CHAPTER 5

Enlaced in a Network of Inequality?

How an Organizational Practice Plays Out in Diverse Trainees' Career Opportunities

5.1.   Introduction

"Being a trainee, you will have built a large network after two years. In the second year, you will get the opportunity to 'arrange' your own project. We believe in actively engaging in networking and searching for something that really fits you." (Translated from Dutch, website of large urban municipality in the Netherlands)

This extract from the promotional website of the traineeprogram of a large urban municipality in the Netherlands positions active network development as an organizational practice by clearly expecting it of all incoming trainees. However, as suggested in relation to some organizational practices previously (Castilla, 2008; Castilla & Benard, 2010), we presume the organizational practice of active network development to sustain ethnic and gender career inequality by favoring some while constraining others, as it may be considered a primary source of individual social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

Generally, social capital is considered a sine qua non for career success (e.g., Borgatti & Foster, 2003; Podolny & Baron, 1997; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). However, differences in the career benefits of social capital have been shown between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics (Ibarra, 1993, 1995; Parks-Yancy, 2006; Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso, & Post, 2006), and between men and women (Bevelander & Page, 2011; Ibarra, 1992, 1993, 1997; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). In addition, social network segregation may create and sustain ethnic and gender inequalities in terms of careers (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). These findings stand in contrast to the common presentation of active network development as an organizational practice with the aim of facilitating an individual's achievement of career benefits.

As evidence on the relationship between social group membership and social capital acquisition after organizational entry is limited (see for exceptions Bielby, 2012; Hasan, 2010; Parks-Yancy, 2006), we investigated this relationship among diverse trainees within the same municipal organization over time. Since human (inter)action or agency lies at the core of structural outcomes (Kilduff & Brass, 2010; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014), we combine qualitative data on network agency with longitudinal quantitative data on network structure. To avoid the trap of "structural determinism" common to social network research (Kilduff & Brass, 2010, p. 335), we thus acknowledge both network structure as well as network agency components. The municipal's expectation of active network development by all trainees as a means to enhance individual career benefits provides a context, which enables us to increase our understanding of potential unequal consequences of organizational practices for dominant versus minority ethnics, and for men versus women.

5.1.1. Organizational practices. Practices are described as routine actions and use of bodies, minds, things, knowledge, discourse, structure, and agents within a particular context (Reckwitz, 2002; Thompson, 2014). As such, organizational practices can be understood as similar routinizations "evolved over time under the influence of the organization's history, people, and actions" (Kostova & Roth, 2002, p. 216). Also, the broader cultural frameworks and the interplay of organizations and other actors with these frameworks are considered of importance for the establishment of an organizational practice (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007).

Kosova and Roth (2002) also note that, "(a)s practices become institutionalized, they become viewed in the society as legitimate and are adopted by organizations for legitimacy reasons and not necessarily for efficiency reasons" (p. 216). Therefore, next to their positive features in terms of stimulating particular outcomes, unreflect institutionalization of particular

organizational practices may be problematic: Specific organizational practices implemented to decrease inequality between members of different social groups in terms of individual career outcomes, such as reward practices or affirmative action, have been shown to often reinforce rather than reduce inequality between members of these social groups (Castilla, 2008; Castilla & Benard, 2010; Kalev, 2009; Kalev, Kelly, & Dobbin, 2006). Therefore, we are curious to further investigate *how* active network development as an organizational practice may (re)enforce (in)equality between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics, and between men and women in terms of personal career opportunities after organizational entry.

 5.1.2. Structure and agency. The plea for supporting the "agentic turn" in organizational network research (Kilduff & Brass, 2010) resonates in the construction of the present study, as we acknowledge both network structure as well as network agency in organizational social networks. Our subsequent elaborations of social capital and networking will explain why we follow Wolff, Moser, and Grau (2008) in their understanding of social capital as a construct on the structural level, and networking as a construct on the behavioral, thus agency level.

 Social capital. Social capital is commonly defined as "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). A network is defined as "a set of nodes and the set of connections representing the existing relationship, or lack of relationship, between the nodes. In the case of social networks, the nodes represent people (individuals or groups), and the connections may represent any sort of relationship among the people" (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999, p. 182). Brass and Krackhardt's (1999) description of the social network perspective concurs with the structural understanding of social capital

(Coleman, 1988; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), in that the presence or absence of relationships (or ties) between people (or actors) is the key to receiving access to information or other relevant resources, which will facilitate accomplishments within a specific social structure. Thus, social capital "inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors" (Coleman, 1988, p. S98), rather than being possessed by an individual alone, or embodied in material outcomes (Coleman, 1988). Since an actor's social network connections thus form the basis for the acquisition of social capital (Ibarra, Kilduff, & Tsai, 2005; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), we operationalize social capital in this study in terms of structural social network data.

Networking. As individuals can be considered active agents in their social networks (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Ibarra, 1993), this study includes networking as a means of network agency. Networking is a meaningful antecedent for acquiring and reaping the benefits of network structures (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, 2004; Wolff & Moser, 2009; Wolff et al., 2008), thus the benefits of social capital. Reflecting a "prototypical process of relationship development" (Wolff & Moser, 2010, p. 239), networking can be functionally differentiated into building, maintaining, and using social contacts, either extra-organizationally or intra-organizationally (Wolff et al., 2008). Michael and Yukl (1993) give a wide array of possible types of behaviors individuals can engage in to build or maintain their networks, such as

> "calling and visiting people, socializing before and after regular meetings, attending social activities such as parties or lunches, conducting tours and entertaining visitors, doing favors, providing mentoring and advice, giving gifts, using forms of ingratiation such as praise and congratulations, forming alliances and sponsorships, passing on gossip and information that is important to another manager, and engaging in informal conversations about nonwork topics such as sports, family, and recreational activities" (p. 329).

Qualitatively exploring networking among 30 managers with at least 10 years of work experience, Kim (2013) focused explicitly on enablers and constraints of building and

maintaining network contacts (Wolff & Moser, 2009; Wolff et al., 2008). Our study heeds Kim's (2013) call for incorporating a broader range of demographic variables, and also to specifically address younger professionals at the beginning of their careers. In our study, we use all aspects of Wolff, Moser, and Grau's (2008) functional distinction of networking (building, maintaining, and using) as an organizing principle for the collection and analysis of intra-organizational data in order to deepen our understanding of how both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic trainees (i.e. young professionals) build, maintain, and use social network contacts in the early stages of their career.

   Integrating structure and agency. Disregarding actor agency by mostly focusing on structural components in social network research has been criticized (e.g. Ibarra et al., 2005; Kilduff & Brass, 2010; Shaw, 2006) for giving "center stage to the formal properties of abstract relations between actors, but provid[ing] little insight in how those structures come about" (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014, p. 4). Paying more attention to actors' networking activities and behaviors along with structural components of social networks is suggested to be the key to enhance our understanding of actors' choices and behaviors in and around their social network (Kilduff & Brass, 2010; Shaw, 2006; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014), giving more insight in where and why network structures develop the way they do.

   As delineated previously, we operationalize network agency as networking, which is featured by moments of building, maintaining and using network contacts (Wolff et al., 2008), and can therefore be understood as evolving and dynamic over time. As a consequence, we also chose for a longitudinal approach to study network structure in order to explore the development of network structure over time. Inspired by Hasan's (2010) longitudinal study of gender differences in network development among incoming and established professionals in a

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professional service firm, we longitudinally studied trainees' network structures in order to discover potentially differing patterns of network development among dominant ethnic and minority ethnic, and men and women trainees over time.

While network structure is usually captured by quantitative data, qualitative data is often used to get insight in network agency, such as responsibilities, roles, activities, and content of social networks (Neergaard, 2005; O'Donnell & Cummins, 1999). Following these common approaches, we collected quantitative data to capture the development of the trainees' social network structure, while we collected qualitative data to enhance our understanding of how the trainees engage in networking.

5.1.3. Diversity. Diversity is defined as the "dissimilarity or the *extent* to which an individual's demographic, or idiosyncratic attributes are shared by others in the unit" (Guillaume, Brodbeck, & Riketta, 2011, p. 81, emphasis added by the first author). Thus, in the context of one specific commonly shared attribute, diversity can be understood as a means of the relative (dis)similarity of an individual compared to others in the same unit, which is also known as the relational approach to diversity (Riordan, 2000). In order to become meaningful and to eventually lead to systematic inequalities between individuals, (dis)similarities in terms of a commonly shared attribute need to be incorporated in social or institutional structures (DiTomaso, Post, & Parks-Yancy, 2007).

Grounded on previous definitions of ethnicity (Eriksen, 2002; Kenny & Briner, 2007), we understand ethnic diversity as the relative dissimilarity between individuals within one unit due to assigned or acclaimed group membership based on assumed similarities in culture, ancestry, traditions, and categorizations. Following Scott (1986) and Acker (1992) in our understanding of gender, we define gender diversity as the relative dissimilarity between individuals related to

perceived differences between men and women. We approach these two attributes of diversity in an inter-categorical manner, acknowledging "the relationships among the social groups defined by the entire set of groups constituting each category" (McCall, 2005, p. 1787).

Since our study was conducted in the Dutch context, differentiation in "dominant ethnics" (i.e. Dutch ethnics) and "minority ethnics" (i.e. western and non-western minority ethnics) is based on the official definition of ethnic group membership of the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Netherlands (CBS, 2012). In contrasting the terms dominant and minority even though they are not exact antonyms, we highlight the complex dependencies and relationships between ethnic groups, which are not necessarily a matter of numerical representation of social group members in organizations (e.g. DiTomaso et al., 2007). In addition, we follow Kenny and Briner's example of using "ethnic" both as a noun and as an adjective, and at all times further specified as either dominant or minority, to underline the fact that "ethnicity is something that we all possess" (2007, p. 439).

5.1.4. Career. Commonly, career has been defined as an "unfolding sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005, p. 178). The contemporary understanding of a career as being continuously procreated and shaped by the individual themselves in interaction with (and thus in relation to) relevant others within a given context (Cohen, Duberley, & Mallon, 2004) already entails the importance of social relations within particular social structures. Besides being based on indicators of human capital, promotion decisions are likely to be based on indicators of social capital, such as perceptions about the individual successfully acquiring and utilizing social network contacts (Friedman & Krackhardt, 1997). As such, we understand both objective and subjective career markers (Heslin, 2005), such as number of promotions and salary, or satisfaction and commitment, respectively,

(Arthur et al., 2005; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz Jr., 1995; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005) as one possible outcome, or one form of social action (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), resulting from social capital and/or networking. Since our study was conducted among a group of young professionals involved in a traineeprogram, which constitutes a fixed trajectory without the opportunity for objective career success according to the previous delineation, we operationalize objective career success in terms of career benefits or opportunities. Our understanding of career benefits or opportunities reflects a trainee's achievements within the traineeship, which may play out beneficially for the trainee's actual or future career, but which are not necessarily immediately translated to measures of objective career success, such as salary or promotion. Rather, we consider the acquisition of particular projects or roles throughout the traineeship as indicators for career benefits or opportunities, which may emerge in the particular context of the traineeship.

 5.1.5. Social capital, networking, diversity, and career. Inequalities between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics, and between men and women in terms of (benefits of) social capital as well as networking have been found previously: Generally, dominant ethnics and men benefit more from social capital and engaging in networking activities, compared to minority ethnics and women (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, 2004; Ibarra, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997; McGuire, 2000, 2002; Parks-Yancy et al., 2006; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014; Wolff et al., 2008). Referring to how social identity affects social networks, Ibarra, Kilduff, and Tsai (2005) state that "(s)pecifically, demographic characteristics such as gender and ethnicity can have strong effects on network ties, and through these ties, on career outcomes" (p. 364), through availability, exclusion, and identity dynamics (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2007). More specifically, DiMaggio and Garip (2012) posit that "(i)nequality is exacerbated when effects of [perceived or

assumed] individual differences are multiplied by social networks" (p.93). Therefore, the consideration of active network development as an organizational practice in order to support individual career opportunities imposes the need to further investigate both its construction and its meaning in an ethnic and gender diverse environment. The group of starting ethnic and gender diverse trainees of an urban municipality in the Netherlands provides a suitable environment to further study these phenomena.

5.2. Method

5.2.1. The organization. The data for this study was collected at a large urban municipality (of CityX) in the Netherlands. With almost 600.000 inhabitants, CityX is one of the largest cities in the Netherlands. The municipality employs about 12.000 people, who work in a vast variety of jobs at different educational levels. Similar to most other municipalities in the Netherlands, this municipality stopped hiring external candidates for open job positions in the end of 2011 due to financial restrictions; only in the case of exceptions, external candidates are accepted.

Traineeship. The traineeship is one of the exceptions allowing externals to enter the organization. In the early years of 2000, the municipality introduced traineeships with the aim of educating young professionals to become financial public servants. Later, the focus of the traineeship was broadened to a greater variety of functions, such as project management, organizational consultancy, and technical areas of responsibility.

Usually, about ten young professionals form a trainee pool, pursuing either a management traineeship or a technical traineeship. Throughout the two years of their traineeship, the young professionals individually work on different projects across the organization. The management trainees are involved in four subsequent projects, whereas the technical trainees are

involved in three projects. In the first year, the trainee coordinators assign the projects. In the second year, the trainees are expected to arrange their own projects by finding or creating opportunities particularly within their own municipal network. Next to their individual projects, the trainees take part in specific educational days as a group, during which they work on their personal development and on group projects.

As reported in the beginning of the introduction, the importance of networking throughout the traineeship is specifically mentioned on the municipal website giving specific information about the traineeship:

> "Being a trainee, you will have built a big network after two years. In the second year, you will get the opportunity to 'arrange' your own project. Actively engaging in networking and searching for something that really fits you is the convention. Ten trainees from the same group go through the two-year trajectory together. Every other week, trainings and educational meetings will be held within this particular group. Also, this permanent group will organize various activities as well as two social projects. Next to collaborating with trainees from the own trainee pool, there are also various opportunities such as excursions and drinks, where other trainees and young municipal employees can meet each other and where they can engage in networking."
> (Translated from Dutch, website of large urban municipality in the Netherlands)

Thus, the trainees are expected to actively engage in networking activities inside and outside of their traineepool for their personal and career benefits.

5.2.2. Participants. Since we wanted to explore the development of social networks for members of different social groups (in terms of ethnicity and gender), we ideally wanted to study newcomers to an organization from their first day of employment and follow them for a specific period of time. In addition, we wanted the participants to be as similar as possible in terms of characteristics other than their ethnicity and gender, such as age, educational level, and perceived ability/potential. Based on these criteria, the decision to study a group of incoming trainees at the municipality was made.

The selection of the participants and the starting point of the data collection were closely tied to the specific circumstances at the municipality. Once we finished our negotiations concerning the research project, the municipality's selection of the trainees had already been finalized. Therefore, we can be sure that our research project did not influence the selection process. We consider this as a strength of our sample, since we know that the group of trainees we studied adheres to the organization's requirements without taking any other aspects into consideration, which may possibly be related to our research.

The trainee coordinator provided us with a list of names and corresponding demographic information (i.e. gender, age, ethnicity). Our sample consists of five men and five women, of whom three belong to the minority ethnic group (two men and one woman) according to the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics' official definition of Dutch ethnic or minority ethnic group membership (CBS, 2013). The trainees were between 21 and 29 years of age at the starting point of the traineeship. All trainees were highly educated. The disciplines they graduated in vary from more technical to more social foci. For most of the trainees, the trainee position is the first official long-term employment after finishing their higher education and after part-time jobs held alongside their studies. A small number of the trainees had completed an internship at the municipality prior to their employment as a trainee, mostly to collect data for their master thesis for their university degree.

Table 5.1: ID and demographic information of trainees.

