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Players and Purists: Networking Strategies and Agency of Service Professionals

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Social capital research has established the performance advantages of networking. However, we know surprisingly little about the strategies individuals employ when networking and, in particular, the underlying agency mechanisms involved. Network analysis tends to presume structural determinism and ignore issues of endogeneity rather than explore how actors draw on schemas, beliefs, and values in developing their networks. This empirical paper induces three networking strategies of newly promoted service professionals operating within two firms (AuditCo and ConsultCo) over a 16-month period. Using a grounded theory building approach, we first establish a set of core categories that capture networking behavior. We then conduct a cluster analysis revealing three distinct networking configurations or strategies: Devoted Players, Purists, and Selective Players. We also reveal the distinct agency involved in each profile and investigate the extent to which these networking strategies correlate with variables that shed light on issues of endogeneity and deepen our understanding of the strategies (including network structure and socialization progress in the players' new jobs).

Key words: social networks; social capital; agency; network dynamics; professional service firms; qualitative methods

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Introduction

This paper addresses two closely related limitations in current social network research, agency and endogeneity. Agency concerns purposive actors who display creativity and choice in social action, which should include strategies for networking. Endogeneity questions the causal prominence granted to network structure on individual outcomes, versus the reverse influence of outcomes on structure, and the comparative influence of individual agency on those outcomes. Both issues invite a better empirical account of individual networking strategies—not just network positions—and their genesis. Despite calls by theorists to take agency more seriously in social network research (White 1992, p. 92), there is remarkably little research on individual agency in social networking. Rather, network research has focused on the links between an actor's social structure (largely sparse versus dense network ties) and various individual-level outcomes—for example, reputation (Kilduff and Krackhardt 1994), job opportunities (Fernandez and Weinberg 1997; Granovetter 1973, 1974), salary (Orpen 1996, Seidel et al. 2000), and innovativeness (Obstfeld 2005, Rodan and Galunic 2004, Subramaniam and Youndt 2005). Much of the research

on social capital examines the relative causal advantages of sparse versus dense structures—indeed, the term “capital” connotes that social structure *begets* social action and advantages.

Although much has been learned about social networks in the workplace, research to date is limited in at least two ways. First, social network research has targeted numerous outcomes and advantages but, through limited network qualities, is mostly devoid of human agency. The tendency is to see what new performance advantage sparse or closed networks can explain, and so studies appear to move from one performance indicator to another in search of new applications of the same core mechanisms. Structure is deterministic in much of this work. To be sure, this body of work is important. Not only has such research made social capital a much more credible, and thus influential, theory, but it has also refined the core structural mechanisms, spawning studies of the contingent nature of sparse or dense networks (Burt 1997, Gargiulo et al. 2009, Reagans and McEvily 2003). The danger, however, is that social capital, a broad and holistic concept, is simply reduced to the network position (i.e., cold, hard structure), and perhaps averaged tie strengths, of actors. Social capital is about

more than network position (Adler and Kwon 2002). Bourdieu's (1986, p. 248) definition of social capital sees actors embedded in relationships where leverage and advantage are not guaranteed by virtue of structure alone; rather, in as much as potential exists for advantage, that advantage must be seized through the relational strategies and decisions of actors. Social capital should be as much about agentic social actors as it is about social positions (Stevenson and Greenberg 2000). Social capital involves an ensemble of networking behaviors and attitudes, including strategies for tie discovery, acts of leverage, targeting, or prioritization (up, down, out), and even moral codes and beliefs. Social capital is about both an actor's social network (noun) and an actor's social networking (verb).

Our focus is on the configuration of relational choices and activities that amount to a social networking strategy. Our research purpose is to empirically induce the networking strategies of organizational actors—in this case, service professionals. Moreover, we contribute an agent-centric perspective, exploring how personal choices and acquired cultural categories (e.g., schemas, beliefs, values) play out in the construction of networking strategies. The field badly lacks an empirical and grounded approach to understanding agency in the construction of social networking strategies (Ozcan and Eisenhardt 2009, Shipilov et al. 2007, Stevenson and Greenberg 2000, Vissa 2012). Although it is taken for granted that the development of interpersonal relationships through networking is an important competence for business careers (Defillippi and Arthur 1994), we lack comprehensive studies of the configurations of individual networking behavior and thinking that would amount to networking strategies. Shipilov et al. (2007, p. 1) go further in this direction when they call network building behaviors the “great black box of social network research.” Although recent studies have examined how specific networking acts and individual attributes influence social position (structure) or social outcomes (e.g., knowledge sharing, tie formation; see Reinholt et al. 2011, Stevenson and Greenberg 2000, Vissa 2012), no individual-level research that we know of has examined how networking behavior and choice amount to and construct a networking strategy (at the firm level; see Ozcan and Eisenhardt 2009).

Our perspective has its roots in the human agency tradition of social structure (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994, Emirbayer and Mische 1998, Sewell 1992), premised in the belief that human actors, even while constrained by broader cultural categories or structures, can creatively interpret and craft their social order, in line with their personal commitments, values, broader beliefs, and so on. A configurational approach would then look for repeated patterns in how actors construct their social networks, looking for commonalities in motives and tactics; that is, we must be careful not to assume that, although

networks can be flexible or “plastic” (Davis 2008), plasticity must mean that there are as many networking approaches as there are actors. Commonalities are likely, and empirical investigation is needed to induce and define these strategies. This is essentially what Mehra et al. (2001, p. 141) have in mind when they call for an “examination of the ways in which different types of people forge distinctively different patterns of social ties in the workplace” (see also Gibbons 2004). This is the first ambition of our study and a much needed contribution to the field: to empirically induce the networking strategies of organizational actors, examining the common configurations of underlying elements that constitute distinct agentic choices and approaches to networking.

A second shortcoming of network research is that it tends to be static, lacking appreciation of network dynamics, including the possibility of endogeneity. Fortunately, research into network dynamics has increased lately, including a recent special issue (Ahuja et al. 2012). We can categorize the emerging work on network dynamics in roughly three ways. First, network dynamics are explored by looking at how the life cycle of ties (young versus old ties, imprinting ties, or those acquired later) impact performance outcomes (Baum et al. 2012, McEvily et al. 2012, Soda et al. 2004)—the “dynamic” in question is the life stage or history of a particular tie or structure. Second, network dynamics are explored by looking at tie formation and dissolution, the most common approach to network dynamics so far and the most direct interpretation of dynamics as network “change” or development (Burt 2000, 2002; Casciaro and Lobo 2008; Degenne and Lebeaux 2005; Feld 1997; Gulati and Gargiulo 1999; Martin and Yeung 2006; Maurer and Ebers 2006; Reagans 1998). Third, network dynamics are studied by examining how entire structures evolve, not just the gain or loss of single ties, well demonstrated by Zaheer and Soda's (2009) study of the origins of structural holes (see also Gulati et al. 2012). Although the majority of these studies are not at the individual level (most are at the team or organizational level), they have improved our understanding of network dynamics. It is too early to generalize across this emerging work and predict its direction, but these studies suggest that social networks are more flexible and plastic than cross-sectional studies may assume and with more scope for human agency and its role in network genesis and development (Ahuja et al. 2012).

Our study aims to extend the reach of research on network dynamics, a budding portfolio of studies that, as we have seen, range from studies of network life cycles to the genesis (and loss) of network ties, to the genesis of network structures, to (this study) the genesis of networking strategies. This further reach is important. First, there is simply too little research on the genesis or development of individual networks, let alone

on how those individuals develop their network strategies. An agency perspective is a fitting research path for the study of network dynamics if we allow that the actions and choices individuals make over some period of time in the construction of their networking strategy constitute a relevant interpretation of dynamics. Second, although our study does not aim to provide a “play-by-play” history of how a networking strategy comes into being, it does offer enough of a longitudinal view to answer two important questions regarding endogeneity: (1) Do prior network positions (e.g., dense versus sparse structures) beget the strategies that we observe—that is, are personal networking strategies chained to a cold, hard structure, or do agents’ actions have some independent force? (2) Do the networking strategies that we discover subsequently influence the network structure and socialization levels (job and interpersonal) of these actors? Although our study does not capture long personal histories (which would entail impractical resource demands), our approach goes beyond cross-sectional research. Asking an actor about her or his approach to networking and relationship building is better done if data collection targets a bounded and relevant period of time during which the actors are actively developing their networks, so that actors can draw on recent behaviors, events, and emotions in answering the “how” question. To this end, our study targets recently promoted service professionals who take on, for the first time, managerial responsibilities and tracks their relational development and thinking over two points in time, as they begin their new roles and roughly 16 months later. Again, the aim is not to conduct a play-by-play analysis of relationship building over this time but to introduce more subtleties, forces, and thus dynamics into the question of an actor’s networking strategy and issues of agency and endogeneity. We begin by reviewing related work on individual-level networking strategies before outlining our methodology and approach.

Background and Related Literature

A small number of related research streams shed light on the networking tactics of individuals, although not on networking strategies. One stream explores the way context shapes specific networking moves, what we call a *tactic-contingency* approach. For example, a rare study of contingent networking tactics is the study by Stevenson and Greenberg (2000) of social movements (environmental issues) in a New England town. They show that context (favorable or unfavorable political opportunities) and network position (peripheral or central) have a significant impact on an actor’s influence tactics. The broader networking strategies and approaches to relationship building of these agents, however, are not the focus. More recently, McDonald et al. (2008) demonstrate that organizational governance regimes surrounding chief executive officers (CEOs), as well as the CEO’s

level of experience, determine whether CEOs seek out contacts with perspectives dissimilar from the one held by the CEO. Other related studies also suggest ways in which social context influences specific networking tactics (Michael and Yukl 1993, Orpen 1996). This stream is related to our study in that networking behaviors are studied. However, the specific (often singular) actions described are not holistic assessments of networking strategies, nor do they examine agency. In fact, the perspectives can be quite structuralist, for example, in Michael and Yukl’s (1993, p. 328) focus on “situational determinants of networking behavior.” Emirbayer and Goodwin’s (1994, p. 1425) critique of structural determinism in network analysis, which they argue “neglects altogether the potential causal role of actors’ beliefs, values, and normative commitments . . .” applies well here in attempting to interpret and understand networking and social action. Our aim is to offer a more holistic view, with attention to networking configurations, broad strategies, and human agency.

A second stream looks at how *properties of the actor* (e.g., gender, personality, demographics) impact network position and, in rare cases, networking behaviors (for a review of antecedents to interpersonal networks, see Brass et al. 2004). Some personality traits have been found to significantly affect social network positions—for example, high self-monitors occupy more central positions (Mehra et al. 2001), and actors with low levels of neuroticism and high value similarity (to teammates) occupy more central positions in advice and friendship networks (Klein et al. 2004). In a large-sample quantitative study of managers and professionals, Forret and Dougherty (2001) find that greater self-esteem and extraversion were predictors of some common networking acts, such as socializing, engaging in professional activities, maintaining contacts, and improving visibility in the workplace. Unlike this latter study, however, much of the work around antecedents tries to predict network positions, not networking actions. And when networking behaviors are described, they do not point to a networking strategy, nor are temporal dynamics and agency captured.

A third stream consists of practitioner-oriented works that serve as “how-to” career guides and networking advice for business people. They combine personal stories with advice prescribing certain attitudes and behaviors, such as to “be sincere” or “never eat alone” (Ferrazzi 2005). Filling a void in the practitioner literature, such guidelines are prescriptive and anecdotal rather than descriptive, focusing on microbehaviors rather than patterns in networking behavior. Moreover, prescriptive approaches have a tendency to be universal: they do not adequately take into account that because actors are different, strategies may also differ.

Finally, some academic studies have looked at networking behavior by crafting networking scales. Approaches range from scales that include as few as two

items (Gould and Penley 1984) to Forret and Dougherty’s (2001) impressive 33-item scale (see also Forret and Dougherty 2004, Luthans et al. 1988, Michael and Yukl 1993). These contribute important collections of networking behaviors and point to the need for a more holistic understanding of how actors approach social networking. Our study, however, is unique in several ways. First, our approach is inductive. We build empirical models of networking strategies from the ground up; through cluster analysis of multiple networking elements, we examine the behaviors of active managers. Second, we pay more attention to how the elements of networking styles fit together to form meaningful configurations. Our study allows for the fact that although actors may display various foci, behaviors, and attitudes in how they build relationships in their workplace, whether these amount to a networking strategy—whether elements display coherence—is an empirical question. Finally, our approach takes into account actor agency, which has been neglected. We define networking strategies as repeated and patterned relational behaviors, which amount to an ensemble or configuration of interdependent relational activities (Meyer et al. 1993). These will necessarily be multidimensional constructs; however, each strategy will contain some central meaning, style, or theme, and each is derived from the actions, beliefs, and values of agents. Strategies are compelling in the collective meaning of the underlying elements, rather than in the isolated attitudes and activities themselves (Miller 1987).

