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The Contaminating Effects of Building Instrumental Ties: How Networking Can Make Us Feel Dirty

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THE CONTAMINATING EFFECTS OF BUILDING INSTRUMENTAL TIES:

HOW NETWORKING CAN MAKE US FEEL DIRTY

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ABSTRACT

To create social ties to support their professional or personal goals, people actively engage in instrumental networking. Drawing from moral psychology research, we posit that this intentional behavior has unintended consequences for an individual's morality. Unlike personal networking in pursuit of emotional support or friendship, and unlike social ties that emerge spontaneously, instrumental networking in pursuit of professional goals can impinge on an individual's moral purity—a psychological state that results from viewing the self as clean from a moral standpoint —and thus make an individual feel dirty. We theorize that such feelings of dirtiness decrease the frequency of instrumental networking and, as a result, work performance. We also examine sources of variability in networking-induced feelings of dirtiness by proposing that people with greater power feel less dirty when they engage in instrumental networking. Three laboratory experiments and a survey study of lawyers in a large North American law firm provide support for our predictions. We call for a new direction in network research that investigates how network-related behaviors associated with building social capital influence individuals' psychological experiences and work outcomes.

Keywords:

Networking, Morality, Dirtiness, Power

THE CONTAMINATING EFFECTS OF BUILDING INSTRUMENTAL TIES:

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As much as networking is an important task, it sometimes has a negative connotation. The term sometimes conjures up images of back-slapping, forced smiles, awkward conversations or brown-nosing, and because of these negative undertones, many people shy away from becoming actively engaged in the process.

Daisy Wright, Management Coach[1]

How social networks affect individual and collective outcomes can be construed along a continuum ranging from structural determinism to individual agency (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990; Archer, 1995). Structural determinism assumes that a person's position in the social structure—her relatively stable patterns of social relationships—is a main determinant of her outcomes, such as access to resources, wellbeing, and performance. According to this view, the constraints and opportunities created by the social structure leave little room for individual choice in determining behavior. By contrast, the agency view of social behavior assumes that social actors play an active role in shaping their position in the social structure by choosing to engage in social interactions and purposefully creating social relationships.

The emergence of the lexicon of social *networking* (as opposed to *network*) as a lens to understand social behavior emphasizes the agentic nature of individual behavior in the social structure. Social networking refers to the building and nurturing of personal and professional relationships to create a system of information, contacts, and support thought to be crucial for career and personal success (Whiting and de Janasz, 2004). Such active networking is relevant to organizations, as networking within (internal networking) or beyond organizational boundaries

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1 http://www.daisywright.com/2013/04/01/networking-is-not-a-dirty-word-its-relationship-building/

(external networking) can increase members' exposure and personal learning, which may in turn enhance their understanding of organizational practices, promote skill development, and provide role clarity (Lankau and Scandura, 2002). Moreover, research has documented that networking behaviors are essential to individuals' career success (e.g., Wolff and Moser, 2009). The advent of social media and its facilitation of agency in building one's social networks has made the notion of networking central in popular culture and professional practice, with broad potential consequences for individual behavior and outcomes in organizations. As members and representatives of organizations, we build and live within webs of interactions. Nonetheless, the affective and cognitive repercussions of our purposeful social networking are not well understood.

How does the active pursuit of social relationships—as opposed to being the passive recipient of constraints and opportunities created by social structures—influence an individual's emotions, attitudes, and outcomes? We suggest that the answer to this question must consider the nature of the relationship being formed. Social ties vary on two main dimensions: *content* (whether the ties are personal or professional) and *approach* (whether they are instrumental or spontaneous). With regard to network content, professional ties are part of the work-related dimension of an individual's social life and aid in task execution and professional success; personal ties, by contrast, are part of the personal dimension of an individual's life and provide friendship and emotional support (Lincoln and Miller, 1979). Professional and personal networks can overlap significantly, with task goals and personal goals coexisting within the same social relationships (Casciaro and Lobo, 2008), but these two forms of tie content are conceptually distinct and their active pursuit, we will argue, has different effects on individual morality. Independent from tie content, the main motivation that underpins social ties may also differ. In

some cases, the approach used to create a tie may be *instrumental*: the person initiating the social relationship may do so proactively and with a specific goal of obtaining benefits (e.g., advancement) and individual advantage; in others, the approach may be *spontaneous*: the social tie may emerge naturally, with no premeditated purpose, and may be initiated by another person (Bourdieu, 1985; Wellman and Berkowitz, 1988).

In this paper, we examine the consequences of social networking for an individual's morality, arguing that the content and approach of networking have different implications for how a person feels during the development and maintenance of social ties. We focus in particular on *professional-instrumental networking,* defined as the purposeful creation of social ties in support of task and professional goals. Drawing from moral psychology research, we posit that, unlike networking in pursuit of personal goals and unlike networking that emerges spontaneously, instrumental networking for professional goals can impinge on an individual's moral purity—a psychological state that results from a person's view of the self as clean from a moral standpoint and through which a person feels virtuous—and thus make him feel dirty. Given that individuals express a greater desire to cleanse themselves physically when feeling dirty because of moral transgressions (Zhong and Liljenquist, 2006; Lee and Schwarz, 2010), we also argue that networking-induced feelings of dirtiness result in a greater need for cleansing. We then elaborate on the theoretical link between feeling dirty when engaging in instrumental networking for professional goals, the frequency of professional-instrumental networking, and individual work performance. We further investigate sources of variability in networking-induced feelings of dirtiness and propose that the amount of power people have when they engage in instrumental networking for professional goals influences how dirty such networking can make them feel.

We conducted four studies using both field and laboratory data from different populations to investigate the psychological consequences of networking behaviors. In two experiments, we provide support for a causal relationship between instrumental networking for professional goals, feeling dirty, and need for cleansing. A survey study of lawyers in a large North American business law firm offers correlational evidence that professionals who experience feelings of dirtiness from instrumental networking, relative to those who do not, tend to engage in it less frequently and have lower job performance. With regard to sources of variability in dirtiness from instrumental networking for professional goals, we document that when those who engage in such networking have high versus low power, they experience lower feelings of dirtiness. An additional experimental study constructively replicates this finding.

WHAT NETWORKING SIGNALS ABOUT THE SELF

In both our personal and professional lives, we often engage in behaviors that help us develop new social ties or nurture existing ones. For instance, we may join prestigious professional associations, connect with highly visible people in our organizations, or participate in social events. These behaviors, known in the literature as networking behaviors (Welch, 1980; Forret and Dougherty, 2004), are individuals' attempts to create and maintain relationships with others who can assist them in their work or the development of their careers (Higgins and Kram, 2001; Higgins and Thomas, 2001). These behaviors often are proactive (Kram, 1985), are carried out with others both inside and outside one's own organization (Downey and Lahey, 1988; Higgins and Kram, 2001), and may lead to reciprocal relationships that facilitate access to personal and professional resources such as social support, strategic information, or career success.

Networking behaviors can be beneficial for improving various aspects of one's personal life through friendship and emotional support, a process we refer to as *personal* networking. By contrast, when the primary purpose of networking behaviors is to gain career- or work-related benefits, we use the label *professional* networking. The labels we use for different types of social ties differ somewhat from those used in the network literature, which commonly employs the label "instrumental ties" to refer to relationships that arise in the course of one's work and involve the exchange of job-related resources, and "expressive ties" to refer to ties that primarily provide friendship and social support (Lincoln and Miller, 1979). Our choice of lexicon is driven by our distinction between *content* and *approach*; we label work-related ties as *professional ties* and those that provide friendship and social support as *personal ties*. When networking behaviors are proactive and carried out with the specific intention of benefiting the person who initiated them, we refer to them as *instrumental ties*. When such intentionality is missing, and the social tie emerges from the situation (due to interactions with others or the actions of another person who initiated them), we call them *spontaneous ties*. We use these labels to differentiate between the content and approach of network-related behaviors associated with building social capital.

To date, network research has been ambiguous about the purpose of the creation and maintenance of social ties (for critical perspectives, see Kilduff and Brass, 2010; Ahuja et al., 2012). The distinction this literature typically makes between instrumental/task-related networks and expressive/personal networks concerns content, with no explicit consideration of approach. One notable exception is Kilduff and Tsai's (2003) network trajectory theory, which explains how networks change over time. Kilduff and Tsai (2003) distinguish between two types of networks: goal directed and serendipitous. Members of a goal-directed network share a common goal, and most of their activities focus on goal attainment (i.e., they have a specific purpose).