ID	Ethnicity	Gender	Code demographic variables
Trainee 1	Dominant Ethnic	Woman	DEW (dominant ethnic woman)
Trainee 2	Minority Ethnic	Man	MEM (minority ethnic man)
Trainee 3	Dominant Ethnic	Man	DEM (dominant ethnic man)
Trainee 4	Dominant Ethnic	Woman	DEW (dominant ethnic woman)
Trainee 5	Minority Ethnic	Woman	MEW (minority ethnic woman)
Trainee 6	Dominant Ethnic	Woman	DEW (dominant ethnic woman)
Trainee 7	Dominant Ethnic	Woman	DEW (dominant ethnic woman)
Trainee 8	Minority Ethnic	Man	MEM (minority ethnic man)
Trainee 9	Dominant Ethnic	Man	DEM (dominant ethnic man)
Trainee 10	Dominant Ethnic	Man	DEM (dominant ethnic man)

5.2.3. Procedure. Data collection consisted of two phases throughout the period from May 2012 to June 2013. Firstly, quantitative data was collected through a longitudinal online survey, which was intended to capture the trainees' contacts with each other ("closed network") and with other colleagues within the municipality ("open network", using a name-generator) throughout the first weeks of their traineeship. The survey was distributed eight times. Secondly, qualitative data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with each of the ten trainees with the aim of enriching our understanding of how the trainees engage in networking. According to the chronological order of events, first the data collection, the measures, and the data analysis for the quantitative survey data will be described, followed by the same information for the qualitative interview data.

Survey data. Data collection. On the trainees' first official day of work, the researcher explained the research project and the general requirements. Complete disclosure was promised after completion of the data collection. The need for continuous participation was highlighted and strongly encouraged by both the researcher and the trainee coordinator. However, participation was still on a voluntary basis and no consequences were tied to non-participation. It was mentioned that next to taking part in a longitudinal survey study, trainees might be asked to

take part in an interview at a later point in time. Furthermore, confidentiality concerning the collected data was guaranteed. After this introduction of the research project, all trainees agreed to participate.

The first seven out of the total eight measurements captured by the online survey were done within the first twelve weeks of the trainees' employment. The eighth measurement was taken about three months after the seventh measurement. On every other Monday for 12 consecutive weeks, the trainees received a link to the online-questionnaire via e-mail. For the first measurement, we used a paper and pencil version of the questionnaire, since the trainees did not have access to a personal computer on their first day of work. In limiting the period of intensive data collection to the first 12 weeks of the traineeship, we follow Hasan's (2010) example of distributing a sociometric questionnaire amongst incoming analysts in a law firm due to network stabilization assumptions. A few weeks before taking the eighth measurement, the trainees had switched project once. We conducted this last measurement, because we were interested in how the trainees' networks would have changed after this change in their social environment – in terms of building new contacts and maintaining older ones.

Most of the trainees filled in the questionnaire for every measurement, however some of them skipped one or more measurements, even after receiving a reminder (see Appendix 5.8, Table 5.1 for an overview of missing data per trainee). Even though we are aware of the fact that missing data is not desirable in social network analysis (Knoke & Yang, 2008), we decided to still include all respondents in the study for a number of reasons: First, we compared the observations of network agency with network structure and we did not find great discrepancies between both components for those trainees who missed one or more measurements. Second, we refrained from statistical testing and based our analysis on the visual representations of the social

network structures. Based on these decisions, we present and discuss distributions and patterns of relations observed in the particular sample of the ten trainees throughout the period of the eight measurements.

Measures. The survey consisted of two parts. For both parts, five questions were asked concerning seeking and giving work-related and non-work-related advice, and contacts with others outside working hours (Hasan, 2010). Inspired by Hasan (2010), the following five questions were used in the survey:

Asking for work-related advice:
Whom of the following people did you ask for work-related advice (solving a problem, additional knowledge, redefinition of a problem, validation of your own idea/plan, legitimation of own idea/plan) [specify time period depending on measurement]?

Being asked for work-related advice:
Who of the following people asked you for work-related advice (solving a problem, additional knowledge, redefinition of a problem, validation of your own idea/plan, legitimation of own idea/plan) [specify time period depending on measurement]?

Asking for non-work-related advice:
Whom of the following people did you ask for non-work-related advice (think of "how e do things here", how you can optimize opportunities, how you can build a successful career) [specify time period depending on measurement]?

Being asked for non-work-related advice:
Who of the following people asked you for non-work-related advice (think of "how we do things here", how you can optimize opportunities, how you can build a successful career) [specify time period depending on measurement]?

Spending time with others outside of work:
Whom of the following people did you meet outside of work (excluding drinks or other (informal) opportunities organized by the municipality) [specify time period depending on measurement]?

For each measurement, we paid particular attention to the specification of the time-period the questions were directed to: 1st measurement: in the past; 2nd – 7th measurement: during the last two weeks; 8th measurement: during the last three months.

We collected demographic information (gender, ethnicity) of contacts in the open

network at the end of the survey by asking two additional questions per mentioned contact

probing the trainees' assumption concerning their contact's gender and ethnicity the first time

they mentioned each contact.

Gender:
Are the people you mentioned male or female?
[A list of the newly mentioned contacts was provided, together with check-boxes for possible answers]
Ethnicity:
Which ethnic background do you think the people you mentioned have?
[A list of the newly mentioned contacts was provided, together with check-boxes for possible answers]

The options to choose from for the gender-question were "man" and "woman". The

options to choose from for the ethnicity-question were: The Netherlands, Europe (except

Turkey), North America (USA, Canada), Oceania, Turkey, Japan, Indonesia, Africa, Latin

America, Asia (except for Japan and Indonesia). The selection of these options, as well as the

clustering of these ethnic backgrounds for further analysis into dominant ethnics and minority

ethnics was based upon the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics' official definition of Dutch ethnic

or minority ethnic group membership (CBS, 2013).

While the first part of the survey focused on the trainees' contacts with each other

("closed network"), the second part of the survey focused on the trainees' contacts with

potentially all other municipal colleagues ("open network"), except for the trainees from their

own traineepool. The open network questions were connected to a name-generator: The trainees

were asked to generate preferably both the first and last name of each new contact built in the

period prior to the specific measurement. After having created this list of new contacts for each

measurement, the five questions were directed towards each of the newly mentioned names of

this particular measurement. For the subsequent measurements, the names previously mentioned

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in the open network were allocated in a list of names tailor-made to each participating trainee, presenting only those names this specific trainee had mentioned in previous measurements. This way, all contacts mentioned within the open network at previous measurements would return in subsequent measurements and new contacts could be added for each measurement. Consequently, the open network part of the questionnaire expanded for each measurement. Since the trainees could not delete any contacts from the list, the trainees had to indicate whether or not (yes/no) they had interacted with each contact previously mentioned for all five questions throughout all eight measurements.

    Data analysis. Our analysis of the quantitative data is purely descriptive. The representations provide an opportunity to sketch a picture of the structure of both the trainees' closed and open networks. While being aware of the fact that the longitudinal quantitative data is based on a rather small sample, we understand this manner of visually presenting a selection of the data as a way to meaningfully describe the available structural information.

    To give an illustration of the composition of each trainee's open network in terms of the alters' ethnicity and gender, we included all contacts mentioned across all five contexts of the structural data collection (asking for work-related advice, being asked for work-related advice, asking for non-work related advice, being asked for non-work-related advice, and spending time with others outside of work). For the analysis of the pattern of the open network development and the closed network over time for this particular study, we focused on those three contexts of the survey in which the trainee is considered the active agent in the networking process. Therefore, we only included the contexts of asking for work-related advice, asking for non-work related advice, and spending time with others outside of work. Our decision to focus on particularly these three contexts is in line with our general focus on the trainees' agency in active

network development in both network structure, as well as network agency. For the analysis of the pattern of the open network development, we included only the first seven measurements, because we wanted to present the pattern based on a continuous period of data collection. The first seven measurements were conducted every other Monday in twelve consecutive weeks and asked about the trainees' contacts in the previous two weeks, while the eighth measurement was conducted about three months after the seventh measurement and asked about the trainees' contacts in the previous three months. This discrepancy in continuity led us to the exclusion of the eighth measurement for the representation and analysis of the open network developmental patterns. However, since we intended to give a comprehensive impression of the general composition of the trainees' open and closed networks over time, we decided to include all eight measurements for the representation and analysis of these sets of data.

Interview data. *Data collection.* We conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each of the trainees after approximately one year of employment. These interviews were conducted face-to-face at each trainee's actual workplace (except for one interview, which took place at the trainee's apartment, due to travel conveniences), and they lasted between one and one and a half hours. As all trainees and the interviewer were fluent in Dutch, all interviews were conducted in Dutch. After each interview, the purpose and the details of the research were disclosed and the participants' additional questions were answered.

Measures. The semi-structured interviews were all conducted by the same researcher (first author) according to an interview guide that had been developed in close cooperation with the co-authors. Since we were interested in how the trainees actually *do* networking, the general topics of the interview guide have been informed by literature on networking, mainly by the work of Wolff and Moser (2009, 2010; Wolff et al., 2008). The main topics discussed within

each interview were the trainees' positive and negative experiences throughout the previous first year of their traineeship and the role personal contacts might have played therein; the trainees' way of building, maintaining, and using network contacts; the trainees' awareness of aspects of diversity in terms of their own network (both, in terms of their experience of their individual ethnicity and/or gender, and in terms of the composition of their own ego network).

Data analysis. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. In the first round of coding, the functional distinction of networking in the three components known as building, maintaining, and using (Wolff & Moser, 2009, 2010; Wolff et al., 2008) constituted the organizing frame and guided our initial classification of various forms of networking. Simultaneously applying open coding in the first round gave room for including other emerging themes related to the general topic of networking and social categories. In the second round of coding, a separation along the lines of the relevant diversity categories (ethnicity and gender) was applied for each of the components of networking and other relevant codes. While re-examining the data along the organizing frame for the specific social groups, additional sub-themes emerging from the data were recognized. In the third round of coding, similarities and differences in terms of sub-themes between the social groups were elaborated in order to discover potential patterns within the three components of networking. At different points in the coding-process, discussions among the authors challenged previous and stimulated future steps of the coding process.

As the interviews were conducted in Dutch, the quotes chosen to illustrate the findings had to be translated into English. Since all co-authors of the paper are fluent in Dutch, the original Dutch quotes were kept in the manuscript for as long as possible in order to prevent loss of meaning due to translation in the process of analyzing the data and writing the manuscript.

Finally, the first author translated the quotes and the translations were discussed with the co-authors. The original quotes in Dutch language may be obtained from the first author as supplementary material.

While following the chronological order of the data collection in terms of describing the quantitative and the qualitative data collection, measurements, and analysis in the method section, we will now let go of the chronological order in the result section. We will first present the results in terms of network agency derived from the conducted interviews with the ten trainees, following the organizing frame of building, maintaining, and using network contacts. Secondly, we will present the findings in terms of network structure based on the data collected via the longitudinal survey. Our decision to present the results in this order is driven by our interest in where and why network structures develop in a certain way. Informed by previous literature (Kilduff & Brass, 2010; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014), we believe that this can best be understood by considering network agency prior to network structure to explore how the first resonates in the latter. In the discussion, we will further elaborate on the insights emerging from the combination of network agency and network structure.

5.3. Results

The following sections will present the network agency and the network structure findings. The subsections of the network agency findings will show a) the importance and the positioning of networking as an organizational practice within the municipality, b) a sketch of the context in which networking happens, and c) a presentation of how dominant ethnic and minority ethnic, man and women trainees engage in building, maintaining, and using their network contacts within the municipality. The subsections of the network structure findings will illustrate a) the distribution of each trainee's open network alters in terms of ethnicity and

gender, b) the pattern of each trainee's accumulation of open network alters throughout the first seven measurements, and c) the structure of the accumulated closed trainee network, including each trainee's accumulated total number of open network alters after the eight measurements.

Since this study is mainly descriptive in nature and the group of participants is rather small, we chose to let the data speak for themselves as much as possible. We will present the "raw data" in both direct quotes and figures, followed by concise summaries highlighting general patterns and themes detected in the data.

5.3.1. Network agency: Talking about networking. To begin with, we will describe the trainees' experiences of networking as an organizational practice and their perceptions of the organizational context, followed by an exploration of how the trainees build, maintain, and use their open and closed networks.

Networking as an organizational practice. As the previous excerpt from the website of the municipality shows, networking is formally positioned and actively promoted as an organizational expectation with the aim of identifying personal interest and creating career opportunities after organizational entry. The trainees describe how this belief in networking as an important condition to success is engrained in daily organizational life:

> (…) my project was pretty much internal, also in that department, I had to write a communication plan and a culture plan, thus, let's say team building and building a new department, because there was just a new department, that was also pretty much focused internally. But, after all, they choose to say, well, it is good for your network and it is good for your future to see more than this. (Trainee 1, DEW)

> (…) also, from the trainee program it is said that it is important to be visible or to self-promote or to build your network. You hear that from uhm… from the trainees who are a little bit further along in the process or who are ex-trainees, you hear how important it is to… to transition from the traineeship properly, that you need to have a good network, thus people who know you and who can help you along. You also see that all trainees who received a permanent contract after their traineeship that they basically managed to do so using their own network and the others basically continued on the basis of temporary extensions. (Trainee 9, DEM)

But in general, I try to show up at this kind of events, because I notice that it can be useful based on earlier experiences. And not only for yourself, but also, you know, my father also does it in his work and my father in law, and they also say that it is not about what you know but whom you know. (…) both of them work in the profit sector, thus they can get an assignment or an offer at these events, and in the public sector you can, yeah, you don't get a proposal, but it is about knowledge sharing. (Trainee 10, DEM)

The value ascribed to networking is not unique to the municipal environment. As the previous quote illustrates, networking is considered to be of importance across different sectors.

All in all, we see that the active development of a network within the municipality constitutes an important pillar of organizational life. The importance of active network development especially as a means of creating future career benefits is highlighted by granting time and space to trainees to actively engage and pursue these networking activities. Furthermore, trainees learn about the effectiveness of networking within the municipality by the example of alumni trainees, who succeeded at securing future positions after their traineeships through their previously established networks. As we will see in subsequent quotes in the following subsections, next to more long-term benefits of networking in terms of creating future career opportunities, networking is also considered to be of importance for "ad-hoc"-support when trainees face immediate work-related challenges. Also, active network development is not only valued in the municipal environment, but it is considered of importance across different sectors.

Perceptions of the organizational context.

… something that was very difficult for me was – you are sitting between those real "Xer's" [people from the "City X"]… Yes, from my point of view, they are very crude and… very direct. And, well, if you have just come over from (…) [his country of origin] you really need to get used to that and then, from their point of view, you are extremely quiet and modest. Therefore, it was very difficult for me to be noticed. (Trainee 8, MEM)
… I could be myself with her [her supervisor, dominant ethnic woman] very much and she was herself as well, I think [laughs]. She was quite direct and I am the same and therefore she also accepted that I would sometimes just blurt something, for example…

> Absolutely not the same, but I recognized a lot of myself in her… and she also had to smile a bit about me sometimes, because she saw how she herself used to be twenty years ago. (Trainee 4, DEW)

Unanimously, the trainees described the employees of the municipality as mostly men, dominant ethnic, and "older". This perception in terms of gender, ethnicity, and age resonates in the trainees' experiences when engaging in active networking. The first quote shows how the perception of "being different", can lead to obstacles for a minority ethnic man trainee when building relationships with dominant ethnic colleagues. The second quote illustrates how the perception of "being similar" can foster a relationship for a dominant ethnic woman trainee with another dominant ethnic woman colleague. Both trainees at the same time belong to a dominant as well as a minority social category in terms of ethnicity or gender. Minority ethnic man Trainee 8 (MEM) belongs to the minority social group in terms of ethnicity and to the dominant social group in terms of gender; dominant ethnic women Trainee 4 (DEW) belongs to the dominant social group in terms of ethnicity and to the minority social group in terms of gender. Even though both trainees might appear similar in terms of distribution of dominant and minority group membership, the quotes show that depending on the particular context, the salience of perceived relative similarity versus perceived relative difference appears to play a role in the trainees' experience of and engagement in networking. While Trainee 8 (MEM) describes a context in which he is particularly aware of the difference in terms of ethnicity he experiences with his colleagues and how this hampers his active development of a relationship with them, Trainee 4 (DEW) describes a context in which she is specifically aware of the similarities she holds with her supervisor and how this stimulates her creation of a relationship with her. Thus, while the objective distribution in terms of dominant and minority diversity characteristics valid within this particular municipal organization might be similar for these two trainees, paying close

attention to the context and the relative experience of similarity and difference seems to be of importance when trying to understand how individual social group membership may affect individual active network development.

The perception of "being different" does not necessarily lead to restrictions in social contact, as the following quote of a minority ethnic woman wearing a headscarf shows.