The absence of knowledge on agency and networking strategies makes an inductive theory building approach, grounded in individual case histories, relevant and suitable. We will first explain the grounded theory approach we used to identify the activities and attitudes employed by actors in their ongoing social relations, where we eventually use cluster analysis to collect and aggregate these behaviors into distinct networking configurations, complemented by a comparison with existing networking dimensions found in the literature. To add meaning and interpretation to these clusters, we then describe and detail our findings, including a look at whether prior structural measures predict strategies and how various associated variables perform as correlates of the three networking clusters we uncover.

Methods

Our sample consists of newly promoted project managers in the consulting and auditing industries. We chose professional service firms (PSFs) to study networking strategies for several reasons. Because knowledge is the key resource of service organizations, its creation, development, and exchange is important in these industries (Cross and Cummings 2004, Sarvary 1999). Connecting to various others is a big part of this work. Our subjects were all entering their midcareer stage, generally

those who survived the first three to five years as consultants or junior auditors/analysts and were now promoted to the manager level. In consulting and audit, this is a key career transition. Preliminary interviews conducted with human resources (HR) specialists in consulting and audit revealed that the move from senior consultant/auditor to project manager represents a major shift in activities: early in their careers, our subjects will have focused on a particular consulting/auditing mandate at one client company, reporting to one manager. But once promoted to project managers, they are leading multiple projects, managing multiple teams, being involved with various clients, and reporting to, or within the expertise of, various partners. This career transition places many demands from multiple stakeholders on the project manager—team leadership, developing subordinates, client management and “selling,” coordination and knowledge sharing with peers, and positioning for the partner track (Stumpf 1999). Finally, because this occurs at regular intervals for a substantial cohort of employees, these industries are ideal for such networking research. In particular, we expect to see more diversity in networking patterns at this midcareer stage than at entry (Carroll and Teo 1996, Michael and Yukl 1993).

Our sample consists of 53 project managers. Sixteen of them came from the German offices of a global strategy consulting company, and 37 were employees of a Big Four auditing firm, with 15 from the firm’s London office and 22 from the New York office. The sample was representative in age, gender, years with the company, and areas of specialization for each company. All participants had been promoted to the project manager position not more than three months prior to the first data collection point. Table 1 summarizes the sample.

Data Collection

Data collection took place at two times: when participants had been promoted to a project manager position (within three months), denoted as T1, and an average of 16 months later, denoted as T2. We found that this time span allowed managers to settle into their new jobs, with regular relational patterns and styles emerging, but without so much time having passed that their ability to recall important actions and events was in jeopardy. The aim of T1 data collection was to understand the subjects and their new roles, including an ego-network survey and early input on relationship management in the new

Table 1 Sample Characteristics

	Consulting (Germany)	Audit 1 (London)	Audit 2 (New York)
No. of participants	15	15	22
No. of female participants	2	7	6
Average age	31.9	28.0	28.8
Tenure with firm (years)	3	5	5

role; the aim of T2 data collection was to gather detailed information on how they had managed their relationships over those 16 months, including a close look at agency in networking development. Because we did not want to impose any networking constructs on our subjects, we based our interviews on a broad definition of networking as behaviors that individuals use to develop and maintain relationships with others, relevant to their work and careers, whether internal or external.

Each data collection event consisted of a semi-structured interview and an egocentric network survey. Interviews lasted 1.5 to 2 hours and were recorded and transcribed. All authors conducted interviews at both times, initially interviewing subjects together to calibrate our approach. Interviews at T1 created an understanding of the subject's role as project manager. Because participants had only recently been promoted, we used open-ended questions to understand how this new position differed from what they had done before and how they thought of their future development in this role. Particular emphasis was placed on how they were managing their key professional relationships, as well as probing how they felt about networking as an activity in general. Interviews at T2 were more structured and detailed than at T1. The aim was to ask the subjects what they had been doing to develop, manage, or dissolve their professional relationships. The interview started with open-ended questions about the past year's highlights and any major professional or personal events, such as achievements or failures, to help anchor discussions in concrete events. The ego-network data from the T2 survey were prepared a few days before the second interview, which we used during the interview for data triangulation; that is, we probed subjects about any major changes we could detect by comparing T1 and T2 network data (e.g., a shift in network membership). This allowed us to have more detailed conversations about subjects' experience. Network size was the number of contacts listed by each subject, and we used a broad range of network generators to ensure that we were comprehensive in tapping key relations (task advice, buy-in, professional development, innovation, friendship, and external). Network density uses Burt's ego density measure of the average marginal strength of relations between alters (see Burt 1992; 1993, p. 181), which makes use of tie strength data from ego (which we collected) and varies between 0 (no relations between ego's alters) and 1 (maximum strength relations between all alters). By asking subjects to make sense of the ego-network data, we tried to surface the otherwise implicit ways in which they went about networking. The interview also helped us to understand any inconsistencies between what the network data suggested and the subject's narrative (i.e., supporting stories and events) and the main thrust or thread of the subject's relational approach. This narrative, rather than the maps per se, were the focus. Where

we found inconsistencies, we probed for explanations. This also helped us reduce the risk of post hoc rationalization of intentions and agency (e.g., "I didn't network much, maybe I don't think it's important?"), which we also mitigated by providing the network maps only later in the interview and examining the holistic experience of subjects during this career transition.

At T2, subjects also completed a "closing" survey that asked them to rate on a five-point Likert scale a series of items assessing five scales concerning learning/socialization and embeddedness in the context: (1) task mastery (Chao et al. 1994; Morrison 1993, 2002), (2) role clarity (Ashford 1986, Morrison 2002, Rizzo et al. 1970), (3) social integration with coworkers and (4) social integration with clients (Chao et al. 1994, Morrison 1993), and (5) organizational commitment (Allen and Meyer 1990, though their measure captures affective commitment in particular, rather than commitment for instrumental reasons, and is thus more relevant for the capture of embeddedness). This survey helped us to assess subjects' sense of competence and embeddedness in their new roles at the end of those 16 months. As competence and embeddedness are useful correlates of social networking strategies, such assessments allowed us to deepen our understanding of these induced types, to which we return in the discussion.

Data Analysis: A Grounded Theory Approach

As noted, we define networking strategies as repeated or patterned relational behaviors that amount to a configuration of interdependent relational activities. Given the lack of theory on such configurations, we opted for a grounded theory approach (Eisenhardt 1989, Glaser and Strauss 1967, Yin 1989). Data analysis proceeded in three phases. The first phase followed T1 and began the process of generating the networking elements. Interview transcripts were coded by examining statements referring to networking in its widest sense. This was typically a point about a networking target (e.g., peer, client, partner, subordinate) and some action undertaken (e.g., taking a client to lunch, having a drink with a peer after work). Following Miles and Huberman (1994), we used constant data comparison and iteration to create categories of networking acts. At least two authors read each transcript, coding independently before comparing notes. This process generated a variety of first-order actions (e.g., taking out a client) that resulted in categories (e.g., "client entertainment"). We eventually aggregated the categories into generative elements (Strauss and Corbin 1998) that produced networking dimensions for which we abstracted labels. After examining and collapsing several dimensions, we ended up with a basic frame of seven dimensions: *partner focus*, *client focus*, *team focus*, *peer focus*, *exploration*, *leverage*, and *attitude toward networking*. Table 2 summarizes these dimensions. The first four dimensions refer to a specific stakeholder group. It was very common for

Table 2 Dimensions of Networking Configurations

Variable	Description	Examples
<i>Client focus</i>	Activities aimed at enhancing the relationship with existing or potential clients	—Client entertainment activities, e.g., taking the client to lunch, dinner, sporting or cultural events —Selling activities, e.g., presenting proposals for consulting/auditing projects
<i>Partner focus</i>	Activities aimed at enhancing the relationship with partners the manager works with or may work with in the future	—Doing social activities together, e.g., playing on the same football team —“Selling oneself,” e.g., presenting yourself as an expert in a subject area the partner is covering
<i>Peer focus</i>	Activities aimed at enhancing the relationship with peers within the company	—Doing social activities together, e.g., going to a pub or parties —Doing favors, e.g., swapping resources for a client mandate —Seeking peer advice about whom to recruit into a project team
<i>Team focus</i>	Activities aimed at enhancing the relationship with existing or potential future team members	—Mentoring team members, e.g., giving them career advice —Doing social activities, e.g., taking team members to lunch or dinner
<i>Exploration</i>	Activities aimed at maximizing the number of new relationships, seeking to broaden the network, “exploring possibilities”	—Going to a company social event with the goal of meeting as many new people as possible and broadening the network
<i>Leverage</i>	Activities aimed at intensifying selected relationships, striving for depth to extract value	—Going to a company social event with the goal of talking to partner X about topic Y —Having a cigarette break with a member of HR staffing to get a particular staff member assigned to one’s team
<i>Attitude toward networking</i>	Attitude toward networking, how networking activities are perceived as an overall activity	—Negative attitude, seeing networking as false and somewhat artificial —Instrumental attitude, seeing networking as a means to a specific end

subjects to discuss relational activities with an emphasis on one of these particular social groups, something we will come back to in the findings. The fifth dimension captured explorative networking behavior, where the aim was an informal yet not aimless approach to meeting people, for example:

I try to participate in as many social things as possible. It’s a great opportunity to meet lots of people.

We labeled this behavior “exploration.” In contrast, we also found “leveraging” behavior, which captured acts that attempted to extract a resource or benefit from a relationship—for example, having a cigarette break with an HR manager to get specific people assigned to your project team. The final dimension captured the subject’s attitude to networking—partly to our surprise, managers were far from neutral about “networking” and freely shared their view, a category that would help shape our understanding eventually of the overall styles that emerged.

We then studied existing research to compare our emerging categories with established concepts. We found similar dimensions. For example, other research has identified similar stakeholder groups: Linehan (2001) stresses the role of peers for information exchange, Fosstenlökken et al. (2003) underline the crucial role of clients and

peers for the knowledge development processes in PSFs, Dabos and Rousseau (2004) highlight the particular role of coworkers in general and peers in particular as key networking targets, Williams (2000) describes networking strategies in PSFs focused on the team, and Fincham and Clark (2002) underline the increasing importance of clients in the career of service professionals (see also Vissa and Anand 2006).

The coding and analysis of T2 data turned toward validating the basic dimensions and, more importantly, assessing variations among subjects on the identified dimensions during the key period of the study, their experiences in the new roles. Conducted about 16 months into the job, T2 interviews allowed us to first validate our categories (and look for new ones) and then identify the *intensity* of networking activities within each category. We read the T2 data with the aim of (1) developing scales of intensities for the networking categories and (2) coding each subject along these scales. Again, at least two authors read each transcript to extract and code scales, then compared and refined their results. The final rating was done by two raters with an interrater reliability of 84%. For any cases of disagreements, the two coders went back to the original transcript and discussed the rating, emerging with a final coding decision. Table 3 summarizes the variable scales.

Table 3 Cluster Variable Scales

Variable	Scale	Definitions and examples
<i>Partner/Client/Team focus</i>	0–5	0. <i>No focus</i> : The respondent's networking is not focused on this target population, or he or she is ignoring this target population. "My personal life is more important to me than developing relations with people below me in the organization." [for team focus]
		1. <i>Light/peripheral focus</i> : This target population is not an important target for the respondent's networking activities. "I don't know how to strongly network up."
		2. <i>Needed to get job done</i> : The respondent needs the target only to get the work done and is not particularly focusing attention on it; the respondent only realizes the target's importance whenever there is a problem (for client focus, realizes its importance and deals with it on a purely professional level). "I see one or two other partners but on a very occasional basis."
		3. <i>Subservient focus</i> : The baseline level—the respondent's focus on this population is subservient to another target of networking (partner, client, or team) (for client focus, realizes its importance and makes some efforts to deepen the personal relationship). "Team management helps you to get your job done. If you know that your team is out there and you can count on them, then you can count on more important stuff such as selling to clients."
		4. <i>One of the main targets for networking</i> : The respondent has focused attention to this target (for client focus, realizes its importance and makes more efforts to deepen the personal relationship). "You have to take care of your staff, give them advice, listen to their needs, and be empathetic."
<i>Peer focus</i>	0–2	0. <i>Weak or no peer relationships</i> : Peers are not part of the networking strategy; there is no specific investment effort in building peer relationships. "You just don't talk with your neighbour . . . Also, it's very competitive around here."
		1. <i>Keeping good neighbour relationships</i> : The baseline level—This is part of the firm's social norms. "We will occasionally go out for a beer or so." "This is how you learn about all the office gossip."
		2. <i>Very strong relationships</i> : Strong bonding/support relationships with some selected peers are built. "Sometimes so-and-so [a close peer] will go, I've got these four people free, and actually most of the times they will not then go straight to resourcing and say, I've got these four people free and let them loose."
		0. <i>No exploration beyond existing networks</i> : The respondent does not go beyond the existing contacts, is not actively seeking new contacts, is satisfied with the contacts he or she has, and "is fine" with/focused on the current network. "I am not one of these party animals. I have work to do and not going for drinks all the time."
		1. <i>Some exploration</i> : The respondent is happy to meet other people and seek and enjoy new contacts, yet not with a planned agenda ("passive exploration"). "I believe that relationship building is important but that much of this comes about because of natural chemistry."
<i>Exploration</i>	0–2	2. <i>Aggressively seeking to broaden the network</i> : The respondent increases the number of encounters with contacts (e.g., being at every party/event); actively, purposefully, and in a planned manner, seeks to meet lots of new contacts within or outside the firm (e.g., seminars, talks, parties, dinners) ("proactive exploration," or the more, the merrier approach). The respondent is trying to contact lots of different partners, projects, or clients without a precise objective; his or her objective is to "meet lots of people" or "get his or her name out there." "I try to participate in as many social things as possible."

