

of competence and duty as dimensions of trust relations in diverse institutions in American society.

Theory and research exist to identify trustworthy contacts. Strong relationships and mutual acquaintances tend to develop between people with similar social attributes such as education, income, occupation, and age (for example, Fischer, 1987; Burt, 1986, 1990b; Marsden, 1987; and see note 4 below). Both factors are linked to trust. Trust is a component in the strong relationships, and mutual acquaintances are like an insurance policy through which interpersonal debt is enforced such that the other person can be deemed trustworthy. (Nohria, 1991). Whether egocentrism, cues from presumed shared background and interests, or confidence in mutual acquaintances to enforce interpersonal debt, the operational guide to the formation of close, trusting relations seems to be that a person more like me is less likely to betray me. For the purposes here, I set the whole issue to one side as person-specific and presume that it is resolved by the able player.

Siting Contacts

That leaves the first criterion, establishing contacts where useful bits of information are likely to air. Everything else constant, a large, diverse network is the best guarantee of having a contact present where useful information is aired. This is not to say that benefits must increase linearly with size and diversity, a point to which I will return (Figure 1.5), but only that, other things held constant, the information benefits of a large, diverse network are more than the information benefits of a small, homogeneous network.

Size is the more familiar criterion. Bigger is better. Acting on this understanding, people can expand their networks by adding more and more contacts. They make more cold calls, affiliate with more clubs, attend more social functions. Numerous books and self-help groups can assist them in "networking" their way to success by putting them in contact with a large number of potentially useful, or helpful, or like-minded people. The process is illustrated by the networks in Figure 1.1. The four-contact network at the left expands to sixteen contacts at the right. Relations are developed with a friend of each contact in network A, doubling the contacts to eight in network B. Snowballing through friends of friends, there are sixteen contacts in network C, and so on.

Size is a mixed blessing. More contacts can mean more exposure to valuable information, more likely early exposure, and more referrals.

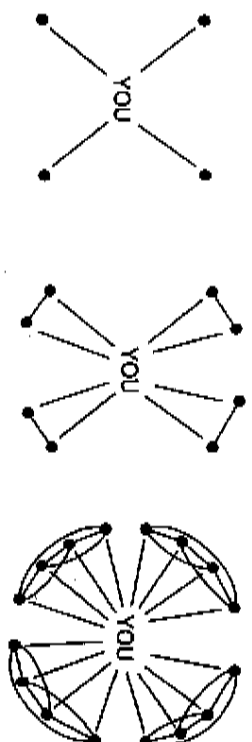


Figure 1.1 Network expansion

But increasing network size without considering diversity can cripple a network in significant ways. What matters is the number of nonredundant contacts. Contacts are redundant to the extent that they lead to the same people, and so provide the same information benefits.

Consider two four-contact networks, one sparse, the other dense. There are no relations between the contacts in the sparse network, and strong relations between every contact in the dense network. Both networks cost whatever time and energy is required to maintain four relationships. The sparse network provides four nonredundant contacts, one for each relationship. No single one of the contacts gets the player to the same people reached by the other contacts. In the dense network, each relationship puts the player in contact with the same people reached through the other relationships. The dense network contains only one nonredundant contact. Any three are redundant with the fourth.

The sparse network provides more information benefits. It reaches information in four separate areas of social activity. The dense network is a virtually worthless monitoring device. Because the relations between people in that network are strong, each person knows what the other people know and all will discover the same opportunities at the same time.

The issue is opportunity costs. At minimum, the dense network is inefficient in the sense that it returns less diverse information for the same cost as that of the sparse network. A solution is to put more time and energy into adding nonredundant contacts to the dense network. But time and energy are limited, which means that inefficiency translates into opportunity costs. If I take four relationships as an illustrative limit on the number of strong relations that a player can maintain, the player in the dense network is cut off from three fourths of the information provided by the sparse network.

a strong relationship. Redundancy is unlikely, indicating a structural hole, between total strangers in distant groups. I will return to this issue again, to discuss the depth of a hole, after control benefits have been introduced.

