishes, associations, sports clubs etc.; and (d) level of identification measuring the community spirit in the neighbourhood and local identity.

The results of the household survey were deepened by 19 qualitative interviews with neighbours of different socio-economic groups (duration of each interview approx. 30 min) who participated in the household survey.

e) *Expert interviews*

This qualitatively oriented methodology was applied because of mainly two aspects: Firstly, to comprehend the definition of social integration in Santiago de Chile and, secondly, to detect barriers and opportunities of social integration which may have implications for policy strategies aiming at enhancing social integration. Regarding this

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<sup>1</sup> Only one person per household was contacted who should be > 18 years old. The households were selected by random sample. In Huechuraba 206 of 4,045 households were interviewed, in Peñalolén 232 of 17,653 households and in Lo Barnechea 207 of 8,280 households.

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qualitative methodology 18 interviews with academics, politicians, representatives of local administration, NGOs, school principal, church members and neighbourhood associations were realized in October / November 2008 and March 2009 (duration of each interview approx. 60 min).

## 5 Preliminary results – a short insight

At the moment, preliminary results are only available for some aspects of the first and second research question. Regarding the first research question a link between intra-urban migration and segregation patterns was applied, focusing on educational attainment.

In general, the educational level in Santiago de Chile has increased significantly between 1992 and 2002. The municipalities with the highest increases in educational attainment during the period 1992 - 2002 are those that correspond to peripheral municipalities, such as the case studies Peñalolén and Huechuraba. This is mainly the result of the dispersal of the 'elite' from the eastern affluent municipalities of the city towards more peripheral and extra peripheral municipalities, leading to (in some cases) the suburbanization of middle and high income families in the phase of starting a family. Concretely, Huechuraba increased in terms of educational attainment from 6.2 to 9.4 between 1992 and 2002; Peñalolén from 6.6 to 9.6 and Lo Barnechea from 7.7 to 10.6 considering the total population<sup>2</sup>. These increases are in fact the result of intra-urban migration flows. Thus, Lo Barnechea raised its educational attainment due to migration by 0.3%, Huechuraba by 3.5% and Peñalolén by 2.0% in 2002. Therefore, it can be assumed that the residential segregation pattern has changed on communal level leading to a social mix of different socioeconomic groups (heterogeneity).

Whether the new social mix has lead to spatial contacts between the different socioeconomic groups within the case study areas is the aim of the social space analysis. Based on the assumption that the socioeconomic composition of the case studies has changed between 1992 and 2002 the space perception of every interviewed person was mapped. A first preliminary draft delivers Map 1 (see annex) for the case study area of Huechuraba. This social space analysis of only some interviewed persons helps to get an idea of this methodology. The final aim is to detect: a) whether different socioeconomic groups have similar spaces of interest and b) whether there are differences between the case studies regarding the overlapping of social spaces of different social groups. Here, divergent results between the case studies are expected.

Based on the results of the social space analysis which aims at identifying spatial contacts, the next step was to find out whether the vicinity has an effect on the composition of social networks (heterogeneity / homogeneity). Therefore, an egocentric network analysis was

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<sup>2</sup> The mean of the educational attainment of the total population in the 34 municipalities of Santiago de Chile increased from 7.5 to 10.1 between 1992 and 2002.

applied.<sup>3</sup> Via this method, it was possible to calculate the heterogeneity of the social networks on the subject of socioeconomic composition (as one example). In general, 616 interviewees named up to four contact persons: 5.7% named one contact person, 10.4 % two, 9.6 % three and at least 69.7% four contact persons. In total, I obtained information about 2157 Alteri (contact persons) and 616 Egos (interviewees who named contact persons). Regarding the heterogeneity / homogeneity of the social networks, it was observed that the Alteri are to 81.2% of the same socioeconomic strata, to 12.8% of a higher and to 5.7% of lower socioeconomic strata. Additionally, the analysis of the relation between Ego and its Alteri was determined by the statistical mean<sup>4</sup>. A statistical mean of 0.81 was measured (considering all case studies). This data assumes that Ego and its Alteri are to 80% of the same socioeconomic status affiliation. Consequently, the social networks are mainly homogeneous regarding its socioeconomic composition. According to Wolf (1993) and Laumann (1996) social relations tend to be homogeneous. Nevertheless, they also mentioned that people prefer to choose a status-higher person when they establish new contacts. This so called prestige principle was also observed in my case studies (see Table 1). Finally it's a moot question whether the spatial contacts (vicinity) are linked to or have influenced the social contacts (affinity). This relationship was not possible to establish until now.

