

Networking Behaviors under the Microscope: Examining Networking Actions from Different Perspectives

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Networking Behaviors

- **Definition:** Proactive and purposeful efforts made by individuals to create, maintain, and leverage relationships that can provide them with valuable resources for their work and career.
- As such, networking excludes:
 - spontaneous interactions
 - passive interactions
 - forced interactions
 - purely affective interactions

Why study networking?

- Emphasis of structure over agency in network literature
- Little work on networking behaviors
- But paradoxically, we already teach students what networking is, why it is beneficial, how to network, ...

Overview

- **Chapter 1:** Do people feel uncomfortable when networking?
 - Cognitive frame and moral emotion
- **Chapter 2:** Why do women benefit less from their networking actions than men?
 - Gender difference in maintenance activity
- **Chapter 3:** Is each networking behavior (search, maintenance, and leverage) associated with unique motivations and unique network properties?
 - Antecedents in terms of motivations (power, affiliation, achievement) and consequences in terms of network structure (size, diversity, density).

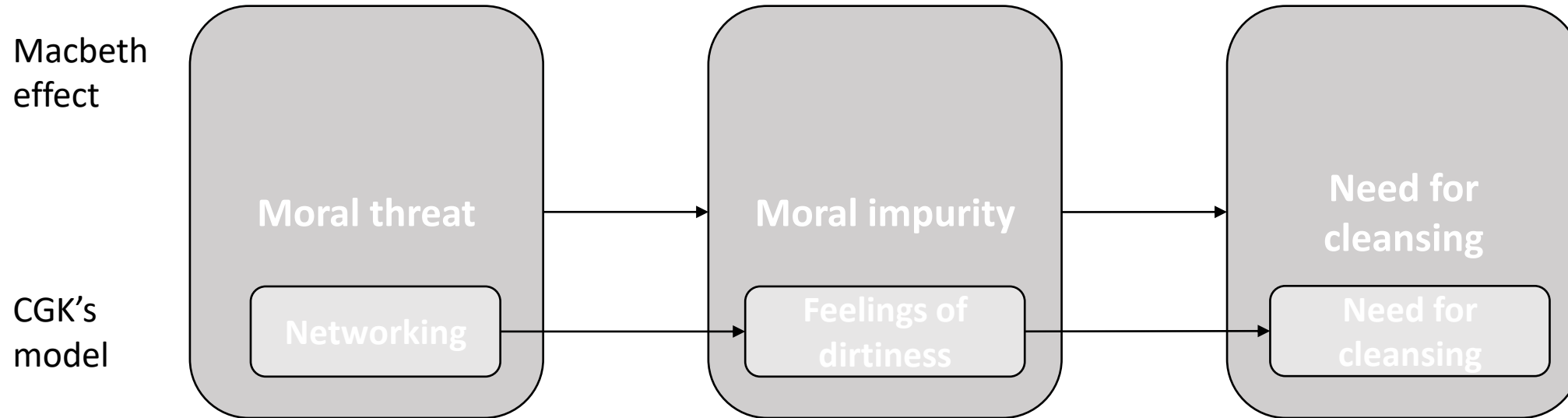
**Does Networking Make People Feel “Dirty”?
Reconsidering Casciaro, Gino, and Kouchaki
(2014)**

Chapter 1

Why reconsidering CGK?

- **My original goal:** Extend its model to find how to mitigate people's aversion for networking
 - **My original RQ:** Can we mitigate people's reluctance to network and how?
- **Why does it matter?** Because networking has a lot of benefits for people's career.
- **But:**
 - To moderate people's discomfort when networking, we must understand what causes it.
 - A single causal piece of evidence so far: CGK argues that people feel "dirty" when networking.

Where does this idea of “dirtiness” come from?



The Macbeth Effect

- **Effect:** Threats to moral purity activates a need for physical cleansing.
 - Based on the idea that there exists a psychological connection between moral purity and physical cleanliness.
- Several large scale pre-registered replications of the effect: no evidence

Can we build upon CGK?

- **No:** The key argument in the paper is based on an effect for which there is no empirical support.
- If not “dirty”, then what?
- Do people experience any psychological change after networking?
- **Research Questions:**
 - Do people experience discomfort when networking?
 - What is the reason for this discomfort?
 - What is the exact nature of this discomfort?
 - Can this discomfort be mitigated?

