# RECURSOS HUMANOS

# THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORK AND SELF-MONITORING ON CAREER

## A INFLUÊNCIA DE REDES SOCIAIS E AUTOMONITORAMENTO NA CARREIRA

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ABSTRACT

After decades of a solid presence of women in the workforce, the fact that men still overwhelmingly dominate the majority of top positions in the hierarchy of many organizations suggests that there is much more to be investigated. This study aims to explore individual differences (gender and self-monitoring) and social network patterns of professionals, in order to explain barriers on women striving to ascend to the top, since these factors have both been found to affect performance evaluation, promotions and career in organizations. The results showed that males in management positions displayed the same network pattern, whereas females had different networks patterns, depending on their self-monitoring. Furthermore, social network differences were enhanced regarding low self-monitor males and females. High self-monitors males in gender homophilic networks were the ones more related to higher positions in the organization's hierarchy. The contribution of these findings is discussed, with suggestions for future research.

KEYWORDS

Career. Gender. Self-Monitoring. Homophily and Social Network.

*RESUMO*

*Mesmo depois de décadas de presença das mulheres na força de trabalho, a desigualdade de gênero é um fato no topo das organizações. Este estudo tem como objetivo explorar as diferenças individuais (gênero e personalidade de automonitoramento) e padrões de redes sociais de profissionais, a fim de analisar barreiras que mulheres encontram para atingir altos níveis hierárquicos, uma vez que tais fatores separadamente foram identificados como influenciadores nas avaliações de desempenho, promoções e carreira. Os resultados mostraram que os homens exibiram o mesmo padrão de rede independente do grau de automonitoramento, enquanto que as mulheres apresentaram padrões de redes diferentes, dependendo do seu automonitoramento. Além disso, observou-se uma diferença substancial nas redes de homens e mulheres com baixo automonitoramento. Homens com elevado automonitoramento e cujas redes sociais apresentam homofilia de gênero foram os mais relacionados a altos níveis hierárquicos. A contribuição desses resultados é discutida, com sugestões para pesquisas futuras.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE*

*Carreira. Gênero. Automonitoramento. Homofilia e Redes Sociais.*

## INTRODUCTION

After decades of a solid presence of women in the workforce, men still overwhelmingly dominate the majority of top positions in the hierarchy of many organizations. As discussed in the Women in Business Report 2017 (Thornton, 2017) only 25% of senior roles globally were held by women. However, the number is even lower considering CEO positions (only 12%) and Sales Directors (6%). Moreover, there are still 34% of firms with no women in senior leadership. Nevertheless, WATTS, FRAME, MOFFET, et al. (2015) found that it is not because of a lack of aspirations that women fail to reach the top, but the fact that women have an overall higher career barrier perception than men, which in turn can impact the stability of women's aspirations over time. Therefore, investigating these barriers are fundamental to support women reaching the top.

Many scholars have suggested that individual, social and organizational factors can function as barriers to gender equality at the top of organizations (CECH; BLAIR-LOY, 2010; IBARRA; ELY; KOLB; 2013; METZ, 2009; NG; SEARS, 2017). For example, the presence of a female CEO in organizations was associated with a higher percentage of women in the upper echelon due to some factors such as more inclusive style of management (MELERO, 2011), the symbolic role of women in the top job, and supporting other women "navigating through the 'old boys´network" (NG; SEARS, 2017, p. 142).

Among the social factors, social networks have been found to have a great impact in people's careers in several ways


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such as support while job hunting (BELLIVEAU, 2005; LOPEZ-KIDWELL; GROSSER; DINEEN *et al.,* 2013), individual performance and career growth (BARSNESS; DIEKMANN; SIEDEL, 2005; BURT; HOGARTH; MICHAUD, 2000; CARMELI; BENHDOR; WALDMAN *et al.,* 2009; SEIBERT; KRAIMER; LIDEN, 2001), CEO and board member selection and compensation (GELETKANYCZ; BIYD; FINKELSTEIN, 2001), leadership quality (GOODWIN; BOWLER; WHITTINGTON, 2009), development of an international career (LYNESS; THOMPSON, 2000), and career satisfaction (VAN EMMERIK; EUWEMA; GESSCHIERE *et al.,* 2006). In summary, social capital which is an "investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace," provides access to power, reputation and information, which are available via one's social network, that is, the structure of social relations which is developed by social interactions among individuals and which supports a number of outcomes such as career success (LIN, 2001, p.19).

However, some scholars have called attention to the fact that it is not only important to examine the network itself, but also to investigate individuals and their specific characteristics, including having an interactive perspective on individual differences and social network patterns (ZHOU; SHIN; BRASS *et al.,* 2009). In fact, the psychological personality theory (ALLPORT, 1962) proposes that people's behavior can be explained, to some extent, in terms of personality traits, defined as individual characteristics that remain relatively permanent/stable over time. Thus, individual differences (ethnicity, gender, personality traits) may affect networking behavior and social choices, i.e., a personality characteristic could be considered antecedent (creation) to network structures, and could also affect the creation and mobilization of network resources (KALISH; ROBIN, 2005; KILDUFF; KRACKHARDT, 2008).

