8

SELF-MONITORING

A Personality Theory for Network Research

Martin Kilduff and Claudia Buengeler

One of the outstanding puzzles facing social network research has been the characterization of people likely to (a) occupy and (b) succeed in a variety of social network roles involving brokerage and popularity across both expressive relations (e.g., friendship) and instrumental relations (e.g., advice). From a traditional social network theory perspective, this puzzle is relatively insoluble because its solution involves the invocation of the psychology of the individual, an invocation that goes against the grain of the structuralist tradition from which most network research in the social sciences derives. Network research has largely adhered to the Durkheimian injunction to avoid psychologically based individual-level explanations. The structuralist emphasis has been on how social network patterns affect outcomes. Thus, social network theorists felt free to condemn the study of individuals as a "dead end" (Mayhew, 1980, p. 335) given that network patterns can be derived from "social structure rather than be attributed to human agency" (McPherson, Popielarz, & Drobnic, 1992, p. 168). Network research has tended to bypass the possibility that personality or psychological differences lead to differences in social network outcomes (e.g., White, Boorman, & Breiger, 1976) as part of a self-proclaimed movement away from so-called "essentialist" explanations toward so-called "systemic" understandings (Borgatti & Foster, 2003, p. 991).

Thus, among hard-core social network structuralists, homage to foundational theorists (such as Durkheim and Spencer) is expressed through the development of models of social interaction that are explicit in avoiding any assumption of individual differences (e.g., Mark, 1998, p. 325). Structuralists tend to "shun the 'person' construct as polluting" (White, 1992, p. 3) in pursuit of an individualist-free sociology in which structural patterns reproduce or change themselves in the absence of human intention (see the critique in Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994). As Bruce Mayhew (1980, p. 339) stated in his manifesto for a structuralist approach: "Structuralists do not study human behavior." The emphasis on structural relations is seen as establishing a scientific revolution (Berkowitz, 1982, p. 150) that dispenses with the intrinsic characteristics, intentions, and attributes of individuals (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988, p. 5). From this revolutionary perspective, "psychological phenomena do not exist…. To the structuralist, psychology is contemporary civilization's witchcraft and psychologists are its corresponding witchdoctors" (Mayhew, 1980, p. 346).

The importation of social network ideas and methods into organizational research posed a dilemma from the beginning, given the alien nature of assumptions concerning individuals' lack of agency; and given assumptions concerning the futility of psychological explanation. Early social network research in organizational behavior settings tended to focus, therefore, on the outcomes of social network patterns rather than on the likely psychological determinants of such patterns. To the extent that individual differences were discussed, they were of the kind that complied with structuralists' emphases on objective "facts" rather than on potentially unobservable psychological constructs. Thus, a lively literature emerged concerning gender and social networks in organizations, with emphases on gender segregation, homophily, and patterns of centrality and marginalization (e.g., Brass, 1985; Ibarra, 1992; Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 1998).

Meanwhile, in a move designed to overcome the absence of agency that was threatening to stifle paradigmatic social network research, a structuralist theory of action was developed in sociological articles and synthesized in an important book (Burt, 1982) that prefigured the later acclaimed distinction between under- and over-socialized descriptions of human actors (Granovetter, 1985). In Burt's (1982) account, atomistic models of human action and normative models of human action were similar in isolating actors in the context of evaluations and decision-making. Atomistic models assumed that evaluations were made without reference to other actors, whereas normative models assumed that separated actors evaluated actions independently as a function of socializing processes that inculcated collective values and beliefs. Burt's (1982) alternative to atomistic and normative approaches accepted the structuralist insight that actions took place in the context of the complete set of relations in which an actor was involved. But, crucially, Burt introduced two novel advances that shaped the micro-foundations of the social network agenda within which self-monitoring theory found its place.

The Micro-Foundations of Social Network Research

First, Burt emphasized the importance, for social network research, of considering the individual's awareness of other actors. Consider this quote, for example: "The actor evaluates an action by taking on the positions of others to see what the action might look like to them" (Burt, 1982, p. 211). Of course, the extent to which the individual attends to others' actions and attitudes is a key element in self-monitoring personality theory that differentiates people on the basis of willingness and ability to adapt behavior to the demands of different situations (Snyder, 1974). Burt suggested that an actor's evaluation of the utility of possible actions was influenced by the extent to which these actions would improve the actor's situation relative to others who were perceived by the actor to occupy network positions similar to his or her own. The focal actor could be "envisioned as symbolically taking on the role of persons with whom… [the actor] is structurally equivalent so as to answer the question, Does this action improve my well-being as an occupant of my position in society?" (Burt, 1982, p. 178).

This emphasis on the actor's cognitive perceptions of status within network relations as a determinant of action was radical and unprecedented in the structural social network paradigm. Among other things, this emphasis implied that it was actors' perceptions of social networks that influenced outcomes rather than or together with actual interactions between actors (Burt, 1982, p. 14). It is, of course, the high self-monitors who are accurate in their perceptions of social networks, especially when these network perceptions relate to status dynamics (Flynn, Reagans, Amanatullah, & Ames, 2006).