Serendipitous network trajectories, instead, refer to networks that change haphazardly as a result of interactions with different people and organizations. Thus, serendipitous networks are not formed to achieve a common goal or strategy.

Though organizational network scholars have paid little attention to the purposes behind individuals' creation and maintenance of ties in their networks, structural sociologists do debate the role of agency (purposeful) and structure (emergent) mechanisms in how social ties come about (Simmel, 1950; Bourdieu, 1977; Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994), but without clearly attributing these mechanisms to expressive or instrumental content. Building on these literatures, we posit that the content and approach of network-related behaviors associated with building social capital (i.e., networking) influence the psychological experience of those engaging in them. Indeed, we suggest that individuals' strategic behaviors on behalf of their self-interest and active pursuit of network ties for their own advantage rather than concern for others affect their morality.

The Moral Self-justification of Networking

Self-perception theory suggests that people make inferences about themselves based on their choices and behavior (Bem, 1982). For instance, people who donate money to charity may use that information as a signal that they are compassionate, or they may observe themselves eating unhealthy food and think of themselves as lacking self-control. Thus, the choices people make provide them with valuable information about their own character (Bodner and Prelec, 2001; Prelec and Bodner, 2003).

Generally, people wish to make choices that reflect positively on themselves. As decades of social psychology research have robustly demonstrated, people strive to maintain a positive self-concept both privately and publicly (Allport, 1955; Rosenberg, 1979). A positive self-

concept depends on an individual's self-assessment across a number of domains, including being morally upright, worthy of love, and personally competent (Epstein, 1973). In this paper, we focus on people's perceptions of their own morality as a result of engaging in different networking behaviors. Morality is one of the two primary dimensions upon which individuals build their evaluations of both others and themselves (Cuddy et al., 2008), making it a fundamental aspect of self-conception.

Like other aspects of the working self-concept, people evaluate their morality and attach either negative or positive labels to it based on cues from the social world and their own actions (Kernis and Goldman, 2003). Though people may vary in terms of how highly they value their moral selves in general (Aquino and Reed, 2002), they share a fairly universal desire to be moral (Dunning, 2007; Reed et al., 2007), at least in terms of self-perceptions (Mazar et al., 2008).

We suggest that developing and nurturing social ties entails networking behaviors that can provide different signals to people's moral self-concept. Networking behaviors may produce negative self-attributions when the behaviors are difficult to justify to oneself, induce guilt, or are not essential. In particular, we suggest that professional networking is more difficult than personal networking to justify to oneself and that instrumental networking is more difficult than spontaneous networking to justify to oneself.

Personal networking is likely to be perceived as more justifiable to oneself than professional networking (and as such it is less likely to produce negative self-attributions), because the moral worth of an action is commensurate with its motivation to benefit others (Williams, 1973; Blum, 1980; Singer, 1995),[2] and personal relationships tend to be animated by a concern for the other to a greater extent than professional relationships. Concern for the other

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2 The thesis that morality is other-based has not gone unchallenged, but it has been a key tenet of moral theories from Philo of Alexandria, to Hume, to neo-Kantian moral philosophy (Rogers, 1997).

manifests itself through three features of personal ties: symmetry, lack of direct reciprocity, and a belonging motive.

First, people expect personal ties to be symmetric (Moreno, 1934; Desoto, 1960; Newcomb, 1961; Bell, 1981; Wellman and Berkowitz, 1988; Krackhardt, 1992). That is, friendship is built on the assumption that affection and socio-emotional support will be mutual: If John is friends with Bob, Bob is assumed to be friends with John. Although, empirically, non-symmetrical friendships can occur (Carley and Krackhardt, 1996), the expectation of symmetry makes the pursuit of personal relationships easier to morally justify to oneself than the pursuit of professional ties, because symmetry presumes that benefits received come hand-in-hand with benefits given. Friendships are motivated by receiving warmth and emotional support and well-being as much as by giving these benefits to others. By contrast, professional ties do not carry an expectation of symmetry. If John gives work advice to Bob, Bob is not expected to or assumed to be able to do the same for John. When Bob cultivates a professional relationship with John, therefore, he does so knowing that he has more to gain from the relationship than to give. To the extent that professional relationships are motivated by self-interest more than altruism, they are more arduous to justify to oneself morally than personal ties.

While symmetry concerns the exchange of a specific resource within a relationship (e.g., John and Bob giving each other work advice), reciprocity concerns the exchange of any resource to equalize the relationship. John may give work advice to Bob, and Bob can reciprocate by inviting John to popular social events. The norms of reciprocity that regulate personal and professional relations differ. Personal ties are communal-affective relationships that presuppose a general obligation to care for the welfare of the other, and thus a willingness to give benefits to please the other, even if doing so provides neither present nor future material rewards (Clark and

Mills, 1979). By contrast, professional ties are exchange relationships in which no such obligation exists, but there is an expectation of direct reciprocity: benefits are given with the expectation of receiving comparable benefits in return (Clark, 1984; Clark and Waddell, 1985). Because of this expectation of direct reciprocity, people may focus on the fact that they will be able to benefit others when they create a professional tie. However, benefiting others is not sufficient to establish the moral worth of an action; the action has to be motivated by altruism rather than selfishness to be morally pure (Williams, 1973; Blum, 1980; Singer, 1995). This is "the central reason why egoism is generally considered so unacceptable … it contradicts one of our most deeply held dogmas about morality" (Rogers, 1997: 2). The purpose of creating a professional tie makes it salient to people that their intent is to personally benefit from the relationships. It is thus difficult to morally justify professional ties to oneself as driven by a concern for another person's welfare. The motivation for creating a professional tie is what makes it morally impure.

Finally, while professional ties are motivated by personal gain and accomplishment, a belonging motive animates personal ties. When motivated by the need to belong to a group in the hope of gaining acceptance and avoiding rejection (Fiske, 2004), people tend to join networks of friendship and support (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). In the process of conforming to group norms, they sacrifice part of their individuality. Due to their outward focus on the social group, it is easier to justify personal ties to oneself than self-focused professional ties.

These three reasons provide (possibly self-serving) justifications for individuals to convince themselves that their networking behavior is appropriate when it is personal rather than professional in content. This type of self-serving justification process is commonly used to explain self-interested or even immoral behavior (Snyder et al., 1979; Schweitzer, 2002; Shalvi

et al., 2011; Gino and Ariely, 2012). As noted by Kunda (1990: 480), the ability of people to reach the conclusions they want to reach "is constrained by their ability to construct seemingly reasonable justifications for these conclusions." As a result, when justifications for one's questionable behavior are available, there is no need to negatively update one's moral self-concept (Moore and Gino, 2013). But when such self-serving justifications are difficult to generate, one is more likely to recognize the problematic nature of particular types of networking behaviors and experience them as immoral.

We also posit that self-serving justifications are more difficult to generate for instrumental networking than for spontaneous networking. Consider that individuals' reactions to another person's behavior often are based more on their construals of the person's motives than on the behavior's objective impact (Deutsch, 1973; Thomas, 1976; Reeder et al., 2002). For example, individuals' perceptions of the degree to which another person intended to harm them generally predict their reactions, including their desire for retribution, more strongly than the degree to which they are actually harmed (Epstein and Taylor, 1967; Batson et al., 2000). Even when another person's behavior does not notably affect them in any tangible way, people nonetheless react strongly to the violation of norms of politeness and respect (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Greenberg, 1994; Allen and Leary, 2010). Similarly, people react negatively to selfish intentions, even when these intentions drive pro-social behaviors, such as donating money to charity (Lin-Healy and Small, 2012). Instrumental networking clearly has a selfish intent, since the person initiating the relationship is doing so to obtain certain benefits. Because this intent is clear to the initiator, but perhaps not to the other person, the initiator may feel guilty about this form of deception. This intent may be more salient in instrumental networking, which involves actively creating or nurturing a relationship, than in spontaneous networking. Thus, we propose

that instrumental networking feels more morally compromising than spontaneous networking and is thus less justifiable to oneself, especially in the case of professional networking.

