

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS

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In its purest form, the structuralist perspective that underlies network studies of organizations de-emphasizes (Wellman & Berkowitz, 1988) or denies altogether (Mayhew, 1980) the importance of social actors' individual characteristics and psychological processes in favor of explanations of organizational phenomena that focus on the patterns of relationships linking actors to one another and the topological and positional configurations that drive actors' behavior. Yet, as *social* networks, the structural patterns of relationships that emerge in organizations unavoidably implicate human psychology. Unlike neural, molecular, and other networks in the physical world, organizational networks connect feeling and thinking human beings. Acknowledging and leveraging this distinctively *human* trait, early developments in social network research linked seamlessly social structures and psychological processes (e.g., Heider, 1958; Homans, 1961; Moreno, 1961; Simmel, 1950). Over time, however, disciplinary boundaries hardened, making such cross-disciplinary advances less frequent in network research.

Reversing this trend, research on organizational networks has recently been showing signs of a renewed interest in joining structural sociology and psychology in the study of organizations, with social network scholars drawing insights from psychological theory and organizational psychologists adopting network concepts and methods. These advances notwithstanding, social network research has yet to fully leverage the contributions of psychological theory to the understanding of organizational networks. Likewise, the psychological perspective on groups and organizations has still much to gain from incorporating the advances of structural analyses of collectivities.

This special issue aims to renew the early promise of cross-disciplinary research in organizational networks. We encourage submissions that marry, extend, challenge, and reconcile sociological and psychological theories and methods to break new ground into our understanding of the emergence, structuration, and consequences of organizational networks. We welcome studies of interpersonal networks within and between groups and organizations,

as well as studies of how individual perceptions of network structure influence organizational phenomena. Submissions may use a variety of methodologies and data (e.g., field, laboratory, qualitative, and quantitative). Possible topics for submissions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How do group network structures and group members' affective states co-evolve?
- How do social categories and schemas affect the perception of organizational networks?
- How do individual actors' positions in the organizational network influence how they are perceived by other group members?
- How do particular relational events or reactions to actor behavior shift actors' positions in the organizational network? What are the implications of these position shifts?
- What network configurations operate as antecedents or consequences of pro-social and counterproductive behavior in organizations? What are the boundary conditions for such structural effects?
- Are inter-organizational networks affected by how influential organizational decision-makers perceive the network of relationships among organizations in their field of activity?
- What are the social encoding and memory processes that underlie network perception and its accuracy?
- Given the multitude of personality traits with potential relevance to network configuration, what are the defining features of theories of personality and social structure?
- How do employee emotions, attitudes, cognitions, or behaviors diffuse through networks? What factors moderate these diffusions?
- What is the causal role of negative and positive affective states or traits in the emergence of organizational networks? What are the relevant mediating mechanisms involved?
- How do deliberate changes to organizational networks alter group processes and performance?

The above list is only meant to be suggestive -- we encourage authors to explore research linking psychology and organizational networks that extends beyond this list.

Review Process

Submissions are due November 1, 2012. Manuscript submission is handled electronically via ScholarOne Manuscripts: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/orgsci>.

To fulfill the cross-disciplinary goals of the special issue, each submission will be co-handled by a two-person editorial team composed of an organizational psychologist (Sigal Barsade, Amy Edmondson, or Cristina Gibson) and a social network researcher (Tiziana Casciaro, David

Krackhardt, or Joe Labianca). The specific composition of the editorial teams will be determined by the nature of each individual submission.

All authors will receive an initial screening, and only papers deemed to have a reasonable chance of acceptance after two rounds of accelerated review will enter the process. After a maximum of two rounds of review, a rejection or acceptance decision will be made by the editorial team.

Bibliography

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