THE EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE NETWORK

Balancing network size and diversity is a question of optimizing structural holes. The number of structural holes can be expected to increase with network size, but the holes are the key to information benefits. The optimized network has two design principles.

Efficiency

The first design principle of an optimized network concerns efficiency: Maximize the number of nonredundant contacts in the network to maximize the yield in structural holes per contact. Given two networks of equal size, the one with more nonredundant contacts provides more benefits. There is little gain from a new contact redundant with existing contacts. Time and energy would be better spent cultivating a new contact to unreached people.⁴ Maximizing the nonredundancy of contacts maximizes the structural holes obtained per contact.⁵

Efficiency is illustrated by the networks in Figure 1.3. These reach the same people reached by the networks in Figure 1.1, but in a different way. What expands in Figure 1.1 is not the benefits, but the cost of maintaining the network. Network A provides four nonredundant contacts. Network B provides the same number. The information benefits provided by the initial four contacts are redundant with benefits provided by their close friends. All that has changed is the doubled number of relationships maintained in the network. The situation deteriorates even further with the sixteen contacts in network C. There are still only four

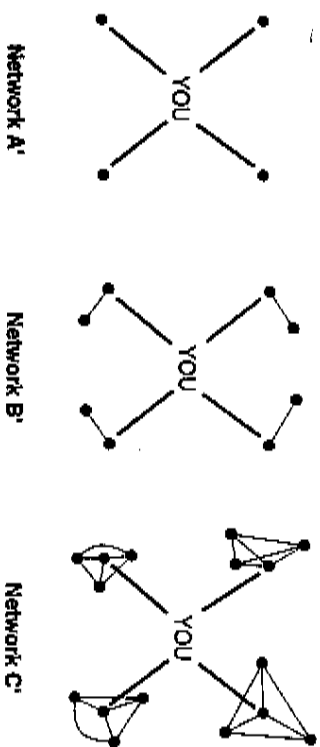


Figure 1.3 Strategic network expansion

nonredundant contacts in the network, but their benefits are now obtained at a cost of maintaining sixteen relationships.

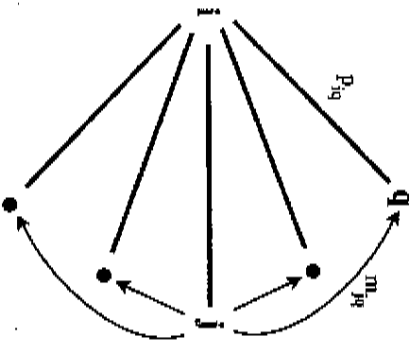
With a little network surgery, the sixteen contacts can be maintained at a fourth of the cost. As illustrated in Figure 1.3, select one contact in each cluster to be a primary link to the cluster. Concentrate on maintaining the primary contact, and allow direct relationships with others in the cluster to weaken into indirect relations through the primary contact. These players reached indirectly are secondary contacts. Among the redundant contacts in a cluster, the primary contact should be the one most easily maintained and most likely to honor an interpersonal debt to you in particular. The secondary contacts are less easily maintained or less likely to work for you (even if they might work well for someone else). The critical decision obviously lies in selecting the right person to be a primary contact. The importance of trust has already been discussed. With a trustworthy primary contact, there is little loss in information benefits from the cluster and a gain in the reduced effort needed to maintain the cluster in the network.

Repeating this operation for each cluster in the network recovers effort that would otherwise be spent maintaining redundant contacts. By reinvesting that saved time and effort in developing primary contacts to new clusters, the network expands to include an exponentially larger number of contacts while expanding contact diversity. The sixteen contacts in network C of Figure 1.1, for example, are maintained at a cost of four primary contacts in network C' of Figure 1.3. Some portion of the time spent maintaining the redundant other twelve contacts can be reallocated to expanding the network to include new clusters.