Moral psychology research has demonstrated that people think about morality in terms of cleanliness. Zhong and Liljenquist (2006) found that people who had been asked to recall past immoral behavior they had engaged in were more likely to feel dirty and expressed greater preference for cleansing products than those who recalled their own moral behavior (see also Lee and Schwarz, 2010). In fact, the simple exposure to physical dirtiness influences third-party observers' evaluations of others' moral transgressions (Schnall et al., 2008). Moral threats activate the need to cleanse oneself physically through actual decisions to physically cleanse oneself, concept accessibility (i.e., words related to cleanliness are more likely to enter into one's mind), and attitudinal preferences for cleansing products (Zhong and Liljenquist, 2006). After experiencing moral threats that result from violating their moral values, individuals are thus likely to engage in either symbolic or literal cleansing to reaffirm their core values and purify their contaminated consciences (Tetlock et al., 2000).

Building on this research, we suggest that engaging in instrumental networking for professional goals leads people to feel dirty and thus to experience an increased desire for cleansing. Specifically, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1a: Professional networking, as compared to personal networking, increases feelings of dirtiness and need for cleansing.

Hypothesis 1b: Instrumental networking, as compared to spontaneous networking, increases feelings of dirtiness and need for cleansing.

Hypothesis 1c: The extent to which instrumental networking increases feelings of dirtiness and need for cleansing as compared to spontaneous networking is greater for professional networking than for personal networking.

Hypothesis 2: Feeling dirty mediates the relationship between professional-instrumental networking and need for cleansing.

Feeling Dirty, Professional-Instrumental Networking Frequency, and Performance

People vary in their likelihood of engaging in networking behavior. Forret and Dougherty (2001) identified five types of networking behavior—maintaining contacts, socializing, engaging in professional activities, participating in community, and increasing internal visibility—and showed that gender, socioeconomic background, extraversion, self-esteem, and attitudes toward workplace politics were related to the networking behavior of managers and professionals. Similarly, Wanberg, Kanfer, and Banas (2000) found extraversion and conscientiousness to predict networking intensity.

We focus here on feelings of dirtiness from networking as predictors of the frequency with which people engage in instrumental networking for professional goals. Azrin and Besalel (1982) first introduced the notion that attitudinal differences toward networking may inhibit the intensity with which people activate and develop their networks to find a job, with some people feeling more uncomfortable than others about asking for help or imposing on friendships. Building on this insight, Wanberg, Kanfer, and Banas (2000) developed the construct of "networking comfort" to denote the relative discomfort and embarrassment of asking for job leads or advice. The concept of dirtiness from instrumental networking further specifies this construct by identifying feelings of moral impurity as the psychological force underlying networking discomfort. Evidence linking networking comfort to networking intensity (Wanberg

et al., 2000), as well as the basic notion that motivation is rooted in approach toward pleasant stimuli and avoidance of unpleasant ones (for a review, see Higgins, 2006), suggests that people who experience higher levels of dirtiness from instrumental networking will tend to engage in it with lower frequency.

In turn, theory and empirical evidence suggest that networking frequency should be positively related to individual job performance. A fundamental principle of network theory is that an individual's social relationships provide potential access to resources, information, and opportunities (Lin, 2001). Consistent with this principle, network size and diversity are well-documented correlates of individual performance (Papa, 1990; Mehra et al., 2001; Sparrowe et al., 2001; Cross and Cummings, 2004). As a means of building and developing social relationships, networking behavior has been shown to positively affect objective and subjective career-related outcomes, including performance evaluation, compensation, and promotion (Forret and Dougherty, 2001; Forret and Dougherty, 2004; Wolff and Moser, 2009). We expect, therefore, that those who engage in more frequent instrumental networking increase their chances of accessing valuable information, resources, and opportunities, and thus improve their job performance. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: The extent to which people experience instrumental networking as dirty is negatively associated with the frequency with which they engage in instrumental networking.

Hypothesis 4: The frequency with which people engage in instrumental networking is positively related to their job performance.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between the extent to which people experience instrumental networking as dirty and their job performance is mediated by the frequency with which people engage in instrumental networking.

Who Feels Dirty? Power and Instrumental Networking

Individuals differ in their likelihood of engaging in networking behaviors. Yet, even when engaging in the same set of behaviors, they perceive networking differently. As noted earlier, Wanberg and colleagues (2000) found that both extraversion and conscientiousness, as well as individual differences in comfort with networking, influenced networking intensity. We suggest that in addition to personality, actors' perceptions of the dirtiness of networking may be affected by the extent to which they occupy a power position.

We posit that power—both objective power and the subjective experience of it—affects the experience of moral impurity from instrumental-professional networking. Power is commonly defined in both the psychology and management literatures as control over other people or overvalued resources in social relations (Magee and Galinksy, 2008). Power has been found to influence a variety of outcomes, including decision making (Anderson and Galinsky, 2006; Inesi, 2010), taking action (Galinsky et al., 2008), focus on personal goals (Gruenfeld et al., 2008), and resistance to both persuasion and conformity (Brinol et al., 2007; Galinsky et al., 2008; Tost et al., 2012).

There are two reasons that individuals who objectively have power or simply subjectively experience it may perceive professional-instrumental networking as more justifiable and feel less sullied by it as compared to less powerful people. First, the powerful tend to dehumanize and objectify others (Gruenfeld et al., 2008). Feelings of power motivate personal goal pursuit (Keltner et al., 2003), and this increased motivation to pursue goals encourages a more

instrumental treatment of others, whereby others are viewed as mere tools or obstacles between

the individual feeling powerful and his or her goals (Gruenfeld et al., 2008). Hence, we expect

the powerful will not feel dirty when they treat others instrumentally. Additionally, power makes

people feel self-sufficient, free from dependency, and capable of achieving personal goals

without aid from others. Consequently, the powerful will not feel as dirty as the powerless when

they approach others because, in their minds, others are not as instrumental to their goal.

Second, consistent with the notion that direct reciprocity is a main reason that some

forms of networking are perceived as more justifiable and thus do not produce negative self-

attributions, powerful people by definition have more to give and are less dependent on others

(e.g., in terms of resources) than less powerful people (Emerson, 1962; Cook and Emerson,

1978). As a result, the powerful are more likely to reciprocate help, favors, or support, and their

networking tends to yield more balanced relationships, with the powerful potentially giving as

much or more than they take from others. The greater capacity for reciprocated and balanced

exchanges should make the power-advantaged feel less dirty about instrumental networking.

For these reasons, we expect a negative correlation between power and dirtiness from

instrumental networking. Specifically, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 6: Individuals with high power experience lower feelings of dirtiness from

instrumental networking as compared to individuals with low power.

METHODS

Overview of Studies

We conducted four studies—a survey of a business organization and three laboratory

experiments—to test our theory. In Studies 1 and 2, we tested Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2 using

two laboratory experiments employing different measures. In Study 3, we tested Hypotheses 3, 4,

5, and 6 with data on professional-instrumental networking from a survey of lawyers in a large North American law firm. Finally, in Study 4, we used a laboratory experiment to constructively replicate the test of Hypotheses 1a, 2, and 6.

STUDY 1

In our first study, we investigate the effects of instrumental networking for professional goals on feelings of dirtiness. We distinguish this type of networking behavior from others that differ in content and approach. We have suggested that professional-instrumental networking behaviors are perceived as a threat to one's own moral self-concept. Previous studies find that moral threats activate the need to cleanse oneself physically through concept accessibility (i.e., recalling words related to cleanliness more often than other words) and attitudinal preferences for cleansing products (Zhong and Liljenquist, 2006). In Study 1, we examine the contamination effect of instrumental networking by using an implicit measure of feeling dirty, namely a word-completion task that includes words related to cleanliness.

Method

Participants and design. Three-hundred six individuals (54% male; M_{age}=31.7, SD=8.9) recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk participated in this study in exchange for $1. Study 1 employed a 2 (content: personal vs. professional) by 2 (approach: instrumental vs. spontaneous) between-subjects design.

Procedure. We randomly assigned participants to one of the four conditions.[3] The instructions informed them that the researchers were interested in studying how people

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3 Prior to being randomly assigned to condition, participants answered two questions used as attention checks. Participants who did not answer these questions correctly were automatically redirected to a page that indicated they could not proceed with the study based on their answers. Thus, their data was not recorded.

remember and reflect on events from their past. In each condition, we asked participants to recall

a certain event from their past and then write about it for about five minutes.