Model

- **Cognitive frame:** objectification
- **Moral emotion:** guilt
- **Self-serving justification:** prosocial motivation

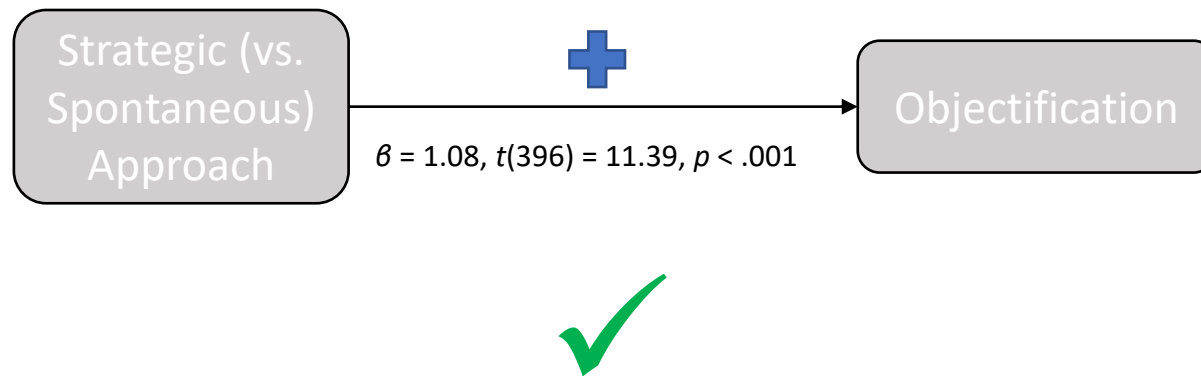
Method

- Online **experiment** based on vignettes
- **Procedure:**
 - Participation in exchange of payment
 - Random assignment to conditions
- **Design:** 2 (type of approach: strategic vs. spontaneous) x 2 (motivation to network: prosocial vs. proself) between-subjects
- **Sample:** 398 full-time employees
- **Measures:**
 - Objectification: 10 items measured on a 7-point scale from (1) Strongly disagree to (7) Strongly agree (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, Galinsky, 2008) (Min = 1.5, $M = 4.55$, Max = 7, $SD = 1.09$, $\alpha = 0.9$)
 - Guilt: 10 items measured on a 7-point scale from (1) Strongly disagree to (7) Strongly agree (Jones, Schratte, Kugler, 2000) (Min = 1, $M = 3.14$, Max = 7, $SD = 1.21$, $\alpha = 0.92$)



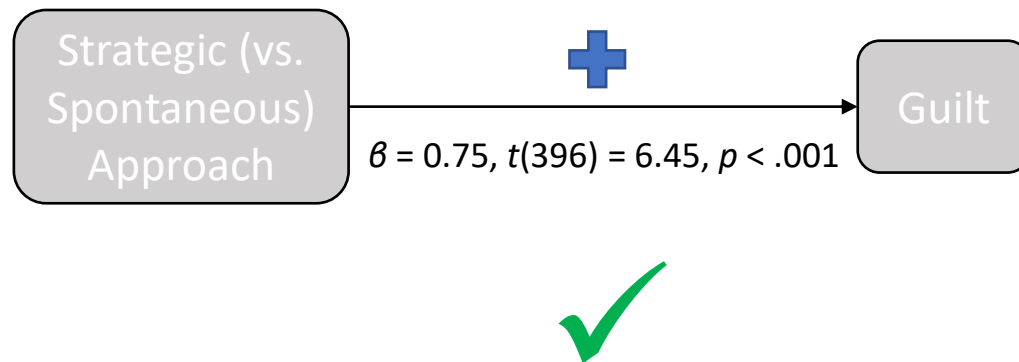
Results

Hypothesis 1: People who network (i.e., strategically approach someone) will be more likely to frame their behavior as the objectification of the interaction partner, compared to people who do not network (i.e., spontaneously approach someone).