> Yeah, I basically think that they take it [her minority ethnic background and her headscarf] pretty well. Uhm… I did have, you know, you hold certain prejudices, or you think like "How will they think about it? How will they perceive me? Will they treat me differently?" But they simply treat you the same way as they treat everybody else. (…) I really like it to do my prayers while I am working and then I simply ask uhm… "Do you have certain rooms which are empty, that I can just do my prayer for five minutes?" and then they also ask questions about it, you know, things are simply like that, and then it is a nice conversation like "Oh, ok, I did not know that it works like that." And then you have Christians, of course, and then you start comparing things, simply having a little conversation. (Trainee 5, MEW)

As illustrated by the previous quote, particular personal needs, which may elicit special attention, because they are less common in the organizational context, can also be the starting point for conversations and interactions.

As the presented quotes give a general impression of various experiences of members belonging to different social groups, we will now explore in more detail how members of different social groups build, maintain, and use network contacts.

Building network contacts.

Trainee:	I am pretty good at getting in contact with people, I think…
Interviewer:	Yeah?
Trainee:	Yeah!
Interviewer:	And how do you do it?
Trainee:	Talk a lot.
Interviewer:	Talk a lot?
Trainee:	Yeah, and not be afraid. (…) And I notice that if you are reserved and if you don't dare, then you do not move ahead. (Trainee 2, MEM)

As this first quote illustrates, this section focuses on aspects the trainees reported to be relevant in terms of building network contacts.

Generally, the interviews reveal that the trainees often feel that they are the ones to initiate the building of network contacts with others in the municipality.

> No, most of the time I go alone. Yeah, well, yeah. It is not the case that the mentor… the mentor does not take you along like uhm… This is our new… our new trainee or whatever. No. (…) It is not the case that someone takes me by the hand like uhm… we go see everyone, no, most of the time I usually do that by myself. (Trainee 1, DEW)

> (…) and then you also see them going outside and then you say: "Hey, can I walk with you?". And then they say like "Yeah, just come and walk with us." And then they ask you again the next time, but it is not that they… that they maintain those sociable contacts, so you need to do it yourself and you need to ask them yourself how they are doing and things like that. (Trainee 5, MEW)

Next to the descriptions given in the previous quotes, "assertive", "active", "present yourself", "take the initiative" are additional examples of how trainees describe the traits and behaviors they need in order to build network contacts. Overall, these descriptions highlight the active role the trainees (are expected to) adopt when building network contacts with others, both formally, as well as more informally.

Next to meeting direct colleagues, some trainees' particular positions present the chance to meet open network alters on higher functional levels, who are not direct colleagues.

> Thus, all directors sit here and also, during the meetings, the directors just below them also come here (…) They come to give a talk to the board and then they sit and wait a while before they are admitted to the meeting room… and what I have done so far very often is that I start a conversation with them and then I tell them that I am trainee and then they say "Oh, how interesting, what do you want to do as a next project, for example?". Up until now it happened a couple of times that they say like "Well, you need to come to me and you need to call this and that person and I have a contact for you". And I have done this very intentionally. (Trainee 3, DEM)

> (…) I often accompanied her (her manager) to the aldermen committee, thus… I've seen them all at some point, but I have not really talked to them, because, yeah, there, it was mainly… it really was one of these hierarchical stories, and then not a lot was, let's say, expected from me that I had some sort of opinion myself, that was not really appreciated.

I was (there) mainly for the welcoming (the others) and for writing and well yeah, only for organizing… (…) In terms of my network: I knew people, because I had shaken their hand and because had heard what they had said, but it was not really appreciated, if I also uhm… well, to me, this was a different sort uhm… relationship I had with those people. (Trainee 6, DEW)

Particularly regarding opportunities to build high status network contacts, we see in the quotes that man Trainee 3 (DEM) takes the chance to introduce himself to the directors and subsequently reaps the benefits of it. Woman Trainee 6 (DEW), on the contrary, acts according to assumed expectations in line with her formal role without embracing the opportunity of approaching these high status people for her own benefits. Also, we see a difference in reaction of the high status alters towards the trainees: While the high status alter ascribes an active role to man Trainee 3 (DEM) by asking him about his future plans, other high status alters seem to ascribe a more passive role to woman Trainee 6 (DEW) by expecting her to only receive and reproduce information. The subsequent interpretation of the network contacts with these high status alters differs for the two trainees: While man Trainee 3 (DEM) explicitly mentioned that he consciously relied on the acquired high status contacts, woman Trainee 6's (DEW) account suggests that she does not feel entitled to act in a similar way. Woman Trainee 6 (DEW) describes her relationship with these high status network contacts as "different" from contacts she has with other people and she relates it to the feeling of little value that seems to be attached to her opinion.

Furthermore, the trainees mostly agreed that they rely on non-work-related information exchange when building contacts with others.

No, it is more content-related. (…) But it can also be about other things uhm… For example, I have another department manager… I saw that his shoulders were a little broad, really a boxer's appearance and then I asked like "I guess you do boxing?". And that was right, because I had also done boxing. (…) And this way, you also start to talk. (…) But these kinds of things are also triggers to get in touch. (Trainee 2, MEM)

I think that I mostly do it in a personal manner, let's say that I prefer to uhm… well, I think that it is the most important how I myself… what I myself always like is, if people are interested… really honestly interested in me, that I also do that with them… I am also often curious, and I let them know, and I ask them. I am also often curious why people are in their position, what drives them to be here? Or uhm… what did they do before or uhm… what is their background or do they come home alone or do they have children or is there also a dog waiting or uhm…? Yeah, I think so uhm… And if you have a bond like this, then you can more easily ask each other things. (…) you can be only result-oriented and only maintain functional relationships with each other, but I don't think that, in the end, you can thus keep up … good relations with each other or something. Then you are in touch very briefly, but if it lasts, that's what I wonder. (Trainee 4, DEW)

(…) I am a lot more aware about that it is important to talk to everyone who could become, certainly functionally, of importance to your project. Without the intention of immediately getting something out of it, but just simply to get to know each other and to tell them what you are there for… (Trainee 9, DEM)

(…) it simply helps if you later on send a memo or a plan or whatever to someone, then they know like "Oh yeah, we saw him, I looked into his eyes and we had a little chat and ok, that's what it's about". Then, you are basically in 1-0 in the lead already instead of beginning with a deficit. Thus, together with my supervisor, I try to think about all the key players here, let's say, who would be interesting to quickly talk to beforehand? I do approach all of those. (Trainee 9, DEM)

And there is one moment to say goodbye to him (a former manager), and there the different departments thus all came together and then the new manager of the department had started (…) But then I did speak to the [new] manager… (…) And about the department, I said, the department is not really a reflection of society in the sense that it is a little bit of an obsolete network, the mean age is namely quite high and that was something I noticed like, "Hey, wouldn't you like to have a few more women, or a few more young people [in your department]?". (Trainee 10 DEM)

In general, we constitute an overarching agreement on the importance of non-work-related information to build network contacts across dominant ethnic and minority ethnic men and women trainees. However, we also see that men trainees prefer to speak about hobbies, such as sports, whereas women prefer to speak about more private aspects of a person's life, such as a person's home situation or relationship status. In addition, some men trainees refer to the functional importance of building network contacts, as well as the importance of referring to work-related information at times. It was mainly men trainees raising these aspects. For instance,

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Trainee 10 (DEM) benefitted from raising work-related information when meeting the manager for the first time at the company drinks. As he told us, this particular event was the stepping stone for a future career move, when the manager, remembering "this young men's boldness", gave Trainee 10 (DEM) the opportunity to join his team when he was short on staff. In women trainees' accounts we did not find similar explicit examples of stressing the functional aim of building network contacts.

In line with the previous example illustrating the importance of informal settings, all trainees consider occasions outside of the formal work setting as opportunities for building network contacts.

> The second day, I already went along to uhm… coincidentally, they [his new department] had an outing, which is, basically, the outing of the year. (…) And that worked out very well, because this way, you get to know the people in a different setting. (…) And that was very fortunate for me, because uhm… because I instantly knew everybody. And in one day I had talked to everyone a little bit or I saw everyone in a different atmosphere… (…) Thus, this was the reason why the rest of the period there [in this department] was very pleasant, because you did not have to make an effort to greet the people and to introduce yourself and all that, that was done within one day, thus I enjoyed that very much, to be honest. That was a good start. (Trainee 8, MEM)

> And I was, yeah, just because it is informal company drinks, then you always say a little more than normally, of course. Or maybe it was, because I had a beer that all of a sudden I dare to say what is missing, so to speak. (Trainee 10, DEM)

Company drinks, however, have mostly been mentioned by dominant ethnic trainees, who describe this particular setting as an occasion where it is quite easy to get in touch with open network alters.

Maintaining network contacts.

> (…) Look, ideally you should maintain a connection with everybody, but in reality, this does not work out (…) Yeah, ideally, you should give that kind of people, who you have worked with less intensively, a call sometimes or something like that, but in practice, you don't have the time to do so, that's it most of the time. (Trainee 10, DEM)

As this initial quote illustrates, this section focuses on maintaining network contacts. As suggested by Trainee 10 (DEM) maintaining relationships with everyone met at work would be ideal, yet due to time constrains, it shows to be unrealistic. In daily organizational life, this becomes evident in fewer contacts with former colleagues after switching to a new project, as other trainees told us.

Actively maintaining network contacts is not particularly necessary in order to approach an open network alter in situations guided by an immediate work-related need to acquire information.

> Well yeah, if there is the need to do so, then I do it [get in touch again with a (former) colleague], but if this is not the case, then I would not approach everyone… I do not say that I do not do it with anyone, but it is not for everyone that I would think like ok, let's be in touch once again, just to be in touch again, no, not like that. (…) And I also say "hello", when I bump into someone I know or I chat a bit, but I do not call up a high director like "Yeah, do you want to go for a coffee?", no I do not do that. Not if there is no need to do so. (Trainee 1, DEW)

> I have not collected any business cards, but I always say that, where we work, the unit is small and you always run into each other. Ehm… it is simply… it is yeah, it is not nurturing relationships, but at the very moment you see someone it is always nice to chat and to ask how the person is doing. But I do not proactively look uhm… for people to ask them how they are doing uhm… well, if I run into them, I am always happy to have a chat and they as well, luckily, thus this means that the relationships are good… Uhm… But most of the time it really happens at the moment that you need them or that you run into them, that you are in touch again. (Trainee 2, MEM)

> And maintaining work-related relations yeah, I don't really know. Maybe by… yes, yes, basically I think this is difficult. In these instances it is… in these instances you basically maintain a relation at the moment that you need each other, and not really because you uhm… yeah, only at the moment when you need each other. (Trainee 7, DEW)

The trainees describe how the pure instrumental need for information seems to lead and legitimize to contact open network alters without actively maintaining the contact across time. However, with specific (high-status) others, who have been particularly relevant for an

individual trainee for various reasons, trainees choose to engage in actively maintaining these

contacts.

> Not with the large group, let's say, not really consciously. However, if I bump into them, I do not keep on going or I say hi, but it is not that I very consciously… with those people who I have not worked with very closely, that I still meet them. What I uhm… for example at the moment, we planned a date to go for lunch with my mentor of my second project [first and last name of the mentor], because both of us enjoy it and because she also said " I would like it to stay in touch with you also if we… (Trainee 4, DEW)

> Yeah, well, there are simply people, for instance your mentor, your work-related mentor or a person who taught you specific things, look, you still have a relation with them; you send an email every once in a while like "Hey, how are you doing in your job? How is your project going?" (…) Thus, then you go there again and then … you go for lunch together… yeah, it just stays. (Trainee 5, MEW)

> But especially my mentor and my supervisors always played a very important role, with whom I sometimes had daily conversations, but who also created the atmosphere and who could help me with like, who can you use and what for? Yes, really the mentor, who… the mentors were really good for these kind of things. Yes, uhm… and with them, I still have personal connection with, thus that I send them an email, or that we meet outside of work uhm… coincidentally, I have plans with my former colleagues and also with my mentor next Friday, thus well, those people really played an important role. (Trainee 7, DEW)

> (…) I still have a really good connection with my last project and every once in a while I just go, half a day I go there to flexibly work from there to see the people once again. (…) Thus I was… the last time that I was there, that was in April I think, back then I had uhm… I brought cake and I worked there for half a day, thus I enjoyed it very much to be there again. (Trainee 8, MEM)

As illustrated by the quotes, the trainees use various forms of social interaction to

maintain network contacts with alters who are particularly important to them. These forms of

interaction vary in terms of time-investment and personal involvement by ranging from

exchanging up-dates via e-mail to informal face-to-face meetings, such as having coffee or going

for lunch. These findings are supported by Michael and Yukle's (1993) description of activities

people engage in when building and maintaining their networks.

We also see that women trainees seem to more often maintain contacts with open network alters for social reasons, whereas men trainees, next to the social aspect, seem to more often also keep the functional importance of maintaining open network contacts in mind.

> For example, I also go out for dinner with colleagues from my first department once every two months. Well, yeah, I regularly go for lunch with colleagues of another department, thus this is probably not very work-related, but simply more social. (…) Like, how is your husband doing and… you were sick and so on, you know, like this. Yeah. (Trainee 1, DEW)

> Well, what I generally try to do especially is to try to add people to LinkedIn, because I like to see what they have done so far, thus this is what I like already and because I expand my network that way. (…) Uhm… yeah, this is what I do really easily and the people in my department [silence] yeah, maintaining relationships… yeah, I think this is difficult, I simply do that by doing personal things, like saying "Hi" every day, saying "Bye", asking how things are going, that way (…). Or an email every once in a while to… (…) to fine tune things or to ask how something went or… yeah. (Trainee 7, DEW)

> Well, I … I remember it or I also write it down for myself that I simply every once in a while uhm… simply suggest to someone to go out for lunch, because I have a click with someone, because otherwise I often do not do it, either to have lunch or go for a coffee or whatever. Uhm… and normally, I thought about it every once in a while to do it spontaneously, but it is put center stage so much that it is important to keep your network warm, let's say, or to make use of it. Uhm… that's the reason why I began to write it down, so that I can take a look at it every once in a while like "oh yeah, you should have a chat with this person again". (…) yeah, I have a to-do-list on my iPad and a date is related to everything, except for this kind of things, thus those things are at the bottom without a date. If I want, I can open it and I see "Oh yeah, I should do something with this and that person again. (…) I do have a list for this purpose that I propose to meet up again every once in a while. (Trainee 9, DEM)

> Well, those lunches are informal. (…) Well, uhm, as it usually goes, you start informally, just small talk and chit chat, and after that it will be about work. That is usually the intention. Uhm… yeah. (Trainee 10, DEM)

> (…) my old director, die uhm… for example, we had a training with him once about consulting and at that time, I also thought like well, I'll send him a quick mail about what people thought about it. (…) just to drop a line again. Thus, I asked him, if he would like to do something on the consulting day, just give a short talk and after that I send a quick mail like uhm… thanks again and things like that. And just some feedback that he had done it well and a sketch of people's reaction on it. (Trainee 10, DEM)

In particular, the previous quotes highlight that especially dominant ethnic men trainees may have a clear strategy concerning the maintenance of relevant contacts, whereas women trainees seem to be more socially driven in maintaining contacts.

Overall, the trainees agree that maintaining contact is easier with people who share similar interests.