Effectiveness

The second design principle of an optimized network requires a further shift in perspective: Distinguish primary from secondary contacts in order to focus resources on preserving the primary contacts. Here contacts are not people on the other end of your relations; they are ports of access to clusters of people beyond. Guided by the first principle, these ports should be nonredundant so as to reach separate, and therefore more diverse, social worlds of network benefits. Instead of maintaining relations with all contacts, the task of maintaining the total network is delegated to primary contacts. The player at the center of the network is then free to focus on properly supporting relations with primary contacts and expanding the network to include new clusters. The first principle concerns the average number of people reached with a primary contact; the

Redundant Contact Is Connected with Others



Constraint Contact Also Has the Dependence of Others

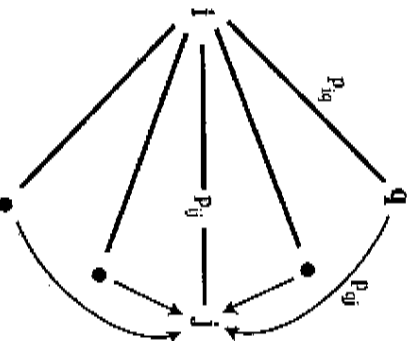


Figure 2.1 Hole conditions of redundancy and constraint

i's relationship with *j* that is redundant to *i*'s relations with other primary contacts:

$$\sum_q P_{iq} M_{jq}, \quad q \neq i, j$$

One minus this expression is the nonredundant portion of the relationship. The sum across relationships of the nonredundant portion in each is the number of nonredundant contacts, or effective size, of your network:

$$(2.2) \quad \text{Effective size of } i\text{'s network} = \sum_j \left[1 - \sum_q P_{iq} M_{jq} \right], \quad q \neq i, j$$

where the first summation is across all *N* primary contacts *j* in your network. If contact *j* is completely disconnected from all other primary contacts, then the bracketed term equals one, indicating that *j* provides one nonredundant contact in the network. As relations between *j* and the other contacts strengthen, the bracketed term approaches P_{ij} , indicating that *j* is completely redundant with other contacts in *i*'s network. The sum in Eq. (2.2) across contacts varies from one, indicating that the network only provides a single contact, up to the observed number of contacts in the network, *N*, indicating that every contact in the network is nonredundant.⁵ With respect to structural holes, the index measures a network's effective size. The ratio of this number divided by *N* measures efficiency. The efficiency ratio varies from a maximum of one, indicating that every contact in the network is nonredundant, down to a minimum approaching zero, indicating high contact redundancy and therefore low efficiency.

Table 2.1 contains the size, effective size, and efficiency of each network in Figures 1.1, 1.3, and 1.4. For this illustration, I have treated the networks as sociometric choice data, setting all relations to 1 where there is a line in a sociogram and 0 otherwise. The networks in Figures 1.1 and 1.3 all have an effective size of four contacts, however, the increasing contacts in Figure 1.1 are redundant and so lower efficiency.

The results also highlight what is not captured. Network C' in Figure 1.3 reaches 16 people, four primary contacts and 12 secondary contacts, but its effective size of four contacts computed from the above measure is no different from network A', which only reaches a total of four con-

Table 2.1 Size, effective size, and efficiency

	Number of contacts		Effective size	Efficiency
	Primary	Secondary		
Figure 1.1				
Network A	4	0	4.0	1.00
Network B	8	0	4.0	0.50
Network C	16	0	4.0	0.25
Figure 1.3				
Network A'	4	0	4.0	1.00
Network B'	4	4	4.0	1.00
Network C'	4	12	4.0	1.00
Figure 1.4				
BEFORE	5	10	3.4	0.68
AFTER	5	24	5.0	1.00

There are many reasons for the development of a behavioral relation between two people. Strategic embedding is only one. Imaginary embedding relations have a simpler etiology. They only serve to lessen the tension of performing a relationship under the constraint of having little say in the negotiation of how the relationship is performed. These imaginary relations therefore signal felt constraint and their occasional maladaptive use leaves revealing emotional boils on personality.

There is a richly documented literature on imaginary embedding relations as defense mechanisms. There are the mechanisms of projection, in which you attribute your own impulses or perceptions to another person, and identification, in which you take on characteristics of another person. There are the mechanisms of denial and dissociation, in which you cauterize the self from specific objects and relations. There are dreams, in which you perform relations in fantasy, sometimes in a heroic role that gives you an emotional release from the constrained relations you must wake to perform, sometimes in a pusillanimous role that serves to reinforce the oppression of real life. As Sullivan (1940:69) so nicely puts it: "Dreams are interpersonal phenomena in which the other fellow is wholly illusory, wholly fantastic, a projection, if you please, of certain constructive impulses, or of certain destructiveness, or of certain genital motivations, or something of that kind."