Table 3 (cont'd)

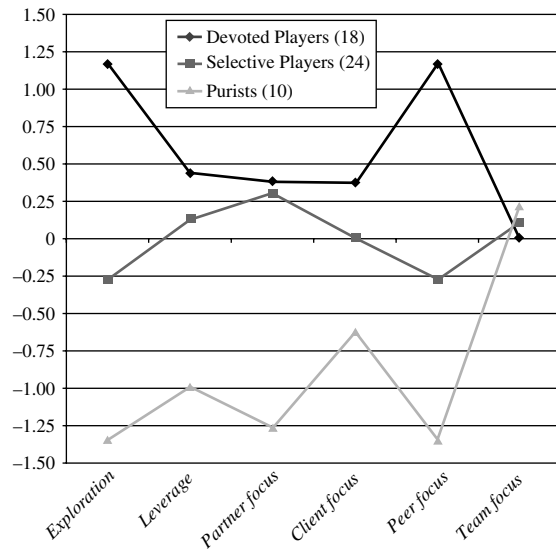
Variable	Scale	Definitions and examples
<i>Leverage</i>	0–5	<p>0. <i>Not exploiting</i>: There is no declared objective to opportunistically extract value from some key relationships in the network.</p> <p>“I would never work with someone simply on the basis that if I do a good job they will shout.”</p> <p>1. <i>Awareness</i>: There is a realization that it may be important to extract value from some relationships, but the respondent chooses not to or cannot do so.</p> <p>2. <i>Just getting the job done</i>: The respondent is taking advantage of current contacts within the framework of the current position with the objective of getting the job done, with no particular long-term plan behind this.</p> <p>3. <i>Present focused</i>: The respondent is actively extracting value/benefits from current contacts for higher performance in the present.</p> <p>4. <i>Exploiting relationships for the future</i>: The respondent has a clear objective to exploit relationships for further career advancement (beyond the current project) and is aiming for partnership within the professional firm (career track and promotion oriented).</p> <p>“I asked these two senior managers who are the most senior partners and how to target them.”</p> <p>5. <i>Effectively extracting value</i>: The respondent has an elaborate and precise plan for how to exploit relationships for the future; there is a clear extraction of value from the relationship in terms of getting political support, extracting key information, and/or getting access to critical resources from the key contact. There is a very conscious time horizon regarding future gain beyond the success of the current project.</p> <p>“I used this social contact, the squash play meetings, to pick up new opportunities for advisory work and training programmes.”</p>
<i>Attitude toward networking</i>	0–4	<p>0. <i>Passive, emergent</i>: The respondent does not report any effort to go to events for networking purposes; she or he lets the network build on its own. The respondent only reacts if drawn by others.</p> <p>“I don't like the falseness of it all.”</p> <p>“One of the challenges for me is to network.”</p> <p>1. <i>Only need based</i>: The respondent happens to actively network but seems to do this only on a need basis; there is very focused and punctual networking, limited in time, with an exceptional and specific purpose in mind.</p> <p>“Yes, I know who would be my go-to person if I have a tax question.”</p> <p>2. <i>Active</i>: The baseline level—The respondent is a casual networker that is generally active yet without any preplanning; he or she opportunistically seizes opportunities when they present themselves.</p> <p>“He will always be in front of a partner, whereas I tend not to do that. I tend to just probably get on with my work a bit more, and I don't go and make that big social effort the whole time with partners, whereas he does.”</p> <p>3. <i>Planned</i>: The respondent is a conscious networker, intentionally active, though no reference to any specific plans or calculations. It can be inferred that the respondent knows what she or he wants to do and why she or he is networking; there is a general consciousness of where the respondent should go.</p> <p>“I know networking is important, and I want to do it correctly.”</p> <p>4. <i>Instrumental/calculative</i>: There is an explicit reference to concrete plans and actions for networking, who to network with, and when; the professional identifies “high return” occasions and people and has a clear game plan with targeted events. The respondent preplans, creates, or targets occasions and can assess the costs and benefits of different networking targets, occasions, and strategies.</p> <p>“This partner is a high return contact. I do make sure to meet him at the office social to discuss future mandates with him.”</p>

Cluster Analysis

After the completion of category induction and content coding, cluster analysis was used to identify and distinguish configurations and to classify managers accordingly (based only on T2 data) (Uhl-Bien and Maslyn 2003).

The key variables (categories) for the cluster analysis were grounded in our data, and as such, they provide an exceptional basis for the cluster analysis (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984, Everitt 1980). Our coded variable, *attitude toward networking*, however, does not describe

Figure 1 Cluster Comparisons on Key Dimensions



a networking behavior or action but a disposition, and so we included it among the “associated” variables and used it as an aid to interpretation of agency in networking. We standardized the cluster variables using z-scores (Hair et al. 1992, Harrigan 1985). The final sample was reduced by 1, to 52 professionals (the subject had switched roles; coding also indicated her or him as an outlier).

We followed a two-step approach to conduct the cluster analysis using STATA. First, a hierarchical

cluster analysis was performed using Ward’s algorithm. The examination of the agglomeration coefficients by the number of clusters as well as the examination of the dendrogram indicated that a three-cluster solution was optimal. In the next step of analysis, a nonhierarchical cluster analysis using *k*-means was performed for three clusters with 18 professionals in Cluster 1 (Devoted Players), 10 in Cluster 2 (Purists), and 24 in Cluster 3 (Selective Players). Figure 1 depicts the three clusters in terms of the defining variables used for the classification. Supporting analysis of the three clusters further revealed that five of the six networking dimensions yielded significant differences at the $p < 0.001$ level (the exception being *team focus*).

To enrich our understanding of the meaning and additional characteristics of the three clusters, we compared the three clusters on a range of associated variables, including attitude toward networking, basic demographics, job experience with other firms, network structure, and embeddedness in the new job (the five scales we mentioned). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that a number of the associated variables exhibited significant differences across clusters, thereby adding to the richness of description that underpin the three clusters and confirming criterion-based validity (see Table 4). We return to these correlational analyses in the discussion.

To account for imbalanced cluster group sizes (Tabachnick and Fidell 1989, Uhl-Bien and Maslyn 2003) and determine exactly which groups differed in each dimension of networking, we used the Scheffe

Table 4 Cluster Comparison for Defining and Associated Variables

	Devoted Players		Purists		Selective Players		<i>F</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Defining (clustering) variables							
<i>Exploration</i>	2.00	0.00	0.20	0.42	0.92	0.28	166.52***
<i>Leverage</i>	4.06	1.21	1.90	0.99	3.71	0.95	14.39***
<i>Partner focus</i>	4.33	0.59	2.80	0.79	4.25	0.61	21.82***
<i>Client focus</i>	4.06	1.21	1.90	0.99	3.71	0.95	14.39***
<i>Peer focus</i>	2.00	0.00	0.20	0.42	0.92	0.28	166.52***
<i>Team focus</i>	2.94	0.73	3.00	0.82	2.92	0.56	0.05
Associated variables							
<i>Network size (T1)</i>	16.59	4.42	16.50	4.43	14.38	5.20	1.31
<i>Network density (T1)</i>	0.38	0.12	0.36	0.13	0.42	0.14	1.04
<i>Attitude to networking</i>	3.39	0.92	1.50	1.27	2.92	1.14	9.81***
<i>Age</i>	29.12	2.93	29.73	2.87	28.61	2.43	0.66
<i>Sex (% female)</i>	0.28	0.46	0.18	0.40	0.39	0.50	0.80
<i>Tenure with firm</i>	4.31	1.80	4.17	1.66	4.76	1.08	0.78
<i>Jobs with previous firms</i>	1.61	0.50	0.70	0.48	1.46	0.51	11.36***
<i>Task clarity</i>	3.94	0.49	3.86	0.74	3.98	0.41	0.21
<i>Role clarity</i>	3.77	0.47	3.47	0.32	3.57	0.45	1.75
<i>Social integration clients</i>	3.75	0.61	3.58	0.85	3.65	0.55	0.24
<i>Social integration peers</i>	4.18	0.64	3.65	0.50	3.96	0.49	2.97*
<i>Organization commitment</i>	3.61	0.54	2.85	0.62	3.40	0.52	6.33***
<i>Network size (T2)</i>	17.24	7.51	13.40	6.60	12.08	3.55	4.08***
<i>Network density (T2)</i>	0.35	0.13	0.34	0.09	0.43	0.12	3.55**

* $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

method for further analysis. Table 4 summarizes the significance of differences found between the three clusters. To check for the robustness of our networking configurations, we took two steps. As suggested by Hair et al. (1992), we carried out additional cluster analyses using different clustering algorithms. The use of Ward's algorithm resulted in three clusters groups of 18, 7, and 27, respectively, whereas the use of *K*-medians resulted in a cluster distribution identical (18, 10, and 24) to the *K*-means algorithm, indicating overall that there was a high degree of consistency between the solutions. Further analysis of the correspondence between the cluster solutions of the hierarchical Ward's cluster analysis and the nonhierarchical *K*-means cluster analysis revealed a high correspondence in each of the three clusters (94%, 70%, and 100% for Clusters 1, 2, and 3, respectively), indicating good reliability of the nonhierarchical three-cluster solution (Korunka et al. 2003). Finally, we went back into our data and notes to examine the agency mechanisms underpinning each emergent cluster, refining our emergent categories through the same grounded process.

A qualitative validation of the clusters used expert opinion (Lincoln and Guba 1985). In each firm, we interviewed a senior partner who had been an informant for our preliminary phase. Aiming at a "strong form" of qualitative validation (Seale 1999), we presented the partner with our basic findings and the three configurations and invited him or her to make sense of the result. This validation lasted between one and two hours and generated very supportive feedback. Interviewees recognized the rich cluster descriptions as "familiar types I have come across." Overall, this process yielded results that have strong internal and external validity. The resulting three configurations could be generalized as networking strategies or styles, which are presented in Table 5 and described below.

Findings: Three Networking Strategies

Recently promoted and upwardly mobile managers, all service professionals who have made it through a competitive "up-or-out" selection process, might suggest practically indistinguishable networking approaches. Yet our findings reveal three distinct strategies. Two clusters were both "players," not in the pejorative sense of hyperselfish politicians but in the sense that they enjoyed and were active in networking—although there the similarities stopped. The other cluster was the "purists." Remarkable was their disdain and open scorn for networking, although not without an eye on their professional standing and how it can best be developed. Below we describe the basic components of each cluster, which we lay out in Table 5. We also combed through our interview data and notes (T1 and T2) and the emergent clusters to locate and synthesize displays of agency

and how they differed between the three clusters. These are summarized in Table 6 and also described below.

Before we turn to the clusters, we want to answer the first of the two questions we posed regarding endogeneity: Does prior network structure explain the strategies that we observe? We analyzed T1 network size and network density. Neither T1 size nor density could explain the emergence of the networking strategies—there were no significant differences in the mean values of network size and network density across the three clusters, with *F*-tests of 1.31 and 1.04, respectively, which were not significant. In other words, commonly examined structural variables are not the driving force behind the emergence of these strategies. Focus must therefore fall on the choices and attention, as well as schemas, beliefs, and values, of agents.¹

Cluster 1: The Devoted Players

Central Characteristics. Devoted Players are the most dedicated and active networkers of the three clusters. First and foremost, this means a lot of energy—time and thought—is expended on social relations of all sorts, an approach that can best be described as "the more, the merrier." As indicated by the mean comparisons, these professionals have the highest networking activity targeting stakeholders above the team level, meaning partners, clients, and peers. Moreover, they have enthusiasm for this work. Keen to broaden their networks, Devoted Players are particularly strong in exploration. They are devoutly proactive in this regard. To increase the number of encounters, they are socially hyperactive, attending office events, seminars, talks, dinners, and so on. Even though they do not always know the exact outcomes, they purposefully seek to meet lots of different people.