> He [the manager] also likes to do sports and cooking, just a similar attitude towards life, thus in relation to work you are very close… yeah, even though he stood above me [hierarchically] I could level with him very well, somehow; the same sort of humor and also a bit similar interests in our private lives, even though he is 20 years older than me. (…) But I have to say that Debbie [his former woman manager] (…) I also have WhatsApp contact with her. (…) But we do not exchange recipes, as yet [he does exchange recipes with his man manager] (…) But I have to say, uhm … it is not because I uhm… want to make a difference between genders or something, but I do notice that men amongst each other, that this is a bit easier. With him [his man manager] it was also, sometimes, we would go to meetings, for example and then a beautiful lady was present and then he said "Well, uhm…". And you would not do this with a woman colleague, of course, this kind of things. Do you get, what I mean? (…) In these cases, you have more in common with a man than with a woman. Except for that we were talking about cooking, I could also do that with her very well, let's say, but with men you can talk about soccer, about beer, about women, let's say. But you would not talk to a woman about "Oh, that's a hot one", do you get what I mean? (…) [With men] you can have similar conversations as with your friends, let's say. Thus uhm… for instance about the soccer results or what I said, about man-things, hey. (…) But at the end of the day, let's say, with your man colleagues you have a little more in common in terms of things beyond your work than with ladies, simply because of the fact that you have the same interests. This is what I try to illustrate. (Trainee 10, DEM)

> Uhm… but on the other hand I more easily maintain contact with minority groups, because it is likely that we come from the same neighborhoods, or share the same history or similarities in other aspects. (…) … the composition of my network is now maybe 80-20. 80% simply white Dutch people and 20% from ethnic minority groups. Uhm… but uhm… I do notice that uhm… the maintenance of my contacts is a bit easier with the 20% compared to the 80 %. I do not want to say that uhm… well, let me phrase it like this: it is not that the 20% is easier, but if you look at the fact that the white Dutch people form 80% of my network, you would also think that 80 % of these contacts… or of the good contacts… would come from this group. I think if you… if the good contacts 50-50 is, then the minority groups are overrepresented in the good contacts, thus people with whom I maintain contact easily. Thus, relatively speaking, it is a bit easier with them, but in absolute numbers, I would say it is 50-50. (…) People with whom I have lunch regularly or with whom I regularly uhm… well, have a conversation with more easily. According to me, according to my opinion. To whom I speak a bit more often and with

whom I have a better click emotionally. (…) Well, what I just said, maybe you have… you have different things in common, for example eating habits of a particular culture, traditions, because I am also part of a minority group I think that you share particular things. I mean, most of us do come from the same type of neighborhoods… and have experienced quite similar things, for instance in education or other things. Uhm…know the rotten apples in the environment uhm… have the same preferences for, for instance, food uhm… also similar tastes, sometimes also the same music you listen to. Uhm… and I think that these similarities are quite decisive in terms of what you can talk about. And if you can talk to each other more easily, then you can also maintain the contact more easily. (…) and this has to do with the similarities, which I just mentioned previously, and most of us, and with us I mean the minority group, because I am also part of it, [is] from the big cities… from City X. (Trainee 2, MEM)

We see descriptions of trainees supporting the idea of gender and ethnic homophily

(McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001) as drivers for

social interaction and shared interests. For instance, Trainee 10 (DEM) repeatedly alludes to the

relevance of similarity or difference in terms of gender as a means of defining shared interests

and ways of interaction. Similar to Trainee 10 (DEM), Trainee 2 (MEM) alludes to the

importance of shared interests, such as food or music, which lead to a deeper connection and

easier interaction between people. The only difference between both accounts is that the first (by

Trainee 10, DEM) is based on (dis)similarity in terms of gender, whereas the second (by Trainee

2, MEM) is based on (dis)similarity in terms of ethnicity. However, both trainees refer to

congeneric underlying needs and phenomena determining the ease of maintaining contacts with

similar compared to dissimilar others.

Even though similarity in ethnicity and gender have been described as possible grounds

evoking shared interests, the following quote suggests that these interests are not necessarily only

shared along the lines of ethnicity and gender.

Yeah, I don't know… I find it simply easier to get in contact with a woman in one way or the other. Like uhm… women are simply… often easier to approach and they are more open for uhm… personal contact, whilst with men it is often simply already a bit more work-related and what yeah, what is the benefit of it? Or what do I know. I don't know, I think it is easier to maintain contact with a woman, yeah. (…) I think is a lot more about

a personal preference, in that sense that I usually outside of my work, I also think it's easier to talk to women about all kinds of things, and then about men, who only talk about, putting it exaggeratingly, only talk about soccer and whatever, but, I am just not into that. (…) For the rest, I am not a very feminine type of guy, you know, but it is simply easier for me to interact with women… (…) in a positive kind of way. (Trainee 9, DEM)

As an example for how gender does not necessarily determine the ease of contact maintenance, man Trainee 9 (DEM) explicitly noted that it is easier for him to maintain contacts with women open network alters compared to men open network alters. As such, shared interests may also lead to cross lines and to overcome the tendency of homophily in terms of ethnicity or gender.

Using network contacts.

(…) then I simply keep uhm… a number of people from my network "warm" in the sense that at a certain moment, I will go there and ask them or they have an idea or if they can recommend a person who I could talk to, knowing that due to your network… or that you kept this contact warm and that this person will also put in a good word for you or would say like, I have this trainee and he did a project for me and that went really well and I am still regularly in contact with him, I think you should talk to him some time. Thus in this manner I hope in any case that… that this will be beneficial for the last project or for finding a position after the traineeship. (Trainee 9, DEM)

As illustrated by this quote, the benefit from building and maintaining social contacts within the organization is that the trainees can use these contacts for several purposes. The previous quote particularly alludes to acquiring a new project or a future position, which is one of the main purposes the trainees (are expected to) use their network contacts for. This section focuses on both the various purposes of using network contacts, as well as which types of contacts the trainees actually use in order to pursue their own interests.

The following quotes illustrate the different purposes the trainees use their acquired network contacts for.

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And also on the other side with department A, they want to do things where they need the Secretary General, for instance, then I take care of it. And I am also "used" like "Well, I hear that the Secretary General will attend an event, it would be beneficial if department A would be there, as well, do you know anything about it? Or who do we need to talk to?" Then I facilitate the contact between people from department A with those people they need to talk to. Thus, it goes both ways. (Trainee 3 DEM)

(…) and he was also always challenging me a bit, like uhm… "well hi [her last name], what are you up to today?" Like that, let's say. And at some point, I knew what he was working on, because his field of expertise was something with uhm… uhm… financial support and uhm… well, something like that, and I was in need for information about this, thus then I call him and then I say: "Hey [her colleague's first name], for my new project, I need something, how are you doing? Yeah, no, good, how are you? Yeah, great, I need something from you, could you… do you have it? Or do you know who I should talk to?" "No, I will look it up for you…" And within ten minutes I had an email in my inbox with the information I needed. (Trainee 4 DEW)

(…) But, for instance, at department B [her first project], if I struggled with anything, I asked either my mentor or someone else like "Gosh, do you have a minute?" And that I quickly could ventilate it or that I could fine tune it or get it off my chest, or whatever. (Trainee 7 DEW)

(…) I received an offer from a director of my previous project (department C) for a position for a future project thus uhm… or for a permanent position, thus uhm… and I was very much… In the beginning I thought this is fantastic, of course, but I wanted to talk about it with my mentor, what he thinks about it, because I value his opinion very much. Thus, I went to my former mentor like… of course, he already knew a little what it was all about, but I asked nicely like" Yeah, what is your view, if I go and do it? Uhm,… is it realistic and do you see me do it well?" This is what I did use him for, to really ask this in particular. (Trainee 8, MEM)

Besides the previously mentioned use of network contacts as a means to acquire potential future projects or positions, trainees agree in terms of using their network contacts for immediate work-related reasons and not immediately work-related reasons. When considering the contacts trainees can potentially access, we see differences between dominant ethnic trainees and minority ethnic trainees and between men trainees and women trainees.

Thus, sometimes, you strategically make use of your position there. (…) And this morning, just by chance, the director of department D was sitting there and this is where I want to do my next project, thus then I briefly mention this and, of course, he is also interested in it… It is always beneficial to have the vote of a director of course, that he

knows you at least. Thus, this is what I do pretty consciously. And this is also, among other things, the reason why I sit on this position. Yeah. (Trainee 3, DEM)

(…) If you are talking about a high level director, who is holding a position somewhere, I do not think that this is a contact in the sense of uhm… that I could use this contact in the future, but maybe I can. Whereas I cannot really use it at this moment at least, but it is a fact that, if you talk about establishing contacts… of course, if you just start working and you sit at the table with someone who holds a high position, in the beginning, I thought it was quite difficult, because then I thought "yeah, oh no, they're probably wondering why am I sitting here?" But if you are used to it to more and more often sit at the table with these kind of high positions, then it will be more easy in the future, for my own impression, thus maybe in this sense I don't know if I can benefit from them content-wise. But I certainly think that a bit of the awareness of the context, which is very important within a network, that this will be increased by this. (…) and also that you more quickly approach people, who maybe would not so quickly, of whom in the first instance you would think "oh, that is, you know, some quite high level boss". Yeah, now I do not care so much about that anymore. (Trainee 1, DEW)

(…) maybe I only use those people in order to search for another project, it is not for a job or uhm… whatever [laughs]. I am not at that point yet, because mostly like, "I want to end up there, I need to maintain the contact with these people really well, if they want to describe me well to those people", but I do not have that yet. I do not know yet if I want to keep working for the municipality. (…) Look, for instance, Trainee 8 (MEM), I am not sure if you already talked to him? But he really wants to end up within a certain department, thus he really has close contact with people, he goes running with them on the weekend or cycling, you know, he also says " I need to have good contact with them, because I do see a future with them". (…) He simply says "If they offer me a job, then I will do it right away and then I will not even have to finish the trainee program. (…) So, this is his goal behind it and for me it is… I do not know yet if I want to end up here, so uhm… so like that, basically. (…) (Trainee 5, MEW)

The previous quotes depict a similar pattern between men and women trainees in terms of using high status network alters, as the pattern we described in the previous section on building network contacts: For instance, man Trainee 3 (DEM) actively approaches high status others with the aim of using these contacts for his personal benefit, while woman Trainee 1 (DEW) seems to adopt a more passive interpretation of encounters with high status others. Other than what we heard from man Trainee 3 (DEM), woman Trainee 1 (DEW) perceives encounters with high status others as moments of learning and getting accustomed to the situation of interacting

with high status others, instead of immediately using these contacts for her own personal benefit, similar to what we heard from man Trainee 3 (DEM).

Similarly to our description in the section of maintaining network contacts, the separation in social and professional networks along the lines of ethnicity and gender also seems to play a role in terms of using network contacts.

> Yeah, sure. You mean my network within the municipality? The professional network? (…) Look, the social… the sociable network is nice uhm… but it does not directly pay off for my work. (…) what I called informal contact, and directly, it does not pay off, because at work you are basically not involved with each other a lot, it is more like… (…) It is always a nice add on, it is good, and the professional network, that is really… what I also need in my work. And there is also a thin line in between, I also know that, only for me it makes… they are both important, I think, they are both good to have. (Trainee 2. MEM)

> (…) And it is really only men, old men, so at some point, you only interact with them and maybe that's why it is more difficult to build up a specific social relationship. (…) And I did mention that I miss it, that I miss it, you know, that I cannot build up relationships or networks with women. It is really the only women I interact with are from the trainee program and uhm… Thus, here, I also thought it was very nice that I have a manager, who is a woman, and another woman who works at another department, thus I also interact with them and then you also see how they do it and uhm… but here it is again all men and here it is also really, yeah men between forty, fifty. (…) you know, it is more like, I also want to know what it is like to work with women. (…) And then you think like yeah, sometimes, you know… Maybe a bit stupid, but (…) just simply talk about whatever, whatever on women's things. This is simply not possible, that's a fact, I cannot say, "hey, I went out with this person" or "I experienced this", that is really strange in the department [laughs]. Thus, it is simply yeah, the women's things, because you… because you think like yeah, how would that be? Because you realize at the trainee program, that you do have it there, that you can talk about women-things there and here [at her department] you cannot do so. (Trainee 5, MEW)

Minority ethnic man Trainee 2's (MEM) previous illustration suggests that he is rarely able to use his social network in order to realize certain benefits in his direct work environment. As he delineated in a previous quote, the network he labels as his social network consists of mostly minority ethnic alters, while the network he labels as his professional network consists of mostly dominant ethnic alters. In terms of gender, we refer to woman Trainee 5's (MEW) quote

illustrating the situation in which she does not share non-work-related information, which she

labels as "women-things", in the man environment where she mostly operates. The fact that she

turns towards her women fellow trainees also suggests that her network is at least partially

separated along the lines of gender in a non-work-related network mostly consisting of women

and in a professional network mostly consisting of men. We did not observe similar illustrations

of separations in social and professional networks along the lines of ethnicity and gender in the

dominant ethnic men's accounts.

A difference in the use of network contacts along the lines of ethnicity emerged in

reference to the trainees' closed network, the trainee network.

> (…) well yeah, just as I said, my previous project, at those moments I often thought like "oh help, how should I do this?" Or when I received one of these tirades like "oh, how should I uhm… how should I deal with it?" And then I often approached my trainee network or uhm… like wel.. uhm… "This is my situation, how would you deal with it or uhm… in that way." (…) well yeah, basically, I use the trainee network for everything, but also for social things. (Trainee 6, DEW)

> Thus my traineepool is generally very important in all contacts, because also… You know, everyone is placed everywhere. Thus if I need something from a certain cluster and I think "oh yeah, this person is there", well, then I can call this person, and this person will arrange it that I get in contact with someone else. And I get the impression that all of us use it amongst each other pretty well. And you simply say "this person is now there, can you put me in contact with this and that person?" Thus, our trainee group generally was an important link throughout the last year. (Trainee 7, DEW)

Almost all dominant ethnic trainees referred to their trainee network as a very important

source of both work-related and non-work-related information and support. Particularly,

dominant ethnic trainees describe how mentioning their own trainee-status to any alumni trainee

usually opens doors and thereby creates opportunities non-trainees would not receive as easily.

Also, the trainee network seems to function as more of a personal sounding board. Except for

minority ethnic woman Trainee 5's (MEW) explanation of turning towards her women fellow

trainees for "women-things", minority ethnic trainees did not explicitly mention to use the

trainee network as a prominent source for work-related and non-work-related information, or as a context in which they spent a lot of time with others outside of work.

Summary networking. Considering the applied organizing frame (building, maintaining, and using network contacts), we see aspects most trainees agree on, as well as aspects that trainees belonging to different social groups in terms of ethnicity and gender approach differently. In terms of building network contacts, trainees generally agree that they are the ones who need to take the initiative to establish contacts with others. Also, trainees mostly agree that it is necessary to actively maintain network contacts with particularly relevant, mostly high status others, who they have learnt from, while asking for immediate work-related information seems to require less active maintenance of network contacts. In terms of using network contacts, trainees seem to generally share similar intentions to actively use network contacts namely in order to acquire future projects or positions, and to ask for particular work-related and non-work-related advice.

Considering the observed differences between the social groups, we see that men and women trainees differ in terms of building network contacts with high status others. Furthermore, we observed differences between both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic trainees, and men and women trainees in terms of the topics and the settings in which they engage in building network contacts. The results suggest differences in the instrumental versus the interpersonal focus of maintaining network contacts between men and women trainees. In addition, trainees described shared interests as fueling the ease of maintaining network contacts, while dissimilarities in personal interests are described as making the maintenance of network contacts more difficult. Many of the trainees related (dis)similarities in ethnicity or gender to (dis)similarities in individual interests. In terms of using high status network contacts, the

trainees' accounts suggest a similar difference between men and women trainees as observed for building high status network contacts, in which men trainees seem to take a more proactive role compared to women trainees. Furthermore, we see indications for differences in which kinds of networks trainees use for different purposes along the lines of ethnicity and gender.

Since these findings describe the trainees' retrospective accounts of how they built, maintained, and used their network contacts throughout the previous year, we will now turn to the quantitative survey findings, to investigate how the trainees' descriptions of network agency resonate in their network structure.

5.3.2. Network structure: Describing network patterns. After considering the network agency component, we will now turn towards the network structure component. First, we will look at the composition of each trainee's open network in terms of their open network alters' ethnicity and gender across all five contexts (asking for work-related advice, being asked for work-related advice, asking for non-work related advice, being asked for non-work-related advice, and spending time with others outside of work) after the eight measurements. Second, for each of the three contexts in which the trainees actively seek contact with open network alters, we will consider the development throughout the first seven measurements for each trainee's open network. Third, for the same three contexts in which the trainees seek active contact with fellow trainees, we will consider the accumulated closed network among the ten trainees in the traineepool after the eighth measurement. In each of the figures representing the closed network, the total number of each trainee's open network alters accumulated throughout the period of the eight measurements is illustrated, as well.

In all figures, the order in which the individual trainees are presented (Trainee 1 – Trainee 10) is kept constant. To create this order, we randomly chose one letter of each trainee's full

name and allocated the trainees accordingly in alphabetical order. Thus, no a priori distribution in terms of ethnic or gender group membership influenced the applied order. This has to be taken into consideration with respect to the figures presented subsequently. The order of the lines and nodes in the Figures 5.1 through 5.8 does not imply any information regarding the possible distributions or relations among trainees and/or open network alters.