Participants in the *professional* [*personal*], *instrumental* conditions received the

following instructions:

> Please recall a time in your *professional [social]* life where you did something
> with the intention of building and nurturing a *professional [personal]*
> relationship. We are interested in a situation where you tried to create or maintain
> connections *that would aid the execution of work tasks and your professional*
> *success [for emotional support and friendship]*.
>
> Other people engaging in this type of introspective task frequently write about
> instances where they accept invitations for receptions and drinks because they
> want to meet potential *clients [friends]*.

Participants in the *professional* [*personal*], *spontaneous* conditions read:

> Please recall a time in your *professional [personal]* life where you found yourself
> interacting with people at a social event, such as a party. We are interested in a
> situation where connections *that would aid the execution of work tasks and your*
> *professional success developed for you professionally [for emotional support and*
> *friendship developed for you personally]*.
>
> Other people engaging in this type of introspective task frequently write about
> instances where they attended one of their *coworker's* [*friend's*] birthday party, or
> *an office* [*a*] Christmas party.

Across all conditions, we asked participants to describe such a situation, what it was like

to experience it, and what thoughts and feelings they had during it. We also asked them to

provide as many details as possible such that a person reading the entry would understand the

situation and how they felt.

Participants then completed a word-completion task to measure cleansing accessibility

(adapted from Zhong and Liljenquist, 2006). The task involved turning word fragments into

meaningful words using the first word that came to mind. We provided participants with six

word fragments, three of which (W _ _ H, S H _ _ E R, and S _ _ P) could be completed as

cleansing-related words (wash, shower, and soap) or as unrelated, neutral words (e.g., wish, shaker, and step). We also had three word fragments (F _ O _, B _ _ K, and P A _ _ R) that could be only completed as unrelated, neutral words (e.g., food, book, and paper).

Results and Discussion

    Description coding. To gain a better understanding of the type and variety of events people recalled, we coded their written descriptions (see Table 1). Two independent coders blind to hypotheses and conditions read the descriptions and categorized the participants' descriptions into a few basic categories. In the spontaneous-professional condition, most descriptions concerned office holiday parties (43.4%) or work-related events and gatherings (28.9%). Those in the instrumental-professional condition recalled inviting colleagues or friends for drinks (34.9%) or engaging in extra role activities directed at others at work (21.9%). Those participants in the spontaneous-personal condition wrote about attending parties and social gatherings with their friends and family (27.8%), while those in the instrumental-personal condition wrote about inviting others for drinks (33.3%).

    Accessibility of cleansing-related words. A 2 (content: personal vs. professional) by 2 (approach: instrumental vs. spontaneous) between-subjects ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of approach, $F(1,302) = 39.97$*, p < .*001, such that participants who recalled an instrumental networking experience generated more cleansing-related words ($M = 1.21$, $SD = .80$) than did those who recalled a spontaneous networking experience ($M = .66$, $SD = .75$). The main effect of content was also significant, $F(1,302) = 3.90$*, p = .*049: Participants who recalled professional networking generated more cleansing-related words ($M = 1.01$, $SD = .89$) than did those who recalled personal networking ($M = .85$, $SD = .75$). Importantly, as we predicted, the interaction of content and approach was also significant, $F(1,302) = 6.59$*, p = .*011, such that the

difference in the number of cleansing-related words participants generated in the instrumental-networking condition versus the spontaneous-networking condition was larger for professional networking than it was for personal networking. Figure 1 depicts the results.

Together, these results provide initial support for our Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, and suggest that instrumental-professional networking in particular may result in a moral self-threat and feelings of dirtiness, and thus accessibility of cleansing.

STUDY 2

To strengthen causal inferences, rule out alternative explanations, and establish causal mechanisms, we conducted a second laboratory experiment in which we asked participants to imagine making connections either instrumentally in a professional context or spontaneously in a personal context. By randomly assigning participants to different experiences rather than relying on their choice of their own past experiences, we can test whether instrumental networking in a professional context directly increases feelings of dirtiness, which, in turn, increase one's need for cleansing (as suggested by Hypothesis 2). Moreover, we rule out potential alternative explanations by showing that it is feelings of dirtiness—and not negative or positive affect—that explain the link between instrumental-professional networking and the increased desire for cleanliness. Furthermore, to test the robustness of our results, we use different outcome measures.

Method

Participants and design. Eighty-five students (M_{age}=22.95, SD=3.92, 48.1% male) from local universities in a city in the Northeastern United States completed the study for pay. We randomly assigned participants to one of two conditions: instrumental-professional networking versus spontaneous-personal networking.

Procedure. Participants read one of two short stories (see Appendix A), depending on the condition to which they had been randomly assigned. We asked participants to take a first-person perspective and put themselves in the shoes of the main character. In each story, participants imagined receiving an invitation to attend an event in which they used the time to socialize with others. In the instrumental-professional condition, the story described the main character as actively and intentionally pursuing professional connections with the belief that connections are important for future professional success. By contrast, in the spontaneous-personal condition, the main character was excited to make friends, get to know a lot of people, and enjoy the party. The story indicated that the person found herself/himself making connections and knows that making friends is important to one's social life and well-being.

Feelings of dirtiness. After reading the story, using the Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark and Tellegen, 1988), we asked participants to indicate how they felt on a five-point scale (1 = very slightly or not at all, 5 = extremely). Participants also used the same scale to indicate the extent to which they felt dirty, inauthentic, and uncomfortable. We averaged these three items to create a composite measure of *feelings of dirtiness* (α = .84). The PANAS items and those on the feelings of dirtiness scale were randomly presented.

Cleansing products. Afterward, we presented participants with a list of products and asked them to indicate how desirable they found each of them to be (1 = completely undesirable to 7 = completely desirable). The list included both cleansing products (e.g., Dove shower soap, Crest toothpaste, Windex cleaner) and neutral products (e.g., Post-it Notes, Nantucket Nectars juice, Sony CD cases) as in Zhong and Liljenquist (2006).

Results and Discussion

Feelings of dirtiness. As predicted, participants in the instrumental-professional networking situation were significantly more likely to report feeling dirty ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.21$) than were participants in the spontaneous-personal condition ($M = 1.43$, $SD = .62$), $t(83) = 3.36$, $p = .001$.

Negative and positive affect. Negative affect differed between conditions ($M_{professional} = 1.68$, $SD = .90$ vs. $M_{personal} = 1.23$, $SD = .37$), $t(83) = 3.00$, $p = .004$, but positive affect did not ($M_{professional} = 2.55$, $SD = 1.03$ vs. $M_{personal} = 2.36$, $SD = 1.14$), $t(83) < 1$.

Cleansing. As predicted, instrumental-professional networking ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.39$) increased the desirability of cleansing products as compared to spontaneous-personal networking, ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.28$), $t(83) = 2.13$, $p = .036$. Importantly, there were no differences between conditions for the non-cleansing products ($M_{professional} = 3.99$, $SD = .80$ vs. $M_{personal} = 3.81$, $SD = .95$), $t(83) < 1$.

Mediation analyses. We tested whether feelings of dirtiness mediated the relationship between our networking conditions and expressed desirability of cleansing products, using the bootstrapping approach outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2004). Based on bootstrapping (with 5000 iterations), we estimated the direct and indirect effects of networking condition via felt dirtiness on our dependent variable, desirability ratings of cleansing products. Our manipulation had a significant effect on feelings of dirtiness ($b = .70$, $SE = .21$, $p = .001$), which, in turn, significantly affected the favorability of cleansing products ($b = .47$, $SE = .14$, $p = .002$). Indeed, the effect of our manipulation was reduced (from $b = .62$, $SE = .29$, $p = .036$, to $b = .29$, $SE = .29$, $p = .33$) when felt dirtiness was included in the equation. The 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for the size of the indirect effect excluded zero (.114, .624), suggesting that feelings of dirtiness mediated the link between networking condition and heightened desire for cleanliness.

Multiple mediation. To test for the potential role of negative and positive affect as mediators, we used a multiple mediation model (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). This model allows us to test the extent to which each measured variable (i.e., feelings of dirtiness, negative and positive affect) mediates the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable in the presence of other variables in the model. Results (obtained with 5,000 samples) indicated that the total indirect effect of our networking manipulation on desirability of cleansing products was significant (95% bias-corrected CI = .142, .783). The bootstrapping procedure also revealed that the indirect effect of our manipulation was significant through dirtiness, as expected (95% bias-corrected CI = .023, .645). Instead, negative affect (95% bias-corrected CI = −.187, .447) and positive affect (95% bias-corrected CI = −.035, .203) were not significant mediators.