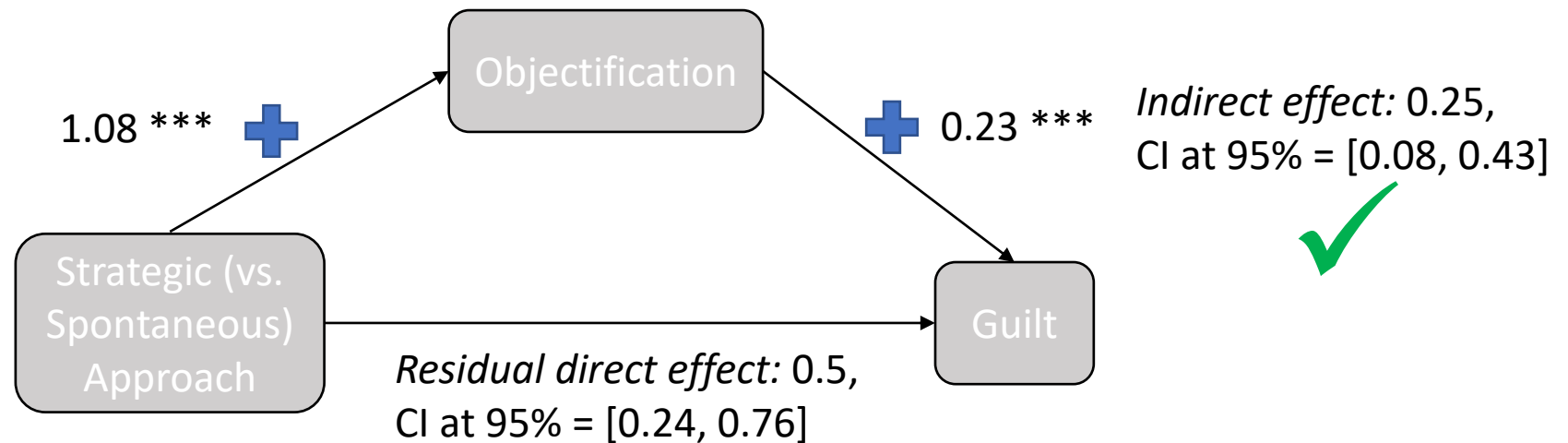
Results

Hypothesis 2a: People who network (i.e., strategically approach someone) will be more likely to experience guilt compared to people who do not network (i.e., spontaneously approach someone).



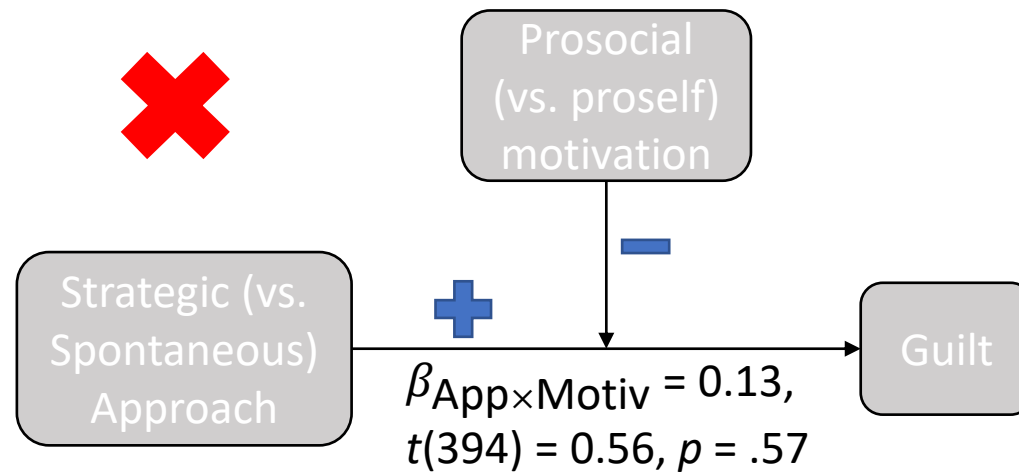
Results

Hypothesis 2b: The increase in experienced guilt for people who network will be mediated by an increase in the perceived objectification of the interaction partner.



Results

Hypothesis 3a: The extent to which people experience guilt when networking will be moderated by the extent to which they are prosocially-motivated when networking: The more prosocial their motivation to network, the less guilt they will experience.



Results

Hypothesis 3b: The pathway between objectification and guilt will be moderated by people's motivation when networking: When people network with a pro-social motive, the link between objectification and feelings of guilt will be weaker than when they network with a proself motive.