The second innovation to the structural agenda introduced by Burt (1982) was the proposition that some actors secured advantages through the skillful arrangement of network ties in their ego networks. Burt developed a model of structural autonomy (a forerunner of the structural hole argument in Burt, 1992) in which some actors relative to others occupied relational positions vis-à-vis their alters that imposed little constraint and opened up avenues of profitable action: "the pattern of relations defining the network position 'frees' occupants of the position from constraint by others" (Burt, 1982, p. 922). An emphasis on deliberate action to lessen constraint that characterizes the later structural hole argument (Burt, 1992) is present in this earlier version in terms of actors changing relations to "eliminate" constraints (Burt, 1982, p. 276). This emphasis on actors' management of social relationships opened the door for a consideration of how individual differences with respect to social skills might affect the structure of ties within which individuals were embedded. Almost contemporaneously with Burt's (1982) book, developments in self-monitoring research highlighted differences in how high and low self-monitors managed social situations (Snyder & Gangestad, 1982) and friendship relationships (Snyder, Gangestad, & Simpson, 1983).

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This book (Burt, 1982), therefore, signaled the twin paths of what was later referred to as the micro-foundations of structural research (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994, p. 88). One path referenced the importance of cognitions about the social network within which each individual was embedded (thereby raising the question of whether some individuals, rather than others, were more accurate in their perceptions of network relationships). The other path referenced the existence of differences in the structural positions that individuals attained within ego networks (thereby raising the question of why some individuals, rather than others, attained these positions of structural advantage). Both paths seemed tailor-made for investigations of self-monitoring differences.

The cognitive network research program found its early champion in David Krackhardt who built on Burt's work (see the extensive discussion of Burt, 1982, in Krackhardt, 1987, p. 112) to argue that perceptions of networks were phenomena of interest in their own right, quite apart from whether and how these cognitions related to actual networks. Quoting the Thomas theorem ("If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences," Thomas & Thomas, 1928, pp. 571–572), Krackhardt made the case for perceptions of networks (rather than actual network interactions) as determinants of outcomes. A direct test of this thesis is difficult to come by, but subsequent research did show that being perceived to have a prominent friend in an organization boosted an individual's reputation as a good performer, whereas actually having such a friend (as assessed by conventional structural methods) had no effect (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 1994). Thus, there was evidence that structure, as it existed in the minds of individuals, was more predictive of important outcomes than had been recognized. And the psychology of individuals was restored to the social network research program, at least in its instantiation in organizational research (see Brands, 2013, for a recent review of cognitive network research).

The cognitive turn in social network research in organizational settings was, therefore, predictable, given the boost from Burt's (1982) book; and given the emphasis from network researchers (including Krackhardt) associated with the University of California at Irvine on developing the structural implications of network cognitions. Thus, in a brilliant resolution of the problem of respondent inaccuracy with respect to network relations (see the review of respondent inaccuracy research: Bernard, Killworth, Kronenfeld, and Sailer, 1984), Irvine researchers showed that respondents were, indeed, inaccurate in remembering who interacted with whom yesterday; but were accurate in the sense of reporting who usually interacted with whom among the members of a relatively stable group. Cognitions about social interactions were influenced by schemas about who was expected to be present and who was expected to interact. Respondents reported on, and were accurate concerning, deep-level interaction patterns rather than on ephemeral meetings (Freeman, Romney, & Freeman, 1987; Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986).

Cognitive network research has provided a rich psychological contrast with and challenge to the structuralist agenda. For example, the structuralist hype concerning the prevalence of small worlds in phenomena as diverse as the neural structure of worms (e.g., Watts & Strogatz, 1998) and the interconnections between German banks (e.g., Kogut & Walker, 2001) was offset by the discovery of a small world schema. Small worlds (i.e., cohesive clusters connected by short paths) are like the Scarlet Pimpernel: people tend to seek them everywhere, even when network interactions exhibit no small world features (Kilduff, Crossland, Tsai, & Krackhardt, 2008). To some extent, then, small world patterns represent optical illusions—they provide useful heuristics for making sense of otherwise complex data. Further, the structuralist dismissal of the individual is called into question by research showing that individuals differ in the extent to which they were subject to such biases of perception. For example, a series of studies demonstrated that people with experience of disconnections among their immediate contacts tended to be the same people who could accurately perceive similar disconnections (i.e., structural holes) in novel social networks, thereby facilitating their ability to build appropriate coalitions. People who inhabited hole-free networks tended to be blind to the opportunities of network brokerage (Janicik & Larrick, 2005). And, as we already mentioned, high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, are more accurate in perceiving the status dynamics in social networks (Flynn et al., 2006).

Why the Focus on Self-Monitoring and Networks?

Although the cognitive turn in network research moderated the triumphalism of the structuralist approach, it was the personality turn that really restored the psychology of the individual in the barren realm of agency-free structuralism. Certainly, the door was opened to personality research once the focus was on network positions that provided some individuals with the advantages of control and access to information (Burt, 1982). But in the context of structuralist hegemony over network ideas and the rejection of individualist psychology in network research, the introduction of personality antecedents and correlates of network positions represented a major challenge to orthodoxy.