Consider Marc, from the audit firm (AuditCo). Marc, a typical Devoted Player when it comes to networking, left a smaller auditing practice two years ago and joined AuditCo's New York office as a senior auditor. In a very short time, he had established a big network of contacts with partners, clients, peers, and team members, and he truly enjoys it:

I will go to every Thursday office social. It's not an obligation at all; sometimes it's boring, yet you often get to meet some really interesting people you did not even know they existed who are working for the same company, and sometimes it is a great contact to have.

This captures well the "planned" nature of their networking, meaning that they are intentionally active and calculative networkers, albeit to different degrees. Some identify "high return" occasions and people for networking, and they assess the costs and benefits of different networking targets and occasions. David, another Devoted Player, illustrates this:

I will go to this colleague's farewell drinks because I know that [Andy], a heavyweight lead partner of this

Table 5 Comparing the Three Networking Configurations

Variable	Devoted Players	Purists	Selective Players
<i>Client focus</i>			
Level	Very high	Medium	Medium
Description	Devoted Players are highly conscious that client contacts and the acquisition of additional work is key to their career progression. They go to great lengths to get close to these clients on a personal level. At the same time, they are selective in the sense that they are perfectly aware who are the “important” clients in terms of the business and links that they represent.	Clients are important as customers, although they can also serve as a means to get more recognition and resources from partners when the job is well done.	Clients are an important stakeholder to satisfy, a source of future reference and sales. To do this, Selective Players try to establish more personal relationships with some client contacts.
Sample quote	“Playing squash or jogging, I met with one client every morning, and we were running every morning.” (Daniel, ConsultCo)	“I’ve got a strong track record. We have very good evaluations by our clients. Our teams are evaluated by our clients, and that’s something which makes it easier for me to convince my partners.” (Eric, ConsultCo)	“Yes, I wouldn’t say we do it often, but when we do it, it is always very pleasant; so maybe go for lunch, arrange a big dinner between my team and their team, that type of stuff.” (Lucy, AuditCo)
<i>Partner focus</i>			
Level	High, broad, and deep	Medium, arm’s-length	Medium–high
Description	Relationships are thought through. Each partner relationship is moving toward some strategic purpose, such as career advice, guidance, and feedback on what the Devoted Player needs to do to move up. They seek deeper relationships, trying to connect on a personal level. At the same time, they are broadening their network, getting more partners into their network, as they are very conscious of the need to branch out to different parts of the organization.	Partners are partly seen as a potential source of complications and unpredictability. They come up with last-minute changes, question too much, and sometimes have more demands than the client. As a consequence, Purists try to stay away from them, or at least carefully manage them (keep them at arm’s length). Managing them well means anticipating their moods and inputs. Partners, however, are not great sources of input for either work or career.	Selective Players understand the importance of partners to their future career and make conscious efforts to broaden and deepen partner relationships; i.e., they try to increase the number of partners and improve the quality of relationships. This is a priority for which they may trade off other tasks, such as managing down. But the overwhelming sense is that the relationship has to be initially task driven, not a personal foray.
Sample quote	“My relationship with the other partners has become so much more important for me to get support for my future... I need the support of multiple partners to be able to make the next step, and I don’t think I have got a problem doing that, it is just a matter of time.” (Andrew, AuditCo)	“Because I am just doing these [special] projects, there are not many people or partners who know me. But I don’t care actually, I actually prefer it. I like it very much because it might not be perfect for making a career with ConsultCo but it simplifies my life.” (Eric, ConsultCo)	“I don’t think you can initially seek them [partner connections] out and try to establish them. I think through circumstances you would have had to have some initial contact, but I think after you have had that contact, even though you are maybe not working with them any more, I think you still need to maintain that network and keep it going...” (Gregory, AuditCo)
<i>Peer focus</i>			
Level	High, concentrated	Low	Medium
Description	Devoted Players have identified a small number of peers (one or two) with whom they have high-trust, long-term relationships. They use these peers as sounding boards, to exchange strategic information on career positioning and advancement (although they are still aware of there being “coopetition” in the system).	Purists have no strategic peer relationships, and they have a natural dislike of “pushy peers,” the sort of networkers that they aspire not to become.	Selective Players feel that they belong to a cohort/an intake and feel comfortable in maintaining these peer contacts. They give each other advice, and peers are seen as a source of general support and sometimes a role model for very specific work. There is, however, no notion of any exclusive strategic peer relationships.

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Table 5 (cont'd)

Variable	Devoted Players	Purists	Selective Players
<i>Peer focus</i>			
Sample quote	"If I have additional resources to spare, before telling HR, I would tell my two best buddies [also managers] if they are short on staff before I release them into the pool." (Andrew, AuditCo)	"The only other project manager we have in [City X] is [Y] ...to be honest, I don't like his style of trying to go forward too much, because he is very pushy and trying to keep everything out of his way to the top I would say. I don't like that stuff much." (Frank, ConsultCo)	"I'll call one of my peers if it's [an] admin-type question...we all do that back and forth to each other, or, bouncing ideas off each other is probably also more at my peer-level group." (Clara, AuditCo)
<i>Team focus</i>			
Level	Medium–high, selective	High	Medium
Description	They establish intense mentoring relationships with selected team members. At the same time, they are very conscious of team members' performance levels and seek out the best to work on their assignments. Having good people on their team frees them to manage upward.	Purists spend a great deal of time with their teams. This is partly because they like being with their team and they feel that this is where the ultimate client service is produced. They are sensitive to team problems and take a lot of time looking into and resolving these issues. They tend to take a very individualized approach to managing their team members, trying to account for their individual preferences. Focus is more on team development rather than selection.	They feel that they have to dedicate an important part of their time to managing downward, especially since moving to a more managerial role. They have become more and more comfortable in this managerial role. However, managing down is clearly seen as a necessity, not as a preferred way of working; the goal is to free up time for managing upward.
Sample quote	"[X] I sought out because I knew he was good and [Y] was already the assistant manager on the [two] jobs, so I wanted to maintain that relationship anyway. He was the best person for it because he knew everyone and he knew how it worked. [Client Z] was a brand new job, so I wanted somebody good to impress the client effectively." (Andrew, AuditCo)	"You really have to have an individual approach for each of the consultants to learn how much leadership they really need and it's always a trial and error process so when I see a consultant he has to show me the first 2 weeks I want to see everything he does, and then I decide whether I think I can trust that he is really working on his own or not." (Rachel, ConsultCo)	"I have pushed more work down to those beneath me, it has allowed me to focus more on managing those above me as well." (Martin, AuditCo)
<i>Exploration</i>			
Level	High	Low internally, high externally	Medium
Description	There is a high degree of exploration behavior. They like to interact with a multitude of people in other parts of the organization or outside. They actively seek to branch out, which leads them to occupy bridging positions, and they are conscious of the fact that this high exploration may lead them to situations that they can exploit.	They do not feel highly motivated to expand their internal network. Their current network is enough to get the job done. Doubts about partnership may diminish network expansion motivations; work–life balance views and questions about the future lead to greater attention to external contacts.	They feel that this is the stage of their career where they have to branch out and widen their network of contacts internally and externally. They try to work on this task by doing projects in other competence areas, going to team meetings, and including clients in their networking activities. This broadening activity is, however, perceived to be difficult and taxing on immediate tasks.
Sample quote	"I would say I have more contacts outside [my focal center]... I expect to have a broader network within ConsultCo." (Daniel, ConsultCo)	"Maybe because I got the impression that it becomes more necessary to speak to the [internal] contacts I've already had instead of trying to make up new contacts." (Eric, ConsultCo, reflecting on network changes)	"[My network is now] different—trying to change the industry, trying to change the client, trying to, I would say, broaden my contacts—not that I have done it, but I hope I have, I am moving towards it." (Martin, AuditCo)

Table 5 (cont'd)

Variable	Devoted Players	Purists	Selective Players
<i>Leverage</i>			
Level	High	Low	Medium
Description	Devoted Players show a high level of leverage of relationships (“asks”). This sets them apart: the level/strength of the exploitation but also the fact that they use leverage very comprehensively for all sorts of relationships.	The low level of leverage is linked with their dislike of networks as a means to achieve aims (see also <i>Attitude toward networking</i>).	Selective Players seek opportunities to leverage, yet with care and to a moderate degree (they make limited “asks”). They think in the long term about the usefulness of contacts, and leveraging potential is based on some previous work or project interaction.
Sample quote	“She got onto my network because she was quite important to me as someone to know and get on with so I could get people booked up on my jobs. We’re very resource constrained...so knowing her and using her was very helpful to me.” (Andrew, AuditCo)	“He’s an associate partner. He should be important for me, but since I see a network as something which happens naturally and not artificially, I didn’t really try to keep him.” (Eric, ConsultCo, reflecting on a lost contact)	“No, I don’t personally ever think like that [target certain contacts]: no, because it is difficult to choose who you work with anyway, and you don’t know what someone is like until you work with them. Some people you do, but a lot of people you don’t, so I would never work with someone simply on the basis that if I do a good job they will shout, because on the contrary, if I did a bad job they would also shout. No, I don’t consciously think of that.” (Lucy, AuditCo)
<i>Attitude toward networking</i>			
Level	High	Low negative if unnatural	Medium
Description	They have a positive attitude toward networking; it is not only instrumental but also natural and enjoyable. They are proactive and, like good chess players, they think several moves ahead and create contacts well before they are needed. They are politically sensitive and thus careful to craft their image in an appropriate way despite their proclivity to network hard.	Networking is perceived to be superficial. They dread a “how are you?” call just for the sake of keeping in touch. They refuse to see networking as a means–end relationship and either do not proactively network or, if they do, are more motivated by a real interest for the person than a calculation.	They know that networking is important and they try to do more; they feel that they are not really engaging enough. They do not find it easy, as it does not come completely natural to them, and they are worried that any approaches need to fit the context. They tend to leverage current task structure, rather than do cold calls, with which they do not feel comfortable. They believe chance also drives networks.
Sample quote	“You really have to be active. You only can manage your network and your career if you are very active. So you have to be the guy who solves the problem... You really have to make the first step.” (Paul, ConsultCo)	“I always make it clear to my network that I am not calling them once a month or once every three months, but I will give them a call when I’ve got time and when it makes sense... The worst thing, at least that I experience, is that I get a call just for getting a call. It’s just blah, blah, blah...” (Eric, ConsultCo)	“You could do more, I don’t know, social activities or group activities where you get to know the partners. It is not easy, especially in a big firm, but I don’t know how. I do think it is important.” (Lucy, AuditCo)

group, is going to be there, and I will seize the opportunity to chat with him and make it clear that I am interested in doing work for him, so that when something comes up, [Andy] will think of me.

In general, then, when it comes to connecting with clients, peers, and partners, they are highly active and go to great lengths to find common ground and establish rapport. Highly conscious that client contacts and the

acquisition of additional work are key to their career progression, Devoted Players skillfully prepare the ground for intensifying their client relationships. For example, Peter from ConsultCo says,

A lot of times my client contact is a very senior person, say, the CFO [chief financial officer], and as I am at least 10 years younger than these guys, it is difficult to really get closer to them. So what I typically do is to become friends with their PAs [personal assistants] and

Table 6 Agency and Cultural Categories in the Three Clusters

Schemas, beliefs, and values	Devoted Players	Purists	Selective Players
Professional schema	Partnership prized <i>Focus on career even at the expense of work–life balance in the present</i>	Expertise and being self-sufficient as professionals prized <i>Broader canvas, with more interests outside of work/company</i>	As organization people, loyalty prized <i>Importance placed on being part of the firm family</i>
Time locus schema	Future oriented <i>Future goals and ambitions play a large motivating force</i>	Past/future oriented <i>Past lessons open broader viewpoint and desires for future</i>	Present oriented <i>Taking care of daily business; networks are present focused and project related</i>
Locus of influence belief	Proactive, relational entrepreneurs <i>You need to make things happen, not let things happen to you</i>	Agnostic, with a tendency to view control belonging to surrounding structures <i>You need to respect the process, not break rules</i>	Modest/reactive with an acceptance of the “luck” element <i>You need to appreciate that not everyone gets what they want, but without giving up in every instance</i>
Value bases	Pragmatists, instrumental <i>Ends oriented; networking is useful and so it is necessary</i>	Idealists, meritocratic <i>Seek authentic relationships, not networks</i>	Realists not idealists, transparency/modesty <i>Relationships are useful means, but conduct should be transparent and modest</i>

learn everything I can about their bosses likes and dislikes. If I learn that this CFO goes jogging at 6 A.M. in the English Garden, guess who will go jogging in the English Garden as well?