IDENTIFICATION AS AN EMBEDDING RELATION

Consider the concept of identification, for example. This is a general concept, used in many ways. When a person is severely constrained by another person, however, identification is an embedding defense mechanism like the concept discussed by Sigmund and Anna Freud.¹² Identification here refers to a person's taking on the characteristics of some object, typically a person, in his or her environment. This is an important form of attachment and, to use the Freudian phrasing, is typically directed at objects "highly cathected with libido." In the simplest examples, objects of identification are people you want to resemble: initially parents, later television heroes and rock stars, popular peers, and at some point, certain teachers and prestigious people in one's line of work. By adopting characteristic views or behaviors of a significant figure in the environment, you can rationalize perceiving yourself as similarly significant. For that moment, you rise above your actual position in the environment. With respect to the source of severe constraint, identification is an imaginary embedding relation that provides a psychic respite from being the object of constraint and replaces it with the exhilaration of being the source.¹³

Embedding qualities of identification are more apparent in abnormal situations. For example, consider Anna Freud's concept of identification with the aggressor. An identification relationship is developed with a tormentor. Frightening qualities of the tormentor are brought into the self, so that, when directed at other people, the self can feel less obviously the target. An often-mentioned example is Bettelheim's (1966) description of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps who adopted the behaviors of their guards. A contemporary example is the sympathetic relation that develops between hostages and their terrorist captors. When a person holds a gun to your head, his cause seems reasonable, even righteous.

The embedding qualities of identification are also more apparent in abnormal uses of the mechanism. In his popular review of psychoanalytic ideas, Charles Brenner (1955:114) attributes to Helene Deutsch (1934) the first systematic discussion of what would be described here as pathological embedding. Deutsch describes a class of people whose personalities are plastic adaptations built around a significant relationship. She calls them "as if" personalities because their relationship (1934:302-305) "has something about it lacking in genuineness and yet outwardly runs along 'as if' it were complete. . . . These relationships are usually intense and bear all the earmarks of friendship, love, sympathy, and understanding; but even the layman soon perceives something strange. . . . It is like the performance of an actor who is technically well trained but who lacks the necessary spark to make his impersonations true to life. Thus the essential characteristic of the person I wish to describe is that outwardly he conducts his life as if he possessed a complete and sensitive emotional capacity. To him there is no difference between his empty forms and what others actually experience. . . . Overenthusiastic adherence to one philosophy can be quickly and completely replaced by another contradictory one without the slightest trace of inward transformation—simply as a result of some accidental regrouping of the circle of acquaintances or the like." Deutsch describes cases of "as if" personalities that developed from the lack of experience with important childhood attachments: a woman raised by nannies in severe detachment from her parents, a woman with mentally disturbed parents and a psychotic brother, and a woman with an alcoholic father who abused her mother, who the patient later discovered took pleasure in being brutalized.

BOTT ROLES

To say that the embedding qualities of identification are more obvious in abnormal uses of the defense mechanism is not to say that

embedding relations are confined to the abnormal. Elizabeth Bott's (1957) close study of conjugal roles in twenty normal families illustrates the point. Bott concludes that conjugal roles are determined by the social network of relationships with people outside the marriage. As the density of the network increases, there is an increasing tendency for husband and wife to segregate their marital activities, the wife performing stereotypically female activities and the husband performing stereotypically male activities.

Segregation is described in the extreme with respect to an ideal typical family, the Newbolls (Bott, 1957:70-73): (1) husband and wife take it for granted that men have interests different from women; (2) husband controls finances, with wife given an allowance to maintain the household; (3) wife controls the household (rent, utilities, food, cooking, cleaning, etc.); (4) husband and wife deemphasize the importance of physical sexuality to a happy marriage; and (5) conjugal role activities between husband and wife are treated as the proper interest of one's friends.