It is important to note here that conventional personality research falls rather neatly into the concerns that structuralists have articulated with respect to individualist approaches. The critique of such approaches enunciated by Mayhew can be summarized as follows: "The individualists do not seem to have grasped the elementary principle that one does not explain a set of data by simply repeating it. To say that people do things because they want to is not an explanation (nor even an interpretation) of what people do: it is a restatement of the (individualist's) data. It is not different from saying that people do things because they do things" (Mayhew, 1980, p. 355).

The structuralist critique carries some weight. Consider, for example, a couple of the Big Five personality characteristics that are often used to predict the centralities of individuals: agreeableness represents the extent to which a person is cooperative, compliant, generous, kind, and trusting, whereas neuroticism represents the extent to which a person is anxious, insecure, hostile, and irritable (McCrae & John, 1992). Stated differently, agreeable individuals want to be friends with people, whereas neurotic individuals put up barriers to such friendship. These individual desires are likely to translate into positive and negative friendship centralities in social networks, which, of course, is what researchers tend to predict and find—agreeable people make many friends whereas neurotic individuals do not (e.g., Klein, Lim, Saltz, & Mayer, 2004).

By contrast, as we discuss in more detail below, self-monitoring theory offers counterintuitive predictions concerning the relationship between personality and network-related outcomes in the realms of decision-making, brokerage, dynamics, leadership, and trust.

A Social Network Perspective on Personality

The micro-foundations of social network research from a psychological perspective has to engage the structuralist critique if it is to shape the social network research agenda. When it comes to personality research, this means constructing research that is specifically engaged with social network ideas; and which avoids the tautologies that structuralists are likely to perceive when personality traits and network outcomes appear to be aspects of the same set of underlying constructs. What, then, constitutes a personality approach best suited to engage with and challenge the structuralist agenda?

Undersocialized and Oversocialized Actors

We've already reflected on Burt's (1982) emphasis on building a predictive model of action in which actors are embedded in social network relationships rather than being considered as isolated actors (the atomistic model) or as governed by social norms (the normative model). A similar distinction was put forward a few years later by Granovetter (1985), who noted the inherent similarity in undersocialized and oversocialized accounts of action: both accounts robbed human agency of its social-relational context. But prior to both of these sociological treatments of human agency in the context of social relationships, there was already in development a research program that posited the existence of strikingly different human types corresponding to the two types of human action that both Burt and Granovetter had contrasted.

The self-monitoring research program began (Snyder, 1974) with the observation that some people (the high self-monitors) chronically strive to present the appropriate type of person called for in every situation, whereas other people (the low self-monitors) are relatively unresponsive to situational specifications of behavioral appropriateness. As noted by Snyder (1987, p. 202), in his book summarizing the first decade of research on self-monitoring, high self-monitors act as if they direct their social behavior in answer to the question, "Who does this situation want me to be and how can I be that person?" The low self-monitors, by contrast, engage in social situations as if answering the question, "Who am I and how can I be me in this situation?" From the beginning, therefore, self-monitoring theory provided two types of personalities analogous to the two types of people highlighted in social theory: the oversocialized high self-monitor and the undersocialized low self-monitor. There is, therefore, considerable weight to the claim that the distinction in self-monitoring theory between high self-monitors and low self-monitors represents "a personality analogue" to the brokerage versus closure distinction in network research (Burt, Kilduff, & Tasselli, 2013, p. 538).

Self-Monitoring Theory

Self-monitoring theory is unusual among personality approaches in deriving inspiration from sociological theory. The roots of this personality approach include the impression management insights of Erving Goffman (1959) and the symbolic interactionist tradition (e.g., Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934; Thomas, 1923). From these and other sources, Mark Snyder (1974) developed the concept of the negotiated self that acts out different roles for different audiences. In effect, the high self-monitor is *homo sociologicus*, earnestly attentive to the requirements of social life, striving for acceptance in a variety of social roles, paying attention to the norms and rituals required for successful role performance, eager to gain social status. The low self-monitor, by contrast, is *homo psychologicus*, striving to be true to the inner self, to act in accordance with deeply held principles and values, to behave authentically across different situations rather than giving in to the varying social pressures that each situation presents.

Self-monitoring, then, is a theory about the self in social situations. For high self-monitors, the self in action is flexible and pragmatic, with identity defined in terms of specific social situations and corresponding roles (Snyder, 1987, p. 48). For low self-monitors, the self in action is unified and principled, with identity defined in terms of consistency and coherence from situation to situation (Snyder, 1987, p. 50). Self-monitoring is assessed through a questionnaire that initially featured 25 true–false questions (Snyder, 1974) but was later trimmed to just 18 such questions to improve reliability (Gangestad & Snyder, 1985). The pragmatic self of the high self-monitor is indicated by such questions as, "I would probably make a good actor" and "I'm not always the person I appear to be." As Snyder (1987, p. 178) wrote, "the portrait of the prototypical high self-monitor that emerges… is of someone who treats interactions with others as dramatic performances designed to gain attention, make impressions, and at times entertain." The principled self of the low self-monitor is indicated by such questions as, "I can only argue for ideas which I already believe" and "I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone or win their favor." And Snyder (1987, p. 178) typified the portrait of the prototypical low self-monitor as someone "likely to communicate what he or she feels at the moment."