Conditional Indirect Effects:

- Approach to Guilt via Objectification (Prosocial Motivation): 0.40, CI at 95% = [0.22, 0.61]
 - Approach to Guilt via Objectification (Proself Motivation): 0.12, CI at 95% = [-0.13, 0.38]
- } $\Delta = 0.28$
CI at 95% = [-0.01, 0.59]



Contribution

- Better understanding networking discomfort:
 - Cognitive frame and moral emotions
 - Networking triggers guilt, partly because people view networking as the objectification of others.
- However, networking for a prosocial motive does not seem to help people morally justify their networking action.
- We've made progress in understanding the mechanism, but further research needs to investigate solutions to help people network.

When Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women from Networking Efficiently

Chapter 2

Networking Activity of Men and Women

- Women network as much as men, but their career benefit less from their networking efforts.
- **One possible explanation:** Women network differently because they renounce certain networking strategies for fear of being misjudged.

Key Networking Strategy

- One key networking strategy is to maintain or deepen relationships with key organizational members.
- Maintenance activities, or **network-deepening actions**: Efforts made to affirm, sustain, preserve, or strengthen ties.
 - Deepen existing interpersonal ties by investing time and effort in the relationship and turning the professional relationship into friendship.
- Since men are over-represented all along the corporate ladder, implementing this type of networking strategy implies that women deepen relationships with men.
 - They must overcome their natural tendency for gender homophily.

Gender Stereotype

- A specific gender stereotype paints women as able and willing to use their power of attraction to influence and manipulate men.
 - Archetypes: the *“femme fatale”*, the *“temptress”* or the *“seductress”*
- Cost of being compared to this stereotype: Perceived as promiscuous, flirtatious, seductive, manipulative, devious, scheming, cold, immoral, incompetent.

Image Risk

- Given the existence of such stereotype, women may view network-deepening actions with male supervisors as a risk for their image.
 - Women expect that others will form an undesirable impression of them because of their networking actions.
- Two sides of this issue:
 - Egocentric perspective: Do women fear for their image when engaged in network-deepening with their male supervisors?
 - Altercentric perspective: Do observers indeed misjudge women (compared to men) when they undertake those actions?

Egocentric Perspective

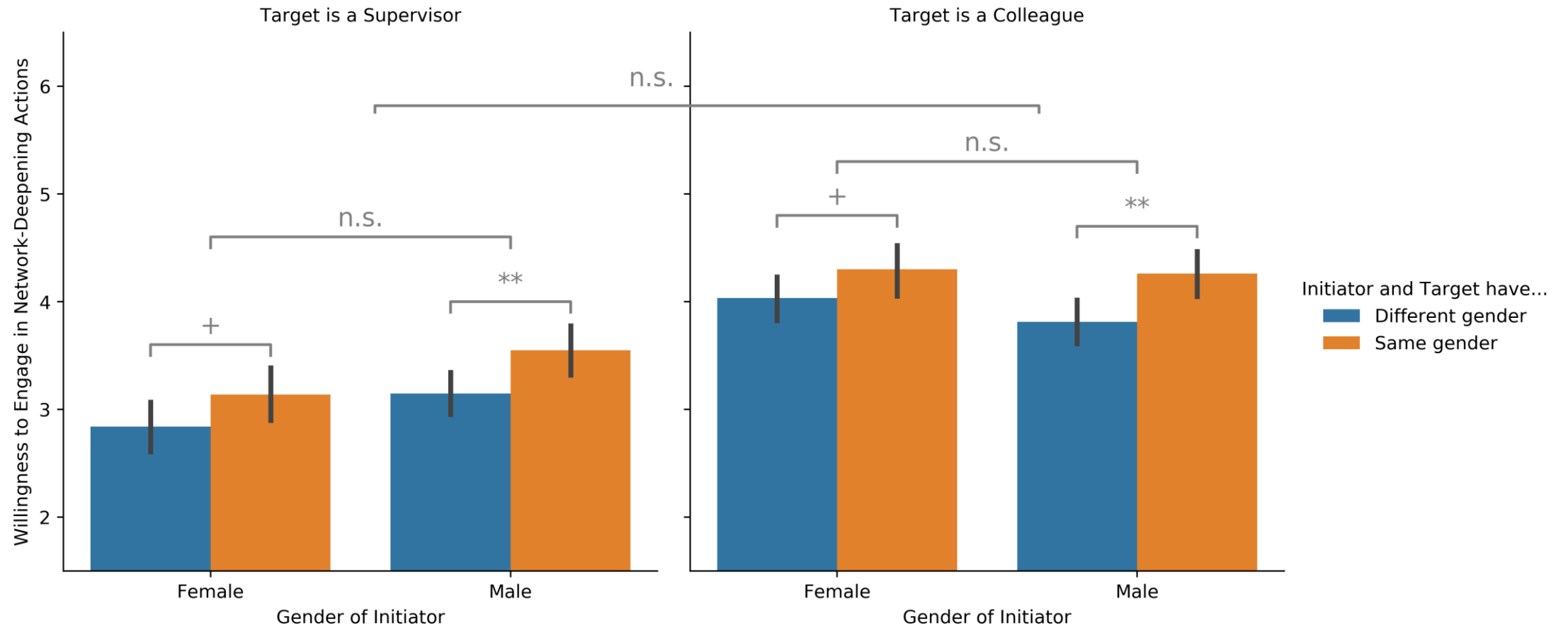
- Focus on the subjective experience of women engaged in network-deepening actions with their male supervisors.
- **Main expectation:** Women will be less likely than men to engage in network-deepening actions with supervisors of the opposite (rather than same) gender because of the risk for their image they associate with those networking actions.