As for partners, Devoted Players attempt to deepen their relationships with critical superiors. Connecting to partners on a more personal level allows them to gain career advice and guidance from partners, signaling their willingness to make partner and their openness to be coached on how to get there.

Important to understanding Devoted Players is that their perspective is not necessarily short term (immediate advantage). Rather, they tend to have a long-term view on relationship building, a perspective that networking is important to their reputation and social standing beyond any immediate need-based exchange. This is corroborated by their high *z*-scores in explorative networking (not just in leveraging, or exploitive, behavior; see Figure 1) and their large networks of key contacts, the largest of the three clusters after some 16 months in their new roles (17.24 compared with 13.40 and 12.08 for Purists and Selective Players, respectively). Devoted Players use this broad base of key contacts to look for brokering opportunities—for example, to broker the movement of know-how. Thomas from ConsultCo describes how he leverages cross function and cross-departmental contacts:

I work very much on the interface between marketing and sales in my team, because I am transferring know-how from one side to the other, which leads to a certain

visibility in that team. I also work with the strategy competence centre on some projects, which leads to some visibility there, and I am part of a cross-company task force, and for our team I take care of all that, like the newsletter, international meetings with other foreign offices, so I network there.

Thomas is aware that being at the crossroads of different units allows him to not only aid internal information and knowledge transfer but also raise his general visibility within the company.

Devoted Players explore new relationships not only internally but also externally. For example, their network consists of the highest number of key external contacts (4.89 compared with 2.25 and 3.8 for Selective Players and Purists, respectively). These contacts may serve as an external sounding board on ideas, provide career advice from an external perspective, or represent new business opportunities. Daniel, for example, consults an external senior executive, someone he befriended and now considers an informal career coach:

I would say in a more career-like way, he [the external career advisor] has a big network, he knows many companies, and when I come to see him, we talk about career planning.

Paul, also at ConsultCo, describes how he plans to use his external contact for a possible bridging opportunity:

I feel very comfortable because I can use this guy [potential client he is friends with] for the next career step, and when it's time for that, I will bring this key partner and this guy together.

Another characteristic that significantly sets Devoted Players apart is that these professionals are building strong and supporting relationships with peers (see Figure 1). Our interviews suggest that they do so with greater precision and selectivity than the other two groups. Devoted Players have a heightened awareness of what peers may bring to a relationship. They use these peers as sounding boards for specific and tricky task-related situations, as well as sources of advice and insight on politics and career dynamics. Although Devoted Players are not bashful about leveraging those relationships when necessary, they also recognize that contributing to peers—not just leveraging peers—is a necessary part of developing their social relations. Andrew from AuditCo explains,

Say an audit gets pushed back for a week because the client is not ready; these things happen, but you have the complete team staffed to start with the audit, so you find yourself with one senior [auditor] and two juniors. Now what happens in this case is that HR would staff them on something else for the week. But before I tell HR, I give a quick call to two of my buddies [peers] and I ask them if they are short on staff.

Finally, Devoted Players' attention to team members (subordinates) is the lowest of the three clusters, although it is not significantly distinguishable from the other clusters. Although Devoted Players are distinguished mostly by their upward, lateral, and external networking, they do not neglect team management issues. Rather, they tend to leverage other networking and social opportunities to impact team management. This was particularly evident when it came to staffing their teams, for example:

I like to make sure I identify new talents early on so that they can work on my projects, that's why I have started teaching the juniors. (Victor, AuditCo)

In other words, this manager positioned himself in a trainer/teacher role for upcoming auditors, recognizing the screening advantage for new talent of doing such work. In general, to ensure that they get top talent onto their teams and projects, Devoted Players tend to work behind the scenes, using partner support or friendly relationships with relevant HR staff. Andrew from AuditCo underlines the importance of a good contact in staffing to get the people he wants on board:

She got onto my network because she was quite important to me as someone to know and get on with so I could get people booked up on my jobs. We're very resource-constrained, there are a lot of people around, so it is always quite hard work to get people onto my jobs and so knowing her and using her was very helpful to me.

Devoted Players tend to exhibit a strong belief that selection (who joins your team) is an important driver of team performance—and having good people on their

team also frees them up to manage upward and outside the company. Nonetheless, they do not neglect their team members. Devoted Players try to create win-win situations by establishing intense mentoring relationships with selected subordinates and give them a lot of feedback on how to make it to the next career stage.

In general, Devoted Players are rounded and comprehensive in their networking approach. Although they are higher than the other clusters in explorative behavior and peer focus, they are closer in the other dimensions. Rather, what sets them apart is that they are active and engaged across the entire spectrum of behaviors, from team selection advantages through HR connections, to client referrals and career advice, to partner tracking and relationship deepening, to peer idea exchange and self-benchmarking, to subordinate mentoring.

Agency and Cultural Categories. Building on the concrete actions, attitudes, and (spatial/hierarchical) foci above, our analysis induced four ways in which actors used cultural categories (i.e., schemas, beliefs, values) that reveal agency at work and further distinguishes the three clusters (see Table 6). This analysis of how actors participate in cultural space and draw on cultural tools is important for deepening our understanding of agency at work in the construction of social networking strategies (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). The four cultural categories are (1) *professional schema* (how actors frame their career and its boundaries, including work-life balance and boundary stances), (2) *time schema* (the relative emphasis actors place on the past, present, or future; see Emirbayer and Mische 1998), (3) *locus of influence* (how much influence or control actors believe they have), and (4) *moral codes* (the underlying values that guide actors in their tactics and strategy).

Devoted Players displayed a professional schema that (a) especially targeted partnership (the defining goal of their career) but (b) applied to a “narrow canvas”—that is, with a strong focus on career relative to broader private life activities. Partnership was practically an obsession for these players, betraying a strong desire for the status and security of that eventual summit. This is epitomized by Paul from ConsultCo, who enthuses, “I take every chance I get to be seen on [the] partner track.” If choices had to be made between doing “interesting things” (in the sense of enjoyable and/or creative) versus doing “things of interest” (in the career sense), the latter was in the forefront of their professional frame, as Paul illustrates:

If there is a decision between a project where I can get more of a reputation or a more interesting job [task], I would decide on more reputation.

Family life was not necessarily ignored, but career advancement was likely to receive priority, as Samuel (AuditCo) describes:

I'm going home to see my kids, yet I know when I have to be social which events I have to attend. I know what

events you have to be at to show you're involved in the social aspect.

Daniel from ConsultCo justifies this laser-sharp focus on the partner track as a means that would ultimately allow him the security and freedom to invest in his private life *after* he makes it to partner:

Making it to [the] partner level will help me also in my private life: you are not away five days a week, you can delegate more, and you are more the master of your schedule.

All in all, this professional schema helps explain the strong focus Devoted Players have on networking with partners and clients as described earlier—they focus on the role to which they most ascribe (partners) and connect with actors (clients) who are of prime importance to, and in contact with, partners. Relatedly, they showed a time schema that was the most future oriented of the three clusters. Daniel's previous comment is an example of how future goals and ambitions play a large motivating force in networking strategy. Samuel also reveals a future-focused perspective when he says,

You want to always have them on your radar, [and convey that,] "Sam wants to be promoted, Sam wants to be a senior manager, Sam wants to be a partner in this firm."

Similarly, Paul notes, "They have to know that you want to become a partner."

Devoted Players displayed a locus of influence that was the most actor-centric of the three clusters. In general, this meant a strong belief that "things don't happen to you" as much as "you make things happen." This meant being proactive about your future and fearless in making demands of your network in line with what you believe you deserve, as Samuel (AuditCo) conveys well:

A lot of people don't take ownership of their careers. They don't have the conversations. They are not easy conversations to have. I can see why people would be embarrassed to go to a partner and say, I think I deserve to get promoted. But you've got to do it.

This belief fits well and helps explain the previous depictions of Devoted Players as the most open relationship builders, what could be called true relational entrepreneurs, for example:

I have to actively manage my relationships. I can't wait for them. It's in my interests and it is my career. If you don't manage your career, someone will manage it for you. And maybe not in the way you would like You have to make it your business to be visible and interact.
(Victor, AuditCo)

It's a conscious effort, I think, to make sure that I am visible to all the partners.
(Hannah, AuditCo)

It's very important to make the first step to people who are above you.
(Paul, ConsultCo)

Finally, the most prominent moral codes that guide Devoted Players (in their networking strategies) are pragmatism or instrumentalism. Just as in philosophy, instrumentalism means that ideas are judged supreme on the basis of their verifiable/practical success (versus their "inner truth"); we mean here that Devoted Players tend to approach relationships more as a means to a performance-related end. In other words, networks are tools for achieving life goals, instruments for success, including the display of success, as Paul (ConsultCo) offers,

Success breeds success; surround yourself with successful people: there are guys who have a lot of success. I have success, so they are my friends.

This may also mean a good deal of unabashed self-promotion (as Victor from AuditCo says, "You have to sell yourself . . . toot your horn"), a fitting complement to their belief in a personal locus of control. Relatedly, being pragmatic about networking also means eschewing the opposite value, a naïve belief in "content" alone as dictating your future, captured by Samuel (AuditCo) when he parrots the well-known adage, "It's not what you know, it's who you know."

In summary, a more complete and integrated picture of Devoted Players emerges: these are the most street-wise and hardheaded networkers. With partnership as their guiding professional schema and a frame that is complemented by a "long" view on career success, they build relationships as investments while remaining motivated and positive toward that prize through a strong belief that they are able to shape their own destiny.

Cluster 2: The Purists

Central Characteristics. Service professionals of Cluster 2 show the least enthusiasm for networking. In many ways, they are the opposite of Devoted Players, with little internal exploration and sarcasm bordering on cynicism when it comes to networking. Take, for instance, George, someone who regards networking as ultimately artificial. For George, going jogging at 6:00 A.M. to run into your client would be unthinkable; in fact, he dislikes simply "hanging around at useless office socials." Purists like George perceive "networking" as mostly superficial encounters. They dread the "how are you?" call, made without a real (task) purpose and mostly involving chatter. In fact, they do not accept networking as a necessary instrument for career advancement, even as a hygiene factor for professionals: "For me, a network is something that happens by doing a proper job or just by working together," Eric (ConsultCo) explains. As a consequence, Purists do not proactively network, or if they do, it is because of some genuine interest for the person or common interest in the task. Purists share the conviction that doing a good job and delivering the results will speak for itself, instead of "schmoozing." Eric explains,

I always make it clear to my network that I am not calling them once a month or once every three months, but I will give them a call when I've got time and when it makes sense. . . . The worst thing, at least that I experience, is that I get a call just for getting a call. It's just blah, blah, blah. . . .

When it comes to internal networking, Purists focus mostly on their team, a dimension where they scored the highest of the three clusters. This is partly because they like being with their team and feel that this is where the ultimate client service is produced. Also, they are sensitive to team problems and take a lot of time looking into and resolving these issues; for example, we found that questions of maintaining and increasing team motivation figured large on the agenda of these managers. Purists also spend a lot of time with their teams because they tend to take a very individualized approach to management, as Rachel (ConsultCo) explains:

You really have to have an individual approach for each of the consultants to learn how much leadership they really need, and it's always a trial and error process; so when I see a consultant he has to show me [during] the first two weeks. . . everything he does, and then I decide whether I think I can trust that he is really working on his own or not.

Rachel's colleague Frank explains how he tries to understand and manage these individual differences:

I have learned how to balance my managing style to the different types of people and different situations. To give you an example, there are some people in the team who really want to have a lot of information and what's going on and not only their project module, but other project modules. Others don't want to have too much information because they want to work more focused because it makes their life easier and they can focus, so it adapts to their interests and needs. [This is] especially [true] for those who want to have more information, I try to give more information and also act as a motivator in the team.

Even though Purists' team focus is the highest, of note is that their efforts to actively target and select new talent for their teams are lower than those for the other two clusters. Although we saw that HR contacts can offer competitive insights on current and up-and-coming people in the talent pool, Purists feel that the choice they have in staffing decisions is relatively limited; hence, they tend to spend more time on team development (versus selection).

Purists' lack of strategic intention in networking is particularly pronounced with peers—they exhibit only weak peer relationships and have almost no focus here, with little effort in broadening peer relationships. Part of this may be explained by the Purists' dislike of "pushy peers with their offensive marketing of their own person" (Frank, ConsultCo), the kind, according to this manager, who socially maneuver their way to the top.