Paralleling, therefore, the distinction between oversocialized and undersocialized conceptions of human actors, self-monitoring theory offers prototypical personality types, with the difference that these types are conceptualized as engaged with social situations. This is what makes self-monitoring different from other personality theories and, at the same time, highly relevant for understanding social network interactions. Self-monitoring is a theory of the self in action in social situations. And from this theory there derive numerous surprising results of relevance for social network research.

Self-Monitoring and Social Network Research

Self-monitoring research in connection with network analysis builds on prior work showing that high self-monitors differ systematically from low self-monitors on a range of social outcomes. These include choice of friends—high self-monitors prefer separate friends for separate activities whereas low self-monitors prefer one best friend for all activities (Snyder et al., 1983). High self-monitors, according to this and related research, create compartmentalized worlds of social interaction whereas low self-monitors create conjoined worlds. Thus, high self-monitors move between these different worlds whereas low self-monitors tend to inhabit the more familiar world in which they can be themselves. In organizational behavior, this difference shows up among boundary-spanning salespeople: high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, are more effective in the boundary-spanning role (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982).

There is also evidence that, relative to low self-monitors, high self-monitors are less committed to relationships (Snyder & Simpson, 1984) including relationships with work organizations (Jenkins, 1993). High self-monitors are better at overcoming others' negative impressions (Flynn, Chatman, & Spataro, 2001) and strive to make social interactions successful by evoking and expressing positive affect (Ickes, Holloway, Stinson, & Hoodenpyle, 2006). High self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, tend to pursue status in social groups (Flynn et al., 2006; Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) and, relatedly, they tend to emerge as leaders in leaderless groups (Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991).

We present an overview of self-monitoring research with implications for social networks on topics that include impression management, vision advantage, segregated social worlds, mobility, and consensus formation (see also Day & Kilduff, 2003).

The Relevance of Self-Monitoring

Impression Management

From its inception, self-monitoring theory concerned the ability of people to create impressions appropriate to different situations. Impressions are managed through (among other tactics) the intentional control of speech and facial expressions (Snyder, 1974). There are predicted to be significant differences in the extent to which high and low self-monitors present appropriate selves across different situations. Tests of the impression management thesis have confirmed that high self-monitors are more effective than low self-monitors in using such impression management techniques as ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification to achieve favorable images among colleagues (Turnley & Bolino, 2001). High self-monitors are also adept at using impression management to overcome negative stereotypes (Flynn et al., 2001). And high self-monitors tend to adapt their behaviors to the demands of the situation. Thus, high self-monitors are conformist in situations where conformity is the most appropriate interpersonal orientation, but are non-conformist in situations that favor autonomy. By contrast, low self-monitors are relatively unaffected by differences in social settings—they seem not to employ impression management but rather to act in accord with their personal attitudes and dispositions (Snyder & Monson, 1975).

Conventional personality assessments (e.g., the Big Five) are, therefore, likely to be relatively unpredictive of the attitudes and behaviors of high self-monitors given the flexibility with which high self-monitors manage their social selves to appear appropriate to different situations. There is likely to be greater fidelity between the Big Five personality traits of low self-monitors and their behaviors. High self-monitors are likely to engage in those behaviors in social situations that they believe will help them fit in and impress others. Empirical research confirms that the performance of high self-monitors, relative to that of low self-monitors, is less related to underlying personality factors (particularly extraversion and neuroticism) (Barrick, Parks, & Mount, 2005).

What is the relevance for network research of these impression management results? There are clear implications for boundary-spanning roles. To the extent that a boundary spanner has to engage with quite different social situations and negotiate between different sets of normative expectations, we would predict advantages for high self-monitors. Indeed, high self-monitors are quicker at extending social network contacts across organizational boundaries (e.g., Oh & Kilduff, 2008) and are more effective in boundary-spanning roles (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982).

Second, high self-monitors are likely to be able to hold onto existing relationships in organizational settings even as they add new relationships, given their skill in managing their social interactions with others. Indeed, research on social network churn shows that high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, are able to take advantage of shocks to the social network system to add additional friends to their network without sacrificing existing friendship relations (Sasovova, Mehra, Borgatti, & Schippers, 2010). For high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, there is less tie decay (Kleinbaum, 2017). And high self-monitors are able to take advantage of finding themselves in structurally advantageous network positions to emerge as leaders in the eyes of others (Kilduff, Mehra, Gioia, & Borgatti, 2017).

New research relating to impression management and self-monitoring is likely to go beyond the well-known advantages of high self-monitoring to explore some of the downsides. With relevance to the Goffmanesque distinction between front stage and back stage behavior (Goffman, 1959), research shows that-in private, non-network settings, away from the scrutiny of the audience, high self-monitoring *amplifies* trait-relevant behavioral manifestations as individuals are

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given greater discretion and autonomy for their actions (Oh, Charlier, Mount, & Berry, 2014).