Method



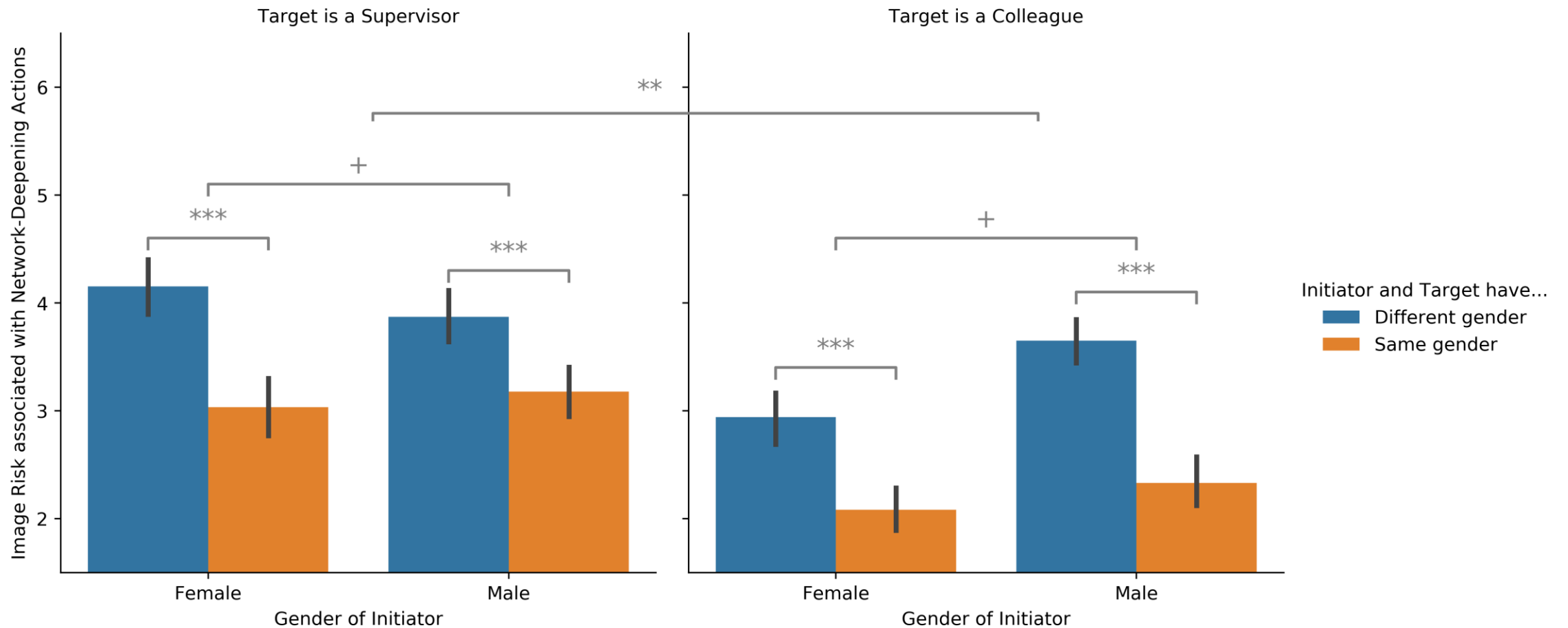
- Online **experiment** based on vignettes
- **Design:** 2 (gender of the target: male vs. female) x 2 (hierarchical level of the target: colleague vs. supervisor) between-subjects
- Control for the gender of the participant
- **Sample:** N = 914 full-time employees
- **Measures:**
 - Willingness engage in network-deepening actions: 7 items measured on a 7-point scale from (1) I would hardly see myself undertaking this action, to (7) I would easily see myself undertaking this action (Forret & Dougherty, 2001; Vissa, 2012; Shipilov, Labianca, Kalnysh, Kalnysh, 2014) (Min = 1, $M = 3.64$, Max = 7, $SD = 1.32$, $\alpha = 0.89$).
 - Image risk: 9 items measured on a 7-point scale from (1) Strongly disagree to (7) Strongly agree (Ashford, 1986; DeWall, Altermatt, Thompson, 2005) (Min = 1, $M = 3.17$, Max = 7, $SD = 1.45$, $\alpha = 0.94$).
- **Key comparison:** difference between men and women engaged in network-deepening actions with a person of a different (vs. same) gender.