Together, these results provide support for both Hypotheses 1 and 2 by showing that instrumental-professional networking leads to greater feelings of dirtiness and greater desire for cleansing products as compared to spontaneous-personal networking. The results also show that feeling dirty mediates the relationship between types of networking and need for cleansing.

STUDY 3

Having documented experimentally the causal path between professional-instrumental networking, feeling dirty, and need for cleansing, in Study 3 we explored in a field setting the implications of this pattern of association for the frequency with which professionals engage in instrumental networking and its link with their work performance. A field setting also gives us the opportunity to examine the relationship between power and dirtiness from instrumental networking. To test Hypotheses 3 through 6, therefore, we conducted a survey study of all lawyers employed at a large North American business law firm.

A business law firm is a particularly appropriate setting for exploring the association between professional, instrumental networking and performance for several reasons. First, in a business law firm, lawyers obtain working engagements either when clients hire them as counsel or when colleagues at the firm ask them to contribute their expertise to a client file. This process of work acquisition therefore requires relationships with colleagues and clients, making instrumental networking a central concern of law professionals, both at junior and senior levels. Second, performance in law firms is measured in a standard and consistent manner based on billable hours. This conventional measure allows us to separate objective, quantifiable performance measurement from the subjective component that typically characterizes performance evaluation in many business settings. Finally, law firms are generally organized hierarchically; thus, members naturally experience different levels of subjective and objective power.

Sample and procedure

At the time of our study, the law firm we surveyed employed 406 lawyers located in five offices across North America and grouped into 12 legal practices in business law. Hierarchically, the law firm is structured along levels of legal experience, as is typical for the industry: junior associate, mid-level associate, senior associate, junior partner (i.e., non-equity partner) and senior partner (i.e., equity partner). All 406 lawyers received an invitation to fill out an online questionnaire regarding their professional networking activities. The invitation was emailed directly from an academic research team external to the firm. The invitation reassured participants that their individual responses would be accessed exclusively by the research team, which would only provide firm management with aggregate data on networking behavior at the firm and large subgroups within it—such as partners versus non-partners—to aid the firm in

designing opportunities for professional development to all lawyers in the firm. The invitation

also specified that participation was entirely voluntary and that, for their effort, all participants

would receive from the research team a personalized confidential report on their networking

behavior as compared to that of their group of peers.

A total of 165 lawyers completed the survey in its entirety, yielding a 41% response rate.

There were no significant differences between participants and non-participants along office

location, law practice (i.e., legal specialty), and gender, but partners were less likely to

participate in the study than associates ($t = 2.58$, $p < .01$). According to firm management, this

difference was attributable to greater demands on partners' time as compared to associates.

Nevertheless, the final sample included 62 junior (non-equity) partners and 21 senior (equity)

partners, providing us with an adequate sample at the higher end of the hierarchical structure of

the organization.

Dependent and Independent Variables

Frequency of instrumental networking. The survey first provided respondents with a

definition of instrumental-professional networking as "the purposeful building and nurturing of

relationships to create a system of information and support for professional and career success."

They were then asked, "How often do you engage in professional networking?" Response

options were on a five-point scale with the following anchors: "not at all," "rarely,"

"sometimes," "frequently," and "a great deal."

Feelings of dirtiness. We measured the experience of dirtiness from instrumental-

professional networking with the average response (on the five-point scale) to four survey items,

each starting with the sentence "When I engage in professional networking, I usually feel…"

followed by these adjectives: dirty, ashamed, inauthentic, uncomfortable.[4] To minimize demand effects, we listed these adjectives interspersed with markers along the affective circumplex (Barrett and Russell, 1998), such as happy, excited, anxious, and satisfied.

Individual performance. We measured individual performance in terms of billable hours, the standard metric of effectiveness and performance evaluation in law firms. Firm management provided us with billable-hour data they collect and record for each lawyer in 15-minute increments. To rescale these data and thus ease their comparison to other variables, we divided the billable-hour figures by 1000.

Since lawyers typically operate in a client-facing capacity throughout their career in a law firm, billable hours are the most relevant measure of performance for lawyers across hierarchical levels. The only potential exception to this rule are senior partners who, by virtue of taking on leadership roles within their firm, may scale back their client work, and thus their billable hours. We account for this possibility by controlling for hierarchical level in the analyses. In addition, in supplemental analyses, we excluded five senior partners whose billable hours were more than two standard deviations below the mean for senior partners as a result of their leadership roles in the firm. The results from these analyses were identical to those we present in the paper.

Power. We measured power in formal-structural terms by using lawyers' level of seniority within the firm. Specifically, we coded the hierarchical level of lawyers on a five-point scale (1=junior associate; 2=mid-level associate; 3=senior associate; 4=junior partner; and

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4 In this study, we assessed feelings of dirtiness by using four items rather than three items as in Study 2. We added the item "ashamed" since this word was frequently used to describe feelings experienced after networking in discussions with lawyers at a different firm. The nature and significance of our results in Study 3 do not change when using the three-item rather than the four-item measure. The results also hold when measuring feelings of dirtiness with only "dirty" and "ashamed."

5=senior partner). In law firms, these hierarchical distinctions are sharp and clearly delineate the power each level yields (Nelson, 2004).

Control variables

  Law practice. The firm was organized in departments representing 12 legal specialties in business law, such as litigation, tax, trusts and estates, and employment and labor. We used dummy variables to control for practice membership in the sample.

  Office geographical location. The law firm had offices in five large cities in North America. To account for the possibility of location affecting billable hours for lawyers operating in different geographies, we used dummy variables to control for lawyers' office membership. Because these indicator variables never had statistically significant effects in any of the regression models, we excluded them from the analyses we report.

  Gender. To account for potential differences in the behavior and performance of male and female lawyers, we used a dummy variable denoting a lawyer's gender (1=female).

  Personality traits. In light of research documenting associations between personality traits and relational behavior, we included controls for self-monitoring and for the Big Five personality traits. We measured self-monitoring with eight items ($\alpha = .66$, see Appendix B) from the self-monitoring scale developed by Snyder and Gangestad (1986). The eight items were selected based on the scale's factorial structure (Gangestad and Snyder, 2000). We measured extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness to experience, and conscientiousness with the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) (Gosling et al., 2003).

Modeling Approach

Hypothesis 3 predicted that feeling dirty from instrumental networking would be negatively associated with the frequency of instrumental networking. Hypothesis 4 then predicted a positive

association between the frequency of instrumental networking and individual performance.

Hypothesis 5 further specified frequency of instrumental networking as the mediator of the

relationship between feeing dirty and job performance. Finally, Hypothesis 6 predicted a

negative relationship between power (as measured by seniority in the formal ranks of the law

firm) and feelings of dirtiness from instrumental networking. Because our theory requires the

simultaneous testing of multiple mediation sequences while controlling for organizational and

individual characteristics that co-vary with multiple dependent variables, we tested these

predictions with a path analysis (Wright, 1934), estimating direct and indirect effects using the

corresponding structural equation model (Kline, 2011).

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for modeled variables.

Table 3 shows the results of the path analysis testing Hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6, including both

direct and indirect effects. The standardized regression coefficients provide support for all

hypotheses, with the model statistics (Table 3) consistently indicating an excellent fit of the

model to the data ($\chi^2_{(17)} = 14.18$, $p = 0.65$; RMSEA = 0.00; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = 0.16).

Specifically, professionals who experience feelings of dirtiness from instrumental-professional

networking tend to engage in it with lower frequency ($b = -.403$, $p < .001$), consistent with

Hypothesis 3. In turn, those who engage in instrumental-professional networking more

frequently tend to have higher performance on the job, measured as billable hours ($b = .183$, $p < .$

05), as predicted in Hypothesis 4. An analysis of indirect effects (right-hand side of Table 3)

provides support for Hypothesis 5, which predicted that frequency of instrumental networking

would mediate the relationship between feeling dirty and job performance. Indeed, feeling dirty

has a statistically significant indirect effect on billable hours ($b = -.074$, $p < .001$).