Peers such as this—and it seemed all Purists knew one—were negative role models in their eyes. Purists are not social outcasts or "nerds," just very particular, developing meaningful relationships where they sensed genuine common interests.

Purists tend to leverage relationships when they have to, initiating contact mostly when task requires. To be sure, they are instrumental in their use of contacts and do keep track of where expertise lies in the organization, as one auditor notes: "I know who I could ask for tax advice if I had a tricky tax issue in one of my audits." But this problem-centered approach to managing and maintaining contacts mostly focuses on present needs; we did not detect a longer-term strategy to their networking, as in the case of Devoted Players. Also, Purists tended not to leverage their contacts to nearly the same level as Devoted Players. Indeed, contacts with whom they did not have a task reason to interact with could be forgotten, as Eric (ConsultCo) explains about a lost contact:

He's an associate partner. He should be important for me, but since I see a network as something which happens naturally and not artificially, I didn't really try to keep him.

When it comes to partners, Purists display not only their trademark reticence to networking but some disdain for what partners contribute. Partners are seen as a potential source of complications and unpredictability. They come up with last-minute changes and "unreasonable questions," and they sometimes create useless demands. As a consequence, Purists tend to be wary of too much contact with partners. Managing partners means anticipating their moods and inputs, such as preparing well in advance so unproductive directions are not taken. Although Purists realize the importance of keeping partners current on the work in progress, they struggle to find the right balance between involving them and keeping them at arm's length. In any case, partners do not feature as a great source of input for career purposes. In comparison with the Devoted Players, the Purists have significantly fewer key contacts serving the "political buy-in" role in their networks (at T2, 5.5 versus 3).

Finally, although Purists are also the lowest in client networking among the three clusters, they are relatively active on this dimension compared with the other dimensions. Clients are important to Purists. But they are particularly important as a means to show one's work and worth, as Eric and Rachel explain:

I've got a strong track record. We have very good evaluations by our clients. Our teams are evaluated by our clients, and that's something which makes it easier for me to convince my partners. (Eric, ConsultCo)

I think this is amazing if the client is asking you, "Does anybody tell you that you are doing a tremendously good

job?!” So you get the feedback from the client and not from your company. (Rachel, ConsultCo)

Overall, we see an approach to social relations that emphasizes the task at hand; clients should be leveraged to provide feedback on the quality of one’s work, but they are not targets of strategic relationship building.

Agency and Cultural Categories. Purists’ professional schema combines a strong identification with the broader profession and “craft” aspect of their work (being a “professional” consultant or auditor) and pride in being a self-made or independent individual. They are neither as summit oriented (partnership) as Devoted Players nor as organization oriented (company) as Selective Players (as we will describe later). As Eric (ConsultCo) unequivocally states, “I would not like to bend my back just to become partner.” Building their expertise is a priority, as is pursuing intellectual paths that are interesting (in the sense of being enjoyable and/or instructive). They also crave independence in advancing their professional talents and accomplishing their work, for example:

Your learning curve is decreasing after a certain time; that’s why it is important for me to always get new topics to learn, some new theoretical frameworks, as well as new businesses to look at.... If I have a choice I choose projects according to topic and industry: Is it a topic I want to learn about? Is it an industry I have not done yet? (Gerald, ConsultCo)

I’m very independent; I don’t seek support from other people.... Some people like to come to their boss and ask questions, but I’m the opposite. I do it on my own. I go through every possible way that I can and then go for a quick discussion, meaning I am independently handling all of those myself, like a real professional. (Kim, AuditCo)

Kim’s ending clause reveals a striking aspect of this professional schema. “Real” professionals are self-contained bodies of knowledge, whose pride should come from self-reliance and whose power and performance should be enhanced by the “non-dependence” of that expertise. This sheds important light on their reluctance to network: it is not just disdain for the schmoozing; rather, it is pride in being true professionals and experts, which for them requires some amount of self-sufficiency. Kim adds, “Everything I learned, I learned through my own experience.” Eric (ConsultCo) emphasizes the point: “Just leave me alone with my team. Just let me do my job.”

This professional schema is applied on a broader canvas than in the case of Devoted Players. Work–life balance is more important to people in this cluster. Although they want to be competent experts, their professional

goals are smaller in perspective when viewed against the backdrop of other pursuits in life, for example:

Maybe it’s also time to rearrange some things—like in your personal area, that you do not only have your daily working focus but some time to get to know yourself better again—to widen your focus on several topics because you are very one-sided when you work in this type of job. (Gerald, ConsultCo)

I think that my career development is fine, it’s going forward, but I am not trying to push my career above everything else; I still need some private life. (Frank, ConsultCo)

I don’t have to desperately make a career. (Eric, ConsultCo)

Once again, this helps explain their reluctance to network. “Partnership” and “career” are cultural categories that hold less weight in their professional schema, a schema that informs their networking behavior and displays their agency in relational development.

Purists’ time schema is perhaps the most complicated of the three clusters. First, although Purists are present focused in their networking (a “problem-at-hand” orientation to seeking resources), they did reveal a broader concern with their future (not with their network per se) and in some cases were motivated by hard lessons in their past (project and political experiences that were not as satisfactory as they wanted, which left them deflated). Purists tended to wonder about what changes life may hold for them in their career walk and how they can leverage their expertise, even outside of the current company and setting:

There is too much in my head spinning around what I would like to do, and I think that maybe in three years’ time I could also do something completely different, in [terms of] industry or running my own company or whatsoever. (Gerald, ConsultCo)

Maybe I will go to business school to learn new things, to broaden my horizon. (Kim, AuditCo)

They seemed to be the most flexible and reflective in how they approach their career and situation, proud of their expertise but interested in opportunities to evolve their skills and take new steps, captured well by Alex (ConsultCo): “In the long run, consulting is not satisfying enough; I want to do real implementation work.”

Regarding locus of influence, Purists tend to be agnostic at best. Because of their stance on expertise and the importance of “content” and not “connections,” they tend to trust the system to coordinate work and allocate recognition and rewards. But this could also result in a belief that, ultimately, they do not have much influence in how the wider organization works around them; for example,

You don’t have the possibility to say, ok, I want to get to know partner X now; it is more sort of driven by surprise,

which kind of projects you do and who is the industry partner. You cannot directly influence it.

(Gerald, ConsultCo)

This was particularly evident in staff selection for their teams. Purists did less to influence or demand the allocation of stars to their teams and resented those who did. They preferred attracting people they simply liked:

Instead of looking for the big stars, I prefer to look for people I like, and I nurture and develop them.

(Beverly, ConsultCo)

Finally, their moral codes are sharply meritocratic and idealistic, as we have already seen in the main characteristics of this cluster. They value knowledge, hard work, and content; they believe in relationships, not “networks,” and value the authenticity of unplanned, uncontrived encounters and relationship maintenance. Indeed, they deeply resented instrumentality and pragmatism when it came to networking. For example,

A network is not a means to achieve something For me, these relations or this network is not a means for making a career.

(Eric, ConsultCo)

There are some people that telephone you that just, you know, you are on their list that pops up in their pile every two weeks or every month or whatever, they just give you these standard questions, but they are not really interested in what you are doing and how you are developing. It's just to keep a contact for them on their list, and this is something that I would never do.

(Gerald, ConsultCo)

Kim's (AuditCo) terse value statement is “colorful” but clear: “I don't kiss ass.”

In summary, the spatial foci (down and out, not up), attitudes, and actions (highly task oriented) of Purists are better understood as we unpack the schemas, beliefs, and values that they hold and apply in the construction of their relational strategies. Purists are idealists, prizing content and the self-sufficiency of their expertise and talents. They are in a sense traditionalists, desiring efficiency in the “organizational” market, an invisible hand to shift resources appropriately and the accurate accounting of value and contribution. They value meritocracy, and they equally loath its opposite, contrived relationship management and advancement because of connections.

Cluster 3: The Selective Players

Central Characteristics. The third cluster are also players in the sense that they, more or less, enjoy networking and find it important to their work and careers. Selective Players believe that this is the stage of their career where they have to branch out and widen their network of contacts, internally and externally, as a few explain:

You need to get other people as supporters or in your corner, so you need to branch out and make sure you are establishing your network and maintaining your network

with those types of people to allow you to get to the next level. So I think in some respects you need to create those opportunities.

(Gregory, AuditCo)

I think it is definitely important to have some way of a network within the firm.

(Sally, AuditCo)

Yet they are not nearly as passionate and focused on networking as the Devoted Players are; they regard networking as important but not the sine qua non of a successful career, and so trade-offs must be made, and networking is not the top priority. Nor does networking come easily or naturally to them; rather, Selective Players hold that relationship building usually emerges from the context: “I think building up contacts is mostly through project work still” (Max, ConsultCo). “Mostly” is an apt qualifier in the case of Selective Players; that is, although they see “chance” as playing an important role, believing that relationships are often at the mercy of circumstance and not claiming personal mastery of networking, they do engage in relationship building, and they tend to be quite targeted. Overall, their core strategy is to leverage ongoing tasks and joint work experiences to first establish but then also maintain relationships. So “cold-calling” a potentially useful contact is not something they normally do (cf. Devoted Players), nor are they comfortable letting important contacts slip from view (cf. Purists). They embody a unique tension, a belief in the importance of networking (like Devoted Players, but unlike Purists) with a discomfort for disingenuous networking (like Purists, but unlike Devoted Players).

In other words, “moderation” characterizes well Selective Players—across all our dimensions of networking, they display moderate levels of activity, the one exception being partner focus (up), where they have nearly the same level of activity as Devoted Players. Selective Players understand the importance of partners to their careers and make conscious efforts to broaden and deepen their partner relationships. For example, they try to increase the number of partners they work with and improve the quality of existing partner relationships, as Lucy (AuditCo) explains:

Certain partners here like [Joe] or [Sue], if a piece of work came in, I know I would be one of the first people they would ask. Whereas if other work came in, another partner may not think of me, they would think of someone else; so I think it is important to make sure you do have good partner contacts so they think of you, and it helps generally in terms of the jobs you do, it helps obviously in promotions, it helps in a number of areas.

Closeness to partners, however, is achieved in their view by joint project work and active engagement during that work (cf. Purists), where they hope to demonstrate the quality of their work. Once this is established, they feel very comfortable asking these partners about career advice. In fact, of all three clusters, Selective

Players were the most likely to have a mentor (partner) who they valued and retained over time (unlike Purists). In contrast to Devoted Players, they avoided approaching partners purely for networking purposes, as Gregory (AuditCo) notes:

I don't think you can initially seek them [the partners] out and try to establish them; I think through circumstances you would have had to have some initial contact, but I think after you have had that contact, even though you are maybe not working with them anymore, I think you still need to maintain that network and keep it going just so that they have some amount of contact with you and so you still have that relationship that can help support you.

Regarding network leverage, Selective Players seek opportunities to exploit useful relationships, yet they do so with care and to a moderate degree. They tend to assess and remember which contacts may be potentially useful in the future, yet the leveraging is based on some previous work or project interaction. The sense is that the initial contact has to be project driven and is thus linked to work circumstances, as seen in their approach to partners. The nature of leverage itself is also moderate. Although they may ask contacts for important and personal input, such as career advice and guidance, they are less likely to seek personal gain through very targeted “asks,” such as “recommend me to partner X” or “get me on project Y.”

Consistent with this trait is their approach to exploring new relationships, where they are at their most moderate. Although Selective Players are happy to meet other people and do not shy away from new contacts, they seldom go about this with calculation. Selective Players try to work on broadening their network by doing projects in other competence centers, going to team meetings, attending relevant seminars, and performing other such task-focused activities. In other words, they do not start with targeted contacts and then plan task (or social) encounters; rather, they start with task-related events but with open eyes to new relations. Lucy from AuditCo explains,

No, I don't personally ever think like that [target certain contacts]: no, because it is difficult to choose who you work with anyway, and you don't know what someone is like until you work with them. Some people you do, but a lot of people you don't, so I would never work with someone simply on the basis that if I do a good job they will shout, because on the contrary, if I did a bad job they would also shout. No, I don't consciously think of that.

Exploring and developing new contacts is not easy for Selective Players, something they engage in with difficulty largely because of the large trade-offs they see in their working lives. This is partly because, similar to Purists, they devote considerable time to team management, where they actively seek efficiency and competence. Moreover, Selective Players, like Devoted

Players, believe that obtaining the strongest star-quality team members is important to their success in team management, and they are willing to voice their needs, one rare area where they do attempt to (albeit more transparently) leverage authority. But they also understand that there is a limit to what they can obtain, once again displaying their moderation in networking:

Getting people on the project team, sometimes it's hard, I sometimes have to take what I can. (Sally, AuditCo)

Team and task management, then, is a priority for Selective Players; networking to build new relations is welcome to emerge from these activities, but the focus is on the task. This approach is consistent when it comes to clients, who they regard as a highly important stakeholder to satisfy. Relationship building with (existing) clients flows from the client work, and so they do try to establish more personal relationships with clients, such as taking them to lunch or dinner on a regular basis. However, the approach is still moderate, as Lucy notes:

Yes, I wouldn't say we do it often, but when we do it, it is always very pleasant; so maybe go for lunch, arrange a big dinner between my team and their team, that type of stuff.