Main Results



Effect on Image Risk

Both men and women associate an image risk with their network-deepening actions when the target is of the opposite gender, but this effect is stronger for women when the target is a supervisor, while it is stronger for men when the target is a colleague.



Moderated Mediation Analysis

Gender Similarity	Initiator Gender	Target Hierarchical Level	Conditional Indirect Effects
Same to Diff	Woman	Supervisor	-0.25 [-0.38, -0.15]
Same to Diff	Man	Supervisor	-0.15 [-0.26, -0.07]
Same to Diff	Woman	Colleague	-0.19 [-0.30, -0.11]
Same to Diff	Man	Colleague	-0.29 [-0.43, -0.19]

-0.06
[-0.18, 0.05]

-0.09
[-0.22, 0.01]

0.10
[0.01, 0.22]

0.14
[0.04, 0.26]

Summary

- Women are reluctant to engage in network-deepening actions with supervisor of the opposite gender, and this reduced willingness to network is mediated by an increase in their image risk.
- However this effect is:
 - Neither specific to women (same for men)
 - Nor specific to supervisors (same with colleagues)

Summary

However, I do find evidence that:

- Women associate more image risk than men with network-deepening actions directed towards supervisors of the opposite gender.
- For both men and women, this image risk is attenuated when the supervisor is of the same gender.
- For women, this image risk is also attenuated when the target is a colleague.
- For men, this image risk is strengthened when the target is a colleague.
- The more image risk people associate with their network-deepening actions, the less willing to engage in those actions they are.

Summary

When image risk specifically refers to sexual intentions:

- Women become particularly reluctant to engage in network-deepening actions with male supervisors (compared with men and with colleagues)
- Men become particularly reluctant to engage in network-deepening actions with female colleagues (compared with women and with supervisors)

Theoretical implications

- To understand gender inequality within organizations, both structural factors and psychological factors matter.
- The risk women associate with their network-deepening actions refers to the sexual ambiguity attached to those actions.
 - They are worried to be viewed as willing to exchange promiscuity for resources.
- Men also fear negative gender stereotypes:
 - They are worried to be viewed as having sexual intentions.
- Altercentric perspective:
 - Not clear whether people stereotype women as “seductress” or “temptress”.
 - More pre-registered studies are needed to confirm the existence of this stereotype.

Practical implications

- To help women overcome their aversion to network-deepening actions with male supervisors:
 - Organizations could hire and promote more women in positions of power at each hierarchical level.
- In a post-#MeToo era, men could have renounced to engage in network-deepening actions with female colleagues:
 - Positive for women's well-being and safety within organizations,
 - Negative for women's career.
- The reluctance of both men and women to deepen relationships with organizational members of the opposite gender will have more severe consequences for women than for men.

Antecedents and Consequences of Various Networking Behaviors

Chapter 3

Networking Behaviors

Purposeful and proactive efforts made by individuals to create, maintain, or leverage relationships that can help them in their work and career development.

- *Search*: tie formation, exploration, network-broadening activity.
- *Maintenance*: efforts made to affirm, sustain, preserve, deepen or strengthen ties.
- *Leverage*: exploitation, activity aimed at extracting value.