Low segregation is described by the same five indicators with respect to a group of five families (Bott, 1957:79-84): (1) husband and wife question the extent to which men and women have different interests; (2) husband and wife jointly determine the family's major financial decisions; (3) husband and wife both participate in maintaining the household; (4) physical sexuality is emphasized as an important component in a happy marriage; and (5) conjugal role activities between husband and wife are deemed private, outside the proper interests of one's friends.

There are standard explanations for the role segregation. Variables such as education, occupation, parental background, and so on would be prominent in a routine sociological explanation. Bott argues, however, that the usual social and psychological variables do not account for the observed variation in segregation.

It is the structure of a couple's external network that predicts segregation. Bott (1957:60) focuses on connectivity: "The degree of segregation in the role-relationship of husband and wife varies directly with the connectedness of the family's social network." A highly connected network (Bott, 1957:65-70) is one in which: (1) relations are multiplex—friends include neighbors, relatives, and people with whom one socializes—and in particular there is extensive visiting and mutual aid from relatives, especially between the wife and her mother; (2) spouses socialize independently and with different people, the wife with female neighbors and the husband with long-time male friends; and (3) there are strong ties between friends independent of the couple, the husband's friends meeting

without him and the wife's friends meeting without her. In contrast, low connectivity networks are ones in which (Bott, 1957:74ff.): (1) friends are not relatives; (2) husband and wife share the same friends and typically socialize together with their friends, going to restaurants, films, and so on; and (3) many of the couple's friends do not know one another.

Husband and wife hole signatures in an illustrative Bott role are presented in Figure 7.4 (compare with Figures 2.6 and 2.7). The couple's network, at the top of the figure, shows the wife's strong relations with her interconnected friends, especially with her mother, Jessica, and the

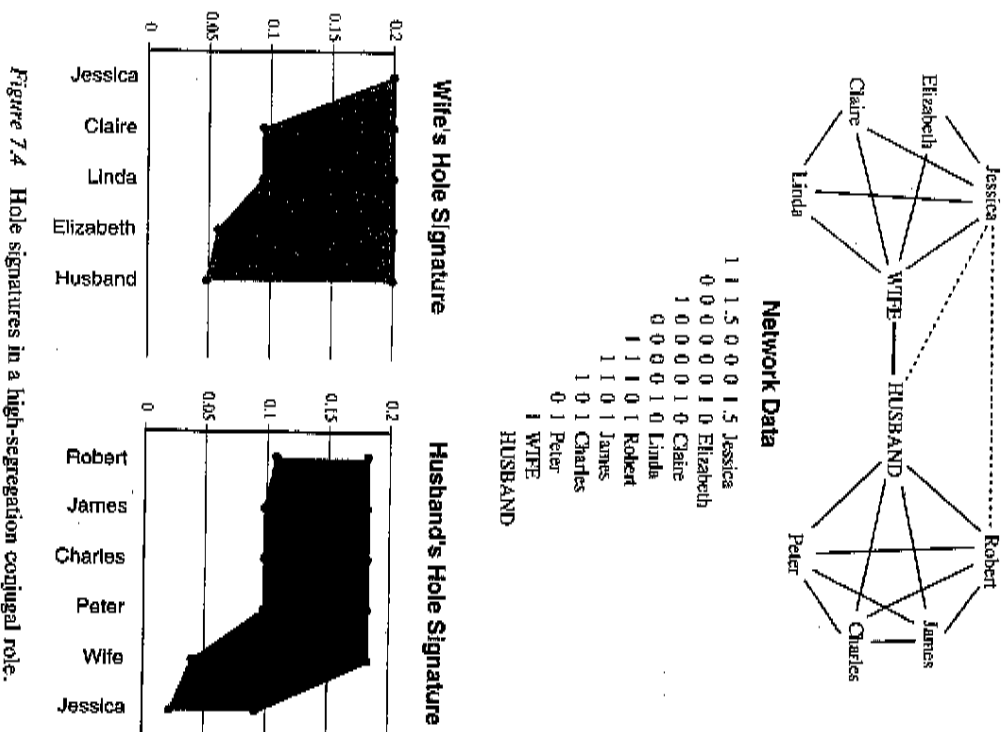


Figure 7.4 Hole signatures in a high-segregation conjugal role.