The low self-monitoring orientation has been overshadowed by decades of research establishing the advantages of high self-monitoring. But the tide may be turning. The relative absence of impression management on the part of low self-monitors may translate into high relations of trust within cohesive friendship cliques where it is important to be open and consistent rather than cagey and calculating (Tasselli & Kilduff, 2018). Additionally, discrepant with the generally positive view of high self-monitors is research showing that individuals who are low on agreeableness or conscientiousness may engage in counterproductive work behaviors whether they are low or high self-monitors in situations where there is no third-party scrutiny (Oh et al., 2014).

Vision Advantage

Self-monitoring theory and research differentiate between high self-monitors and low self-monitors on the basis that the highs are acutely attuned to the attitudes and behaviors of others. Thus, high self-monitors relative to low self-monitors seek out social comparison information (Snyder, 1974), and notice and remember information about anticipated social interaction partners (Berscheid, Graziano, Monson, & Dermer, 1976). High self-monitors are more willing to pay money for information about future interaction partners (Elliott, 1979). High self-monitors are more skillful in interpreting others' non-verbal behavior (Geizer, Rarick, & Soldow, 1977), and this translates into skill in identifying others' deception (Brandt, Miller, & Hocking, 1980).

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The implications for network research are numerous, given the stated importance in network theory of vision advantage for people occupying positions of structural advantage in social networks (Burt, 1982). First, it should be the case that high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, reach out to others when making important decisions, and this is indeed the case: high self-monitors relative to low self-monitors, make decisions that parallel those of their friends (Kilduff, 1992). Second, high self-monitors are likely to be more accurate concerning the structure of the social worlds in which they are embedded, and research has tested and confirmed this prediction (Flynn et al., 2006). Third, high self-monitoring managers should be able to detect when their subordinates are unhappy in their work and should be more motivated to tackle these problems. Indeed, subordinates report that high self-monitoring managers are the ones who help ameliorate emotional problems in the workplace (Toegel, Anand, & Kilduff, 2007).

Part of the motivation for the effort expended by high self-monitors to notice who needs help and to extend help may derive from their pursuit of status (Flynn et al., 2006), given that high status is accorded to those who receive many nominations in organizations. Indeed, it is high self-monitors who emerge as informal leaders in organizations in terms of receiving network nominations across both expressive and instrumental networks (Fang et al., 2015).

However, we should not lose sight of certain low self-monitoring advantages in social network contexts in which there is little need for an acute awareness of relational patterns. As mentioned earlier, to the extent that low self-monitors are comfortably embedded in their preferred social milieu—connected within a group of mutual friends—then low self-monitors are likely to be well trusted by their colleagues. Low self-monitors are likely to be seen as forthright and consistent, whereas a high self-monitor may risk losing colleagues' trust if the high self-monitor is constrained within a single friendship clique that offers no opportunity for skillful impression management (Tasselli & Kilduff, 2018).

Future research concerning self-monitoring and social network vision is likely to incorporate the role of the alters—the people with whom the focal individuals are interacting. Thus, we know that there is a greater propensity for alters to reciprocate the social interactions of high-empathy, high self-monitoring individuals than those low in empathy (Kleinbaum, Jordan, & Audia, 2015). There is also scope for further research on the kinds of performance that high self-monitoring network vision facilitates, building on recent work showing that (even controlling for cognitive style and social network brokerage effects) high self-monitors are more innovative than low self-monitors (Carnabuci & Diószegi, 2015).

Segregated Social Worlds

According to self-monitoring theory, high self-monitors prefer to segregate their social contacts on the basis of activity (Snyder et al., 1983). For example, a high self-monitor is likely to have one friend with whom to play tennis, and another friend with whom to go to the movies, whereas for the low self-monitor, the preference is to have one best friend with whom to share a variety of activities. More generally, high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, show a preference for mobility across social relationships including romantic (Snyder & Simpson, 1984) and sexual relationships (Snyder et al., 1986).

The preference for segregating social contacts combined with the tendency for people in diverse clusters to be charmed by high self-monitoring impression management is likely to result in high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, occupying positions of brokerage in social networks. Because of the motivation and ability of high self-monitors to make social interactions successful (Leone, 2006) even when dealing with people quite different from themselves (Flynn et al., 2001), high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, tend to be invited into diverse settings, to establish contacts with diverse people, and, therefore, to become agents of connection across otherwise disconnected organizations (Oh & Kilduff, 2008) and disconnected groups within organizations (Tasselli & Kilduff, 2018). It is the high self-monitors, therefore, who become brokers in social networks (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001), particularly in the expressive networks (Fang et al., 2015) that are crucial for job performance (Balkundi & Harrison, 2006).

Although there is general agreement concerning the relationship between self-monitoring and brokerage, there is little knowledge regarding the kinds of brokerage that self-monitoring relates to. Do the high self-monitors excel in keeping people apart (divide-between brokerage; i.e., *tertius gaudens*—Simmel, 1950) or in bringing people together (catalyst brokerage—Stovel & Shaw, 2012; i.e., *tertius iungens*—Obstfeld, 2005)? Recent research shows that these two types of brokerage are quite distinct in their operation (Long Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010) and consequences in organizations (Soda, Tortoriello, & Iorio, 2018). Further, there is an absence of research on the extent to which high self-monitors' tendency to move into brokerage positions is facilitated or curbed by the personality orientations, and related network configurations, of alters.

