NETWORKS INSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

Analysts of intraorganizational and occupational networks examine how interpersonal social relations affect status attainment dynamics, careers, and workplace outcomes.

Which positions in stratified systems give job-seekers access to info about better employment opportunities?

- Interaction with human capital & experience
- Relative advantages of weak & strong ties

How do mentoring, networking, friendships shape personal careers, work team social cohesion, and organizational productivity & performance:

Better to rely on mentors or dispersed ties?
Are work-friends assets and liabilities?
Do teams boost productivity and tyrannize?
Network Concepts

Any small, closed social system may be treated as a complete network of social relations among a set of actors (persons, groups, or orgs)

“Small” = half-dozen to a few hundred actors

Ego-centered network consists of one focal actor (ego) and its direct ties to a set of others (alters), plus all the links among those alters.

Work team – a complete network

Ego net – friends of ego
Diagramming one or more networks in a social system requires ego actors to report all the dyadic direct ties (pairwise linkages), of a specific type, that connect them to all other alter actors.

A relation is the set of all ties of one specific type, measured for every pair of actors (dyad) in the network.

- A tie is a direct connection or interaction between a dyad.
- An absent tie of a dyad can be as relevant as a present tie.
- Multiple relational contents may connect a dyad.

Relational content refers to a tie’s substantive meaning, the relatively homogeneous linkages connecting network actors. Varieties of contents, both positive and negative, are potentially unlimited: friendship, work with, play with, advise, consult, lend $, dislike, distrust, house-sit, walk the dog for, ….
Diagram YOUR Ego Network

1. Around a circle, write your name (EGO) and as many as 5 people (ALTERS) with whom you might “discuss work-related matters”

2. Draw a line from your name to each alter. Label each line with that person’s primary relation to you: family, friend, supervisor, coworker, classmate, teacher, etc.

3. Draw lines between alters showing only their strongest tie to one another and label: kin, close friend, friend, acquaintance (no line = strangers)

4. How connected is your work-related ego-net? Are all your alters directly linked (strong clique)? Or are you the central star in your own constellation?
Varieties Of Network Centrality

Persons and groups occupy different types of central positions in intraorganizational communication and exchange networks, with varying implications for the types of resources they can obtain and use.

A more central location reflects ego’s demand from others (high prestige as a target of popular choices) and greater reach (access to information, economic & political resources).

**Bureaucratic hierarchies** are asymmetric authority networks (Weber’s “legitimate power”) based on command-obey and report-to relations of superiors and subordinates. Betweenness centrality (brokering structural holes) is highly useful for person desiring to become a Machiavellian “player.”

**Workteams** are egalitarian networks based on advice & trust ties that build coworker cohesion/solidarity and boost team performance. As in dancing and horseshoes, closeness counts.
Which Actors Are Central? Why?

NET 1

NET 2

NET 3

NET 4

NET 5
Investing in Social Capital

**Social capital** consists of ego’s direct & indirect connections to others who could provide important resources & emotional support. Social capital is embedded in specific relationships that are the **jointly owned property of both parties**.

Social capital is increasingly important for organizational careers: finding info about jobs, getting hired, good performance ratings, promotions.

**Key Proposition:** Persons and orgs with network ties that give them access to more high-quality social capital can better perform their tasks and achieve their goals.

**Two basic forms of social capital:**

- **Network closure with strong ties:** intense, frequent, emotional
  
  Tight-knit teams rely on solidarity (soldiers, sailors, police, firefighters)

- **Network extension via weak ties:** infrequent, causal acquaintance

  R&D scientists need to gather data from many diverse sources
Networking Investments

To get ahead inside a competitive organization, you should develop your networking skills for social capital investments

• “Profit” is generated by having high rates of return on social capital – these benefits are paid to you through your network contacts

• Your personal location within workplace networks holds the key to earning a high return on your networking investments

Become a “network player” by developing new contacts that can improve your chances of gaining two types of network benefits:

(1) Information benefits – early timing & quick access to crucial data

   Create a large, diverse (non-redundant) network of trusted contacts

(2) Control benefits – manipulate your org’l network’s structural holes

   Holes are opportunities to play one person against another

   Find & fill gaps between contacts that you can exploit in negotiations

   Become a broker who can connect the holes between clusters of actors
Find & Bridge Structural Holes

- Learn how to identify structural holes between network positions
- Make new network connections that bridge across discrete clusters
- Gain power by brokering flows of information & resource exchanges
- Control access among your contacts for your own benefit

Who Has Greater Information & Control Benefits?

Is Sally or Jane be more able to use direct and/or short indirect ties to connect with diverse org’l subgroups?