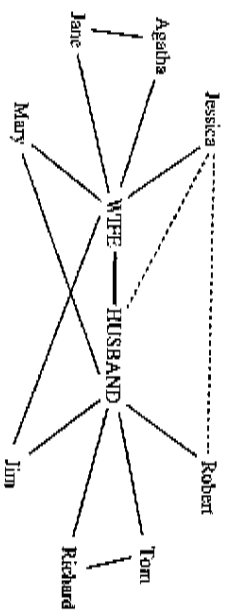
husband's strong relations with the interconnected "mates" with whom he grew up. As summarized by an informant (Bott, 1957:68-69), "Men have friends. Women have relatives" and "Women don't have friends. They have Mum." The hole signature for the wife's position in the network highlights her constrained relationship with her mother. There are no relations in this network where the wife can hide from her mother. The network is hierarchical, with "Mum" on top. The hole signature for the husband is less hierarchical. He is locked into a circle of high-constraint relations with his mates.

Spouses have little say in each other's role performance. Husband and wife have a strong relationship, but the relation's location in social structure makes it negligible. The wife's relation with her husband is the least constrained in her hole signature, the most surrounded by structural holes. When adapting to the preferences of her mother and friends, her conjugal relationship is the most open to redefinition. On the other side, the wife is a weak constraint in the husband's hole signature. When the husband adapts to the preferences of his mates, his conjugal relationship is the most open to redefinition.

The marriage is a relationship laid on top of two separate, pre-existing, high-constraint networks. Husband and wife come to this marriage as representatives of external constituencies. They have less say in the conjugal role they negotiate than in their outside constituencies. The husband performs to the audience of his mates. The wife performs to the audience of her mother and friends. Both husband and wife in such networks turn in the sex stereotypical performances deemed the proper interest of friends outside the marriage, as illustrated by Bott's indicators of high segregation.

Compare this with the hole signatures in Figure 7.5. The relations with and among the couple's contacts illustrate the low-connectivity networks in Bott's analysis. Friends are less connected with one another and are less exclusively the husband's or the wife's friends. If the network in Figure 7.4 had been deliberately transformed to look like Figure 7.5, it would be an illustration of the withdrawal and expansion strategies for managing constraint. Wife and husband have withdrawn from some high-constraint relationships and introduced new contacts connected by structural holes. Such changes are traced by Bott (1957:90, 106-108) to geographic mobility, which frees the couple from their previous high-constraint, if supportive, relationships (compare Young and Willmott, 1957). In Figure 7.5, the wife's mother isn't connected to the new friends

and the husband's mates aren't an interconnected external constituency. The wife has two new friends in the neighborhood and also has friends in common with her husband. The husband has two new friends at work and shares mutual friends with his wife. These changes have reversed the position of husband and wife in each other's networks. Now they are each the strongest constraint in the other's hole signature. The conjugal role they negotiate will be more responsive to each other than to any



Network Data

0	0	0	5	0	0	1	5	Jessica
1	0	0	0	0	1	0	Agatha	
0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Jane	
0	0	0	0	1	1	Mary		
0	0	0	0	1	Robert			
1	0	0	1	Tom				
0	0	1	Richard					
1	1	Jim						
1	WIFE							
HUSBAND								

Wife's Hole Signature

Husband's Hole Signature

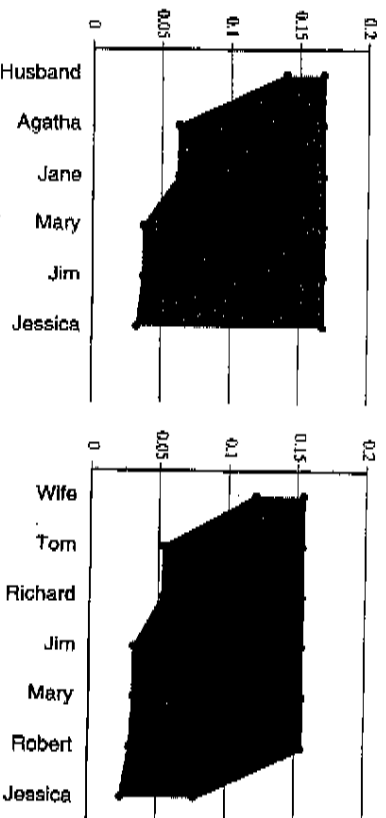


Figure 7.5 Hole signatures in a low-segregation conjugal role.

external influence. Husband and wife in such networks turn in performances less characterized by sex role stereotyping, as illustrated by Bott's indicators of low role segregation.