Mobility across Relationships

The theory of self-monitoring suggests that high self-monitors have less emotional commitment in relationships compared to low self-monitors (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). Additionally, research in organizational settings shows that high self-monitors are more likely to move from one organization to another, and to cross state and national boundaries in pursuit of promotions (Kilduff & Day, 1994). In the realm of private relationships, low self-monitors prefer to establish close and exclusive attachments based on compatibility. They prefer to date people who have sterling inner qualities over people who are physically attractive but have undesirable personalities. High self-monitors, by contrast, prioritize physical attractiveness over a winning personality (Snyder, Berscheid, & Glick, 1985; Snyder & Simpson, 1984). High self-monitors are sensitive to the fit between social activities and those with whom they spend time, whereas low self-monitors view relationships in terms of time centered around each other (Snyder, 1987, pp. 80–81). Furthermore, high self-monitors are significantly more likely to try to gain advantages in the online world of modern dating by misrepresenting themselves in terms of their interests, relationship goals, personal assets, attributes, past relationships, age, and weight (Hall, Park, Song, & Cody, 2010).

Thus, we can contrast the high self-monitoring activity-based relationship selection with partner-based relationship selection. High self-monitors feel little compunction in extracting themselves from network bonds in order to pursue activities with different people, an orientation likely to pay dividends in the corporate world in which even highly trained executives exhibit preferences for interacting exclusively with friends rather than with new contacts who could provide new information (e.g., Ingram & Morris, 2007; McDonald & Westphal, 2003).

Future research in organizational settings can build on prior work demonstrating the mobility of high self-monitors across organizational boundaries (Kilduff & Day, 1994); and the tendency for high self-monitors to attract new friends and to occupy new bridging positions over time within organizations (Sasovova et al., 2010). There is some evidence that high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, are overrepresented in the top echelons of organizations (Sypher & Sypher, 1983). Is this because of the willingness of high self-monitors to pursue social network advantage rather than be bound by network relationships to existing colleagues and roles?

Consensus Formation

Interpersonal interactions and relationships play an important role in the dissemination of perceptions, beliefs, and behavior (Burkhardt, 1994). Individuals who communicate directly and share the same contacts develop similar attitudes and behaviors (Strang & Tuma, 1993). When change occurs, individuals are likely to depend on others to inform their own attitudes and behaviors. This process facilitates the emergence of consensus (Burkhardt, 1994). But is there a difference between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in consensus formation?

A longitudinal study of how social influence and interpersonal relationships related to beliefs, attitudes, and behavior following technological change showed that direct communication between individuals increased consensus in attitudes and beliefs more strongly for high self-monitors; whereas proximity in terms of structural equivalence (i.e., interacting with the same other people; Burt, 1982) predicted consensus in attitudes and beliefs more strongly among low self-monitors (Burkhardt, 1994). Status is also likely to play a differential role in the formation of consensus for high and low self-monitors. For high self-monitors, coworkers' status in terms of network size (and partially in terms of betweenness centrality) is more strongly related to intentions to exchange and accept justice-related information (Fang & Shaw, 2009).

Consensus is a characteristic not just of dyads but also of teams. There is scant work on the aggregation of self-monitoring to the team level. But one research effort showed that when team self-monitoring was high, expressive network density (i.e., the number of close ties between team members relative to the maximum possible number) positively predicted converging justice perceptions in the team. When levels of self-monitoring in the team were low, expressive network density was negatively, yet non-significantly, linked to consensus in the interpretation of fairness in the team (Roberson & Williamson, 2012). As individuals low in self-monitoring are less sensitive to and influenced by social cues (e.g., Gangestad & Snyder, 2000), the normative pressures exerted by the norms, values, and attitudes conveyed through interpersonal exchanges in a team are likely to be neutralized when the degree of self-monitoring in the team is low.

Following on from this work on consensus emergence in teams and organizations, we call for further research concerning the ways in which the proportion of high and low self-monitors in teams affects outcomes such as creativity, conflict management, and shared leadership.

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Empirical Research Directions

As the prior review has shown, self-monitoring has contributed to our understanding of many aspects of social networks in organizations. But there are several areas that can be further highlighted and extended. We focus on a programmatic approach to decision-making, brokerage, and leadership.

The Network as a Decision-making Aid

The first instance of formal social network research from a self-monitoring perspective involved an investigation of how individuals made important decisions (Kilduff, 1992). The research contrasted the network and dispositional approaches. Whereas the network perspective tends to emphasize the extent to which systems of relations influence decisions through such processes as cohesion among friends or rivalry among occupants of equivalent social positions (e.g., Burt, 1987), the personality perspective tends to emphasize the extent to which underlying dispositions predispose individuals to prefer some outcomes rather than others (e.g., Holland, 1985). Bringing the two approaches together facilitates addressing relatively new questions such as: are there systematic differences between individuals in the extent to which they rely on friendship networks in making important decisions?