Thus, compared with the Devoted Players, they are clearly less calculating and tailored in their client networking.

Finally, Selective Players come across as identifying with and attached to their intake cohort. Peers are seen as a source of support and potential expertise. They are useful, and close relationships are maintained. But there was less active search for new and strategic peer relations. Overall, it is not surprising that, compared with those of Devoted Players, the networks of the Selective Players are significantly smaller, including a smaller number of external contacts. In fact, Selective Players have the highest network density and the smallest network size in T2.

Agency and Cultural Categories. Understanding the apparent tensions and resulting moderation in the networking strategy of Selective Players requires a closer look at their guiding schemas, beliefs, and values. Whereas the professional schema of Devoted Players emphasizes a pinnacle role within the organization (partnership), and Purists emphasize an identity that transcends the organization (expertise and self-sufficiency), Selective Players tend to emphasize the organization itself, an “organization–(wo)man” perspective. “Extended family” is an appropriate metaphor to capture their professional schema, which stresses job satisfaction (not simply advancement or expertise), mentorship, enriching interpersonal relationships, and teamwork. For example,

I can't remember a single manager that I really did not like when I was growing up within the firm.

(Clara, AuditCo)

If it is a team you get along with very well, then you can cope with the other things; so this would be my first choice, then the partner who is heading it, and then the topic. . . . It is more about getting along with the person, finding the right mentor you click with, than the client or the topic.

(Max, ConsultCo, on personal motivators in the job)

The company wants people to be happy, and they don't want people to leave as a result of not being happy about what they are working on.

(Edward, AuditCo)

This framing helps clarify their stronger and more positive belief in relationships and networking (cf. Purists), but with a healthy dose of caution that they do not overcalculate and appear scheming (cf. Devoted Players). Relationships are important not only because they helped one climb the ladder or solve technical problems but because they represent responsibilities to others in the firm. In short, they value "citizenship." For example,

I don't want to leave anybody taking up extra responsibility because I left the engagement in the middle, so there's a lot of things to think about. . . . We all understand that when you work with a firm, 80% of the time you might be doing something you like and the other 20% maybe you donate time, you work on different projects to help the firm; I understand that completely.

(Edward, AuditCo)

Part of our job is when a client has a need, your client service team, you have an opening when you need to service that client, it is hard to say, "No, I don't want to do it because I have heard bad things about [the partner]."

(Clara, AuditCo)

Relatedly, the time schema of Selective Players is the most present oriented. They took care of daily business and their teams, projects, and the relationships that these involved without the laser-sharp focus on future goals or external career move opportunities. This helps explain their modest explorative tendencies:

I think it's important to really understand what you're doing first before you actually go out and start moving outward, because if you're not doing the core well, then how can you really move upward?

(Sally, AuditCo)

For the time being, I still focus on getting the right balance between delegation and control [with my teams]; this is still rather challenging.

(Clara, AuditCo)

A focus on the present meant that sometimes they had to be selective in maintaining relationships, but in the sense of coping with current reality and needs, not in the sense of calculating the importance of alters:

Just because we are not on the same engagement, we are not as close as we were.

(Martin, AuditCo, emphasizing the main reason he lost touch with a contact)

Their moderation in networking can also be explained by their modest belief in a personal locus of influence. For example, in staffing decisions, although they have voice and desire the best-quality team members they can obtain, they also appreciate the "luck" element, which is a veiled way of accepting that they are not the only managers with needs in the organization and have to accept what they get:

When it comes to staffing my teams, it is just pot luck who is available.

(Harry, AuditCo)

New projects are assigned through HR, so it is a roll of the dice.

(Martin, AuditCo)

Their locus of control is modest also in the sense that it is "reactive" (adjustments to impositions from the system) rather than "proactive" (planned originators). Selective Players are likely to respond to situations that they may not like and try to alter their course *ex post*; for example,

I managed to transfer off this client, but then you have to take a leap of faith to refill your schedule.

(Martin, AuditCo)

I've spoken to [colleagues who] know what I've been going through, and [another partner] knows too that when I got put on that job, he said, be careful, [new partner] is not nice to work with. . . it got very bad during the year, the year-end audit which just completed the cycle in late March and we are all going into the quarter, so we try to speak to him. . . but he's hard to get in touch with when he does not want to get in touch with you. . . . I think we are on his radar screen now a little bit. . . [I'm] hoping that once we did sit with him a little bit, try to make a conscious effort, that we fix some of these things, because not all of them are very easily fixed.

(Clara, AuditCo)

Finally, their values include the realism (but not full-blown instrumentalism) of Devoted Players—that is, an acceptance of networking as means for advancement, but without the tolerance for pushy tactics and aggressiveness. They value transparency and authenticity, as do the Purists, but without the latter's disdain for networking:

It's important to be known and to be seen.

(Clara, AuditCo)

I think they are always separate, have their own agenda. . . having the attitude to tentatively use their elbow.

(Oscar, ConsultCo, speaking about two aggressive and political contacts he did not like)

It's not me seeking out [partners]. Say I want to meet [partner X]. I think, unfortunately, at this point in time, between my schedule and probably everybody else's, we don't necessarily go out and knock on the door and say, "Hi, I'm so and so; how's it going?"

(Martin, AuditCo)

In summary, Selective Players ride along a knife edge of moderation in their approach to networking. They

know and accept that connections are important to their careers, but because these careers are mostly framed within their current firms—and because they take organizational citizenship and loyalty seriously—they are tempered in their networking (less self-serving). They are neither as instrumental and calculating as Devoted Players nor as idealistic and authentic as Purists.

Origins of Networking Strategies:

Agency on a Leash

We conducted one final analysis to better understand the origins of these networking strategies. As noted, T1 network structures did not predict strategies. Given the qualitative and inductive study design, nor could we really measure those strategies before (i.e., at T1) these actors had a chance to properly experience their new roles (i.e., between T1 and T2). But we did code T1 interviews for what we can call (pre)dispositions to networking. This captures the degree of positivity or negativity of a subject to networking at T1. We coded this on a five-point scale, ranging from -2 (very negative view) to $+2$ (very positive view), with 0 (neutral) in the middle. Importantly, this coding was done prior to any work on the emergent strategy configurations. Its balanced nature (between positive, negative, and neutral) means that the five-point coding could be matched with the three emergent strategies (with several combinations possible for how these five points match the three strategies). In essence, it provides a proxy measure of “intended” strategy at T1 (whether Devoted Players, Selective Players, or Purists), which we can use to assess the match with the actual “emergent” strategy at T2, and so it is a look at the extent of anchoring these strategies experienced over the focal time period. The match rate can, in theory, range from 0% (no subject’s T1 strategy, based on predisposition codings, matches his or her actual T2 strategy) to 100% (all T2 strategies match the T1 proxy). What we found, using two of the most plausible ways to match the five-point codings to the three emergent strategies, were match rates of 44% and 58%. This finding was compelling. Very high match rates (which would suggest that strategies are chained perfectly to the past and that agency consists largely of “maintenance” work) or very low match rates (which would suggest that strategies emerge completely free of anchors and are based purely on local learning and path dependency) are improbable. Rather, these match rates suggest that strategies are on “leashes,” probably elastic ones given the modest time period involved for change to occur. We will come back to consider this result as we reflect on the problem of endogeneity in our discussions below.

Strategy Correlates and Discussion

Our study examines the networking strategies of service professionals as they transition into management

positions. Strategies are configurations of attitudes, actions (explore, exploit), and relational foci (up, out, down, etc.) imbued with meaning through the way actors apply schemas, beliefs, and values in relational choices. We find that strategies are neither singular nor infinite—actors neither have the same approach nor approach networking completely differently. We empirically distinguish three strategies. Devoted Players (comprising 18 professionals) were active relational entrepreneurs, committed to networking because of its future value in the partnership race (means to an end) but also its pleasure. They networked widely, made bold “asks” of their contacts, and were eager to bridge, bolstered by their belief that they are the architects of their future (high personal locus of influence). Purists (comprising 10 professionals) were in many ways their antitheses. They disliked networking, believing it to be both disingenuous and a source of unfair advantage in getting ahead, which should be on the basis of content, not connections. They preferred to avoid it as well as particularly needless interactions with partners, valuing meritocracy and authenticity in their relationships. Rather, they preferred to focus on their teams, managing intensely down, to serve well their clients, and thus to allow the quality of their work to speak for itself. Selective Players (comprising 24 professionals) were moderates—they knew networking mattered, and they would willingly engage in relationship building and leverage opportunities. Their loyalty and familial frame for the organization, however, tempered their networking; they kept activities local or within the periphery of the current project(s), made modest “asks,” and generally kept their focus on the task at hand. They lacked the idealism of Purists and the open hobnobbing of Devoted Players, but they were neither marked by self-deception nor nervously engaged in nontransparent activities that they would really like to avoid. Rather, they were selective in networking, finding more opportunities to network than for which they had time, and so trade-offs were necessary, and they chose to network in a more task-related manner.

Each of the three clusters shares two points. First, they cannot be explained by prior structure. As we noted, measures at T1 indicated no significant differences in either size or density across emerging clusters. Second, each profile can be better understood once we consider the agency involved in networking—that is, the way actors draw on cultural categories (schemas, beliefs, values) in making networking choices. This is an important contribution to the network analysis literature, where questions of agency and endogeneity are underexplored (Schulte et al. 2012, Vissa 2012). Our study induces distinct networking strategies *and* shows how actors, in this process, innovate upon similar career positions “in accordance with their personal and collective ideals, interests, and commitments” (Emirbayer and

Goodwin 1994, p. 1443). We also contribute to network analysis by now turning to the second question we posed regarding endogeneity: *Do the network strategies that we induce subsequently influence the network structure and socialization levels (job and interpersonal) of these actors?* By exploring correlates of these strategies more generally (ex post but also ex ante), we hope to deepen our understanding of them (rather than “predict” consequences). Several characteristics help us to further distinguish these clusters: (1) basic demographics (ex ante), (2) job experience with other firms (ex ante), (3) network structure (ex post), and (4) socialization and embeddedness in the new job (ex post).

Demographics

Demographic characteristics included age, gender, and tenure in the firm. ANOVA revealed no significant differences between clusters on these variables. Players (both Devoted and Selective) and Purists were of similar age (29 on average), similar sex (31% female), and similar number of years in the firm (4.5). There was also no significant difference in the number of days between our two interventions (480 days on average). Also similar were time in the job and firm experience. Finally, we found that both settings displayed all three cluster types so that no strategy was associated with any specific firm or location (5, 5, and 5 cases across the three clusters for ConsultCo; 6, 4, and 12 for AuditCo New York; and 7, 1, and 7 for AuditCo London). Generally, this finding increases the importance of agency in the construction of networking strategies.

Job Experience

Job experience in other firms, however, did matter. Purists had significantly fewer previous employers than both types of players (0.7 on average versus 1.61 and 1.46 for Clusters 1 and 3; $p < 0.01$). This may influence networking behavior in several ways. Networking behavior presumably requires some learning. Having more and different work settings, young service professionals could accelerate their learning and develop greater openness to networking. In our context, what matters is not the total time spent working (Forret and Dougherty 2001), which is similar across managers, but how that time is spent, i.e., at few or several employers. This implies that young service professionals changing employers gain skill in, and appreciation for, relationship development through multiple social integration experiences—a learning process. Also, moving from one firm to another firm (versus from a university to a firm) may require heightened attention to loyalty and acceptance within the new firm. Players, who on average experienced over twice the number of interfirm moves compared with Purists, may have experienced a greater need to reach out socially to accelerate their legitimacy. Of course, there is also the possibility that those who are

more likely to make moves have personalities that are more comfortable with social networking. Nonetheless, this finding implies a learning process to networking, one that is shaped by context and career path (Ibarra and Hunter 2007).

Network Structure

We also found differences in T2 network size and density across the three clusters. Network size differed across clusters (F -test, $p < 0.023$), with Devoted Players having larger networks than both Purists ($p < 0.1$ (one-tailed)) and Selective Players ($p < 0.01$). There was no significant difference between the latter two clusters at T2, both of which saw their networks shrink from T1 to T2; Devoted Players, however, saw some increase. This fits well with their described relational strategies and modes of working; Devoted Players were keen on network exploration, whereas the other two clusters were not.

