

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Opening new brokerage opportunities while closing existing ones: The *Tertius iungens* orientation as a source of network advantage

Olli-Pekka Kauppila¹ | Lorenzo Bizzi² | David Obstfeld²¹Hanken School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland²Mihaylo College of Business and Economics, California State University Fullerton, Fullerton, California, USA**Correspondence**

Olli-Pekka Kauppila, Hanken School of Economics, Arkadiankatu 22, 00100 Helsinki, Finland.

Email: olli-pekka.kauppila@hanken.fi**Funding information**

Academy of Finland, Grant/Award Number: 310063

Summary

Organizational members face a motivational dilemma in influencing the social relationships of others: The organization benefits from high connectedness among employees, but personal advantages accrue to those who occupy brokerage positions between disconnected others. In this study, we draw on the organizational paradox perspective to argue that the reconciliation of these contrasting objectives lies in recognizing one's agency to facilitate connectedness (*closing*) within a social structure and the search for new connections (*opening*) as mutually supportive. Across two field studies, we examine how individuals' advantageous position in an organizational network emerges from the interplay between a *tertius iungens* orientation to join others in collaboration and network building to open new brokering opportunities. In Study 1, analyses of a sample of two-wave, cross-lagged panel data show that a *tertius iungens* orientation contributes to the number of outgoing ties to other actors via network building. Study 2 uses a network survey to add that a *tertius iungens* orientation is positively associated with incoming ties from others and network brokerage, and again, these relationships are mediated by network building. Overall, our results indicate that by increasing connectedness in their organizational social network, individuals simultaneously activate opening behaviors that facilitate the expansion of their network, thereby revitalizing their structurally advantageous position.

KEYWORDSbrokering behavior, network advantage, network building, organizational paradox, organizing behavior, *tertius iungens* orientation

1 | INTRODUCTION

Social connections have been proven to be advantageous to individuals and organizations alike, making the study of how organizational members interact and relate to each other a core area of organizational behavior research (Colbert et al., 2016; Lopez-Kidwell et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2021). This research has contributed to our

understanding of organizing behavior—that is, “the Big-O definition of OB” (Heath & Sitkin, 2001)—by examining the role of employees in changing the structure of social relationships (Ibarra et al., 2005; Quintane & Carnabuci, 2016). Traditional approaches within this domain have explored how employees proactively build their own relationships to facilitate their work and career development (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Halgin et al., 2020; Seibert et al., 2001). More

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2023 The Authors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

recently, attention has shifted toward brokering behaviors, investigating how employees' efforts to change the relationships of others also impact collective-level organizational processes such as coordination and change (Balkundi et al., 2019; Halevy et al., 2020; Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010).

With the growing interest in brokering behaviors, *tertius iungens* (TI) orientation, a construct coined by Obstfeld (2005), has gained momentum. TI orientation refers to an individual's "behavioral propensity toward connecting people in one's social network" (Nicolaou & Kilduff, 2022, p. 1). Research has shown that the TI orientation contributes to improving the performance of one's social group—or even an entire firm (Wei et al., 2021)—by enhancing collaboration and the effectiveness of social exchanges (Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, 2012; Ozer & Zhang, 2022). As Tasselli and Kilduff (2021, p. 74) put it, "The matchmaker, or *tertius iungens*, brings parties together for mutual gain and for the good of the organization."

However, the process by which TI-oriented individuals connect others is considered a double-edged sword. Existing research posits that by facilitating connections among their contacts, TI-oriented actors surround themselves with a dense group of interconnected actors (Ahuja, 2000; Fleming et al., 2007; Kang et al., 2007; Quintane et al., 2022). Such a closed or densely connected network might work against the self-interest of the TI-oriented actor by ending their privileged access to creative ideas (Perry-Smith, 2006; Soda et al., 2021), as well as valuable information and resources (Hansen, 1999; Reinholt et al., 2011; Sparrowe & Liden, 2005). This is a grave concern because, through these mechanisms, individuals who are connected to actors who are themselves unconnected achieve higher individual performance (Iorio, 2022; Mehra et al., 2001) and career success (Fang et al., 2015; Seibert et al., 2001). Consistent with this rationale, Soda et al. (2018) elucidated that by investing their time and effort in collaborative activities, TI-oriented individuals may contribute to the success of their social group at the expense of their personal interests.

But does the increased density tell the whole story of how TI orientation relates to an individual's position in the organizational network? We argue that the received assumption that connecting others will lead to a disadvantageous dense network position is undertheorized and unsupported by research evidence. A key reason for the dearth of evidence is that research on individuals' network agency—that is, in the process of "doing" social structures—has developed largely separately from structural approaches to social networks (Casciaro et al., 2015; Kwon et al., 2020; Tasselli et al., 2015). A perusal of the TI orientation literature indicates that the way in which TI orientation contributes to network position might be more complex than current research recognizes. For example, while creativity is generally considered to originate from open networks and multiple unique connections (Baer, 2010; Iorio, 2022; Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017; Soda et al., 2021), several studies have demonstrated that TI orientation also advances the pursuit of creativity and innovation (Grosser et al., 2019; Kauppila et al., 2018; Llopis et al., 2021). Extrapolating from these findings, it is possible that the

structural implications of TI orientation go beyond increased network density. To address this issue, the purpose of our research is to advance understanding of how TI orientation shapes one's position in an organizational network.