To address the possibility of reverse causality, we performed a second path analysis, which showed no effects of job performance, either direct or indirect, on either networking frequency or feeling dirty, effectively ruling out the plausibility of networking frequency and feelings of dirtiness as artifacts of job performance. In another robustness check, we addressed the possibility that need for cleansing may be driven by stress and anxiety versus moral impurity. To that end, we controlled for the average response to the survey items "stressed" and "anxious" that followed the question "When I engage in professional networking, I usually feel…" This measure did not have either a direct or an indirect effect on any of the dependent variables in the path analysis, nor did it alter the effects of feelings of dirtiness, supporting our contention that it is specifically moral impurity, and not generalized anxiety, that underlies our findings, consistent with the results of Study 2.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that individuals with high power experience lower feelings of dirtiness from instrumental networking as compared to those with low power. As shown in Table 3, we find support for this prediction. Individuals with high power, measured in terms of lawyer seniority (ranging from junior associate to senior partner), experience lower feelings of dirtiness from instrumental networking as compared to low-power people ($b = -.252, p < .001$). More senior lawyers also engage in networking more frequently than more junior lawyers ($b = .148, p < .05$). Power also has a statistically significant indirect effect on networking frequency ($b = .102, p < .01$), indicating that feeling less dirty from instrumental networking increases the frequency with which more senior people engage in this relational behavior.

The only additional significant effect emerging from the path models concerns the negative effect of extraversion on feelings of dirtiness from instrumental networking ($b = -.341, p < .001$). Extraversion also has an indirect effect on networking frequency ($b = .138, p < .001$).

Prior research has documented a positive relationship between extraversion and networking intensity (Wanberg et al., 2000; Wolff and Kim, 2012). Our findings add nuance to this evidence by suggesting that feelings of moral purity may mediate the association between extraversion and networking frequency.

Taken together, these findings bring the potential psychological costs of an agentic approach to social networks to the fore of network theory and practice. They also raise the possibility that the hierarchical structure of professional environments may perpetuate and reinforce inequality in the exercise of such networking agency and the distribution of benefits stemming from it. However, it is possible that the correlation between power and feelings of dirtiness is endogenous, with people potentially achieving higher rank *because* they feel less dirty than others when they engage in instrumental networking. To rule out this possibility, we conducted a final laboratory experiment to establish a causal link between power and dirtiness.

STUDY 4

To provide further support for our prediction that individuals with high power experience lower feelings of dirtiness from instrumental-professional networking as compared to individuals with low power (H6), in Study 4 we manipulated both power and content of the networking (professional vs. personal) within an instrumental networking situation.

Method

Participants and design. One hundred and forty-nine students (M_{age}=22.05, SD=5.35, 37.6% male) from local universities in a city in the Southeastern United States completed the study for pay. We randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions in a 2 (professional vs. personal networking) by 2 (high-power vs. low-power) between-subjects design. In all

networking conditions, the approach of the networking was instrumental. We only recruited participants who had an account on both LinkedIn and Facebook.

Power manipulation. Participants first completed a leadership questionnaire and were told that they would be assigned to a role as part of a group task on the basis of their answers to the questionnaire (as in Galinsky et al., 2003). Participants were then assigned to the role of an employee (i.e., low power) or a manager (i.e., high power) and received instructions with regard to their role for the group task, adapted from prior research (for detailed instructions, see Galinsky et al., 2003). The instructions made clear to participants that employees would follow the directions of the manager (i.e., managers had power over employees). Subsequently, participants were told that before taking part in this group task, they would participate in other short tasks for another study.

Networking manipulation. Next, we asked participants to select a person in their network (someone they are already connected with or someone they would like to connect with), draft a message, and send the message to that individual. Participants in the professional condition were asked to send the message through their personal LinkedIn account and were told, "Your intention in sending the message should be to build or nurture a professional relationship. With this message, you are trying to create a connection that would aid the execution of work tasks and your professional success." Those in the personal condition were asked to send the message through Facebook and were told, "Your intention in sending the message should be to build or nurture a personal relationship. With this message, you are trying to create a connection for emotional support and friendship."

Measures. Participants were then asked to complete the same product preference task as in Study 2. They also completed the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) and indicated how they felt on a five-point scale (1 = very slightly or not at all, 5 = extremely).

Next, they answered attention and manipulation-check questions. To ensure they understood the task, we asked participants to indicate their role (manager or employee), select the social network through which they had sent a note earlier (Facebook or LinkedIn), and identify their intention in writing the message (to create a relationship for emotional support or for professional success). Additionally, we assessed their feelings of power (the extent to which they felt powerful after receiving their role assignment; 1 = not at all powerful to 7 = extremely powerful) and dirtiness (the extent to which they felt dirty after sending the message they drafted; 1 = not at all dirty to 7 = extremely dirty). At the end of the study, they answered demographic questions.

Results and Discussion

Data exclusions. Three participants did not draft a message and thus were excluded. In addition, we excluded ten participants who did not provide a correct answer to one or more of the three attention-check questions. We established these exclusion criteria prior to conducting the study. This left us with 136 participants for the analyses.

Manipulation check. As expected, participants reported feeling significantly less powerful in the low-power condition ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.52$) than in the high-power condition ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 1.23$; $F(1, 132) = 78.90$, $p < .001$), suggesting our manipulation of power was successful. We found no significant main effect of type of network (professional or personal) ($p = .34$) nor a significant interaction ($p = .63$).

Cleansing. A 2 (content: personal vs. professional) by 2 (power: high vs. low) between-subjects ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between our two manipulations, $F(1, 132) =$ 4.96, $p = .028$. Participants with high power did not differ in their desirability for cleansing products based on the content of their networking ($M_{professional} = 2.34$, $SD = 1.22$ vs. $M_{personal} =$ 2.70, $SD = 1.49$, $F(1, 68) = 1.25$, $p = .27$), but those with low power had a higher preference for cleansing products when they engaged in professional ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.30$) rather than personal ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.29$) networking, $F(1, 64) = 4.20$, $p = .045$. Importantly, there were no differences between conditions for the non-cleansing products (main effects and interaction effect, $ps > .45$).

Negative and positive affect. Negative or positive affect did not differ across conditions (main effects and interaction effects, $ps > .50$).

Feeling dirty. A 2 by 2 ANOVA revealed a marginally significant main effect of content, $F(1, 132) = 3.39$, $p = .068$. Those in the professional networking condition ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.28$) felt dirtier as compared to those in the personal networking condition ($M = 1.59$, $SD = 1.13$). However, the interaction between power and content of networking was not significant, $F(1, 132) = .77$, $p = .38$. Despite the lack of significance, we ran follow-up comparisons between groups. Participants with high power felt equally dirty independent of the content of their networking behavior ($M_{professional} = 1.86$, $SD = 1.14$ vs. $M_{personal} = 1.66$, $SD = 1.14$, $F(1, 68) = .54$, $p = .47$), while low-power people felt dirtier when they engaged in professional ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.42$) rather than personal ($M = 1.53$, $SD = 1.13$) networking, ($F(1, 64) = 3.19$, $p = .079$). Unlike in Study 2, in this study participants completed the item measuring feeling of dirtiness after rather than before the cleansing measure, a difference that may account for the lack of predicted significant interaction. That is, the cleansing measure may have weakened the effect of our

manipulations on feeling dirty. Nonetheless, the marginal significance of type of networking in the low-power condition is in line with our theoretical argument.

Together, these results provide further support for Hypothesis 6 and suggest that the powerful may be immune to the feeling of dirtiness that results from engaging in instrumental professional networking. While low-power people experience a greater sense of dirtiness from engaging in professional-instrumental versus personal-instrumental networking, high-power people do not.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

As our friends and colleagues often remind us, and as the popularity of social media platforms suggests, there are clear advantages to creating and maintaining both personal and professional relationships. Many social ties emerge spontaneously from the simple fact of working in the same organization or hanging out in the same social circle. Others are the result of purposeful and intentional behaviors: through instrumental networking, people create and maintain connections that they think will provide them with opportunities and other benefits.