  Distribution of each trainee's open network alters in terms of ethnicity and gender. The subsequent figures (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2) illustrate the distribution of the total number of acquired open network alters per trainee across all five contexts (asking for work-related advice, being asked for work-related advice, asking for non-work related advice, being asked for non-work-related advice, and spending time with others outside of work) after the eight measurements. Figure 5.1 shows the composition of each trainee's open network in terms of the accumulated number of open network alters differentiated by the alters' ethnicity. Figure 5.2 shows the composition of each trainee's open network in terms of the accumulated number of the open network alters differentiated by the alters' gender. We chose to include all five contexts in these representations, since we want to give an impression on how many people each trainee has interacted with after the eight measurements, and how the accumulated open network is distributed in terms of each trainee's open networks alters' ethnicity and gender. Both figures show the accumulated total number of each trainee's network contacts; they do not show the accumulated total number of each trainee's interactions with open network alters.
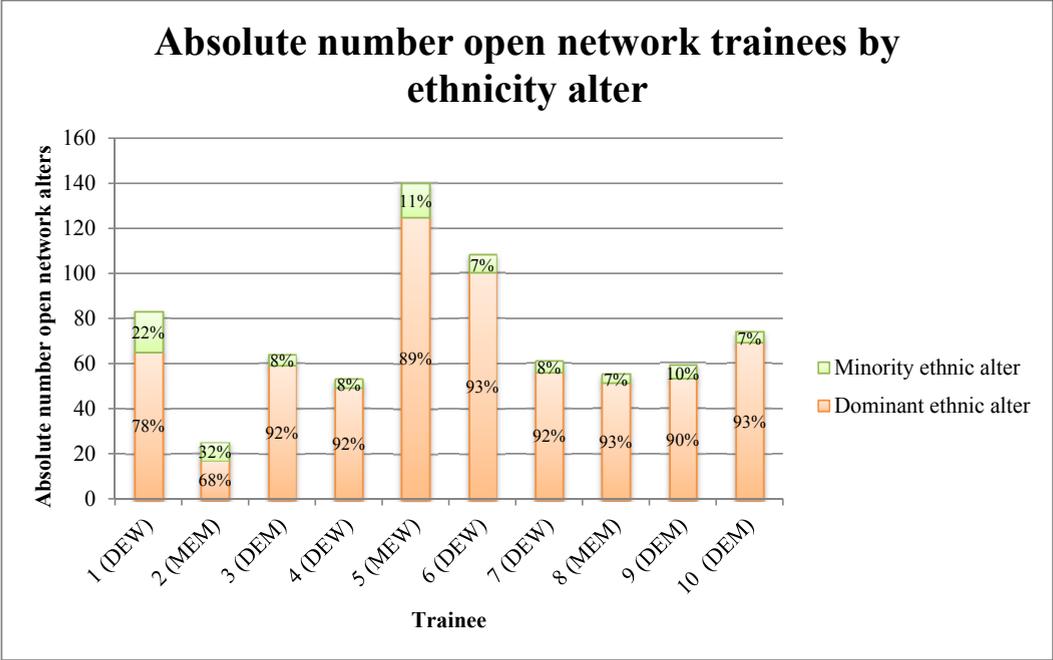
Figure 5.1: Accumulated number of open network alters of each trainee by their open network alters' ethnicity (in percent) across all five contexts after the eight measurement.

Absolute number open network trainees by gender alter
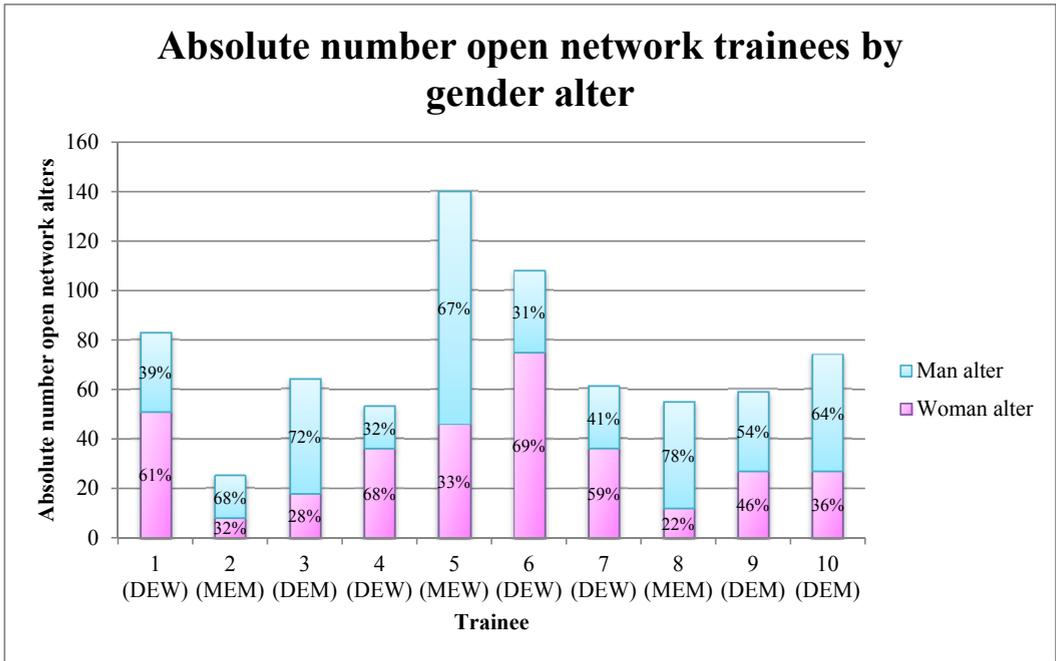
Figure 5.2: Accumulated number of open network alters of each trainee by their open network alters' gender (in percent) across all five contexts after the eight measurement.

Looking at the accumulated number of open network alters per trainee, we see that the size of the networks ranges from 25 alters (Trainee 2 (MEM)) to 140 alters (Trainee 5 (MEW)). Both, the highest and the lowest accumulated number of open network alters were acquired by minority ethnic trainees. Overall, we see that women trainees tend to acquire more open network alters compared to men trainees. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that the general representation of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic employees in the municipality is reflected in the distribution of the trainees' open network alters: All trainees have more dominant ethnic alters in their open networks than minority ethnic alters. While minority ethnic Trainee 2 (MEM) has a clearly higher percentage of minority ethnic open network alters compared to dominant ethnic trainees, minority ethnic Trainee 5's (MEW) and minority ethnic Trainee 8's (MEM) open networks do not show such a clear pattern of ethnic homophily. In terms of gender homophily,

we see a clearer pattern in the sample: Except for woman Trainee 5 (MEW), all other trainees have more same-gender alters in their open network than opposite-gender alters. Man Trainee 9 (DEM) is the only one who has an almost equal distribution of men and women alters in his open network.

   Pattern of open network development per trainee related to work-related advice, non-work-related advice, and time spent outside of work. The following three figures (Figure 5.3 through Figure 5.5) illustrate the different patterns of network development for each of the three contexts in which the trainees actively seek contact with open network alters. Figure 5.3 shows the pattern of network development of each of the ten trainees for work-related advice in the open network. Figure 5.4 shows the pattern of network development of each of the ten trainees for non-work-related advice in the open network. Figure 5.5 shows the pattern of network development of each of the ten trainees for time spent outside of work with alters in the open network.

   The three figures illustrate the percentage of open network alters (y-axis) for each of the relevant contexts in reference to the accumulated total number of each trainee's open network alters. For each moment of measurement (t1 – t7; x-axis), the percentage of open network alters is indicated for each trainee (z-axis). In order to visualize the pattern of open network development per trainee over time (t1 - t7), we decided to connect the separate moments of measurements with a continuous line for each trainee.

   Example of how to read and interpret Figure 5.3 through Figure 5.5. To give an example of how to read and interpret Figures 5.3 through 5.5, we will turn to the work-related context in Figure 5.3 and we will specifically consider dominant ethnic woman Trainee 1 (DEW) as an example. We see, for instance, that dominant ethnic woman Trainee 1 (DEW) has asked a small

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percentage of her total open network alters for work-related advice at measurement one (t1). From measurement one (t1) till measurement three (t3), we see that the percentage of open network alters she asked for work-related advice increases to about 20 percent. From measurement three (t3) till measurement five (t5), the percentage of open network alters she asks for work related advice decreases again to about 5 percent. Subsequently, the pattern increases again for measurement 6 (t6) to about 15 percent, where it stabilizes at the same percentage for measurement 7 (t7). The patterns of all other trainees and for the other two contexts have to be read and interpreted accordingly. After presenting the three figures, we will describe the general findings focusing on both, general patterns and observed variations.
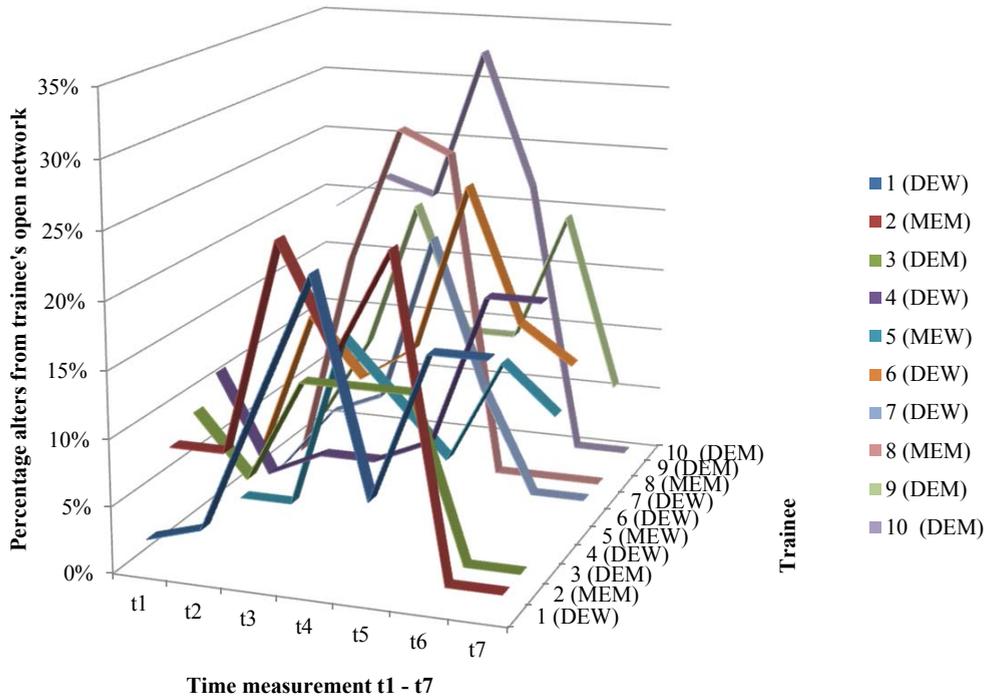
Figure 5.3: Pattern work-related advice per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in open network.
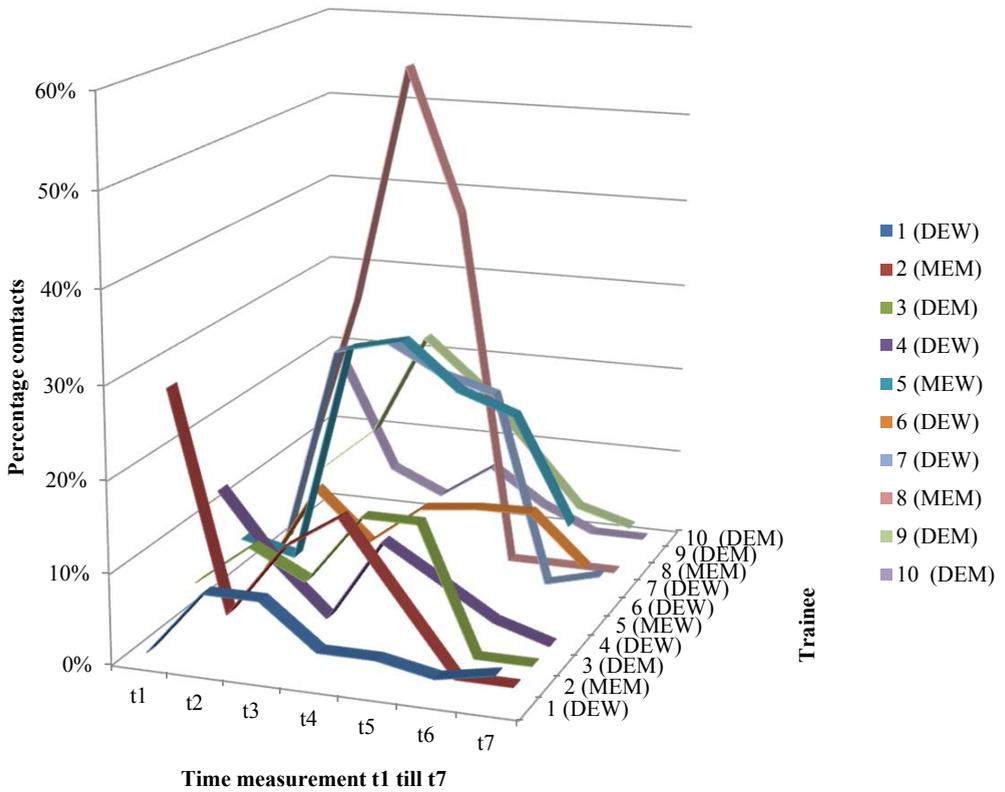
Figure 5.4: Pattern non-work-related advice per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in open network.
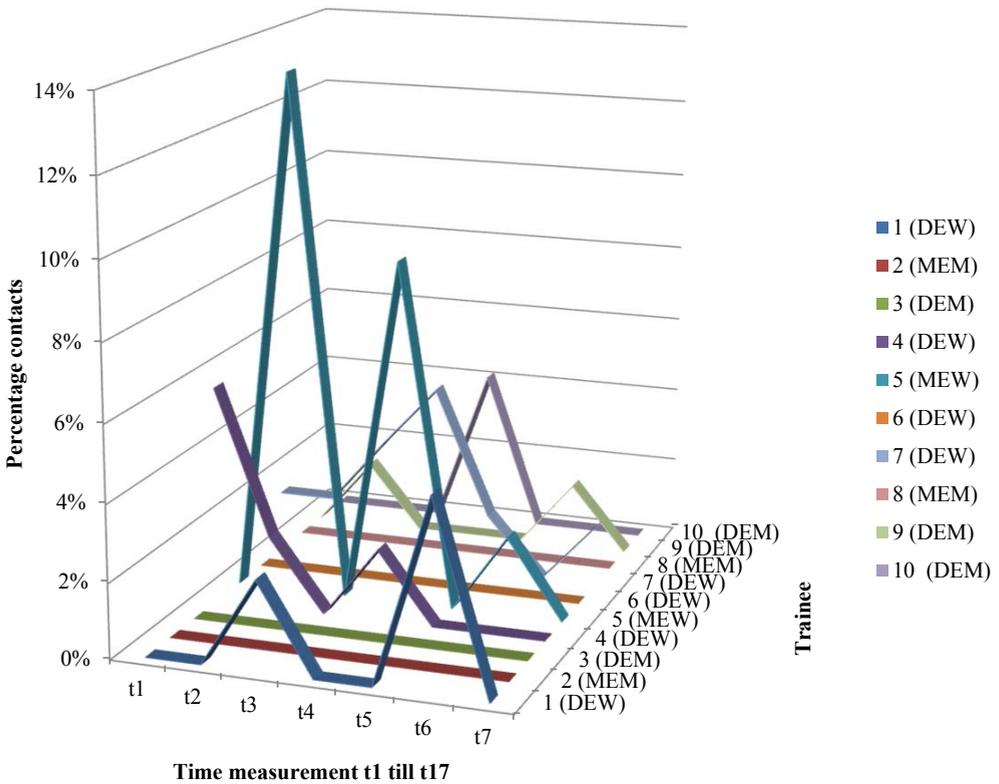
Figure 5.5. Pattern time spent outside work with open network alters per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7.

The previously illustrated patterns of the trainees' open network development suggest that, generally, the work-related (Figure 5.3) and the non-work-related (Figure 5.4) open networks develop similarly for all trainees: While the trainees start off with asking a smaller number of their open network alters for work-related or non-work related advice, we see that this percentage generally increases, before it starts to decrease around the fourth or fifth measurement.