Goal

- Why does understanding the antecedents and consequences of different networking behaviors matter?
 1. Antecedents:
 - a. Understanding the variance in people's engagement in networking behaviors.
 - b. Predicting those behaviors.
 2. Consequences:
 - a. Determining whether networking help people shape their network and influence their position.
 - b. Determining the unique impact of each networking behavior on different network properties.
- **Expectation:** Different motivations (power, affiliation, achievement) will be associated with different networking behaviors (search, maintenance, leverage) that will in turn be associated with specific properties (size, diversity, density) of the network built.



Method

- **Survey** on a cohort of 108 EMBA students
- **Motivations:** Unified Motive Scale (Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012): Each motivation (power, achievement, affiliation) is captured with 3 items (1: Strongly disagree – 6: Strongly agree).
- **Networking Behaviors:** How frequently people engaged in search (4 items), maintenance (4 items), and leverage activities (5 items) over the past twelve months (1: Never – 7: Always).
- **Full network** of the cohort
 - Network size: Out-degree centrality and Reciprocal degree centrality
 - Network diversity: Blau index for nationality and expertise, and Yule's Q for gender
 - Network density: Effective size, Constraint, Betweenness centrality
- **Analysis:**
 - Motivations to Networking Behaviors: SEM with six latent variables and their measurement model
 - Networking Behaviors to Network Structure: SEM with three latent variables and their measurement model and each network score

Relationships between Motivations and Networking Behaviors

Structural Coefficients (SD) between Motivations and Behaviors

		Networking behaviors		
		Search	Maintain	Leverage
~	Motivation for power	0.45 *	-0.07	0.18
		(0.18)	(0.08)	(0.2)
✓	Motivation for affiliation	0.93 **	0.38 *	0.27
		(0.34)	(0.18)	(0.32)
✗	Motivation for achievement	-0.07	0.07	0.17
		(0.14)	(0.07)	(0.16)

Note. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

Relationships between Networking Behaviors and Network Properties

Structural Coefficients (SD) between Behaviors and Structure

Networking Behaviors	Network Structure							
	Network Size		Network Diversity			Network Density		
	Out-degree centrality	Reciprocal degree centrality	Gender	Nationality	Expertise	Effective size	Constraint	Betweenness centrality
Search	0.017 ** (0.007)	0.008 * (0.003)	-0.004 (0.031)	0.023 (0.014)	0.015 (0.013)	1.039 + (0.529)	-0.011 + (0.006)	0.001 (0.001)
Maintain	0.05 * (0.023)	0.026 * (0.011)	0.044 (0.087)	0.043 (0.04)	0.027 (0.036)	4.312 * (1.888)	-0.027 (0.018)	0.008 * (0.004)
Leverage	-0.007 (0.006)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.055 + (0.031)	-0.032 * (0.014)	-0.012 (0.013)	-0.741 (0.499)	0.006 (0.006)	0.000 (0.001)

Note. + p < .1, * p < .05, ** p < .01



Conclusion

- From Motivations to Networking Behaviors:
 - Motivation for power was positively related to search, but not to maintenance or leverage.
 - Motivation for affiliation was positively associated with both search and maintenance.
 - Motivation for achievement was not related to leverage.
- From Networking Behaviors to Network Properties:
 - Both search and maintenance were related to an increase in network size.
 - Neither search nor maintenance were positively related to increased network diversity, but leverage was associated with reduced network diversity in terms of nationality.
 - Maintenance, but not search, was associated with reduced network density.

Theoretical contribution

- Different motivations may account for the variance in the engagement in networking behaviors.
 - But, if motivations play a role, this role could be weaker than expected.
- Each networking behavior may play a specific role on the structure of the network built, which helps us understand the link between networking behaviors and tangible outcomes.
 - However, the association of networking behaviors to specific network properties could be weaker than expected.

Practical contribution

- It may be important to communicate that networking consists of a set of different behaviors, and that each behavior has its own logic and may satisfy specific goals.
 - Given the costs people associate with networking, giving them insights on the links between motivations, networking behaviors, and network properties could help them network.
- Employees with a strong need for achievement do not seem to network.
 - Making them understand that relationships can help them accomplish their goals may facilitate knowledge exchange within organizations.

Limitations

- Low internal validity (correlational study) and low external validity (cohort of EMBA students)
- Self-reported networking behaviors
- The full network used is not the real network
- Small sample size

Future Research

- Establishing the causal link between networking behaviors and network structure.
- Leverage activity would deserve more theoretical and empirical investigation.
- Investigating how people combine different networking behaviors.