This study proposes that a paradox perspective provides a powerful lens for theorizing about how TI orientation leads to changes in one's network position. The paradoxical tension between "open" and "closed" networks (Ahuja, 2000; Burt et al., 2013; Kilduff & Lee, 2020; Ter Wal et al., 2016) and, relatedly, between "separating" and "connecting" forms of brokering behavior (Fleming et al., 2007; Halevy et al., 2020; Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010) resemble the patterns identified in discussions on other organizational paradoxes (DeFillippi et al., 2007; Farjoun, 2010; Holmqvist, 2004; Smith & Lewis, 2011). According to research on paradoxes, contradictory organizational phenomena such as exploration and exploitation tend to be mutually constitutive, motivating one another rather than resulting in a self-reinforcing impasse (Adler et al., 1999; Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009; Tempelaar & Rosenkranz, 2019). Integrating the theory on paradoxes with behavioral approaches to social networks (Kwon et al., 2020; Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021), we build an argument that instead of constraining an individual to a closed social group, TI orientation works through contradictory phenomena in network agency to revitalize the network advantage of the individual.

Our paper contributes to the research on individual network agency by integrating streams of literature that have separately addressed brokering behaviors aimed at shaping relationships between other actors (Halevy et al., 2019; Nicolaou & Kilduff, 2022) and networking behaviors to build one's own relationships (Casciaro et al., 2014; Liang & Gong, 2013). We contribute by providing an integrated theory on how brokering processes unfold through an interplay of juxtaposed—and yet interrelated—*closing* and *opening* behavioral elements of network agency. By opening the black box of how shaping others' relationships influences the position of the individual within an organizational network, our research also bridges the existing divide between behavioral and structural approaches to social networks (Bensaou et al., 2014; Kwon et al., 2020; Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021). Finally, our research responds to the call of Casciaro et al. (2015, p. 1165) to address the question, "Why do some people end up in a particularly advantageous network position?" Our research goes beyond the conventional focus on personality traits (Fang et al., 2015; Oh & Kilduff, 2008; Sasovova et al., 2010) to examine what individuals can do to improve their positioning within a network. In doing so, we provide insight into how prosocial actions in brokering may ultimately benefit the self.

2 | THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 | Network advantage and networking behaviors

Network advantage indicates the extent to which an individual is connected to others, and in particular, has nonredundant connections

(Burt et al., 2013; Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021). Nonredundant connections are ties to actors who are not otherwise connected. Actors with nonredundant connections benefit first via access to novel information and opportunities and second from their ability to broker exchanges in structural holes, that is, otherwise disconnected others (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993; Burt, 1992; Klein et al., 2004; Mehra et al., 2001). Given that nonredundant connections are considered important resources contributing to the success of individuals (Burt & Soda, *in press*; Granovetter, 1973), an advantageous network position is often depicted as a large network of nonredundant ties (Brass et al., 2004; Ibarra et al., 2005; Seibert et al., 2001).

Building on these theoretical underpinnings, we focus on two of the most prominent indicators of network advantage: centrality and brokerage (Brass, 1984; Fang et al., 2015; Mehra et al., 2001). Centrality pertains to the number of connections, while brokerage concerns the non-redundancy of those connections. Centrality, or degree centrality, can be categorized into outgoing ties that an actor indicates they have with others (i.e., out-degree centrality) and incoming ties others indicate they have with the focal actor (i.e., in-degree centrality). Outgoing ties reflect the extent to which individuals leverage their connections (Brands & Kilduff, 2014; McCarthy & Levin, 2019; Shea & Fitzsimons, 2016), while incoming ties are indicative of the popularity of the actor, which benefits their performance and career success (Fang et al., 2015; Ibarra & Andrews, 1993; Klein et al., 2004). The other focal aspect of an advantageous network position, brokerage, denotes the extent to which an actor spans structural holes between otherwise unconnected others (Burt, 1992; Kwon et al., 2020). Brokerage provides access to nonredundant knowledge and enables the arbitrating of exchanges between disconnected others (Burt et al., 2013; Iorio, 2022).

Traditionally, individual agency and psychological phenomena have received relatively limited attention in the social network literature, which has examined fixed social network structures (Casciaro et al., 2015; Kilduff & Lee, 2020; Tasselli et al., 2015). More recently, two separate streams of organizational behavior research have emerged that examine networking behaviors in social networks. One of these two research streams has focused on how actors change the relationships between *others*, that is, brokering behaviors (Halevy et al., 2019; Obstfeld, 2005; Soda et al., 2018), while the other has examined how actors build up their *own* relationships, that is, network building behaviors (Bensaou et al., 2014; Casciaro et al., 2014; Liang & Gong, 2013). Although there is little cross-fertilization or integration between these two perspectives, both the brokering and network building streams of research are driven by a quest to understand network advantage (i.e., a noun characterizing the pattern of social relationships) as the way in which an individual engages with social structure (i.e., a verb describing individual agency to transform social structures; Casciaro et al., 2014; Cardinale, 2018; Kwon et al., 2020; Obstfeld et al., 2014).