**Table 1:** *Composition of social networks differentiated by socioeconomic strata of Ego and its Alteri (all case studies)*

socioeconomic status of Ego	socioeconomic status of Alteri			Total
	similar	higher	lower	
lower	183 75,9%	39 16,2%	19 7,9%	241 100,0%
lower middle	434 89,3%	37 7,6%	15 3,1%	486 100,0%
middle	639 80,9%	99 12,5%	52 6,6%	790 100,0%
upper middle	375 78,0%	72 15,0%	34 7,0%	481 100,0%
upper	82 81,2%	16 15,8%	3 3,0%	101 100,0%
Total	1713	263	123	2099

**Source:** based on calculations of own data collection

## 6 Outlook and open questions

Further steps will be concentrated on the clarification of the relationship between spatial and social contacts and their effects on social integration differentiated by case studies with the aim at identifying different patterns of social integration due to neighbourhood diversity. In order to approximate to this challenging relationship, different intermediate steps are required and still open. Thus, I would be interested in discussing the following questions:

- How could I deepen the comprehension of the relationship between spatial and social contacts taking into account my methodology?
- Is my theoretical framework comprehensive enough to satisfy this challenging topic?
- Are there further remarks or references for my theoretical framework?

<sup>3</sup> It was asked to name four persons with whom he/she has a frequent contact and who live in the same municipality, but does not belong to the same household. In regard to these named persons different characteristics were asked.

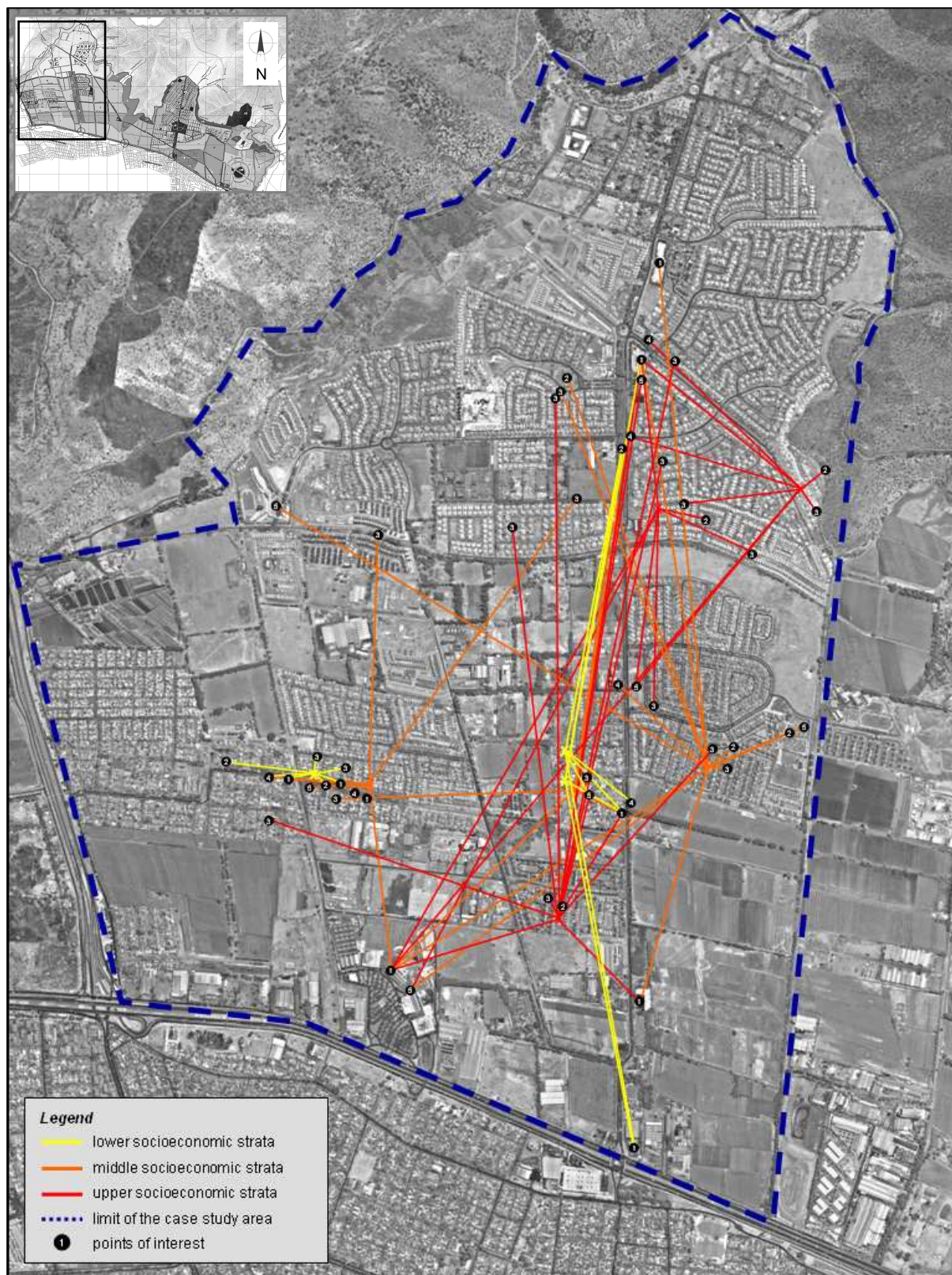
<sup>4</sup> the mean of '1' indicates total homogeneity and '0' total heterogeneity

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**Map 1:** First draft of a social space analysis of some interviewed persons differentiated by socioeconomic strata in the case study of Huechuraba (for methodological discussion)



Source: own elaboration