In this paper, we examined the psychological consequences of engaging in networking. We identified two important dimensions on which networking behaviors differ: content and approach. We argued that, unlike personal networking in pursuit of friendship or emotional support and unlike social ties that emerge spontaneously, instrumental networking in pursuit of professional goals can impinge on an individual's moral purity and thus make him feel dirty. Consistent with our theorizing, we found that professional and instrumental networking produce greater feelings of dirtiness as compared to personal and spontaneous networking. Using data from a large North American law firm, we also found that feeling dirty translates into poor work performance because it decreases the frequency of instrumental networking. Finally, we showed

that the greater the power people have when they engage in instrumental networking, the less dirty such networking can make them feel.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Three insights emerge from our research. First, we demonstrate the analytic utility of a clear conceptual distinction between instrumental networking driven by individual agency versus spontaneous networking reflecting the constraints and opportunities of the social structure. The long-standing sociological debate regarding the relationship between structure and agency has emphasized their interplay so thoroughly (e.g., Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990) as to blur the analytical distinction between the two (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). By contrast, organizational network scholars have largely bypassed this debate (for critical perspectives, see White, 1992; Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994; Bensaou et al., 2014): they espouse a deterministic view focused on network outcomes while at times allowing for—but rarely tackling analytically—an agentic view of social actors who deliberately seek to create ties that favor them (for a review, see Ahuja et al., 2012). Organizational network research has thus not made conceptual distinctions sharply enough to draw out their distinct psychological and behavioral implications (Kilduff and Brass, 2010). The present study shows the benefits of separately defining instrumental (agentic) versus spontaneous (structurally determined) networking and overlaying this distinction on the traditional distinction between professional (work-related) versus personal (expressive) tie content. By doing do, we demonstrate that the content and approach of networking each influence the psychological experience of those engaging in it. These results have broad potential implications for research on organizational networks. For instance, organizational discourse on brokerage, with its tendency to assume agency (Burt, 2005), has largely left unexplored the extent to which brokerage is the result of intentional behavior or of structural opportunity, as

Zaheer and Soda (2009) acutely noted. Our theory and findings suggest that the emergence and sustainability of brokerage behavior may depend on whether the broker intentionally pursued the information and control benefits of bridging structural holes or rather reacted to the demands and opportunities of operating at the boundaries of a social structure: namely, the moral consequences of agentic versus structurally determined brokerage may affect how brokers emerge, whether they persist or vanish in time, and whether they benefit themselves or others.

Second, this research makes strides in establishing the relevance of moral psychology to network theory. People define morality within the embedded social context (Haidt, 2008). The notion that social behavior has implications for individual morality is the centerpiece of moral psychology (Haidt, 2008; Moore and Gino, 2013). Sociologists have also investigated the role of moral emotions—such as shame and guilt—in social behavior (for a review, see Turner and Stets, 2006). By contrast, social network research has paid scant attention to the moral dimension of the human experience in social networks. Even the recent surge in interest in the psychological underpinnings of organizational networks has eschewed morality as an object of study in favor of affect (e.g., Casciaro and Lobo, 2008) and personality (e.g., Mehra et al., 2001). The results of this study show that networking behavior cannot be understood without a thorough consideration of its psychological and moral implications. We show that networking affects an individual's psychological experience beyond mere feelings of positive and negative affect to impinge on a person's feelings of moral purity. The content and approach of networking each have independent effects on the dirty feelings people experience as well as on their desire to cleanse themselves, with professional-instrumental networking as the behavior leading to the highest feelings of dirtiness and desire for cleanliness. This physical embodiment of psychological responses to networking demonstrates how profoundly morality can influence

networking behavior and thus the social networks emerging from it. A thorough understanding of network emergence needs to consider the moral psychology of network agency.

Third, we unveil how power changes the moral experience of instrumental networking. Understanding agency in networking behavior requires an understanding of the structural context within which agency emerges. Whether and how individuals engage in network agency depends heavily on their position in the social structure (Sewell, 1992), yet little attention has been devoted to understanding how structure encourages or discourages varying agentic orientations (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). We considered power as a key dimension of an actor's structural position and elaborated on why instrumental networking does not make powerful people feel as morally impure as the powerless. By ruling out the possibility that the powerful merely self-select into powerful positions because they feel less dirty than others when they network, we uncover a critical source of inequality in organizations. Network ties are essential to advancement in organizations because they provide people with access to opportunities, political insight, and technical knowledge. Because people in powerful positions do not experience the morally contaminating effects of instrumental networking, power emerges from our work as yielding unequal access to networking opportunities. This reinforces and perpetuates inequality in performance. By virtue of their minority status, subordinate role in the formal hierarchy or peripheral position in the informal organizational networks, disadvantaged organizational members rarely have opportunities for spontaneous networking and, our results suggest, feel dirtiest in pursuing it actively. One implication for practice is that, to foster the advancement and effectiveness of professionals at low hierarchical levels or in minority groups, organizations need to create opportunities for emergent forms of networking, as those who need instrumental networking the most are the least likely to engage in it.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its strengths, our research also has some limitations that point to potential venues for future research. First, although we studied a variety of personally and organizationally relevant outcomes resulting from different networking behaviors (i.e., feelings of dirtiness, need for cleansing, frequency of networking, and job performance), it also would be useful to investigate other variables, such as creativity or innovation. Feeling dirty may drain a person's energy or mental resources and thus negatively impact creativity on the job (Tice et al., 2007).

Second, all our measures focused on the person engaging in networking. It would be useful to also measure and model how others perceive different networking behaviors. Though certain types of networking may make one feel particularly dirty, the perceiver may—at least in certain situations—feel flattered by it, suggesting that there is a mismatch between the initiator's experience of networking and the recipient. Unaware of others' strategic motives, we may inaccurately assume that initiators of ties are seeking us out because we are wise or important.

Third, we did not examine the effect of initiators' past experiences with networking (e.g., the reactions they received from recipients of their attempts to create ties). Such experiences are likely to influence the extent to which initiators view networking as deceptive and thus feel dirty when engaging in it.

There are a number of interesting potential boundary conditions surrounding our theory that will be important to test in future research. For example, it would be interesting to consider the appropriateness of networking in contexts where expectations concerning such behaviors are more or less clear. In settings that are explicitly structured to bring together people for instrumental or strategic reasons (e.g., a networking event organized by a company to introduce new recruits to senior management), networking may not produce the same feelings of dirtiness

we observed in our research, as everyone present will know the event was created by others for the specific purpose of building or cultivating social ties among organization members. When individual agency is removed, feelings of contamination are less likely to take a hold. Relatedly, when professional-instrumental networking is intended to benefit a third party—e.g., one's work team or organization—the intentionality of the behavior is less likely to impinge on a person's moral purity, as an altruistic motive coexists with the benefits drawn from networking. This lessening of the contaminating effects of professional-instrumental networking may work as an important tool for the powerless in organizations, who feel dirtiest when they intentionally pursue professional relationships, and thus particularly need means to justify networking to themselves. Benefitting a third party may serve such a purpose well.

Tie multiplexity may also serve as a boundary condition to moral impurity from networking. Theoretically and empirically, we aimed to isolate the respective effects of professional and personal networking. We found that networking has distinctly different effects on individual morality depending on tie content. Yet, personal and work-related content often overlap in organizational and business networks (for example, Ingram and Roberts, 2000; Casciaro and Lobo, 2008). There are competing arguments for how multiplexity may moderate the link between professional-instrumental networking and moral purity. On the one hand, people who mix professional and personal content may feel more impure, because by doing so they contaminate the altruistic motives of friendship. On the other hand, the overlap of personal content may ease the moral burden of networking for professional goals, because the concern for the other that animates the relationship may make it more justifiable to oneself to benefit from it. This is a very promising avenue for future research, given the plausibility of these competing

arguments and the increasing evidence that the personal content of organizational networks is inextricably linked to their task-related content (Casciaro, 2014).

The framing of networking or the main motivation for engaging in it may also be important. For instance, promotion and prevention focus are two distinct orientations people may use to achieve their goals (Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 1998). As applied to networking, some people may engage in networking because of the potential for opportunity and success (i.e., those with a promotion focus), while others may engage in networking because of a sense of duty, adherence to behavioral norms, and threat of lost opportunity (i.e., those with a prevention focus). Prevention-focused individuals may therefore engage in networking with the burden of inauthenticity rather than with a joyous sense of excitement—they network because they have to, not because they want to, and thus they may feel dirtier in the process. Yet, it is also possible that "having to" network may release some of the uncomfortable feelings of networking.

Conclusion

Previous research has demonstrated direct relations between networking and several organizational outcomes, such as promotions (Burt, 1992), influence (Brass and Burkhardt, 1993), and turnover (Krackhardt and Porter, 1985). The effects of networking on these outcomes have often been theoretically explained (but not empirically tested) as occurring because of the access to information, resources, and sponsorship opportunities resulting from social contacts (e.g., Blau and Alba, 1982; Burt, 1997). The current research is unique in its inclusion of potential psychological barriers that people need to overcome (e.g., feeling morally impure) if they want to reap the benefits of "dirty networking."