Self-monitoring - the ability to perceive social cues and adapt one's behaviors to impress others (GANGESTAD; SNYDER, 2000; SNYDER, 1987) - is one individual trait that has been found to influence both network development (MEHRA; KILDUFF; BRASS, 2001; SASOVOVA; MEHRA; BORGATTI et al., 2010) and career success (DAY; SCHLEICHER, 2006; DAY; SCHLEICHER; UNCKLESS et al., 2002). In fact, Day and Schleicher (2006) found that high self-monitors – which tend to be males – have the ability to adapt, be flexible, and display likeability (to be liked by others), in a self-promoting way, characteristics that result in an advantage for performance evaluation and promotions in organizations, and could explain part of the "disparities between men and women at higher organizational levels (i.e., the glass ceiling)."

Furthermore, researchers have given special attention to investigating gender differences in relation to social networks, and most of them have concluded that men and women present different patterns of social network structure and networking behavior in general (BURT, 1998; FORRET; DOUGHERTY, 2001; IBARRA, 1997; TONGE, 2008). Despite the amount of research that has improved the understanding of how women's careers are affected by such networking differences (DING; MURRAY; STUART, 2013; HOLGERSSON, 2013; VAN DEN BRINK; BENSCHOP, 2014), the high gender inequality at senior positions suggests that there is much more to be investigated.

This study entails an explanatory analysis of social capital conceptualized in terms of social network structures, using different and complementary concepts such as strong ties and structural holes, and investigates the homophily of gender and status in the composition of each individuals' network. The study also explores a significant individual factor - self-monitoring - which might constrain people from ascending to the top, and the interaction with gender. Such a perspective is important because the role congruity theory (EAGLY, 1987) posits that society rewards and reinforces different types of behavior for men and women such as a manner of self-promotion and the claiming of higher status, which is a characteristic of high self-monitors, or controlling versus communal social network behavior (BOWLES; BABCOCK; LAI, 2007; EAGLY; KARAU, 2002).

Adopting an interactive perspective this study brings theoretical and practical contributions as very few studies (e.g. BARNESS; DIEKMANN; SIEDEL, 2005) used an interactive lens to on personality traits, gender and social network patterns to understand the glass ceiling effect. The results offer some evidence as to why, after almost seventy years, the "boys club" in the "Little Lulu" comic strip is still alive and well.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### Social network

Several social network studies that have focused on career have used different social network theories. Among them are the strength of weak-ties theory (GRANOVETTER, 1973) and the structural hole theory (BURT, 2002). Some empirical research has investigated how career is associated to brokerage and weak-ties (e.g., BURT; HOGARTH; MICHAUD 2000; SEIBERT; KRAIMER; LIDEN, 2001), arguing that only weak ties could open different doors in an organization fostering career advancement, as they are sources of new, non-redundant information. As Burt (2005) explained in the expression "brokers do better," the advantage of brokerage in a network was not only access to a wider diversity of information (less redundancy) but also early access to information and control over information diffusion, developing a compelling advantage for performance evaluation and career evolution in a competitive internal market for top positions in the organization.

On the other hand other studies (e.g., CARMELI; BEN-HADOR; WALDMAN et al., 2009) focused on the strong-ties and network closure theory (COLEMAN, 1990) as closure of a network (each member has a tie with every other network member) is important for the emergence of norms and trust, and could, therefore, support career growth of individuals of one network. Non-group members of the closed network could suffer the disadvantages such as strong norms.

One important concept of social network theory, and which has also been found to affect one's career (e.g., BELLIVEAU, 2005; NG; CHOW, 2009) is homophily, which McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook (2001, p. 419) summarized in the expression "birds of feather flock together", meaning that people tend to have stronger relationships with people who are similar to themselves. The authors distinguished between status homophily (which includes major socio-demographic characteristics such as race, sex, age, education, religion, occupation and behavior partners) and val-


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ue homophily (which is based on values, attitudes and beliefs, and includes the wide variety of internal states presumed to take part in our orientation toward future behavior). Moreover, the authors posit that homophily can be accumulated; for example, a network could be based on both gender homophily and occupational or hierarchical status. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1987) discussed the difference between induced homophily – resulting from the constraints of the formal structure in organizations, which limits contacts - and choice homophily - resulting from the preference to interact with similar others.

## Gender: Women's networking and career

Due to the recognized importance of networking for performance results and career advancement, and due to the increasing number of women in the workforce, a number of scholars, began investigating the networks of managerial women more than twenty-five years ago. They found that women and men have structural differences in their professional networks: males build many more gender homophilic networks (i.e., their ties are mostly with other males) and they have more high-status individuals in their network than women have. Moreover, since cross-gender networks tend to be weaker than gender homophilous relationships in both peer and superior-subordinate ties, women and minorities have fewer strong and multiple ties (the same individuals are tied together by different types of networks such as work and friendship) than do their male peers (BRASS, 1985; BURT, 1992; IBARRA, 1992; IBARRA, 1993).