Brokering actions can range from attempts to retain the separation between others (holding on to an advantage) to connecting others via collaboration (sharing advantage). These different approaches to acting on structural opportunities explain why others

may view brokers either negatively or positively. In the literature on brokering behavior, the most prominent discussions have revolved around an individual's behavioral propensity to connect and facilitate collaboration between others, that is, TI orientation (see Halevy et al., 2019, and Kwon et al., 2020, for reviews). As a behavioral propensity, the TI orientation describes how an individual acts across different situations when there are no strong situational demands influencing actions (Halevy et al., 2020; Obstfeld, 2005). It thus reflects a self-regulatory behavioral pattern, that is, the motivated action (see DeShon & Gillespie, 2005) of an individual. From the perspective of network agency, TI orientation is a “closing” force in an individual's social network structure, as it describes a process associated with increased connectedness, density, cohesion, and collaboration between associated actors (Halevy et al., 2020; Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, 2005; Quintane & Carnabuci, 2016; Sasovova et al., 2010).

Network building is distinct from brokering behaviors, and refers to behaviors geared toward developing relationships with new acquaintances or deepening ties with existing associates in the more peripheral parts of their social network (Casciaro et al., 2014; Ebbers, 2013; Liang & Gong, 2013; Wolff & Moser, 2009). Network building differs from simple attempts to create new ties because it specifically focuses on forging new relationships with individuals beyond one's work group and with individuals in other parts of the organization (Ashford & Black, 1996). Because network building aims “to attain a large network of nonredundant contacts that facilitate the exchange of resources and favors” (Wolff & Spurk, 2020, p. 277), it is associated with an increased “opening” (e.g., sparseness, new contacts, and structural holes) in the individual's social network structure.

2.2 | A paradox approach to network advantage

Although the behavioral process perspective on brokering has become increasingly popular, the question of how brokering might alter one's position in an organizational social network has been relegated to the background of these discussions. In the absence of a nuanced understanding of the dynamism and complexity of individual agency in brokering processes (Balkundi et al., 2019), existing research has relied on the assumption that as TI-oriented individuals connect others, they eventually wind up in a densely connected network in which all their contacts are mutually connected—that is, all structural holes have been closed. Such a position is akin to a social straitjacket that constrains one's social relationships to a closed group of existing contacts (Kwon et al., 2020; Landis, 2016). However, our research suggests that this may not be the case because brokering, like all psychosocial processes, is highly complex and riddled with paradoxes (Cardinale, 2018; Carnabuci & Bruggeman, 2009; Comeau-Vallée & Langley, 2020; Landis et al., 2018).

The organizational paradox perspective focuses on seemingly contradictory organizational phenomena that are, in fact, interrelated, mutually enabling, and fully functional only in the presence of both antipodes (Farjoun, 2010; Lempilä et al., *in press*; Smith &

Lewis, 2011). The notion of paradoxes is evident in everyday activities, as, for example, people make mistakes to generate competence, work long hours to obtain leisure time, and allow their loved ones to be “free” to have them as their “own.” The paradoxical phenomena “seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously” (Lewis, 2000, p. 760). The paradox perspective has a long history in organizational research, and tensions between organizational phenomena such as stability and change (Farjoun, 2010; Thompson, 1967), routine and creativity (DeFillippi et al., 2007; Obstfeld, 2012), exploitation and exploration (Gupta et al., 2006; March, 1991), and profit and sustainability (Hahn et al., 2015) have been addressed in numerous studies.

In social network research, the paradoxical tension between “closed” and “open” networks might be the most central and enduring source of debate (Iorio, 2022; Kilduff & Lee, 2020; Soda et al., 2021; Ter Wal et al., 2016). Closed networks are characterized by multiple interties among members of the social group and few ties to actors outside the social group. In contrast, the number of interties among members relative to the size of the social group is small in open networks. Closed and cohesive social groups characterized by redundant ties are essential, as they contribute to trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988; Fleming et al., 2007; Uzzi, 1997), ease of knowledge sharing (Hansen, 1999; Reagans & McEvily, 2003), and coordinated action (Obstfeld, 2005). In turn, open networks, characterized by non-redundant ties, are essential as they facilitate access to novel information (Hargadon & Sutton, 1997; Iorio, 2022), the search for creative ideas (Hansen, 1999; Soda et al., 2021), and privileged access to opportunities (Baum et al., 2012; Fleming et al., 2007). In addressing the closed versus open network dilemma, organizational network research has tended to focus on trade-off, balance, or a situation-appropriate configuration between closed and open structures (Ahuja, 2000; Burt, 1992; Shea & Fitzsimons, 2016; Ter Wal et al., 2016; Tiwana, 2008). In these studies, closed and open networks are generally seen as coexisting entities that determine organizational activities and outcomes independently.

In prior literature exploring individual agency within networks, the TI orientation has often been viewed as a behavioral process transforming networks from open structures to closed ones (i.e., densely connected networks). However, the paradox approach might lead to different conclusions, as it considers juxtaposing antipodes as interdependent parts of the same process. Drawing on the tensions between closed and open networks, the behavioral process perspective on brokering (Halevy et al., 2019; Soda et al., 2018) highlights a need for paradoxical approaches—instead of fit-based models—to closing and opening (Farjoun & Fiss, 2022; Smith & Lewis, 2011). According to the paradox approach, juxtaposing closing and opening behaviors are synergistic and simultaneously persisting (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Indeed, researchers taking a more dynamic approach to the relationship between individual agency and social network structures (Burt & Merluzzi, 2016; Burt & Soda, *in press*; Levin & Walter, 2018; Sasovova et al., 2010) are beginning to propose that closing and opening dynamics are interrelated phenomena in network agency. Despite this development, the key issue regarding how

these seemingly contrasting activities interrelate and interplay within brokering processes remains unresolved.