In terms of ethnicity we see that two out of the three minority ethnic trainees tend to ask relatively more alters from their open network for (non-)work-related advice compared to dominant ethnic trainees (Trainee 2 (MEM), Trainee 8 (MEM) for the work-related advice open network; Trainee 5 (MEW), Trainee 8 (MEM) for the non-work related advice open network). Dominant ethnic Trainee 10 (DEM) is an exception in both networks in terms of ethnicity, since for the work-related advice open network, he asks relatively many alters, compared to his dominant ethnic fellow trainees. In the non-work-related advice open network, dominant ethnic Trainee 10 (DEM) starts off with a quite high percentage of approached open network alters, which later decreases again; this pattern is more extreme, yet similar to the pattern we observe for minority ethnic Trainee 2 (MEM).

In terms of gender, we do not see a clear pattern or difference between the open work-related advice network development of women and men trainees. Also, the general pattern of the development of the non-work-related advice open networks between men and women is quite comparable, except for the observation that a few of the men trainees (Trainee 2 (MEM), Trainee 8 (MEM), and Trainee 10 (DEM)) show greater variations in maxima and minima of the curves representing their work-related advice open network patterns compared to the women trainees.

The pattern of network development for spending time with open network alters (Figure 5.5) from their open networks outside of work looks quite differently compared to both types of advice networks: Instead of a steady increase followed by a slight decrease, we see occasional peaks in the percentage of open network alters trainees spent time with outside of work, followed by periods of not spending time with open network alters at all. In addition, almost half of the trainees (Trainee 2 (MEM), Trainee 3 (DEM), Trainee 6 (DEW), Trainee 8 (MEM)) reported not to have spent time with open network alters outside of work, at all.

In terms of ethnicity, we see that dominant ethnic trainees have a higher tendency to spend time with open network alters outside of work compared to minority ethnic trainees. Two out of seven dominant ethnic trainees (Trainee 3 (DEM), Trainee 6 (DEW)) report to not spent any time with open network alters outside of work, compared to two out of three minority ethnic trainees (Trainee 2 (MEM), Trainee 8 (MEM)).

When looking at gender, we see that, generally, women trainees report higher percentages of open network alters they spent time with outside of work compared to the percentages reported by men trainees. Furthermore, women trainees also generally report more occasions of spending time with open network alters outside of work compared to men trainees.

Accumulated closed network with each trainee's total number of open network alters. All eight measurements were taken into account in the representation of the closed network for each of the three contexts in which trainees seek active contact with fellow trainees and open network alters (Figure 5.6 through Figure 5.8). In addition, all three figures present the total number of acquired open network contacts in the three respective contexts. Figure 5.6 shows the status quo of the closed network for work-related advice including information regarding each trainee's accumulated total number of open network alters in terms of work-related advice.

Figure 5.7 shows the status quo of the closed network for non-work-related advice including information regarding each trainee's accumulated number of open network alters in terms of non-work-related. Figure 5.8 shows the status quo of the closed network for the time spent with fellow trainees outside of work including information regarding each trainee's accumulated number of open network alters they had spent time with outside of work.

In Figure 5.6 through Figure 5.8, each trainee is represented by a specific node labeled by their individual trainee-ID. Each trainee's ethnicity is represented by the shape, while each trainee's gender is represented by the color of the respective node (ethnicity: dominant ethnic trainees = diamond; minority ethnic trainees = circle; gender: men = blue: women = pink) of the node. The thicker the line between the nodes, the higher the frequency of the contact between two trainees throughout the eight measurements (frequency: minimum = 0 contact between trainees → no line; maximum = 8 contacts between trainees → thick line; the actual frequency is indicated by the number next to each line. For each measurement, 0 = no contact, and 1 = one or more moments of contact, throughout the period of the particular measurement; to determine the final thickness of the line, the number of moments of contacts were added up per trainee for all eight measurements). In each figure, the number close to each line connecting the respective node to another node indicates the number of contacts initiated by the first with the latter. The arrowheads at the opposite end(s) of the line also indicate the direction of the initiated contact (who approached whom). Since the thickness of the line between two nodes shown in the figures is determined by the highest frequency of contact, we chose to include the numbers at each end of the line to clearly show potential differences in frequency of approaches between two trainees in reciprocal approaches. The size of each node represents each trainee's accumulated number of open network alters for the respective context reflected in the question after the eight

measurements. The larger the individual node, the more open network alters the individual trainee accumulated across time with respect to the particular context.

By integrating information of both the closed as well as the open network, the status quo of each trainee's network development after the eight measurements in both the closed as well as the open network is represented in one figure.

Example of how to read and interpret Figure 5.6 through Figure 5.8. To give an example of how to read and interpret Figures 5.6 through 5.8, we will turn towards the closed network in Figure 5.6, representing the network structure of the work-related advice context. Looking at this particular closed network as a whole, we see in the thickness of the lines, for instance, that Trainee 6 (DEM) asks the most work related advice to fellow trainees. Furthermore, we see in the size and the shape of the nodes that dominant ethnic trainees generally have accumulated more open network alters after the eight measurements in terms of asking for work-related advice compared to minority ethnic trainees. Considering the color of the nodes as well as the number and the thickness of the lines, we see that women trainees generally ask a little more work related advice from their fellow trainees compared to men trainees.

Looking at an individual node in Figure 5.6, we see, for instance, that dominant ethnic woman Trainee 1 (DEW) approaches six fellow trainees for work-related advice (Trainee 2 (MEM), Trainee 4 (DEW), Trainee 6 (DEW), Trainee 7 (DEW), Trainee 8 (MEM), and Trainee 9 (DEM)). Furthermore, looking at the numbers close to the line, we see for instance, that Trainee 1 (DEW) approaches Trainee 6 (DEW) once and that Trainee 6 (DEW) approaches Trainee 1 (DEW) four times. Comparing the size of the node of Trainee 1 (DEW) with the size of the nodes of her fellow trainees, we see that she seems to be quite average in terms of the

accumulated total number of open network alters. The illustrations of the whole closed networks
and the individual nodes in the other two contexts have to be read and interpreted accordingly.
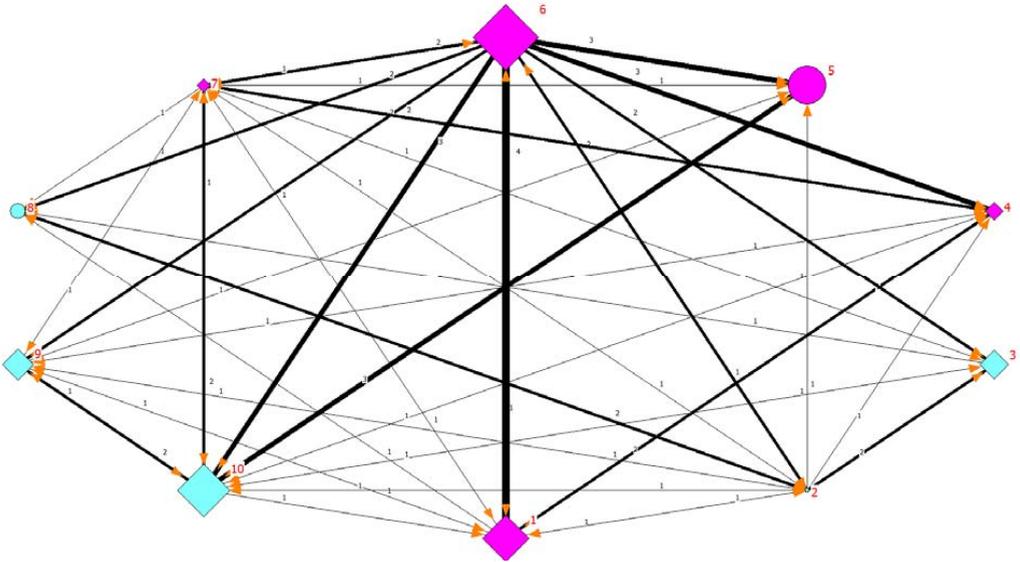
Figure 5.6. Accumulated closed network work-related advice, including information on
accumulated number of open network alters in terms of work-related advice at t8 (ethnicity:
dominant ethnic trainees = diamond; minority ethnic trainees = circle; gender: men = blue:
women = pink; frequency contact: frequency: minimum = 0 contact between trainees → no line;
maximum = 8 contacts between trainees → thick line; the actual frequency is indicated by the
number next to each line. For each measurement, 0 = no contact, and 1 = one or more moments
of contact, throughout the period of the particular measurement; to determine the final thickness
of the line, the number of moments of contacts were added up per trainee for all eight
measurements).

Figure 5.7. Accumulated closed network non-work-related advice, including information on accumulated number of open network alters in terms of non-work-related advice at t8 (ethnicity: dominant ethnic trainees = diamond; minority ethnic trainees = circle; gender: men = blue: women = pink; frequency contact: frequency: minimum = 0 contact between trainees → no line; maximum = 8 contacts between trainees → thick line; the actual frequency is indicated by the number next to each line. For each measurement, 0 = no contact, and 1 = one or more moments of contact, throughout the period of the particular measurement; to determine the final thickness of the line, the number of moments of contacts were added up per trainee for all eight measurements).

Figure 5.8. Accumulated closed network time spent with fellow trainees, including information on accumulated number of open network alters trainees spend time with outside of work at t8 (ethnicity: dominant ethnic trainees = diamond; minority ethnic trainees = circle; gender: men = blue: women = pink; frequency contact: frequency: minimum = 0 contact between trainees → no line; maximum = 8 contacts between trainees → thick line; the actual frequency is indicated by the number next to each line. For each measurement, 0 = no contact, and 1 = one or more moments of contact, throughout the period of the particular measurement; to determine the final thickness of the line, the number of moments of contacts were added up per trainee for all eight measurements).

Looking at the previous illustrations of the three closed networks among the ten trainees concerning the three contexts in which they actively seek contact with fellow trainees, we see slight differences in terms of network structure between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic trainees, and between men and women trainees.

In Figure 5.6, we see for instance, that two out of three minority ethnic trainees (Trainee 5 (MEW), Trainee 8 (MEM)) ask relatively few of their fellow trainees for work-related advice (reporting two and zero occasions, r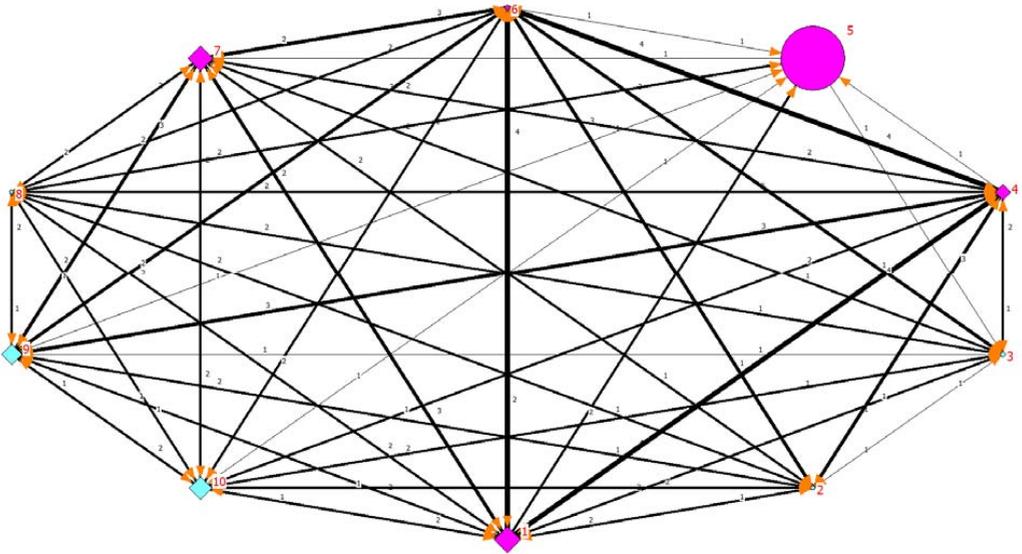espectively), while minority ethnic Trainee 2 (MEM) is one of the trainees approaching all of his fellow trainees for work-related advice (reporting 11 occasions). Dominant ethnic Trainee 6 (DEW) is the exception with approaching all of her fellow trainees and reporting 23 occasions of actually asking for work-related advice. When considering Figure 5.6 in terms of gender, we do not see a general difference between men and women trainees related to asking fellow trainees for work-related advice, except for woman Trainee 6's (DEW) high reports and man Trainee 8's (MEM) report of not asking anyone.

Looking at the non-work-related advice closed network (Figure 5.7), it appears that minority ethnic Trainee 5 (MEW) reported the highest frequency of asking her fellow trainees for non-work related advice. Together with dominant ethnic Trainee 4 (DEW), minority ethnic Trainee 2 (MEM) reported the lowest frequency of asking fellow trainees for non-work-related advice. Minority ethnic Trainee 8 (MEM) is on the high end together with mostly the other dominant ethnic men trainees (except for Trainee 10 (DEM)) in asking fellow trainees for non-work-related advice. In terms of gender, we recognize a general tendency of women trainees asking fellow trainees for less non-work-related advice compared to men trainees.

We see quite a general difference in time spent outside of work with fellow trainees (Figure 5.8) in terms of ethnicity and gender: Minority ethnic trainees seem to spend less time

with fellow trainees outside of work (between one or two occasions per fellow trainee) compared to dominant ethnic trainees (between one and four occasions per fellow trainee). At the same time, we see that women trainees tend to spend more time with fellow trainees outside of work compared to men trainees.

When combining the general observations of the closed networks with the findings of each trainee's accumulated total number of open network alters, we see the following patterns: In terms of asking for work-related advice (Figure 5.6), we generally see that those trainees who ask relatively more fellow trainees for work-related advice, also accumulate relatively more open network alters in their work-related advice open network. We see a similar pattern for the non-work-related advice networks (Figure 5.7): Those trainees, who ask relatively more fellow trainees for non-work-related advice, also acquire more open network alters in their non-work-related open networks. Regarding the networks of spending time with fellow trainees and open network alters outside of work (Figure 5.8), we discovered an opposing pattern: Those trainees, who spend relatively more time with fellow trainees outside of work, accumulate a relatively smaller total number of open network alters in their networks indicating time spent with others outside of work, and vice-versa.

Summary network structure. When looking at the distribution of ethnicity and gender in the findings in terms of network structure, we see that all trainees generally have more dominant ethnic open network alters in their networks compared to minority ethnic open network alters. We also see a clear pattern of gender homophily in the trainees' open networks. When generally looking at the patterns of the network development over time, we see that for most trainees' (non-)work-related networks, the general pattern shows an increase in the number of approached open network alters for (non-)work related contact, followed by a decrease, which levels out

towards the end and stabilizes at a certain point. These findings suggest that when entering the organization, trainees build many network contacts. As time proceeds, trainees either become more selective in which kind of potential network contacts they want to build and invest time and energy in; or trainees have found a small group of people whom they trust and who they regularly turn to, decreasing the need for acquiring new network contacts or even maintain all previously acquired contacts.

For most trainees' networks related to spending time outside of work with open network alters, the pattern looks quite differently, with every once in a while a peak followed by no time spent with open network alters outside of work. The patterns show that most dominant ethnic trainees and women trainees spend more time outside of work with open network alters, compared to minority ethnic trainees and men trainees, respectively.

Considering the trainees' closed networks, we see that most dominant ethnic trainees make more use of their trainee network in terms of asking work-related advice, compared to most minority ethnic trainees. In terms of asking for non-work-related advice, we do not see a clear pattern of variations in how dominant ethnic and minority ethnic trainees use fellow trainees. However, we see that men trainees tend to make more use of their fellow trainees compared to women trainees. Using network contacts outside of work within the closed network shows a similar pattern as the open network: Both, dominant ethnic trainees and women trainees seem to use fellow trainees more in this particular context, compared to minority ethnic trainees and men trainees, respectively.

Finally, for the (non-)work-related contexts we saw that in general, the more the trainees' ask fellow trainees for (non-)work related advice, the more they also ask open network alters for (non-)work-related advice, and vice versa. For time spent outside of work, we saw that generally,

the more time trainees spent with their fellow trainees outside of work, the less time they spent with open network alters, and vice versa.

After presenting and summarizing both the networking and the network structure results, we will relate both findings to each other in the subsequent discussion. The aim of the discussion is twofold: First, we want to contribute to the better understanding of the general adoption and promotion of active network development as an organizational practice in a diverse environment, by the example of studying the development of networks of diverse young professionals over time in relation to the potential creation of career opportunities or benefits. Second, by integrating both findings of network agency and network structure, we want to underline the previously discussed added value of incorporating both network components when studying networks in general, and network development in a diverse context, in particular.