Furthermore, Ibarra (1997) suggested that the homophily of men's networks could be interpreted as evidence of homophily based on choice; it is not induced, contrary to what some scholars had suggested - that men keep their networks gender homophilic because of the lack of women. She also found that women have more relationships outside their subunits. This was confirmed by Kleinbaum, Stuart and Tushman (2013), who found that women communicate more with other women both inside their own areas (business units, offices) and across other areas of the organization, thus amplifying homophily among women. In contrast, men have significant homophily mostly within the physical office. The authors suggested that these cross-unit ties are due to the fact that women have been found to be more collaborative, or because they suffer the exclusionary effects of male power networks in the office.

Some scholars have also suggested that women maintain their networks more for social support, whereas men maintain theirs more for instrumental objectives, such as career (BURT, 1992; IBARRA, 1992). Burt (1992, 1998) proposed that ties to unconnected individuals promote men's careers (males had to be brokers to foster their careers), whereas women need to have strong ties to maintain legitimacy and advance their careers. Accordingly, Ibarra (1997) analyzed the networks of women who have high advancement potential (women who have been selected by organizations for accelerated career growth) and found that these women rely more on closed tie networks, defined by them as "genuine relationships" and also that they have more ties to other women.

Hodigere and Bilimoria (2015) also confirmed that having a high degree of central-

ity (keeping their ties unconnected among themselves as brokers) within the network did not increase women's chances, compared to men, when it comes to being appointed to boards of public companies. In fact, it is the other way around: cohesiveness (which indicates that ties are connected among themselves, and therefore the individual has low centrality) and total number of pairs of ties, do increase their chances. Moreover, the authors also concluded that human capital and social networking alone were not enough to explain women's appointments to boards, but were enough to explain men's appointments, reinforcing that more had to be investigated to understand women career growth.

More recently, some research has extended the previous work on gender inequality in networks, suggesting that there is an explanation other than homophily - by choice or induced - for the preference of men to promote other men (DING; MURRAY; STUART, 2013; VAN DEN BRINK; BENSCHOP, 2014). Ding, Murray and Stuart (2013) also examined gender differences on boards (in this case, corporate scientific advisory boards) and concluded that genderstereotyped perceptions and unequal opportunities in social networks could explain the gap between men (twice as many men as women) and female scientists on such boards. Accordingly, Holgersson (2013) found that there are two main practices in the recruitment process that give the advantage to hiring men: (i) redefinition of competences and acceptability criteria, which makes male candidates appear more competent, and (ii) hierarchical considerations, described as selecting younger males who conform to the company's hierarchy.

Van den Brink and Benschop (2014, p. 476), however, argued that such male gender homophilic networking behavior is related not to a conscious process but to a liminal practice ("something that people are not fully aware of"), whereby men base their feelings of trust on the perception of similarity. As they concluded, this similarity applies not only to the male who is doing the selecting and the candidates who are being considered, but it also applies to a successful and ideal model of corporate professionals: men who are "white, flexible, mobile, committed and available" (ACKER, 1990). Besides, they argued that, since trust and risk are closely connected, and since women are perceived as riskier candidates (not coincident with this success model), women suffer the exclusionary effects of men's informal networking practices. Such arguments would seem to lead to the conclusion that it is safer for male managers to hire/promote other males.

Moreover, in an organization, positive attitudes towards female leadership and the presence of more women in top management were found to reduce cross-gender instrumental networking among women (NG; CHOW, 2009). On the other hand, Ng and Chow (2009) also found that organizations in which there was perceived discrimination against women in the workplace presented an increase in women's cross-gender networking (as if, because women are worried about their careers and reputation, they avoid networking with other women). Being married increases the probability of females building cross-gender networks as well, probably because single women may suffer more prejudice by having ties with men.

Other studies have investigated the rea-

son why females are found to have smaller networks at work than males have. Forret and Dougherty (2001) suggested that women engage in fewer networking activities because of time and family constraints, but Tonge (2008) suggested that, as women, they suffer more barriers to networking, which in turn leads to greater resistance to networking per se.

## Self-monitoring

Day, Schleicher; Unckless et al. (2002, p. 390) argued that the core of the self-monitoring construct is expressed by "individual differences in the propensity for impression management involving the construction of positive social appearances." One of the objectives of impression management is to influence evaluations of oneself and to win approval from others. Day and Schleicher (2006, p. 696), in their review of self-monitoring theory (GANGESTAD; SNYDER, 2000; SNYDER, 1987) and research, found that high self-monitors have the ability to adapt, be flexible, and to display likeability (to be liked by others) - characteristics resulting in an advantage for performance and promotions in organizations - and that high self-monitors tend to be males and are younger than low self-monitors.

Furthermore, as Snyder's (1987, p. 58) theory of self-monitors posits that high self-monitors "construct social worlds that can function as instruments of status enhancement, whereas low self-monitors construct social networks that support their reputations as genuine and sincere people." Some studies found that self-monitoring is associated with centrality and brokerage, and consequently with better performance and career success (MEHRA; KILDUFF; BRASS, 2001; OH; KILDUFF, 2008; SASOVOVA; MEHRA; BORGATTI et al., 2010). However, other studies did not find this structural pattern (e.g. KALISH; ROBINS, 2006).