APPENDIX A

Experimental Materials Used in Study 2

Spontaneous

You received an invitation last week one of your co-workers to attend her annual party. This isn't just your average Christmas party. It's a large event hosted inside a warehouse that attracts a very large crowd. Your colleague said that people are even driving in from neighboring towns to get there. You don't know of any of your friends who were invited, so you are pretty sure the event is exclusive. You recently graduated from college and you recently moved to New York. Living here has been your dream, and you are definitely hoping to remain in the city for your entire life. You are excited to make some friends and learn more about this fascinating city. You want to enjoy your first major party in the city and get to know a lot of new people.At the annual party, you used the time very wisely: socializing with as many people as you could. The party started out with a cocktail hour at 6pm, followed by a dinner. You headed to the cocktail hour with George Richdale, a good friend of the host. You ran into him at the hotel and you knew who he was, so you introduced yourself. As soon as you two arrived at the cocktail hour, he introduced you to his friends, Mike, Tommy, Kate and their spouses. You all had an interesting discussion on the transition from college to the real world, and you later exchanged emails so that you could keep in touch. After the cocktail hour, you and George had dinner. You were sitting next to Alex Hayward, the booker for Saturday Night Live, and Jennifer Aramovich, the author of How to Get Along with Your Boss. You all shared some good laughs, and you think they found you friendly and funny. Because you just moved to the city, getting to know people and making friends are really important for your social life and well-being. As the dinner transitioned into the New Year's Party, you had a friendly conversation with as many people. You met a lot of people with whom you shared mutual friends or were in the same social circle and added plenty of contacts on Facebook. In addition, you really hit it off with Chris Lee, a friend of George Richdale, who happened to live a few blocks from your apartment. Like you, Chris Lee grew up in the same town and attended the same college, so you had plenty to talk about from the start. Meeting Chris was really the highlight of the party. Everyone knows that moving to a new city can be tough, so it's great to have met someone who has been through the same experiences as you.

Instrumental

You received an invitation from your mentor last week to attend the Company's annual party. This isn't just your average Christmas party run by a Company's branch. It's actually the annual New Year's Party at the Company's headquarters. Your supervisor said that everyone from corporate will be there. You don't know of any of your friends who were invited, so you are pretty sure the event is exclusive. You recently graduated from college and you currently have a two-year contract with this Company. Working here has been your dream job, and you are definitely hoping to remain with the Company for your entire career. You really want to make a good impression on the people at corporate, and this event will definitely help you do that.At the annual party, you used the time very wisely: interacting with as many people from corporate as you could. The party started out with a cocktail hour at 6pm, followed by a dinner. You headed to

the cocktail hour with George Richdale, the head of marketing for the Mid-Atlantic region. You ran into him at the hotel and you knew who he was, so you took the opportunity to make a connection. As soon as you two arrived at the cocktail hour, he introduced you to his friends, Mike, Tommy, and Kate. They are all executives at the Company and were accompanied by their spouses who worked at competing firms. You made sure to get their emails so that you could keep in touch.After the cocktail hour, you and George had dinner. Your were sitting next to Alex Hayward, the director of sales, and Jennifer Aramovich, the head of the RandD division. You definitely made a good impression when you talked about your accomplishments so far at the Company. Because you just started, having these people get to know you is as important as performing well at your job. As the dinner transitioned into the New Year's Party, you walked around so that you could talk to as many people as possible. You met a lot of other executives and added a lot of new contacts at the company to your LinkedIn profile. In addition, you really hit it off with Chris Lee, the CEO at the company, who you met through George. Like you, Chris Lee grew up in the same town and attended the same college, so you had plenty to talk about from the start. Making this connection was really the highlight of the party. Everyone knows that in this industry being good at your job is not enough, so it's really important that you made this contact.

APPENDIX B

Items used to measure Self-monitoring, Study 3

1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
2. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
3. At a party, I leave it to others keep the jokes and stories going.
4. In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.
5. I would probably make a good actor.
6. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
7. I can put on a show to impress or entertain others.
8. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.

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Table 1. Percentage of descriptions used by participants in their essay by condition - Study 1

Category	Instrumental Professional	Instrumental Social	Emergent Professional	Emergent Social	Percentage across conditions
1. Attending Work-related events and gatherings	15.1%	6.4%	28.9%	7.6%	14.4%
2. Attending office holiday party	5.5%	0.0%	43.4%	7.6%	14.1%
3. Attending conferences or networking events	12.3%	7.7%	5.3%	0.0%	6.2%
4. Inviting colleagues or old friends for drinks	34.2%	33.3%	5.3%	7.6%	19.9%
5. Engaging in extra role activities directed at others at work	21.9%	5.1%	1.3%	0.0%	6.9%
6. Attending friend's party	1.4%	7.7%	5.3%	27.8%	10.8%
7. Accompanying someone to parties/gatherings	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	8.9%	3.3%
8. Attending alumni events	2.7%	9.0%	2.6%	22.8%	9.5%
9. Joining clubs or signing in for special events	1.4%	9.0%	1.3%	2.5%	3.6%
10. Hosting a party	1.4%	3.8%	0.0%	6.3%	2.9%
11. Other	4.1%	14.1%	6.6%	8.9%	8.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2. Mean, standard deviations, and correlation of variables - Study 3

	Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Billable hours	1.47	.46										
2	Networking frequency	3.50	.84	.18									
3	Feeling dirty	1.81	.59	-.01	-.49								
4	Seniority	3.19	1.46	-.01	.29	-.30							
5	Female	.33	.47	.00	-.06	.13	-.13						
6	Self-monitoring	3.11	.55	.00	.15	-.11	-.20	-.03					
7	Extraversion	3.42	.90	.07	.32	-.37	.02	.00	.52				
8	Agreeableness	3.59	.75	-.01	.01	-.20	.20	-.13	-.10	.15			
9	Conscientiousness	4.22	.62	.10	.12	-.18	.21	.20	-.07	.21	.26		
10	Neuroticism	2.40	.84	-.10	-.21	.28	-.18	.17	-.10	-.36	-.26	-.25	
11	Openness to experience	3.59	.87	.00	-.06	-.11	-.01	.00	.18	.02	.13	.16	.03

Correlation coefficients greater than .13 are significant at p < .05

Table 3. Results of path analysis: Direct and indirect effects - Study 3 (N = 165)

	DIRECT EFFECT		INDIRECT EFFECT	
	Standardized coefficient	OIM s.e.	Standardized coefficient	OIM s.e.
D.V. Networking frequency				
Feeling dirty	-.403 ***	(.101)	.000	(no path)
Seniority	.148 *	(.040)	.102 **	(.020)
Female	-.005	(.120)	-.031	(.052)
Self-monitoring	.050	(.120)	-.017	(.052)
Extraversion	.105	(.078)	.138 **	(.040)
Agreeableness	-.074	(.078)	.020	(.033)
Conscientiousness	.021	(.097)	.007	(.041)
Neuroticism	-.060	(.071)	-.039	(.031)
Openness to experience	-.096	(.063)	.043	(.028)
Law practice dummy variables	Yes		Yes	
D.V. Feeling dirty				
Seniority	-.252 ***	(.030)	.000	(no path)
Female	.078	(.091)	.000	(no path)
Self-monitoring	.041	(.093)	.000	(no path)
Extraversion	-.341 ***	(.059)	.000	(no path)
Agreeableness	-.050	(.059)	.000	(no path)
Conscientiousness	-.017	(.074)	.000	(no path)
Neuroticism	.097	(.055)	.000	(no path)
Openness to experience	-.106	(.049)	.000	(no path)
D.V. Billable hours				
Networking frequency	.183 *	(.049)	.000	(no path)
Feeling dirty	.108	(.066)	-.074 ***	(.010)
Seniority	.004	(.024)	.019	(.008)
Female	-.059	(.072)	.002	(.014)
Self-monitoring	.000	(no path)	.011	(.013)
Extraversion	.000	(no path)	.008	(.016)
Agreeableness	.000	(no path)	-.015	(.009)
Conscientiousness	.000	(no path)	.003	(.010)
Neuroticism	.000	(no path)	-.008	(.009)
Openness to experience	.000	(no path)	-.021	(.009)
Law practice dummy variables	Yes		Yes	

$\chi^2_{(17)}$ = 14.18, p = 0.65; RMSEA = 0.00; CFI = 1.00; SRMR = 0.16
Two-tailed tests; * p<.05, ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Figure 1. Accessibility of cleansing-related words, Study 1