Social comparison theory provides an overarching framework within which to situate the investigation of people's differing reliance on friends. Social comparison theory suggests that human beings learn about themselves by comparing themselves with similar others when important issues are at stake and when no objective bases of comparison are available (Goethals & Darley, 1987). But high and low self-monitors are likely to differ in their susceptibility to social comparison information. The research examined, over a five-month period, the freely chosen behaviors of MBA students deciding which organizations to prioritize for interviews. Given the intense socialization pressures and the openness to identity reconstruction characteristic of top MBA programs, it was expected that social comparisons would influence the set of important decisions concerning organizational choice. Each student had a budget of points that could be allocated across the different organizations recruiting in the elite, US-based MBA program.

Self-monitoring theory is relevant to this choice process given that prior theory and research has shown that compared with high self-monitors, "low self-monitors rely less on social cues to direct behavior and more on introspection" (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982, p. 125). High self-monitoring individuals are more likely than their low self-monitoring colleagues to seek out relevant social-comparison information (Snyder & Cantor, 1980, p. 223). Thus, the empirical hypothesis was that, relative to low self-monitors, the organizational choices of high self-monitors would be more highly correlated with the organizational choices of their friends. And this was what was found. Specifically, there was a significant correlation between the friendship and bidding similarity matrices. Follow-up analyses suggested that high self-monitors did, indeed, take the advice of their friends rather than the similarity of decisions being due to high self-monitors influencing their friends.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences between low self-monitors and high self-monitors on the number of interviews they gained, the number of bids they made for interviews, or the number of friends, although all these indices trended higher for high self-monitors. But individuals with different personality types did differ significantly in their attitudes toward work: high self-monitors, compared with low self-monitors, were more concerned with choosing organizations on the basis of such socially defined criteria as prestige and reputation.

The question arises as to whether the decision processes of high self-monitors in terms of reliance on friends rather than on their own introspection pay off. Follow-up research on this same cohort of people over a five-year period showed that high self-monitors achieved significantly more promotions both across companies (for those who left their original choice of work organization) and within companies (for those who stayed with their original choice of work organizations) (Kilduff & Day, 1994). This evidence suggests that high self-monitors tend to choose organizations in which they can gain crucial advantages in terms of fast, early promotions that are known to be an indicator of career success (Rosenbaum, 1979); and they tend to leave organizations when opportunity beckons elsewhere, even when such moves involve crossing state and country boundaries. Further research on how social networks affect the career progress of high and low self-monitors over time would be valuable.

Brokerage

One of the major debates in social network research concerns why some people, rather than others, end up in the brokerage positions in organizations that provide significant advantages in terms of access to diverse resources. People who broker between otherwise disconnected groups in organizations tend to get ahead and earn more money (Burt, 1982). These structural-hole spanners, it turns out, tend to be high self-monitors (Mehra et al., 2001). In an investigation of social networks and personality within a high technology firm, the analyses showed that high self-monitors tend to occupy positions of high-betweenness centrality. Thus, self-monitoring predicts social structure. Further, high self-monitors (but not low self-monitors) become more central in the organizational network the longer they stay in the organization. The evidence is consistent with the view that high self-monitors tend to occupy positions that span social divides, whereas low self-monitors remain tied to more homogeneous social worlds.

AU: Burt 1992 changed to 1982 to match date given in list of references.

A very different context provided further evidence of the self-monitoring antecedents of brokerage. A study of Korean expatriate entrepreneurs in a Canadian city showed that those high in self-monitoring tended to occupy direct brokerage roles within the Korean community, in terms of their direct acquaintances being unconnected with each other. But self-monitoring effects reached beyond direct contacts to ripple out among indirect contacts: the acquaintances of high self-monitors (relative to those of low self-monitors) tended themselves to have acquaintances who were unconnected with each other (Oh & Kilduff, 2008).

A later study of the dynamics of brokerage in a different organization showed that high self-monitors were more likely than low self-monitors to attract new workplace friends and to occupy new bridging positions over time (Sasovova et al., 2010). The new friends that are attracted to high self-monitors tend to be relative strangers in that they tend to be unconnected with previous friends, come from different functions, and increase the number of structural holes in the network. Thus, self-monitoring shaped the dynamics of brokerage over time.

AU: Should the sentence beginning 'The new friends that are…' be in past tense?

Meta-analytic path models of data from 138 social network samples showed that self-monitoring predicted brokerage in both expressive and instrumental social networks (Fang et al., 2015). Indeed, the evidence from this meta-analysis indicated that self-monitoring (relative to the Big Five personality dimensions) was especially relevant for understanding why people differ in their acquisition of advantageous positions in social networks.

Going beyond this linkage between self-monitoring and brokerage, future work can illuminate the specifics of how individuals with different personality types respond to the pressures of differing types of brokerage (see Fernandez & Gould, 1994, for one typology). Brokerage activities include bringing people together (e.g., Obstfeld, 2005), keeping people apart (e.g., Long Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010), and acting as a go-between (e.g., Aldrich, Reese, & Dubrini, 1989). What are the activities that characterize high and low self-monitors in these brokerage roles? Do these different personality types seek to conserve and acquire different types of resources (e.g., Halbesleben, Neveu, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014) as they manage the interactions across clique and organizational boundaries? And as they seek to avoid stress and burnout in these demanding network positions?