Network density also differed across clusters (F -test, $p < 0.037$) at T2, although with some twists. Devoted Players did not exhibit the least dense networks, as might be expected with greater network size. Rather, their networks were in the middle of the range. A typical network graph of a Devoted Player featured a dense internal network of close relationships, but then a number of distinct external contacts that they used for specific needs. Devoted Players maintained over twice the external contacts of Selective Players (4.89 versus 2.25; $p < 0.05$), and their dense internal contacts testify to their bridging behaviors. Selective Players maintained the densest networks overall, but with fewer contacts across company departments, groups, or offices, and fewer external contacts—they were less likely to serve as bridges compared with Devoted Players. Finally, Purists maintained the least dense networks, a result of their reasonable attention to external contacts (3.8 on average) but apparent disregard for connecting contacts. There is also the possibility that Purists, given their networking style, are less likely to accurately assess relationships between their contacts. In sum, the consequent network structures at T2 are reasonable given the emergent networking styles. We can also speculate that T2 structures were influenced by strategies because these were brand new roles for the focal actors, giving them opportunity to “break” with the past and shape their future.

These associations shed some light on the differences in networking strategies and their source—that they are not necessarily driven by structure but may stem from individual interpretation and choice. Individual attitudes to networking is one factor, as are the underlying values and moral codes (e.g., Purists’ disdain for instrumentality) and professional schemas (e.g., Selective Players’ familial frame is consistent with the construction of denser networks). Indeed, our finding that T2 emergent strategies are partially but imperfectly tied

to T1 predispositions to networking (or intended strategies) offers plausible implications for the origins of these strategies—that these strategies, and human agency more generally, are on a “leash” to the past. Actors neither roam freely to form their networking strategies nor are chained to prior positions. On the one hand, agency is not entirely creative, but it is in fact “recreative,” with choices maintaining and reproducing earlier positions; that is, there is no “skyhook” that magically descends to form a person’s networking strategy, even during what should be moments of considerable learning for young professionals. Agency works with the cultural materials at hand, including prior dispositions, histories, and inertia. And yet agency also means that learning and movement, even if gradual, are possible. People can learn to network (or not), even though that learning is on a leash. In fact, because the time span for this movement (16 months) was relatively brief compared with an entire span of a career, we could consider these leashes to be “elastic.” To the extent that these predispositions have their origins in deeper personality differences, it suggests more work in this direction is needed. Recent research suggests that deeper personality differences are also associated with variance in network structure (Burt et al. 1998, Forret and Dougherty 2001, Klein et al. 2004), and this raises the possibility that personality is also a factor in networking strategies, although it is beyond the scope and measures of our paper. And yet learning is likely to be important, indicated by the correlations with the numbers of previous employers. Although our findings point to the power of cultural understandings and agency, and they are suggestive of experiential causes (learning), measures of personality differences would be needed to tease out their contribution, a fertile terrain for future research. We also need a more systematic way to assess changes to the strategies themselves (that is, how elastic are they?), which we consider below. Although deterministic accounts of network structure determining outcomes and choice are not supported and need to be questioned (at the firm level; see Ozcan and Eisenhardt 2009), we are cautious not to replace one source of determinism with another. More research is needed into endogeneity and the interweaving of causal mechanisms over time, a point we emphasize below.

Job/Organization Embeddedness

Finally, it is natural to wonder about the performance differences of the three clusters. Unfortunately, we could not obtain adequate and objective performance measures.² Although we know that all service professionals in our sample successfully passed the same important hurdle, and they were, of course, still on the job at the second intervention, we also sought some way to capture the “progress” of their experience in the new job. As noted, we measured aspects of their

embeddedness or comfort in their jobs at T2, albeit through self-reports. Two measures (established scales) are suggestive of task socialization and feelings of competence: *task clarity* (e.g., “I feel competent conducting my job assignment”) and *role clarity* (e.g., “I know what my responsibilities are”). In both cases, we found no significant differences across clusters. Analysis indicated similar levels of engagement on these scales (only *role clarity* indicated marginal differences between Devoted Players and Purists, with the former reporting greater clarity in the new role; $p < 0.09$ (two-tailed t -test)). Although the elapsed time in the new job is relatively short, these findings indicate that different networking styles did not necessarily correlate with substantially different levels of perceived competence and task embeddedness.

We also examined three scales concerning social (not task) embeddedness: *social integration with clients* (e.g., “I feel well integrated with my clients”), *social integration with peers* (e.g., “I feel well integrated with my coworkers”), and *organizational commitment* (e.g., “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me”). *Social integration with clients* showed no significant differences across clusters, which is sensible given the seriousness with which each cluster approached clients. Other measures of embeddedness, however, did indicate differences. Regarding *social integration with peers*, we found modest evidence of differences (ANOVA, F -test, $p < 0.06$); the driving factor was a substantial difference between Devoted Players and Purists (4.18 versus 3.65; $p < 0.03$ (two-tailed t -test)). This corroborates the greater focus to peers that Devoted Players exhibit. What is striking is that, even though more instrumental in their approach to networking, Devoted Players did not necessarily end up with poorer-quality relations. Of course, it would be useful to also assess what their contacts thought of them, but the implication is that a greater openness to networking—even if pragmatic—may boost, not stifle, feelings of social integration with colleagues.

Regarding *organizational commitment*, the differences were more striking (ANOVA, F -test, $p < 0.004$). In particular, Purists exhibit much less emotional attachment and loyalty or obligation to the firm than either Devoted Players ($p < 0.002$) or Selective Players ($p < 0.013$) do. A negative attitude to networking along with a schema that emphasizes self-sufficiency may then lower feelings of commitment. Even though there may be no immediate and detrimental influence on task/job embeddedness (e.g., *task clarity*, *role clarity*), longer-term implications include a lower likelihood of extrarole behavior (Morrison 1993) and higher turnover (Cohen 1993), outcomes associated with organizational commitment levels. Relatedly, research has found that greater external networking is positively associated with turnover (Wolff

and Moser 2009); thus, whereas Devoted Players' accumulation of organizational commitment may shield them from this effect (they were the most externally linked), Purists (second-most externally linked) may lack such a countervailing force, raising the likelihood of departure. There is also corroborating evidence that actors with more bridging activity—such as Devoted Players—are more likely to be dedicated employees within the firm (Lamertz 2006). Overall, and as Simon (1991) once suggested, if loyalty and commitment are key sources of firm effectiveness, then players of both kinds have an advantage over Purists in as far as their networking strategies will stoke their motivation toward the firm and peers, engendering appreciation and approval from authority figures and easier resource access. Moreover, the importance Purists place on independence and self-sufficiency may lead to a vicious circle where they feel less integrated and appreciated and so continue to withdraw.

On the other hand, the tendency of Purists—and to some extent, Selective Players—to focus hard on the jobs and teams at hand, where this results in continued success and recognition, may counter these forces and breed greater affinity to the job and firm. Further research is needed to untangle the performance consequences of these strategies. (Our time span is arguably too short, and our measures are self-reports.) Although examining these correlates helps us to interpret these strategies, the purpose of this study was not deductive model testing of performance outcomes but inductive research into the networking strategies and agency of service professionals.

Agency and Endogeneity in Network Analysis

On the whole, our study has implications for how academics approach social network research. The academic literature is mostly preoccupied with the structural properties of social networks—in particular, the ongoing battle between structural holes versus closure as to which one is the principal driver of assorted outcomes. Without doubt, both perspectives have generated useful findings (Burt 1992, Gabbay and Zuckerman 1998). However, our findings support the call to take agency and endogeneity seriously in network analysis (Ahuja et al. 2012). First, our study contributes to knowledge of network genesis, particularly during job transitions. Personal networks are dynamic constructions: in a sense, actors “have” a network (noun) only to the extent that they participate in networking (verb). But too little is asked about the quality of that participation and construction. One key insight of this study is that agency, through creative interpretation and choice that leverages cultural attributes, is an important force in networking and network genesis. Moreover, we show how distinct schemas, beliefs, and values are used by actors and help

explain the unfolding of a relational strategy. In particular, we suggest that approaching social structure as cold and hard is questionable. Networking acts contain powerful moral understandings and personal commitments. Strategies that are natural to some make others cringe, and such strategies may not be simply explained by prior structure. Acts of agency in the construction of social capital represent important endogenous forces that should be considered more closely.

Relatedly, taking endogeneity seriously does not mean replacing one causal dogma (structural determinism) with another. Even though prior structure in our study does not drive strategy formation, we, of course, cannot say that the various constructs we examine in our study will not have an iterative and reinforcing influence over time. Moreover, we have seen that predispositions to networking (a proxy for intended strategies), albeit imperfectly, keep learning anchored to the past (as do the various cultural categories that we observed, which, of course, must have been formed over histories much longer than 16 months). Ultimately, endogeneity means that there is the possibility for iterative causal effects in network mechanisms. Over the 16 months or so of networking activity that we focused on, we have described the emergence of networking strategies and their correlation with prior and post measures of interest, including network structure and proxies for prior (intended) networking strategies. Future research could improve this work by examining longer activity periods and measuring more causal forces at different points in time, a limitation of the current study. If resources and time were available, we could imagine a more “deluxe” method of investigating the endogeneity problem. Future work could, first of all, build on this study by using the strategies induced here as starting points for deductive surveying of strategy types. Strategies, network structures, and relevant personal/personality measures could then be taken at two points in time, including some capture of the experiences of actors in the interim period. Quantitative methods could then try to tease out how T1 strategies and structures result in T2 strategies and structures, including the influence of intervening experiences. Although such work would be resource heavy, requiring not only a large sample size but also an assessment of the qualitative experiences of actors during the interim period, it could help push our understanding of endogeneity and the elasticity of networking strategies much further.

Reflecting on a good deal of the focus in current ego network research, our study suggests that, within an actor's strategy, holes versus closure is not always a zero-sum trade-off (although not a conscious consideration—no subject spoke in these terms). Actors may display ambidexterity when it comes to positions (Uzzi 1997). Looking at the three configurations, we notice that Selective Players maintained denser networks and Purists

sparser ones. The former, in particular, tended to make trade-offs such that they gave priority to relations that were immediately relevant to their task and competence centers—thus the apparent focus on dense networks. However, Devoted Players exhibited a balance between holes and closure—a tightly knit inner core but with relatively numerous external contacts—and thus their density scores were in the middle of the range. In short, some networking strategies may be ambidextrous when it comes to structural positions; this further questions the field's acute focus on network position without understanding agency. However, more research is needed—for example, studies with longer assessments of structural change postjob transition.

Finally, our study has other limitations that should be corrected in future research. The performance implications of these strategies—the outcome measures that are separately collected and reduce the problems of common-method bias—should be better investigated. Larger sample sizes and survey methods that use and further validate the three clusters/strategies found here should prove useful. Also, as noted, personality measures could be used to deepen our understanding of these strategies and refine our understanding of endogenous forces. Once again, changes in strategy should also be explored. It is entirely probable, as our proxy tests for T1 intended strategies suggest, that individuals, over time, can shift between the three strategies. We can speculate that moves in and out of the Selective Players cluster is the most likely (given the gap between Devoted Players and Purists), but further research is needed.

Conclusion

This paper expands our understanding of the strategies individuals use to build networks. A grounded theory approach finds three network configurations that each describe how a set of common dimensions interact to inform and distinguish the three strategies that we uncover: Devoted Players, Purists, and Selective Players. This approach allows us to include specifics about an actor's attitude, behavior, and position (microelements) while also aggregating these components into consistent and empirically distinguishable archetypes. In each case, we further distinguish the strategies by examining the agency involved—how the actors' strategies were shaped by key schemas, beliefs, and values. We also examined several correlates or associated variables, which added color and meaning to these archetypes. Our study suggests that qualitative, agentic, and longitudinal approaches to studying networking are needed. It also raises new and related avenues for research, such as the antecedents of strategies, their performance benefits, and whether and how actors can switch between strategies.

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Endnotes

¹In other words, social “structure” in its broader sense can still help explain strategies through agents applying reoccurring cultural attributes in their relational decisions, even though structure in the narrower sense of “network ties” and standard measures of network structure does not. As one reviewer suggested, the sorts or types of actions that are examined or come to the surface in researching networking strategies may connect to narrower (with correlates to standard network measures) as well as broader conceptions of structure, which future research of different contexts for action can help untangle.

²Measures of job and interpersonal embeddedness were collected in T2 (at the same time as the T2 interviews), which raises common-method bias concerns. Our use of these ex post correlates, however, is to help us further understand the emergent strategies rather than as “performance outcomes.”

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