Turnley and Bolino (2001) found that three different impressionmanagement tactics – ingratiation (favor-doing, flattery), selfpromotion and exemplification (appearing dedicated) - fostered a desired versus undesired image, depending on whether the individual was a high or low selfmonitor. High self-monitors engaging in ingratiation were evaluated by their peers as likeable (cooperative, nice, pleasant) whereas low self-monitors were viewed as sycophants (overly conformist, a "yes men"). High self-monitors who engaged in self-promotion were perceived as competent, but competence was unrelated to low self-monitors when they utilized the same tactics. Exemplification was positively related to dedication for high selfmonitors, but related to "feel superior to others" for low self-monitors. In addition, the authors called for researchers to study the target of impression management in order to understand how self-monitoring bosses perceive such impression management tactics by their subordinates.

In response, Jawahar and Mattson (2006) used lab experiments to examine the influence that job type and applicant sex/attractiveness have on getting a job, as well as the self-monitoring characteristic of the decision-maker. They found that high self-monitor decision makers have a higher propensity to select attractive applicants. Moreover, for gender stereotyped jobs (e.g. engineering is dominated by men) applicant sex/attractiveness has more influence on their decision. The authors' study confirmed previous theoretical and em-

pirical studies (e.g. SNYDER, BERSCHEID; MATWYCHUK, 1988) indicating that high self-monitors are more influenced by physical attractiveness and stereotypes when making their selection.

Accordingly, Barsness, Diekmann and Siedel (2005) analyzed two types of impression management: supervisor impression management (subordinate doing favors for and making compliments to supervisor/manager) and job impression management (reporting one's accomplishments; self-enhancement posturing). They found that supervisor impression management is positively related to performance evaluation, and that centrality does moderate the relationship between supervisor impression management and performance evaluation. In this case, individuals who are low in centrality (and engage in supervisor impression management) had a marginally better performance evaluation; however, those high in centrality had a substantially better r performance evaluation.

It is interesting to note that Goodwin, Bowler and Whittington (2009), in his study of leadership, also found that centrality influences the rating of the quality of the leader-follower relationship: leaders rated the quality much lower when the follower (subordinate) was not in a central position. They argued that this could be due to an attempt by leaders not to be perceived by others as similar to an employee who is not central in the network. One possible explanation might be found in studies that argue that self-monitors are more "competent" at impression management (TURNLEY; BOLINO, 2001), while other studies have found that self-monitors are more willing to occupy central positions (MEHRA; KILDUFF; BRASS, 2001; SASOVOVA; MEHRA; BORGATTI et al., 2010).

Barsness, Diekmann and Siedel (2005) found that sex-dissimilarity moderated the relationship between impression management and performance evaluation: subordinates of the same sex as their supervisor had slightly better performance evaluations, but subordinates of the opposite sex had a much better performance evaluation if and only if the subordinate was a female. This means that male supervisors are more influenced by the impression management attitudes of favors and compliments by their female subordinates, and women supervisors are less influenced by this kind of impression management. On the other hand, the authors found that job impression management was negatively associated with performance evaluation, but even more "harshly" so when the subordinate was of the opposite sex.

Accordingly, Bowles, Babcock and Lai (2007) based on the role congruity theory (EAGLY, 1987) found that women tend to present themselves more modestly than men do and that this self-presentation modesty reduces their perceived competence compared to people who uses a self-promoting style (as high self-monitors do). But even worse, if women adopt a masculine selfpromoting manner they risk being perceived as lacking "social competence" although technically skilled (RUDMAN, 1998); further, if they adopt masculine leadership styles, as directive or authoritative, they are evaluated more severely than men. Bowles, Babcock and Lai (2007) also found that claiming for a higher status (through promotion negotiation) could be considered an inappropriate behavior for women. They explained that if women display dom-


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inant behavior – a masculinity trait – they challenge the gender status hierarchy, as competence and dominance are associated with status hierarchy.

Day and Schleicher (2006, p. 696) argued that those holding superior positions tend to be high selfmonitors, creating a risk of a negative perception about low self-monitors ("the lack of flexibility may seem like an overly rigid or dogmatic approach to the high selfmonitoring boss") and also creating a cycle to promote more high self-monitors. In fact, Kilduff and Krackhardt (1994) found that an individual perceived as having a "prominent friend" increased his/her good performance reputation. Thus, high self-monitors expend more effort on creating their network by selecting people who can enhance their status and reputation.

In sum, high self-monitors - who tend to be males - might have an advantage in their career because they engage in effective impression management tactics to receive a better evaluation, and because they occupy central positions in networks that provide the resources (and perceived status) needed to advance their career. Furthermore, career evolution and leadership may be consequences of the fact that senior people tend to be high self-monitors who use stereotypical, sexist techniques for evaluating and selecting for promotions (BARSNESS; DIEKMANN; SIEDEL, 2005; DAY; SCHLEICHER, 2006; JAWAHAR; MATTISSON, 2006).