What about actors 1, 2, 5, and 7?

Guanxi Networks in China

“Guanxi generally refers to relationships or social connections based on mutual interests and benefits … a special type of relationship that bonds the exchange parties through reciprocal exchange of favours and mutual obligations.” (Lee et al. 2001:52 quoted in Parnell 2005)

Guanxi networks are based on strong ties of blood/marital loyal relations or social identities (“classmates”). Chinese gain “face” by knowing how to act appropriately. Outsiders can enter when a mutual friend vouches.

Guanxi networks facilitate economically efficient exchanges in a fragmented, weak-rule-of-law society. They enabled China’s rapid transition from command to market economy since 1978.

Chinese culture views the guanxi obligation to reciprocate as ethical behavior, not as a “using” relationship. But, guanxi’s dark side is potential to cover-up corrupt transactions within relations.
Build a *Guanxi* Network in China

“The stranger, the ‘outsider’, for example, a (foreign) potential business partner, has to undergo a gradual induction process, imbibing the ‘rules of the game’, to become a member of the inner circle or its equivalent, of family and close friends. … it may be short-circuited by employing an intermediary with ‘face’ … but success is not guaranteed.” (p. 31)

Your organization, MINN-Widgets, wants to enter the lucrative Chinese market for widgets, but must find business partners from both the private and the state-owned sectors.

Small groups discuss how to build a lasting *guanxi* network:

- What kinds of go-betweens/brokers should you seek?
- Who has technical and culture knowledge useful to M-W?
- How could you get their help, support, protection without losing “face” in this politically sensitive environment?
A Developmental Network Typology

Higgins & Kram (2001) reconceptualize mentoring relations as developmental networks. They identify and label four types of protégé-developer networks by crossing (1) the strength of interpersonal ties with (2) the range of relationship diversity:

Low-range of ties creates either:

**Traditional**: Classic mentoring of strong tie to one developer, or a clique-structure, inside an org. Strong support, but redundant info.

**Receptive**: A few weak ties in the same organization. Consistent but weak support. Similar information.

Narrow ranges of both develop’l nets results in impacted knowledge – “similar info, including similar attitudes & cognitive judgments.”
High-Range Develop’l Nets

In contrast, if developmental nets built on high range of ties, protégés can bridge to diverse clusters of unconnected people:

A high-range of ties – spanning org’l boundaries – creates:

**Entrepreneurial:** Many strong supporters are motivated to act on behalf of the protégé, “and who collectively provide access to a wide array of information.”

**Opportunistic:** The protégé generally lacks strong personal ties to developers, and takes a more “passive stance toward actively initiating and cultivating such relationships.”
Propositions on Mentoring Networks

Propositions on develop’l network effects on protégé career outcomes shape org’l workforce’s mobility & professionalization:

- **Entrepreneurial** strong ties to a diverse range of developers exposes a protégé to many career opportunities, personal growth
- **Traditional** nets tighten bonds to an employer, hard to break away
- **Opportunistic** ties are too superficial, & receptive nets too weak, to be helpful – Avoid ‘em like plague!

If Higgins & Kram’s developmental network propositions are correct, then how should employers encourage the creation of developer-protégé networks that would provide the most benefits for both the employees and their organizations?
Watch an excerpt from *Working Girl* (1987) starring Melanie Griffith, Sigourney Weaver, & Harrison Ford. Tess McGill wants to move up the corporate ladder from secretary to manager. Her boss, Kathryn Parker, seems to be a positive role model. But, does Kathryn really look out for Tess’s best interests?

This excerpt illustrates both networking and mentoring. At the end, a dramatic plot twist is the betrayal of trust.

Apply the Higgins & Kram developmental network typology to analyze Tess’s situation. Explain how her dependency on Kathryn left Tess structurally vulnerable to her boss’s actions. What type(s) of mentoring network would you advise Tess to develop that might be more supportive; why?

DUE in class Thursday, March 2

Word limit = 1,000, typed double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times Roman font. Include your name & student ID, Assignment #, and “Word Count = 000”
Use concepts from the Schein-Hatch assumptions-values-artifacts-symbols (AVAS) model of organizational culture to interpret Kristen Dellinger’s ethnographic study of dress codes at two magazines.

Discuss how the dress codes for the editors reveal major cultural differences in these two gendered and sexualized workplaces.

Why is talking about women’s appearances and their personal lives encouraged at Womyn, but is considered “out of line” at Gentleman’s Sophisticate?

In what ways do the organizational and occupational cultures of Gentleman’s Sophisticate enable the employees to avoid behaviors that might be interpreted as sexual harassment?

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