2.3 | Hypothesis development

In our quest to understand whether and how TI orientation is related to network advantage, we integrate insights from brokering theories and paradox theories into a new paradox-based model of network advantage. The point of departure in our model is that TI orientation as a behavioral variable pertains primarily to *closing* dynamics in the brokering process, that is, brokering geared toward increasing the connectedness and cohesiveness in one's social network. Herein, the paradox is that, in order to pursue their connecting activities, TI-oriented individuals need disconnected actors whom they might connect or parties that are only loosely connected to others. Finding these actors requires *opening* mechanisms via which new ties are created in organizational networks. We focus on network building as a pertinent opening mechanism. TI orientation and network building drive the social structure in seemingly contradictory directions, as the former facilitates the closedness of a social network, while the latter promotes its openness. Thus, there is a paradoxical tension between closing dynamics associated with TI orientation and opening dynamics associated with network building. Consistent with the paradox perspective, our theoretical model (Figure 1) proposes that despite the contradictory agency associated with closing and opening dynamics, TI orientation and network building are mutually enabling and interrelated parts of the agentic process of developing network advantage.

A basic assumption of our model is that the development of a closed network position is not the driving motivation of TI-oriented individuals. On the contrary, the eventual depletion of connectable pairs is an unwanted and possibly unforeseen consequence of the activity that actually motivates TI-oriented individuals, which is the process of connecting others via collaboration. Therefore, we propose that beyond the pursuit of connecting activities and facilitating collaboration—that is, “acting on TI”—TI orientation motivates behaviors that generate new or improved opportunities for these activities. Network building behavior serves as an essential mechanism that generates new pairs to be connected or facilitated. TI-oriented individuals are thus motivated to switch between connecting activities and network building, as network building facilitates a continuous pursuit of connecting activities, aligning with the motivation of TI-oriented individuals.

To illustrate these ideas, Figure 2 presents a hypothetical example of how and why TI orientation motivates network building. In the example, Alex has two connections: Ben and Cassidy. Because Ben and Cassidy do not know one another, Alex occupies a structural hole position. Assuming that Alex introduces Ben and Cassidy (i.e., a closing behavior), the structural hole disappears, and Alex ends up in a more densely connected group (a completely closed group in this example) where it is more likely that everyone knows everyone else and fewer connecting opportunities are available. To pursue connecting activities, Alex engages in network building behavior (i.e., opening

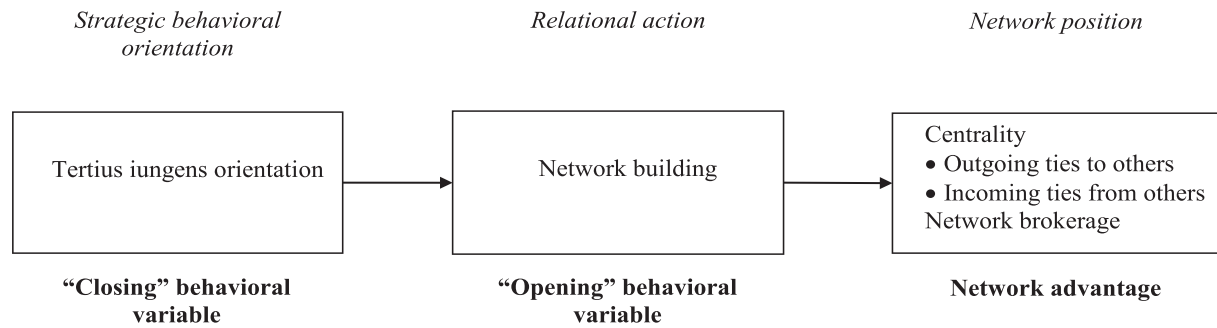
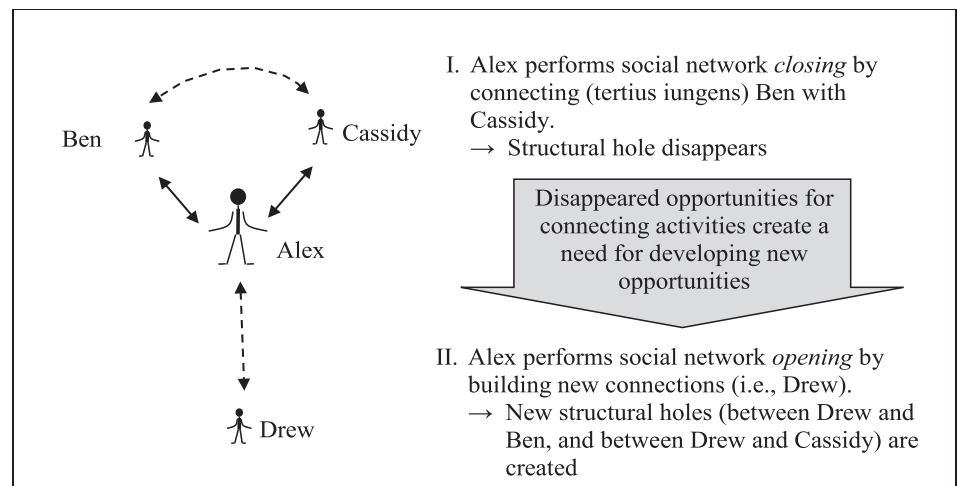


FIGURE 1 Theoretical model.