## METHODS

### Participants and procedures

The sample consisted of 129 professionals in different industry sectors and was based on convenience, with requests sent to business people from different organizations in one of the author's networks, and with snowball requesting to forward to other colleagues in their work network. Among these, 87 were in management positions (the sample that was used to explore the social network patterns): 33 (37.9%) directors or VPs, and 54 (62.1%) managers. Fifty-two (59.3%) of these were males and 35(40.7%) were females, the mean age was 44.6 (SD=8.1), and the majority (77 or 88.5%) were Brazilians. The web-survey, conducted in English, consisted of egocentric network data collection and questionnaires on self-monitoring and demographics.

### Measures

This study applied an egocentric network design, which collects data about the relationship between a specific individual (ego) and the other individuals (alters) with whom he or she is connected. Specifically, respondents were asked to list up to 5 people (using only their initials) "who are important sources of professional advice (whom you approach when you have a work-related problem or you want advice on a decision you have to make)." This description is based on the theory that there are different types of networks and that this particular type is relevant for career and performance development (e.g., SEIBERT; KRAIMER; LIDEN, 2001). Moreover, it abides by the recommendation that "five names" is enough for studying network effects (MERLUZZI; BURT, 2013). For each contact in the network, the individual gives information about the strength and diversity (to measure homophily of gender and status) of his or her relationships: strength of connection (close, less close, weak), gen-


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der, and level in the hierarchy (lower, same or higher). In addition, respondents are asked to indicate how strong a connection their alters have with each other: close, less close, weak.

The present study employed different structural social network measures (weak-ties, strong-ties, constraint, and centrality), gender homophily and status homophily in order to analyze the network by using different social network concepts. The structural variables constraint, which is Burt's (1992) structure hole index, and betweenness centrality (Freeman, 1979) were calculated using the Ucinet software (BORGATTI; EVERETT; FREEMAN, 2002). Centrality, measured by betweenness centrality, which usually presents a strong variability, suffered an LN transformation (EVERETT; BORGATTI, 2005). The relationships were dichotomized to 1(close) and zero (less close or weak). Moreover, measures of strong-ties and weak-ties, which are measures of the ego-alter relationship only (i.e., does not consider the information about relationships among alters) were also calculated: Strong-ties as the sum of ties that were reported as close and Weak-ties as the sum of ties that were reported as less close or weak.

The variable Homophily_Gender was calculated as the number of alters that has the same gender as ego, and Homophily_Status measured status (sum of ties that have the same or higher level in the organization). It was also computed two additional variables: Uplevel (number of ties to higher levels in the organization) and Downlevel (number of ties to lower levels in the organization).

The study used the 25-item self-monitoring instrument employed by Snyder (1987). For each statement, participants were asked to respond using a 5-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The Cronbach alpha for this instrument was .77, in line with other studies (e.g., DAY; SCHLEICHER; UNCKLESS *et al.,* 2002). The dichotomized high versus low self-monitoring, using the median as used in other studies (e.g., BOLINO; TURNLEY, 2003), was calculated. Moreover, demographic information regarding gender (0=male; 1= female), age and hierarchy (1=Directors and VPs, 2= Managers, 3 = professionals not in management) were collected.

## RESULTS

Considering the fact that high self-monitors (HSM) are those who score the median (2.82) or higher, the sample was composed of 44 (50.5%) high self-monitors and 43 (49.5%) low self-monitors. The breakdown by gender and self-monitoring was well balanced: 26 male high self-monitors; 26 male low self-monitors, 18 female high self-monitors and 17 female low self-monitors. There was no mean difference between men and women in relation to self-monitoring. Moreover, the majority of individuals (egos) – 65 (74.4%) – reported having five alters in their network, 8 (9.2%) reported 4 alters, 10 (11.5%) reported 3 alters, 3 (3.4%) reported 2 alters, and only 1 ego reported having a single alter. Table 1 presents the correlations among the main variables in the study.

Similar to previous social network studies (e.g. Burt, 1992; Ibarra, 1993), an analysis using ANOVA confirmed the pattern difference between men and women when building their network: men had more alters ($F=8.23$; $p< .01$; Eta Sq=0.09; males=4.75, Std. 0.65; fe-

males=4.20, Std. 1.13); more strong-ties to alters (F=5.24; p<0.5; Eta Sq=0.06; males=3,13, Std. 0.23; females=2.49, Std. 1.35); less network constraint (F =6.46; p<0.5; Eta Sq=0.71; males=0.58, Std. 0.24; females=0.73, Std. 0.30), higher network centrality (F=6.03; p<0.5; Eta Sq=0.07; males=1.40, Std. 0.91; females=0.90, Std. 0.94), and a much higher gender homophilic network (F=89.17; p<0.00; Eta Sq=0.51; males=4.11, Std.1.04; females=1.83, Std. 1.20) than did women. Homophily of status did not present any mean difference considering gender. Concerning the self-monitoring dimension, none of the network variables had a mean difference between low and high self-monitors. However, the high self-monitor and gender breakdown presented surprising differences. Table 2 presents all social network measures by self-monitoring and gender.