Structural network theory and research have been criticized for their lack of attention to agency (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). In response, there is research showing that people can learn to be better social networkers (e.g., Burt & Ronchi, 2007; Janicik & Larrick, 2005). But can people change their personalities? Or is personality a straightjacket that constrains individuals to persevere with whatever self-monitoring orientations they happen to have developed? Is self-monitoring orientation any different in terms of its agency with respect to outcomes than apparently deterministic individual differences such as age, race, social class, gender, rank, and social position?

Recent research offers a window of escape from the orthodox and unsatisfactory answer of personality stability. Self-monitoring research in social network contexts can respond to the surging interest in how personality orientations change in response to situational contingencies (Tasselli, Kilduff, & Landis, 2018).

This change process may kick-start a gradual shift in personality orientation if daily activities change to incorporate different behaviors, different interactions, and different engagements. Perhaps, as Burt (2012) has recently argued, the experience of social network brokerage confers upon people skills of seeing and translating across diverse groups. Brokerage positions may transform occupants in ways that we have not understood. The taken-for-granted assumption of much organizational behavior research concerning the fixedness of personality can no longer be sustained given the widespread evidence of personality change over the life course, consequent on career change, and consequent on self-improvement efforts (Tasselli et al., 2018). The research question remains: does a change in social network position affect the personality variable that is most predictive in network research (Fang et al., 2015)—self-monitoring?

The Social Networks of Leadership

Despite evidence that high self-monitors tend to emerge as leaders of leaderless groups (Zaccaro et al., 1991), leadership scholars have expressed skepticism toward the idea that high self-monitors with their changeable attitudes and behaviors could possibly have the right stuff to emerge as leaders. In real-world contexts, the attempted leadership behaviors of high self-monitors would surely be perceived (according to one skeptic) as "both duplicitous and reprehensible" (Bedeian & Day, 2004, pp. 707–708). But research on the social networks of leadership provided evidence contrary to this skeptical view.

AU: Should 'the right stuff to emerge' read 'the right qualities' or 'the right skills'?

The evidence, from a high technology company, showed that relative to low self-monitors, high self-monitors were more likely to be perceived by their colleagues as leaders; they were more likely to be sought out for advice; and the relationship between being trusted by colleagues and emerging as a leader was stronger for high self-monitors than it was for low self-monitors (Kilduff et al., 2017). There is no significant relationship between self-monitoring and whether people are perceived in organizations as "authentic" leaders (Tate, 2008); or whether people are inauthentic in pretending to advocate socially desirable organizational policies with which they actually disagree (Hewlin, Dumas, & Burnett, 2017).

High self-monitoring leaders are not only active in providing workplace advice, they are also active in counseling employees suffering from negative emotions (Toegel et al., 2007). Specifically, high self-monitoring leaders (relative to low self-monitoring leaders) are significantly more central in the emotion-helping network, based on responses from employees.

What is not clear, however, is how entrepreneurial leaders might differ in the match between personality and network activity. Current research is exclusively in established firms. There is no research on self-monitoring and networks with respect to start-ups. Do low self-monitors tend to form companies based on their current set of friends and family more so than high self-monitors? How do the social networks of entrepreneurs change over time as an expression of their self-monitoring orientation?

A useful research direction would be to study the start-up experience of high versus low self-monitors. With respect to team composition in start-up firms, entrepreneurs low in self-monitoring might hesitate to install much-needed newcomers in their start-up, keeping team composition constant rather than adjusting the team flexibly (likely to be a disadvantage in changing environments, but might be appropriate in relatively stable environments). Within such start-up teams, the question would arise as to whether low and high self-monitors differ in the extent to which they build teams in their own image in terms of personality dispositions.

If a start-up team is diverse in terms of self-monitoring (a form of deep-level diversity; see, for instance, Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007), there might be a division of labor with high self-monitors playing the role of external brokers bringing resources into the team; whereas low self-monitors might play the role of building cohesion around an original vision that represents the start-up's distinctiveness.

Trust, Brokerage, and Leadership

In a recent integrated examination of how informal leaders manage relationships of trust with their friends within and across cliques in organizations, significant results were found for both high self-monitors and low self-monitors. The basic idea is that there is a fit between personality and network position such that high self-monitors represent a fit for the position of broker between friendship cliques; whereas low self-monitors represent a fit for the position of embeddedness within a single clique. To the extent that personality and network position are matched, individuals tend to maintain higher trust with their workplace friends (Tasselli & Kilduff, 2018).

Trust is a vital resource in organizational settings. Given recent research that suggests effective brokers oscillate in and out of embedded networks (Burt & Merluzzi, 2016), the question arises as to how different personality types manage these social network transitions over time. Is the advantage exclusively with high self-monitors (whose personality matches the open rather than the closed part of the oscillation cycle)?

Conclusion

Self-monitoring theory, more than other personality approaches, is particularly suited to social network research because it places the self in interaction with others and facilitates the exploration of differences in self-presentation. Across such vital areas as brokerage, leadership, decision-making, and trust, the self-monitoring approach locates the micro-foundations of social networks in established and evolving theory; and self-monitoring theory facilitates the extension of social network research into counterintuitive inquiries that go beyond the domains established by either conventional personality research or the structuralist agenda.

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