FIGURE 2 Illustration of the dynamics between closing and opening behaviors in brokering.



behavior), which leads to Alex forming a new tie with Drew. As Drew is unconnected to Alex's existing social circles (Ben and Cassidy), a tie to Drew opens two new structural holes (Drew–Ben and Drew–Cassidy), thus rejuvenating opportunities for Alex's connecting efforts. In practice, people's networks tend to be larger, in which case TI orientation facilitates simultaneous closing and opening activities across various segments of the network.

In light of the paradox perspective, the dynamism proposed in our model mirrors the well-known interplay between exploitation and exploration in organizational learning theory (March, 1991). Although exploitation and exploration activities are considered contradictory, ill-fitting, and—in a sense—mutually exclusive (Gupta et al., 2006), it is also known that the exploration of new possibilities and alternatives serves exploitation by generating new opportunities for exploitation (Holmqvist, 2004; Levinthal & March, 1993) for an actor (e.g., a firm or an individual). Likewise, the TI-oriented individual is motivated to explore the formation of new relationships (an opening behavior) in order to exploit the opportunity of closing a gap in the relational structure. Nothing can be closed that was not previously opened. Network building enables the continuous connecting activities of TI-oriented individuals and thereby enhances the individual's network advantage. While certain studies addressing organizational tensions propose that actors attend to contrasting activities sequentially,

alternating between them, our paradox approach posits that both opposites coexist (almost) simultaneously, mutually motivating and enabling each other.

We predict that by motivating and enabling network building behaviors, TI orientation enhances different aspects of structural network advantage. A key aspect of network advantage, and the first facet of centrality, is the number of outgoing ties. To pursue many outgoing ties, individuals need to recall relevant relationships (Smith et al., 2012) and mobilize these relationships in practice to obtain advice and resources from others (Brands & Kilduff, 2014; Shea & Fitzsimons, 2016; Smith et al., 2012). We propose that, via network building behaviors, TI orientation is positively associated with both recalling and mobilizing a higher number of outgoing ties. First, TI-oriented individuals engage in network building to seek, identify, and contact actors who could become meaningful acquaintances. People recall their contacts while pursuing relational activities (Kilduff et al., 2006; Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021); thus, individuals engaging in network building are likely to recall a larger group of actors to whom they can reach out for advice and other resources. Second, because the network building behaviors of TI-oriented individuals are motivated by a desire to collaborate with others, it is highly likely that these individuals will not only call to mind various actors but also mobilize these relationships in practice. That is, actually turning to their contacts to

obtain information and other resources needed to build collaboration. Accordingly, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. (a) The *tertius iungens* orientation is positively related to the number of outgoing ties to others in an organization (i.e., out-degree centrality), and (b) this relationship is mediated via network building.

The other facet of centrality is incoming ties from others, indicating the extent to which an individual is sought after by others (Fang et al., 2015; Kilduff et al., 2008). Individuals with a high TI orientation are perceived by others as collaborative and helpful (Ebbers, 2013; Ibarra et al., 2005; Soda et al., 2018), which is likely to make them popular and trusted sources of advice and support. We know from earlier research that by helping others and facilitating collaboration, individuals build trust, knowledge sharing, and collective action within their social network (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988; Hernandez, 2012). The pursuit of collaborative brokering orientations also improves the status and prestige of the individual (Halevy et al., 2020), thus attracting a growing number of actors interested in becoming acquainted and connecting in collaborative activities (Hargadon, 2002; Lingo, 2020; Tiwana, 2008). The popularity of TI-oriented actors becomes fully activated through the pursuit of network building behaviors, as these opening behaviors increase others' awareness of the TI-oriented individual outside their regular social circles. By engaging in network building activities, TI-oriented individuals interact with a growing number of new people, thus increasing the pool of individuals who are familiar with what they do and who they know; this phenomenon is known as popularity spread (Brennecke, 2020). Without the mediating role of network building, TI-oriented individuals might remain embedded in a closed social group, and actors outside the group might remain unaware of them. Thus, network building behavior is a focal mechanism that makes TI-oriented individuals not only approachable but also familiar to a larger number of actors.

Hypothesis 2. (a) The *tertius iungens* orientation is positively related to the number of incoming ties from others in an organization (i.e., in-degree centrality), and (b) this relationship is mediated via network building.

The final aspect of network advantage in our model is network brokerage. Our theorizing indicates that to provide the best opportunities for connecting and facilitating collaboration, TI-oriented individuals are likely to focus on building new connections with individuals outside their social circles. Ties to actors who lack connections or active relationships with the individual's existing associates increase the number of structural holes in the network (as presented in Figure 2) and thus provide the best opportunities for TI-oriented individuals to forge new connections and facilitate collaboration. In comparison, it would be less interesting or useful for TI-oriented individuals to develop ties to actors who are already connected and collaborating with members of the individual's existent social group

because the connecting potential in such relationships is lower. Network building behavior plays a crucial mediating role in these relationships, as it provides a means to extend the individual's network to include unfamiliar actors and actors outside their existing social circles (Casciaro et al., 2014; Wolff & Moser, 2009). That is, instead of constraining an individual's collaborative efforts to the sphere of their existing social circles, network building is a mechanism that transmits the effect of TI orientation on the formation of ties with actors in more remote parts of the network. Thus,

Hypothesis 3. (a) The *tertius iungens* orientation is positively related to the extent to which an individual will be connected to actors who have no direct connections with that individual's existing connections (i.e., brokerage), and (b) this relationship is mediated via network building.