Although high self-monitor males and females had very similar network patterns (but gender homophily), the low self-monitor males compared to low self-monitors females, had highly different network, despite the fact that their self-monitoring means were similar (low self-monitor males = 2.46, Std. 0.24; low self-monitor females =2.52, SD=0.25). They presented sig-

**TABLE 1 – Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix for Primary Variables**

| | | Mean | Std. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ego_gender | 0.40 | 0.49 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Self-monitoring | 2.82 | 0.43 | -0.08 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Num_alters | 4.53 | 0.91 | -0.30** | 0.10 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Strong_egoalter | 2.87 | 1.33 | -0.24* | 0.10 | 0.48*** | | | | | | |
| 5 | Constraint | 0.64 | 0.27 | 0.27* | -0.08 | -0.34*** | -0.43*** | | | | | |
| 6 | Centrality | 1.20 | 0.95 | -0.20* | 0.09 | 0.39*** | 0.75*** | -0.79*** | | | | |
| 7 | Homphily_gender | 3.20 | 1.58 | -0.72*** | 0.09 | 0.57*** | 0.30** | -0.26** | 0.26* | | | |
| 8 | Homophily_status | 3.76 | 1.20 | -0.15 | -0.09 | 0.61*** | 0.24* | -0.28** | 0.24* | 0.32** | | |
| 9 | Uplevel | 2.02 | 1.13 | -0.08 | -0.02 | 0.31** | 0.14 | -0.16 | 0.15 | 0.08 | 0.55*** | |
| 10 | Downlevel | 0.78 | 0.96 | -0.08 | 0.18† | 0.19† | 0.13 | 0.04 | 0.05 | 0.14 | -0.66*** | -0.40*** |

Source: From the authors

Note. N=87. Male=0, Female=1

† p<.10, * p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

**TABLE 2 – Social Network variables by Gender and Self-monitoring**

| Gender | Self-Monitoring (SM) | Num_alters | Strong-ties egoalter | Constraint | Centrality | Homophily gender | Homophily status | Uplevel Diversity | Downlevel Diversity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MALES | LOW SM (26) | 4.73 (0.72) | 2.96 (1.16) | 0.56 (0.24) | 1.41 (0.83) | 4.12 (1.14) | 4.15 (0.96) | 2.31 (1.12) | 0.58 (0.80) |
| | HIGH SM (26) | 4.77 (0.58) | 3.29 (1.33) | 0.60 (0.23) | 1.39 (0.99) | 4.11 (0.95) | 3.65 (1.12) | 1.89 (1.07) | 1.11 (0.92) |
| | MalesTotal (52) | 4.75 (0.65) | 3.13 (1,25) | 0.58 (0.24) | 1.40 (0.91) | 4.12 (1.04) | 3.90 (1.07) | 2.10 (1.11) | 0.85 (0.89) |
| FEMALES | LOW SM (17) | 3.82 (1.33) | 2.17 (1.21) | 0.78 (0.32) | 0.64 (0.96) | 1.59 (1.23) | 3.23 (1.39) | 1.65 (1.17) | 0.64 (0.86) |
| | HIGH SM (18) | 4.56 (0.97) | 2.76 (1.30) | 0.68 (0.27) | 1.16 (0.87) | 2.06 (1.20) | 3.83 (1.29) | 2.17 (1.15) | 0.72 (1.23) |
| | Females Total (35) | 4.20 (1.13) | 2.49 (1.36) | 0.73 (0.30) | 0.90 (0.94) | 1.83 (1.16) | 3.54 (1.36) | 1.91 (1.17) | 0.69 (1.05) |
| Total | Total LOW SM (43) | 4.37 (1.06) | 2.65 (1.30) | 0.65 (0.29) | 1.11 (0.95) | 3.12 (1.70) | 3.79 (1.22) | 2.04 (1.17) | 0.60 (0.82) |
| | Tota HIGH SM (44) | 4.68 (0.67) | 3.09 (1.31) | 0.63 (0.25) | 1.30 (0.95) | 3.27 (1.45) | 3.73 (1.19) | 2.00 (1.09) | 0.95 (1.05) |
| | Total | 4.53 (0.91) | 2.87 (1.33) | 0.64 (0.27) | 1.20 (0.55) | 3.20 (1.58) | 3.76 (1.20) | 2.02 (1.13) | 0.78 (0.96) |

Source: From the authors

Note. SM= Self-monitors; means (Std.)


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nificantly different means considering number of alters (F=8.34; p< .01; EtaSq=0.17), constraint (F=6.37; p< .05; EtaSq=0.13), centrality (F=7.99; p< .01; EtaSq=0.16), homophily of gender (F=55.75; p< .00, EtaSq=0.58), homophily of status - maintaining ties with same or higher level of the organization (F= 6.53; p<0.05; EtaSq = 0.14), and strong ties to alters, in a weak significance (F=3.85; p< .10; EtaSq= 0.09).