5.4. Discussion

Considering both network agency and network structure, we discussed how trainees of different social groups embrace active network development as an organizational practice and how they enact it as part of their daily organizational routine. Between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic, men and women trainees we distilled variations in building, maintaining, and using network contacts in the contexts of work-related and non-work-related advice, and time spent with colleagues outside of work. We also described how these variations are reflected in different outcomes in terms of social capital acquisition and subsequent career opportunities and benefits among dominant ethnic and minority ethnic, men and women trainees. By relating network agency to network structure, we now want to further understand the promotion of active network development as an organizational practice as a means to benefit individuals' career opportunities in a diverse organizational context. We will do so by subsequently discussing the

importance of *perceptions of active network development as an organizational practice*, *ethnic and gender homophily in trainees' networks*, *shared perspectives on networking*, *different benefits of active network development*, *different types of social capital*, and *differences in shared personal interests* therein.

5.4.1.   Perception of active network development as an organizational practice. To begin with, all trainees seem to acknowledge and act upon the municipality's efforts to position and promote active network development as an organizational practice. All trainees mention aspects of the municipality's promotion of active network development and their own actions towards building, maintaining, and using social contacts in the interviews. Furthermore, the illustrations of their network structures shows that all of them report to approach open network alters and fellow trainees for various reasons starting at the very first day of their employment as a trainee.

5.4.2.   Ethnic and gender homophily in trainees' networks. In the interviews, trainees unanimously described the municipality as being composed of mostly dominant ethnics and men. This description in terms of ethnicity is reflected in the trainees' open network structure. The distribution of the trainees' open network alters' ethnicity shows that all trainees have more dominant ethnic alters in their open networks compared to minority ethnic alters. In their study among MBA-newcomers, Mollica, Gray, and Trevino (2003) found that the salience of ethnic identity for each individual determines each individual's preference to seek contact with others belonging to the same ethnic group. Looking at the minority ethnic trainees in particular, our findings suggest that their ethnicity is more salient for some trainees than for others. We saw this both in the trainees' network agency accounts and network structures.

The trainees' description of the municipal composition as "mostly men" resonates in most men trainees' open network structure, which suggests that men trainees tend to acquire more men open network alters. However, it does not reflect in most women trainee's network structures, which suggest that women trainees tend to acquire more women open network alters.

Generally, our findings are supported by earlier conceptualizations of homophily, describing people's tendencies to stick together with similar others (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; McPherson et al., 2001). These homophilious preferences for interaction have been found in previous studies, also particularly directed at diversity attributes such as ethnicity and gender (Ibarra, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997). However, our findings suggest that the preferences for homophilious interaction along the lines of ethnicity or gender cannot be generalized. Rather, the preference for homophilious interactions seems to depend on the salience of particular identity characteristics within the given context, not only in terms of ethnicity (Mollica et al., 2003), but also in terms of gender.

5.4.3. Shared perspectives on networking. Considering the findings on building, maintaining, and using network contacts, trainees generally agree on some points. First, most trainees feel that they are the ones to initiate building network contacts with others in the municipality. Second, many of the trainees explain that maintaining network contacts is important with high status relevant others as a long-term investment, but less necessary in order to contact (former) colleagues when in need for "ad-hoc" information related to work-related questions. Third, most trainees use their network contacts for work-related advice, non-work-related advice, or the acquisition of future projects or positions. As most of the trainees share these perceptions, we interpret these findings as a common basis shared by the trainees in terms of acknowledging of and acting upon the general purpose, importance, and rules of active

network development promoted within the municipality. In the following, we will discuss the observed differences in building, maintaining, and using network contacts reflected in both network agency and network structure.

5.4.4.   Different benefits of active network development. While women trainees acquired more open network alters compared to men trainees, we want to raise the point that this does not necessarily translate to more career opportunities for women trainees compared to men trainees. Due to a lack of further specification, we can only rely on what we know from the network agency accounts to take an informed guess concerning the hierarchical position or status held by the trainees' open network alters. As we saw previously in terms of network agency, men trainees seem to take the initiative to engage in network contacts with an instrumental aim in mind, while women trainees seem to seek out network contacts more for interpersonal than for instrumental reasons. In addition, we saw that some women trainees tend to interpret and use contacts with especially high status open network alters differently compared to some men trainees. While some men trainees actively seek and use situations in which they encounter high status open network alters for their own purposes, some women trainees tend to interpret and approach similar situations according to what they think is objectively valued and expected from them.

Such situations, in which an (in)congruence between stereotypical beliefs held by the individual and/or relevant others concerning for instance gender and networking (Heilman, 2012) may position the individual in a dilemma in which "a person cannot win no matter what she does" (Oakley, 2000, p. 324). On the one hand, our findings show how behaving according to assumed expectations of (high status) others, may affect some women trainees' behavior in that they say that they do not approach high status others in a given situation, with potentially

negative future implications for career opportunities. Men trainees, who did not mention other's expectations as affecting their behavior, say they approached high status others and reaped subsequent benefits of these contacts in terms of career outcomes. On the other hand, Oakley's (2000) elaboration of the classical double bind, namely that counter-stereotypical behavior is penalized by relevant others due to a lack of stereotype fit, is not observed in the data. However, we still interpret the finding that some women trainees do and some men trainees do not pay attention to behaving according to assumed expectations as an indication of the presence of stereotypical beliefs in the municipal culture. We believe that the mere presence of stereotype beliefs in the organizational environment suggests the potential for double bind situations for trainees belonging to particular social groups compared to others. Thus, similar to findings of Forret and Dougherty (2004), our findings suggest that a similar or higher number of network contacts or social capital does not necessarily lead to equal career opportunities. Not only the mere number, but the specific contexts and conditions in which these network contacts are situated are important in terms of granting access to social capital and thereby creating career opportunities.

    5.4.5. Different types of social capital. Based on insights derived from both network agency and network structure, we want to highlight our observation that men trainees may acquire more instrumental social capital, while women trainees may acquire more interpersonal social capital. Women trainees express to maintain their contacts mostly by social activities, such as going for lunch or get-togethers after work. While men trainees also mention these social activities as a means of maintaining their network contacts, they often stress a work-related component when engaging in such activities. Looking at the open network structure in terms of spending time with open network alters outside of work, many women trainees have a higher

number of open network alters and more occasions when they spend time with open network alters outside of work, compared to men trainees. In the closed network structure, we see that women trainees ask less non-work-related advice to their fellow trainees, but spend more time with fellow trainees outside of work, compared to men trainees. The combination of network agency and network structure findings indicates that men trainees seem to be particularly driven by functional or instrumental interests when developing their networks within the work context, whereas women trainees seem to be mainly driven by personal or interpersonal interests when engaging in active network developing activities, also outside of the work context.

These findings are in line with previous suggestions that women tend to use their networks for social purposes, while men often deploy their networks for instrumental reasons, such as enhancing their internal visibility (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Ibarra, 1992). Podolny and Baron (1997) position the task-advice and the strategic-information network (similar to work-related and non-work-related advice in our study) more in relation to functional support in terms of job performance, whereas friendship and social support relations (similar to time spent with others outside of work in our study) are described as "person-to-person ties that are unlikely to aid job performance directly" (Podolny & Baron, 1997, p. 683). Applying this categorization to our findings, men trainees' network development seems to be more oriented towards instrumental than interpersonal support, while women trainees' network development seems to be more oriented towards interpersonal support than instrumental support. As a consequence, those more looking for instrumental support may always be more likely to find a way to discuss work-related matters, while those more looking for interpersonal support may rather continue to speak about less work-related and more interpersonal matters. Relating this reasoning to our findings, men trainees may be more likely to engage and invest in more instrumental networks to

receive more functional support and thus instrumental social capital, while women trainees may be more likely to engage and invest in more interpersonal networks to receive more friendship and social support and thus interpersonal social capital.

Taking into consideration this "functional difference" in networks or social capital, Ibarra and Deshpande (2007) observed separated networks of minority ethnics and women along the lines of what they call task-oriented networks and psychosocial networks. Accordingly, task-oriented networks mostly consist of relationships with power holders, thus mostly dominant ethnics or men, whereas psychosocial networks mostly consist of same-ethnic or same-gender relationships (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2007). Thereby, minority ethnics and women often hold different networks for instrumental support and for psychosocial, while dominant ethnics' and men's networks are more likely to be more intertwined.

5.4.6. Differences in shared personal interests. We also want to highlight that shared personal interests are an important means to facilitate building, maintaining, and using network contacts. Our findings show that, while shared personal interests may foster ethnic and/or gender homophily and network separation, they may also encourage heterogeneous contacts between social groups. The importance of shared personal interests particularly in relation to maintaining social contacts emerged from the network agency accounts. Both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic trainees explained how shared personal interests in hobbies, music, or food may benefit building and maintaining social contacts. Also, some men and women trainees have described gender as a source for shared personal interests, facilitating active network development. Particularly when talking about non-work-related network contacts, we see another pattern in the agency findings in terms of gender: Men tend to talk more about "things", such as hobbies, while women tend to talk more about "people", such as more personal information.

The likelihood of this kind of preference in individual interests related to gender is supported by Su et al.'s (2009) meta-analysis of differences between men and women in terms of interests and vocational preference. While Su et al. (2009) specifically focus on gender, we argue that the adopted definition of interests as being "integral to one's identity and [being] an expression of an individual's attempts to adjust to the academic and work environment by finding opportunities that match their identity" (Su et al., 2009, p. 860), suggests that differences in interests are not necessarily only related to gender, but potentially also to other types of identity markers. Our findings reflect this idea, as some minority ethnic trainees express that their instrumental or professional networks and their interpersonal networks are separated along the lines of ethnicity due to differences in personal interests between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics. In contrast, statements by some dominant ethnic trainees suggest how their professional and social networks are intertwined, due to shared personal interests with open network alters, such as music and food. In addition, the analysis of the network structures indicates that minority ethnic trainees seem to spend less time with open network alters and fellow trainees outside of work, compared to dominant ethnic trainees.

At the same time, our findings also show examples of both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic, men and women trainees indicating that shared personal interests do not necessarily have to be related to identity markers, such as ethnicity and gender. Sometimes, shared personal interests may also stimulate heterogeneous network contacts in terms of gender or ethnicity.

Considering both network agency and network structure, we see that shared personal interests seem to stimulate and facilitate building and particularly maintaining network contacts. In that sense, our findings add another component to Kim's (2013) findings of enablers and constraints of building and maintaining network contacts. In addition, our data also highlights

that, next to building and maintaining network contacts, shared personal interests may also affect using network contacts, particularly in terms of ethnicity. As we have seen, dominant ethnic trainees benefit from shared personal interests with network contacts, as they enable the creation of more intertwined instrumental and interpersonal networks. In contrast, as some personal interests may differ along the lines of ethnicity, we have also seen how minority ethnic trainees' instrumental networks may be more separated from their interpersonal networks. As a consequence, minority ethnic trainees may benefit less from those network contacts they share personal interests with in terms of instrumental support, compared to dominant ethnic trainees.

5.5.   Conclusion

The previous analysis shows, that all trainees start off with a similar understanding and acknowledgement of the municipal organizational practice of active network development. We also saw that contacts with municipal alters are favorable in terms of creating and using career opportunities and benefits, such as solving work related challenges or acquiring future projects or positions. Thus, we could conclude that an organization's promotion and support of the organizational practice of active network development at least for incoming young professionals is beneficial.

Due to these positive general indications, we do not want to discard active network development as a tool to enhance social capital and, consequently, career opportunities and benefits in organizations. However, we want to make use of our additional findings to explicitly pay attention to the potential of a skewed relationship between the promotion and support of active network development and assumed beneficial career outcomes, particularly in a diverse organizational environment.

First, we saw examples of how stereotypical or role-congruent expectations (Heilman, 2012) of both trainees as well as relevant others can influence the trainees' behavior in terms of particularly building and using network contacts. Second, the analysis suggested different perspectives in terms of support (i.e. instrumental support versus interpersonal support) for members of different social groups, which may lead to different foci of network encounters. Third, we found out about the importance of shared personal interests, which may but do not necessarily have to emerge from similarities in ethnicity or gender.

As we have elaborated, these three aspects differently affect active network development for members of different social groups, with matching consequences for the acquisition of social capital and resulting career opportunities and benefits. Our analysis brought to the fore some, but most likely not all of the aspects potentially creating inequalities in terms of career opportunities and benefits due to the promotion of active network development. While we found some differences in general patterns along the lines of ethnicity and gender, we also found examples of social group members who showed behavior opposite to this generally observed tendency. These findings corroborate how studying diversity in terms of predefined categories, such as ethnicity and gender, is insufficient (Kenny & Briner, 2007). As such, there is a need to allow room for individual experiences and preferences that may also cross those lines drawn by predefined categorizations and to be more sensitive to other salient characteristics of factors potentially relevant in a given context.

As a consequence, facilitating active network development in a diverse organizational environment may ask for the following: Not only researchers, but also both professionals as well as relevant (high status) others need to let go of the widely spread thinking along the lines of predefined categories such as ethnicity and gender often essentialized across situations and

contexts. In an effort to operationalize dynamic concepts such as ethnicity or gender in the context of interpretative research, Ghorashi and Sabelis (2013) suggest to apply strategic essentialism. In order to bring systematic inequalities between different social groups to the fore, strategic essentialism allows for an a priori and strategic choice to apply a predefined category, which appears to be most prominent in terms of the particular systematic inequality under study within the given context (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013). By constantly being aware of the temporal, and context-dependent aspect of applying these predefined categories, strategic essentialism pursues to prevent reification and essentializing of the predefined category across other contexts (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013).

In relation to our findings, the idea of strategic essentialism provides the opportunity to apply predefined categories in terms of ethnicity and gender, in order to highlight and address such systematic differences between the respective social groups. Through the context-specific application of such categories, underlying processes leading to particular systematic inequalities between the respective social groups become visible. Through its sensitivity to a particular time and space (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013), which prevents the essentialization of particular categories across various situations, strategic essentialism also provides room for our findings, which do not fall along the lines of predefined categories. For instance, our findings describe situations in which shared personal interests facilitate interactions between members of diverse social groups across the lines of predefined social categories. As such, strategic essentialism provides a useful framework for the diversity of our findings in terms of sometimes observing differences in active network development along the lines of predefined categories, and sometimes observing similarities or shared interests across these predefined categories.

From a practical point of view, organizations may benefit from our findings on the promotion of the organizational practice of active network development in a diverse organizational context as follows. First, by observing some systematic differences in the enactment of active network development along the lines of the predefined categories of ethnicity and gender applied in this study, we encourage organizations to re-examine their organizational practices according to these terms. For these purposes, it is necessary to temporarily adopt predefined categories in order to be able to detect potential systematic differences between different social groups. Second, whether or not systematic differences in organizations have been observed, our findings suggest that shared personal interests may be a means to cross constructed lines between predefined social groups. As a consequence, we suggest to create opportunities within organizations to encounter each other based on shared personal interests as a means to enhance equal opportunities for all employees to build, maintain, and use their network contacts to their own career benefits. As we have seen in our findings, shared personal interests helped to build, maintain, and use network contacts across hierarchical levels. However, when doing so, organizations should be aware of the pitfall to either create or reward different interest groups in systematically different manners, for instance, along the lines of predefined ethnic or gender categories assigned to or acclaimed by their members. An organizational intervention like this may support the creation of more intertwined instrumental and personal networks among minority ethnic and women professionals, instead of the divided instrumental and interpersonal networks we have observed in our data. Next to diverse recruitment activities and other previously suggested interventions (see for example Cox, 1993), such an intervention may encourage and support *all* professionals to find matching network

alters, who can provide access to equal social capital and thereby career opportunities and benefits.

By means of exploring the underlying processes, this study shows how active network development as an organizational practice at the municipality is presently more effective for some compared to others. If more aware of and sensitive to the ongoing underlying processes as suggested previously, this organizational practice certainly has the potential to equally support all professionals. However, this study illustrates that a careful assessment of the particular circumstances and the potential target group is needed in order to provide equal opportunities to all involved.