3 | OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

We conducted a two-wave cross-lagged survey (Study 1) and a cross-sectional network survey (Study 2) to examine how TI orientation influences different aspects of network advantage and to explore the mediating role of network building in these relationships. In Study 1, we focused on establishing the direction of influence between TI orientation and network building. Although the causal direction from a general behavioral tendency (i.e., TI orientation) to a more situational individual behavior (i.e., network building) is conceptually justified, reversed causality is always a risk when examining relationships between behavioral variables. The first test of Hypothesis 1 is also presented in Study 1. In Study 2, we used a network survey to more comprehensively analyze the roles of TI orientation and network building in different aspects of network advantage. Study 2 replicates the test of Hypothesis 1, after which it proceeds to explain the incoming ties from others and brokerage positions, thus presenting tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3.

4 | STUDY 1: A TWO-WAVE CROSS-LAGGED SURVEY

4.1 | Participants and procedures

Study 1 had two critical goals. The first goal was to investigate the direction of influence in the relationship between TI orientation and network building behaviors. The second goal is to provide initial evidence for the theoretical model by examining the influence of TI orientation on outgoing ties (Hypothesis 1a), as well as the mediating role of network building behavior in this relationship (Hypothesis 1b). The setting for Study 1 was a governmental agency in Finland that performs highly digitalized and knowledge-intensive work. In the studied organization, a large share of the work is project-based and involves collaborating with various public and private sector stakeholders. In contrast to the stereotype of a bureaucratic and

hierarchical governmental agency, the organization analyzed in Study 1 is comparable to a private sector professional service organization in that it devotes significant attention to developing new products and services and tailors solutions for its various organizational clients.

To overcome the problems associated with cross-sectional data, this dataset was collected at two time points 4 months apart. The 4-month time lag was chosen because work projects and, consequently, interactions with different parties evolve relatively quickly in the studied organization. Hence, a longer time lag would have increased the risk of work changes distorting the relationships. In contrast, a shorter time lag would have been problematic because it may take some time before changes in TI orientation are reflected in network building behaviors. We sent email invitations to all employees of the organization, and out of 1,310 invitations, we received 454 (35%) responses at Time 1 and 235 responses at Time 2, that is, a 48% attrition. Furthermore, we removed 31 respondents due to incomplete answers, leaving us with a final sample of 204 employees.

4.2 | Measures

4.2.1 | *Tertius iungens* orientation

Employees' TI orientation was assessed using Obstfeld's (2005) six-item scale. The scale items are presented in Appendix A. The reliability coefficients for the TI orientation scale were .82 (Time 1) and .82 (Time 2).

4.2.2 | Network building behavior

To capture network building behavior, employees completed a three-item scale developed by Ashford and Black (1996). Although the measure was first used in the context of organizational socialization, the wordings of the scale items are generic and independent of the context, making the scale suitable for studies on network building in general. The respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they recently engaged in activities associated with pursuing new relationships within their organization. Specifically, the scale items were preceded by instructions to consider one's work activities during the last couple of months, and the following prompt: "To what extent have you ...?" This prompt was followed by three items: "... tried to socialize with people who are not in your department/unit?"; "... started conversations with people from different segments of the company?"; and "... tried to get to know as many people as possible in other sections of the company on a personal basis?" The coefficient alpha was .87 at Time 1 and .86 at Time 2.

4.2.3 | Outgoing ties to others

Similar to Carnabuci and Diószegi (2015) and Hirst et al. (2015), we measured the number of outgoing ties focused on intraorganizational

work relationships and advice relations by asking the respondents "To whom do you turn for information or advice in professional, technical, or other work-related matters?" The respondents could provide as many names as they considered relevant; a higher number of reported contacts indicated higher levels of outgoing ties. Because this measure taps into the respondents' free recall of their contacts, it is particularly indicative of their capacity to cognitively activate relationships, which is the critical first step in procuring an advantageous network position (Brands, 2013; Shea & Fitzsimons, 2016; Smith et al., 2012).

4.2.4 | Control variables

To rule out alternative explanations, we controlled for the effects of the respondents' age and organizational level. Age is potentially relevant because generational gaps can be a significant challenge to developing trust and building relationships (Williams, 2016). In addition, organizational members higher in the organizational hierarchy may have more opportunities to build networks and initiate outgoing ties within their organizations than those below them. The scale for organizational level ranges from 1 to 5, such that 1 indicates the highest level in the organizational hierarchy. Furthermore, we controlled for job autonomy because regardless of their organizational level, employees experiencing higher levels of autonomy may be more likely to develop their own networks. To do so, we used a three-item measure developed by Spreitzer (1995), with the following sample items: "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job" and "I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work" ($\alpha = .90$).