Moreover, males - low or high self-monitors - had exactly the same network pattern, but ties to individuals at a lower level in the hierarchy (Down-level: F=5.09; p< .05; Eta Sq= 0.09; low self-monitor males=0.59, Std. 0.81 and high self-monitor males=1.11, Std. 0.91). However, low and high self-monitor females also had different patterns regarding number of alters (F=3.97, p< .05, Eta Sq=0.11, low self-monitor females =3.82, Std. 1.33; high self-monitor females=4.56, Std. 0.97) and centrality (F= 2.87; p< .10; EtaSq=0.88; low self-monitor females = 0.64, Std. 0.96; high self-monitor females=1.16, Std. 0.87). In fact, there is a steep decline of centrality of low self-monitor females compared with other gender vs. self-monitoring dimensions.

In accordance with previous studies, one of the more compelling facts of the network in management is that homophily of gender is a very strong male characteristic (BRASS, 1985; DING; MURRAY; STUART, 2013; IBARRA, 1997; VAN DEN BRINK; BENSCHOP, 2014), and such was the case in our sample, despite the fact of being high or low self-monitors. On the other hand, females had a more balanced gender network: males had a mean of 4.75 alters, and among those, 4.12 were other males; females had a mean of 4.20 alters in their network, but half (1.91) were other females. Table 3 shows the difference of homophily of gender and the strength of the ties: not only did males have many more ties to other males, but also these ties tended to be strong-ties. Variables were normalized by the network size as women, and especially low self-monitors women, have less ties than men.

Finally, the entire sample (129 individuals, including the 87 in management analyzed previously, and the others 42 professionals not in management) was analyzed in order to understand the factors related to being at higher levels in the hierarchy. The self-monitoring mean was the same (2.82, Std=0.42). The gender vs. self-monitor breakdown was: 36 male high self-monitors; 34 male low self-monitors, 28 female high self-monitors and 31 female low self-monitors. An analysis of the variance of the relationship between individual traits (gender, self-monitoring) and homophily (status and gender) used in order to predict hierarchy had a significant result: R Squared = 0.97, Adjusted R Squared = 0.57 (Table 3). Two

**TABLE 3 – Homophily of gender and strength-of-ties**

| | Ties to other Males | | | Ties to other Females | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strong | Weak | Total | Strong | Weak | Total |
| Males HSm | 64.2% | 27.0% | 91.2% | 4.4% | 4.4% | 8.8% |
| Males LSm | 54.8% | 30.1% | 84.9% | 8.1% | 7.9% | 15.1% |
| Females HSm | 39.1% | 20.6% | 59.7% | 24.0% | 16.3% | 40.3% |
| Females LSm | 29.0% | 23.7% | 52.7% | 23.7% | 23.7% | 47.3% |

Source: From the authors

Note. HSm= high self-monitors; LSm= low self-monitors


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**TABLE 4 – ANOVA - Gender, Self-monitoring, Homophily (gender and status) and Hierarchy**

| | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 72.37 | 120 | 0.60 | 2.41 | 0.09 |
| Intercept | 202.56 | 1 | 202.56 | 810.23 | 0.00 |
| Gender | 2.25 | 1 | 2.25 | 9.00 | 0.02 |
| Sm | 14.90 | 37 | 0.40 | 1.61 | 0.25 |
| Homophily_gender | 3.88 | 9 | 0.43 | 1.72 | 0.23 |
| Hompophily_status | 2.47 | 3 | 0.82 | 3.29 | 0.08 |
| Gender * Sm | 0.25 | 1 | 0.25 | 1.00 | 0.35 |
| Gender * Homophily_gender | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Gender * Homphilly_status | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Sm * Homophily_gender | 12.69 | 9 | 1.41 | 5.64 | 0.01 |
| Sm * Homphily_status | 2.46 | 7 | 0.35 | 1.41 | 0.32 |
| Homophily_gender * Homphily_status | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Gender * Sm * Homophily_gender | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Gender * Sm * Homphily_status | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Gender * Homophily_gender * Homphily_status | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Sm * Homophily_gender * Homphily_status | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Gender * Sm* Homophily_gender * Homphily_status | 0.00 | 0 | . | . | . |
| Error | 2.00 | 8 | 0.25 | | |
| Total | 555.00 | 129 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 74.37 | 128 | | | |

Source: From the authors

Note. R Squared = 0.95, Aj R Sq = 0,57

variables were positively related to being at the top of the hierarchy: gender (F=9.00, p< .05, EtaSq = 0.53) and homophily of status in a weaker significance (F=3.29, p<.10, EtaSq=0.55). In addition, one interaction term was significant: self-monitoring vs. homophily of gender (F=5.64, p< .01), meaning that high self-monitors who had same gender networks were more related to higher positions in the hierarchy.

## DISCUSSION

This study posed the question as to whether a difference in social network characteristics and a self-monitoring personality of men and women might explain the "boys club" phenomena in organizations. The networks of 89 people in management positions (middle management, directors and VPs) were explored. Results showed surprising effects regarding how gender and self-monitoring interact affecting social network structures and the influence of these factors in predicting hierarchical levels.