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION

In sum, there is a fundamental question for the development of personality that is analogous to the fundamental question for the entrepreneur building a firm. The question is rarely asked explicitly, but is nevertheless informative as an analytical concept. Do I conduct this constraint-generating relationship "as is," with its known limits for negotiation, or do I embed it in another relationship that would make it easier to transact?

Framed by this question, a person is a synthesis of two networks. The foundation is a network of constraint-generating relationships—some mixture of kinship, authority, and intimacy relations. Built on top of the foundation is a network of real and imagined embedding relationships. The structure of the embedding relationships is predicted by the structure of the constraint-generating relationships. The prediction is the substance of the strategy hypothesis. The strategy hypothesis when applied to a person says that in relationships which severely constrain there is an incentive to embed the relationship in other relations over which the individual has more control. In response to felt constraint, mental images and discretionary relationships are built to manage constraint emotionally. Together, the constraints and accompanying embedding relations define a social construction visible to the analyst as personality. In orientation, this image is akin to Lewin's (1936, 1951) idea of discussing personality in terms of the surrounding field of object-specific forces shaping it. In substance, the image is allied with Sullivan's (1940, 1953) interpersonal theory of psychiatry. He describes how the growth and characteristics of personality are determined by the extent to which, and manner in which, the power motive is satisfied in relationships. This is not power as control over others so much as power as a sense of security created by having control over things that matter to the self. Relations in which security is threatened trigger anxiety to which the individual responds with a defense, and the stage is set for an adjustment to the individual's personality.

Personality is a form of organization in a complex environment. The firm is a comparatively simple person: the network of transactions among suppliers and customers defines market constraints on the producer. Corporate ties of various kinds embed constrained transactions in corporate

authority to make it easier, and more profitable, to conduct what would otherwise be constrained negotiations. People are more complex. Embedding is more fluid, more varied, less visible. The foundational constraint-generating relations vary—sometimes kinship, sometimes job related, sometimes emotionally significant ties from one's past—and the embedding relations shift and vary—sometimes friendship, sometimes joking, sometimes sex, sometimes an effort to bring the source of constraint into a collaborative project, sometimes wholly imaginary relations as illustrated by the residues of identification, built to manage emotionally what cannot be managed in fact. The analogy is nevertheless instructive to establish the broad scope of the strategy hypothesis. As the firm is a social construction by players navigating around constrained market transactions, personality is an emotional construction by a person navigating around constrained relationships. The two phenomena, widely different in substance, are similarly predicted as a strategic response to constrained interaction defined by the distribution of holes in the social structure.

DOING RESEARCH

Research can move in two directions: describing how aggregate personality attributes vary with aggregate constraint or describing the transactional basis of personality.

In the first direction, kinds of personalities develop in kinds of networks. For example, David Riesman's (1950) sociological discussion of American personality develops a contrast between "inner-directed" persons, who act from internalized values, and "other-directed" persons, who act from their perception of the values of others. The two kinds of persons can both develop into "autonomous" persons, but would do so in different ways. The image of the "other-directed" person bears resemblance in the extreme to the pathologies described by Deutsch in her "as if" personalities. Riesman's (1950:142) image of the autonomous person is closely related to what I have discussed as the freedom possible from structural holes: "The autonomous are those who on the whole are capable of conforming to the behavioral norms of their society—a capacity the anomies usually lack—but are free to choose whether to conform or not."

Riesman's description of the "autonomous" person highlights the positive side of the personality associated with access to structural holes; Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis, and Aaron Wildavsky's (1990) description of the "individualist" highlights the negative side. Their classifica-

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