We also controlled for the effects of what we refer to as separation motivation. Separation motivation describes an individual's behavioral orientation to keep other actors apart (i.e., divisive brokering or *tertius gaudens*) to prevent the loss of an advantageous network position (Halevy et al., 2020; Obstfeld, 2005). This kind of behavioral orientation may coexist with TI orientation (Grosser et al., 2019; Obstfeld et al., 2014), thus offering an alternative explanation for network building behaviors and structural outcomes. To measure separation motivation, we expanded Grosser et al.'s (2019) scale and selected a set of six items that we determined would offer the best combination of criterion, convergent, and discriminant validity, as well as high reliability ($\alpha = .90$). Appendix A presents a list of items on this scale and the results of a principal component analysis, which shows that the items of the separation motivation and TI orientation scale load on two distinct factors.

4.3 | Results

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables. Before testing the hypotheses, we examined the factor structure of the multi-item measures we used in the analyses. In our confirmatory factor analysis, a four-factor model—with the following factors: TI orientation, network building, separation motivation, and autonomy—provided a good fit to the data ($\chi^2_{129} = 237.73$;

TABLE 1 Study 1: Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

Variables	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1. Outgoing ties, t2	8.83	6.17								
2. Age, t1	47.04	10.78	.12							
3. Organizational level, t1	3.85	0.80	-.12	-.13						
4. Job autonomy, t1	3.74	0.89	-.06	-.19	-.18					
5. Separation motivation, t1	1.42	0.55	-.14	.02	.10	-.09				
6. Network building behavior, t1	3.19	0.96	.28	.10	-.30	.15	-.06			
7. Network building behavior, t2	3.23	0.86	.30	.06	-.30	.12	-.09	.72		
8. Tertius iungens orientation, t1	3.75	0.55	.31	.04	-.27	.11	-.14	.41	.44	
9. Tertius iungens orientation, t2	3.70	0.55	.25	.01	-.32	.10	-.10	.38	.46	.66

Note: N = 204. Correlations of .14 or higher are significant at $p < .05$ level; correlations of .18 or higher are significant at $p < .01$ level.

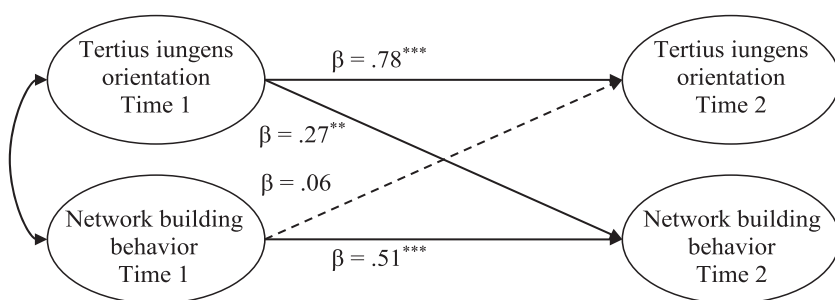


FIGURE 3 A two-wave structural model of tertius iungens orientation and network building behavior.

	Model 1 CE (SE)	p	Model 2 CE (SE)	p	Model 3 CE (SE)	p
Age	0.01(0.00)	.166	0.01(0.00)	.199	0.00(0.00)	.295
Organizational level	-0.09(0.07)	.166	-0.02(0.07)	.791	0.01(0.07)	.843
Job autonomy	-0.06(0.06)	.327	-0.08(0.05)	.152	-0.08(0.05)	.118
Separation motivation	-0.19(0.08)	.010	-0.15(0.07)	.026	-0.16(0.07)	.014
Tertius iungens orientation			0.40(0.09)	.000	0.31(0.10)	.002
Network building					0.14(0.05)	.010
Log-likelihood	-619.82		-609.83		-606.50	

TABLE 2 Results of negative binomial regression analysis on outgoing ties in Study 1.

Note: N = 204.

CFI = 0.94; IFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.064; SRMR = 0.056). Supporting discriminant validity, the hypothesized four-factor model also fits the data significantly better than any of the alternative models where factors were combined, such as the one-factor model ($\chi^2_{135} = 1545.60$; CFI = 0.28; IFI = 0.28; RMSEA = 0.227; SRMR = 0.205).

Next, we specified a cross-lagged panel model to explore the direction of causality between TI orientation (independent variable) and network building behavior (mediating variable in our model). Cross-lagged panel models are frequently used to study causality in psychological processes in organizational settings (see, e.g., Cooper et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). According to MacKinnon et al. (2007), cross-lagged panel analyses are a preferred method for testing causal relationships in cases in which the manipulation of independent

variables in a laboratory setting is difficult. This is the case for our independent variable, as TI orientation is a behavioral tendency and not a situation-specific act (Kauppila et al., 2018; Obstfeld, 2005). The panel analyses presented in Figure 3 demonstrate that, consistent with our predictions, TI orientation is positively related to the ensuing network building behavior ($\beta = .27, p = .006$), whereas the relationship in the reverse direction is not significant ($\beta = .06, p = .178$). A high test-retest relationship between TI orientation at Time 1 and Time 2 is in line with our theorizing that TI orientation facilitates closing and opening behaviors simultaneously, instead of individuals vacillating between juxtaposing behaviors. Control variables were included in this model, but we also analyzed the model without control variables, which yielded the same findings.