First of all, low or high self-monitor males in management positions had very similar structural networks. Indeed, males (no matter if high or low self-monitors) tended to maintain ties (in an advice network) in a highly gender homophilic way (ties to other males only), consisting mostly of strong-ties, which, in turn, were not connected among each other, keeping a high centrality in the network. As Kalish and Robins (2006, p.78) found, an individual whose strong-ties are not connected among each other ("strong-

tie structural holes") was associated with a higher degree of individual focus (people who focus on being different from others, including "others being in their own social group"), an internal locus of control (people who believe that they control the events in their lives), but were also the ones who had higher levels of neuroticism.

Moreover, the only difference between high self-monitor males and low self-monitor males was homophily of status. Surprisingly, although self-monitor theory (Snyder, 1987) posits that high self-monitors build their networks as instruments to enhance their status, low self-monitors males were the ones who presented fewer ties to lower levels within the organization, preferring more higher status relationships (although in a weaker significance) The fact is that the high self-monitor males, followed by low self-monitor females, were the ones who had more ties to lower hierarchical levels. This is in line with the findings that high self-monitor men in management positions were found to be emotional helpers (TOEGEL; ANAND; KILDUFF, 2007) and were more attentive to helping others (FLYNN; REAGANS; AMANATULLAH *et al*., 2006). However, Toegel, Anand and Kilduff (2007) also found that females (who in their sample tended to be more low self-monitors) had a significant effect on predicting their role of being emotional helpers.

On the other hand, females in management positions had a network that included both genders, with a balanced mix of strong ties and weak ties but they also presented different network structures, depending on whether they were high or low self-monitors. The latter tended to keep their alters more connected amongst each other (have lower centrality in their network). As Burt (2005) suggested in his discussion of the brokerage-closure tension, keeping a group in higher closure is fundamental to the implementation of any strategy, whereas keeping connection to other areas as a broker is important to innovation.

The investigation of homophily (of gender and status) and individual differences (self-monitoring and gender) showed that males and high self-monitors who build gender homophilic networks are significantly more related to higher positions in the hierarchies. Considering the meta-analysis of Day; Schleicher; Unckless *et al.* (2002), that high self-monitors (who usually pursue the ability for impression management and show high status) tend to be men, and that homophily (status and gender) can be accumulated (MCPHERSON; SMITH-LOVIN; COOK, 2001), the results of the study could explain the prevalence of men at the top of organizations.

## Contributions

By adding to the literature on how gender differences in networking and self-monitoring disposition affect one's career, this study has made relevant contributions. First, while confirming the importance of the role of self-monitoring in ascending to the top within organizations, this study has also provided evidence that homophily of gender is a predominant factor that influences one's career, since high self-monitors in gender homophilic networks mean a better hierarchy.

Second, it was found that males (and especially high self-monitors males) have strong ties to their alters (probably because of homophily of gender who tend to be stronger than cross-gender networks), but keep these ties unconnected among themselves. On the other hand, low self-moni-


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tors females keep a balanced network of weak and close ties, but tend to keep them much more connected among themselves. Therefore, complementing Burt ´s (1992, p.137) word that "women are an obvious special case", as a higher constraint network (which means less structural holes) was associated to women earlier promotions (against what he claimed as the main idea that centrality is always better for career), we found that this is true much more for low self-monitors women and such a difference among women do deserves attention in future research.

Finally, although some studies found that centrality was associated to high self-monitors (e.g., OH; KILDUFF, 2008) the exploration of the network considering both gender and self-monitoring dimensions, showed that low self-monitors males in management position had exactly the same pattern of network than high self-monitors males, but the low self-monitors males were the ones who develop more connections to higher hierarchical ties, probably due to the need to increase their status, as low self-monitors´ self-promotion style is not considered related the competence (TURNLEY; BOLINO, 2001).

## Final Comments

As with any investigation, this study has some limitations. First of all, the self-monitoring score for each contact of a participant was not collected. Therefore we did not have the information as to whether or not self-monitoring also influences the connection with other self-monitors, which would further explain the homophily of status. Second, in-depth interviews could explain differences in management styles by comparing low self-monitor females to low self-monitor males and to high self-monitor females, because the former had a totally different pattern of networking with respect to centrality (or constraint), and a number of empirical studies have recently discussed the trade-off between structure holes and cohesiveness regarding, for example, innovation creation versus implementation (e.g., TIWANA, 2008) and how these affect the perceptions of those who have the power to promote people within organizations.

Moreover, following Obstfeld (2005) discussion of the concepts of *tertius iungens* (the one who wins) and *tertius gaudens* (the one who enjoys, i.e., an individual who manipulates the fact of being the one who connects unconnected people), future research could investigate the intention of the formation of ties, using the interaction of gender and self-monitoring to further explain exploiting networks to foster one's career (and even further, to investigate who are the ones who have only a primarily objective career, making company performance less important).

People are different, and the unique aspects of each person can be harnessed to compose an optimum team rather than a mere collection (and thus imperfect) of stereotypes. Management should also be aware of this reinforcing trend in male networking and self-monitoring style, building a market of other male contacts. The risk is that, by itself, the "net" is becoming more important than real performance, thus reflecting the unfortunate truth of the expression that "who you know is more important than what you know" for career advancement. After decades of a solid presence of women in the workforce, it seems, unfortunately, that the strongest factor to explain why Lulu is still not a member of the club is simply because she is not a boy.

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