The previous analysis rooted in the combination of network agency and network structure clearly highlights the added value of considering both when studying networks in organizations. On the one hand, we have seen how network agency and network structure mutually affirm and thereby strengthen each other's findings. On the other hand, we have seen how network agency and network structure complement each other, in cases in which one further elaborates and thereby refines or even extends findings derived from the other. For instance, due to the nature of the questions asked in the survey, the data collected to illustrate network structure may be considered as merely representing the component of "using network contacts" in terms of networking. Accordingly, we believe that without separately considering network agency as such, the in-depth information on building and maintaining network contacts would not have been covered when looking at network structure only. Thus, we are convinced that this study clearly benefits from including data reflecting both network agency and network structure. As such, our findings were further refined, resulting in a more nuanced and qualified understanding of how the organizational practice of active network development may (re)enforce inequalities

between ethnic and gender diverse young professionals in terms of career opportunities over time.

5.6. Limitations and Future Research

First and foremost, we want to agree with the statement that "(d)oing intra-organizational network research is a challenge" (Van de Bunt, 1997, p. 66). We have tried to face this challenge as comprehensively as possible within the given circumstances. Nevertheless, we want to discuss some limitations of our study and give suggestions for future research.

First, as mentioned previously, this study is conducted among a specific group of young professional newcomers to a particular organization in the public sector in the Netherlands. The analysis and the interpretation of the collected data have to be understood within this particular context, with its specific rules, regularities, and features. In order to deepen our understanding of the studied phenomena in other organizational contexts or sectors, we suggest future research to consider similar questions in different settings.

Second, as the sample of this study was rather small, we were quite limited in making full use of the collected data. For instance, the small number of interviewees may have affected our perceptions of "general patterns" in the qualitative interview data. When talking about "patterns", we do not rely on a large number of examples. However, we interpret certain agreements on particular topics across the ten interviews as valuable information about potential trends in terms of network structure or network agency within or across diverse social groups. Furthermore, the small sample size and missing data (see additional information in Appendix 5.8) of the quantitative survey data prevented us from applying statistical testing to the quantitative data, rather than relying on only descriptive statistics and interpretations of visual illustrations. While we believe to still having used the collected data to the fullest given these

circumstances, we certainly want to encourage future research to collect qualitative and longitudinal quantitative network data, to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the qualitative data as well as the possibility of statistical testing for the quantitative data.

Third, as mentioned previously, our quantitative survey data holds a few missing values (see additional information in Appendix 5.8, Table 5.1). We checked for (in)congruencies with the network agency accounts of those trainees who showed missing values in their network structures. Since we did not discover relevant discrepancies between network agency and their (limited) network structure, we decided to still include all ten trainees in our analysis. However, we certainly suggest future research to enhance commitment even more to guarantee for as little missing data as possible.

Fourth, we acknowledge that while our sample was evenly distributed in terms of gender, dominant ethnic trainees were overrepresented compared to minority ethnic trainees. As we explained in the method section, we accept and value this sample as an "authentic" example of a trainee pool in the municipality, since the selection of the trainee group was made by the municipality without any interference by the researcher. However, in terms of scientific interests, we want to raise awareness to the potential benefits of a more balanced sample in terms of all diversity characteristics under study.

Fifth, in our study, we had to rely on general descriptions of hierarchical positions and status derived from the trainees' interview accounts. Even though we believe that this gave an initial idea with whom (in terms of the organizational status hierarchy) members of different social groups build, maintain, and use network contacts, we encourage future research to also collect explicit information on the hierarchical status of all network alters mentioned in the network structure, to add more value to the interpretation of both network agency and network

structure, and related consequences. The same is true for collecting explicit longitudinal data on career benefits, such as promotions or salary development after organizational entry, to further explore the relationship between active network development and matching career outcomes.

Sixth, we are also aware of the contradiction of, on the one hand, our plea for letting go of categorical thinking along the lines of diversity attributes and, on the other hand, our own research approach in terms of categorizing the trainees along the lines of ethnicity and gender. The reason that we applied these categories to our sample was our aim of exploring and understanding potential differences in active network development possibly reflected in inequalities in terms of social capital and career opportunities and benefits between particular social groups. While applying the described categorization as a means to an end, we interpret even small variations to observed general patterns along the lines of the pre-imposed categorization as indications for the need to question the applicability of these kinds of categorization. In that, we follow the idea of strategic essentialism, which encourages both the awareness of categories and focusing on difference, as well as the sensitivity to "situative, changeable, and ongoing choices in dealing with cultural difference on an everyday basis" (Ghorashi & Sabelis, 2013, p. 82). Based on our findings and in line with Kenny and Briner (2007), we suggest that future research should rather focus on the meaning of ethnic (or gender) identity salience in relation to other observed phenomena, than continue to uphold and thereby reinforce common categorical thinking.

Despite the limitations of this study, we think that both its design and its findings further deepen our understanding of how active network development as an organizational practice may play out differently for members of different social groups in terms of career opportunities and benefits. By raising awareness to these (unintended) consequences, we intent to encourage future

research to further uncover, understand, and ultimately countervail inequalities among employees (re)enforced through the promotion and support of organizational practices in diverse work environments.

5.7. References

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5.8.   Appendix: Additional Quantitative Information on Representations of Network Structure

This appendix provides additional quantitative information on the representations of the network structure. First, an overview of the participation in the network survey per trainee across all eight measurements will be given (Table 5.1). Second, the absolute numbers of each trainee's contact with network alters in th eopen network will be given, distributed in terms of ethnicty (Table 5.2) and in terms of (Table 5.3) gender. Third, the patterns of work-related advice in the open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in absolute numbers (Table 5.4) and in percent (Table 5.5), the patterns of non-work-related advice in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in absolute numbers (Table 5.6) and in percent (Table 5.7), and the patterns of time spent outside of work in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in absolute numbers (Table 5.8) and in percent (Table 5.9) will be presented. Fourth, the accumulated number of contact with fellow trainees asked by trainee in work-related advice context (Table 5.10), non-work-related advice context (Table 5.11) and time spent outside of work (Table 5.12) across all eight measurements will be presented, each time followed by an overview of the absolute number of open network alters and frequency of open network contacts for the work-related advice context (Table 5.13), the non-work related advice context (Table 5.14), and the time spent outside of work context (Table 5.15) across all eight measurements, respectively.

Table 5.1: Overview participation in network survey per trainee across all eight measurements. X stands for missing.

Trainee	Measurement							
	t1	**t2**	**t3**	**t4**	**t5**	**t6**	**t7**	**t8**
1 (DEW)								
2 (MEM)							x	x
3 (DEM)						x		
4 (DEW)								
5 (MEW)								
6 (DEW)								
7 (DEW)						x		
8 (MEM)					x	x	x	x
9 (DEM)								
10 (DEM)						x		

Table 5.2: Absolute numbers of each trainee's contact with network alters by ethnicity in open network. (In reference to Figure 5.1)

Trainee	Open network alter ethnicity		
	Dominant ethnic alter	Minority ethnic alter	Total
1 (DEW)	65	18	83
2 (MEM)	17	8	25
3 (DEM)	59	5	64
4 (DEW)	49	4	53
5 (MEW)	125	15	140
6 (DEW)	100	8	108
7 (DEW)	56	5	61
8 (MEM)	51	4	55
9 (DEM)	53	6	59
10 (DEM)	69	5	74
Total	644	78	722

Table 5.3: Absolute numbers of each trainee's contact with network alters by gender in open network. (In reference to Figure 5.2)

Trainee	Open network alter gender		
	Woman alter	Man alter	Total
1 (DEW)	51	32	83
2 (MEM)	8	17	25
3 (DEM)	18	46	64
4 (DEW)	36	17	53
5 (MEW)	46	94	140
6 (DEW)	75	33	108
7 (DEW)	36	25	61
8 (MEM)	12	43	55
9 (DEM)	27	32	59
10 (DEM)	27	47	74
Total	336	386	722

Table 5.4: Pattern work-related advice in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in absolute numbers. (In reference to Figure 5.3)

Trainee	Pattern work-related advice in open network in absolute numbers						
	t1	**t2**	**t3**	**t4**	**t5**	**t6**	**t7**
1 (DEW)	2	3	11	19	6	15	15
2 (MEM)	2	2	6	4	6	0	0
3 (DEM)	6	3	8	8	8	0	0
4 (DEW)	6	2	3	3	4	10	10
5 (MEW)	0	0	19	13	7	18	13
6 (DEW)	3	15	10	13	27	16	13
7 (DEW)	0	3	4	12	5	0	0
8 (MEM)	0	9	15	14	0	0	0
9 (DEM)	1	5	12	6	6	12	4
10 (DEM)	14	16	15	24	16	0	0

Table 5.5: Pattern work-related advice in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in percent. (In reference to Figure 5.3)

Trainee	Pattern work-related advice in open network per trainee in percent							
	t1	**t2**	**t3**	**t4**	**t5**	**t6**	**t7**	**t8**
1 (DEW)	2,4	3,6	13,3	22,9	7,2	18,1	18,1	49,4
2 (MEM)	8	8	24	16	24	0	0	0
3 (DEM)	9,4	4,7	12,5	12,5	12,5	0	0	50
4 (DEW)	11,3	3,8	5,7	5,7	7,5	18,9	18,9	28,3
5 (MEW)	0	0	13,6	9,3	5	12,9	9,3	30
6 (DEW)	2,8	13,9	9,3	12	25	14,8	12	38,9
7 (DEW)	0	4,9	6,6	19,7	8,2	0	0	31,1
8 (MEM)	0	16,4	27,3	25,5	0	0	0	0
9 (DEM)	1,7	8,5	20,3	10,2	10,2	20,3	6,8	64,4
10 (DEM)	18,9	21,6	20,3	32,4	21,6	0	0	81,1

Table 5.6: Pattern non-work-related advice in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in absolute numbers. (In reference to Figure 5.4)

	Pattern non-work-related advice in open network in absolute numbers						
Trainee	**t1**	**t2**	**t3**	**t4**	**t5**	**t6**	**t7**
1 (DEW)	1	7	7	3	3	2	3
2 (MEM)	7	1	3	4	2	0	0
3 (DEM)	3	6	4	9	9	0	0
4 (DEW)	7	3	0	5	3	1	0
5 (MEW)	8	6	40	42	35	32	16
6 (DEW)	0	11	5	10	11	11	5
7 (DEW)	1	15	16	14	13	0	1
8 (MEM)	5	16	31	22	0	0	0
9 (DEM)	4	7	14	11	7	3	2
10 (DEM)	13	4	2	5	2	0	0

Table 5.7: Pattern non-work-related advice in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in percent. (In reference to Figure 5.4)

	Pattern non-work-related advice in open network in percent						
Trainee	**t1**	**t2**	**t3**	**t4**	**t5**	**t6**	**t7**
1 (DEW)	1,2	8,4	8,4	3,6	3,6	2,4	3,6
2 (MEM)	28	4	12	16	8	0	0
3 (DEM)	4,7	9,4	6,3	14,1	14,1	0	0
4 (DEW)	13,2	5,7	0	9,4	5,7	1,9	0
5 (MEW)	5,7	4,3	28,6	30	25	22,9	11,4
6 (DEW)	0	10,2	4,6	9,3	10	10,2	4,6
7 (DEW)	1,6	24,6	26,2	23	21,3	0	1,6
8 (MEM)	9,1	29,1	56,4	40	0	0	0
9 (DEM)	6,8	11,9	23,7	18,6	11,9	5,1	3,4
10 (DEM)	17,6	5,4	2,7	6,8	2,7	0	0

Table 5.8: Pattern time spent outside of work in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in absolute numbers. (In reference to Figure 5.5)

Trainee	Pattern time spent outside of work in open network in absolute numbers						
	t1	t2	t3	t4	t5	t6	t7
1 (DEW)	0	0	2	0	0	5	0
2 (MEM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 (DEM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 (DEW)	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
5 (MEW)	0	19	0	9	0	3	0
6 (DEW)	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
7 (DEW)	1	1	2	3	1	0	1
8 (MEM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 (DEM)	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
10 (DEM)	0	0	0	3	0	0	0

Table 5.9: Pattern time spent outside of work in open network per trainee from measurement 1 till measurement 7 in percent. (In reference to Figure 5.5)

Trainee	Pattern time spent outside of work in open network in percent						
	t1	t2	t3	t4	t5	t6	t7
1 (DEW)	0	0	2,4	0	0	5	0
2 (MEM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 (DEM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 (DEW)	5,7	1,9	0	1,9	0	0	0
5 (MEW)	0	13,6	0	9	0	2,1	0
6 (DEW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 (DEW)	1,6	1,6	3,3	4,9	1,6	0	1,6
8 (MEM)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 (DEM)	0	1,7	0	0	0	1,7	0
10 (DEM)	0	0	0	4,1	0	0	0

Table 5.10: Accumulated number of contact with fellow trainees asked by trainee in work-related advice context across all eight measurements. (In reference to Figure 5.6)

Trainee	Fellow trainee									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 (DEW)	n/a	1		2		1	1	1	1	
2 (MEM)	1	n/a	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
3 (DEM)			n/a					2		2
4 (DEW)	1			n/a					1	1
5 (MEW)					n/a		1			1
6 (DEW)	4	2	2	3	3	n/a	2	2	2	3
7 (DEW)	1	1	1	2	1	1	n/a	1	1	1
8 (MEM)								n/a		
9 (DEM)	1	1		1	1		1		n/a	1
10 (DEM)	1	1	1	1	3		2		2	n/a

Table 5.11: Absolute number open network alters and frequency open network contacts for work-related advice context across all eight measurements. (In reference to Figure 5.6)

Trainee	Absolute number open network alters work-related advice	Frequency open network contacts work-related advice
1 (DEW)	66	112
2(MEM)	13	20
3 (DEM)	42	65
4 (DEW)	28	53
5 (MEW)	56	112
6 (DEW)	90	139
7 (DEW)	22	43
8 (MEM)	27	38
9 (DEM)	45	84
10 (DEM)	73	145

Table 5.12: Accumulated number of contact with fellow trainees asked by trainee in non-work-related advice context across all eight measurements. (In reference to Figure 5.7)

Trainee	Fellow trainee									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
1 (DEW)	n/a	1		2	3			4	5	2
2 (MEM)	1	n/a	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1
3 (DEM)	2	4	n/a	3	5	3	2	5	2	5
4 (DEW)	3	1	1	n/a	1	1	1	1	1	2
5 (MEW)	7	6	6	6	n/a	6	7	6	7	7
6 (DEW)	3	5	3	5	4	n/a	2	3	5	2
7 (DEW)	3	2	2	2	3	2	n/a	3	4	3
8 (MEM)	3	5	5	3	5	3	3	n/a	3	4
9 (DEM)	5	4	4	5	4	3	5	3	n/a	4
10 (DEM)	1	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	n/a

Table 5.13: Absolute number open network alters and frequency open network contacts for non-work-related advice context across all eight measurements. (In reference to Figure 5.7)

Trainee	Number open network alters q3	Frequency open network contacts q3
1 (DEW)	25	41
2 (MEM)	13	17
3 (DEM)	37	55
4 (DEW)	26	30
5 (MEW)	117	261
6 (DEW)	39	71
7 (DEW)	48	86
8 (MEM)	44	74
9 (DEM)	40	69
10 (DEM)	28	43

Table 5.14: Accumulated number of contact with fellow trainees asked by trainee in time spent outside of work context across all eight measurements. (In reference to Figure 5.8)

Trainee	Fellow trainee									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
1 (DEW)	n/a	2	2	4	2	2	3	2	2	2
2 (MEM)	1	n/a	1	1		1	1	1	1	2
3 (DEM)	1	1	n/a	1		1	1	1	1	1
4 (DEW)	4	3	2	n/a	1	4	2	2	3	2
5 (MEW)			1		n/a	1	1		1	1
6 (DEW)	4	3	3	4	1	n/a	3	2	3	2
7 (DEW)	2	2	2	2		2	n/a	2	3	2
8 (MEM)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	n/a	2	2
9 (DEM)	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	n/a	1
10 (DEM)	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	n/a

Table 5.15: Absolute number open network alters and frequency open network contacts for time spent outside of work context across all eight measurements. (In reference to Figure 5.8)

Trainee	Number open network alters q5	Frequency open network contacts q5
1 (DEW)	12	13
2 (MEM)	0	0
3 (DEM)	0	0
4 (DEW)	3	6
5 (MEW)	39	38
6 (DEW)	0	0
7 (DEW)	5	12
8 (MEM)	0	0
9 (DEM)	9	9
10 (DEM)	10	11