We then proceeded to test Hypotheses 1a and 1b. Table 2 shows the results of our negative binomial regression analyses of the direct effects of predictor variables measured at Time 1 on the number of outgoing ties at Time 2. We applied negative binomial regression because our dependent variable (outgoing ties) is a count variable. As Model 2 shows, TI orientation at Time 1 is positively related to the number of outgoing ties at Time 2 ($\beta = .40$, $p = .000$); thus, Hypothesis 1a is supported. In Model 3, network building is included as a predictor of outgoing ties, and the model demonstrates that this relationship is significant ($\beta = .14$, $p = .010$). In this model, TI orientation also remains a significant predictor of outgoing ties ($\beta = .31$, $p = .002$), offering initial evidence for partial mediation via network building. To estimate mediation, we specified a negative binomial model with bootstrapped indirect effects in Mplus 8. In this mediation model, TI orientation at Time 1 was used as a predictor of outgoing ties at Time 2, and network building behavior at Time 2 was used as a mediating variable. To rule out alternative explanations, we included our control variables (age, organizational level, job autonomy, and separation motivation) as predictors of both networking behavior and outgoing ties. In addition, we controlled for the initial level of network building (Time 1) in relation to network building at Time 2. The bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals for indirect effects were positive and did not include zero (LL = 0.015, UL = 0.098), indicating support for Hypothesis 1b, which predicted that network building behaviors mediate the effect of TI orientation on outgoing ties. Our results further indicate that the direct effect of TI orientation on outgoing ties is both positive and significant (LL: 0.070, UL: 0.480). This supports our initial supposition that the mediation effect is partial and that TI orientation increases the number of outgoing ties indirectly as well as directly.

As a robustness check, we reran the tests of our hypotheses while excluding control variables to ensure that their inclusion did not bias the estimates. The pattern of the results remained the same when the control variables were excluded. To further investigate the robustness of these analyses, we applied the Monte Carlo Method for Assessing Mediation (MCMAM), which permits bootstrapping indirect effects based on data from distinct models (Selig & Preacher, 2008). Using this technique, we were able to introduce a time lag between network building and outgoing ties while retaining the time lag between TI orientation and network building. In our model, we examined the indirect effects using path coefficients from the initial (Time 1) TI orientation to the ensuing (Time 2) network building, and from the initial (Time 1) network building to the subsequent (Time 2) number of outgoing ties. In each model, we controlled for the effects of age, organizational level, job autonomy, TI orientation, and separation motivation. All control variables were measured at Time 1. Based on the bootstrapped sample of 2000 repetitions, the 95% confidence interval indicates that the indirect effect of TI orientation via network building behavior on the number of outgoing ties is positive and significant (LL: 0.0045, UL: 0.0728). Overall, these findings offer continuing support for the prediction of Hypothesis 1b that network building mediates the positive effect of TI orientation on outgoing ties.

5 | STUDY 2: NETWORK SURVEY

5.1 | Participants and procedures

The purpose of Study 2 was to use a network survey to extend our understanding of how TI orientation and network building behavior are related to network advantage after accounting for the agency of other organizational members. Specifically, we tested whether the hypothesized effects are significant for incoming ties and network brokerage (i.e., Hypotheses 2 and 3). In terms of outgoing ties to others (i.e., Hypothesis 1), we added to the findings of Study 1 by investigating relationships in another context when using a roster method in lieu of free recall of contacts. In our network survey, we collected data from a high-tech firm in Finland focused on automation, measurement, and robotics. This is a considerably knowledge-intensive setting, in which relevant information is dispersed, activities require specialized knowledge, operations are internationalized, and it is not always apparent what information is relevant and who has that information. As such, the firm is representative of organizations in which social relationships are crucial for achieving organizational goals, and obtaining access to various types of knowledge sources is critical to the individual's work performance.

We emailed an invitation to the survey to all 123 employees of the organization. After three rounds of reminders, we received 104 usable responses (85% response rate). Reflecting the demographic characteristics of the firm, 91% of the sampled employees were male, the average age of the respondents was 35.7 years ($SD = 9.1$), and the average organizational tenure was 3.0 years ($SD = 3.2$). Approximately 88% of the sampled employees had a bachelor's degree or a higher educational qualification.

5.2 | Measures

5.2.1 | Tertius iungens orientation

We used the same six-item scales for TI orientation from Obstfeld (2005) as in Study 1. The coefficient alpha was .86.

5.2.2 | Network building behavior

We used the same three-item scale from Ashford and Black (1996) as in Study 1 ($\alpha = .89$).

5.2.3 | Structural measures

To collect data on the social network structure, we relied on a roster method. Specifically, the online survey provided the names of all individuals working in the organization and asked the respondents to indicate with whom they had instrumental ties, that is, "To whom do you go for advice or other information on work-related issues?" To

capture outgoing ties, we counted the number of individuals the respondent reported contacting for advice on work-related issues. Different from the free recalling of relevant contacts, the roster method enables respondents to also indicate contacts they mobilize in the course of work but may not spontaneously recall (Shea & Fitzsimons, 2016; Smith et al., 2012). To capture incoming ties—or in-degree centrality—we counted the number of other members of an organization who reported going to the focal individual for advice or other work-related information (Burkhardt & Brass, 1990; Klein et al., 2004). Finally, we measured brokerage positions to obtain a broader understanding of how brokering behaviors might relate to one's placement within the organizational social network. Although in-degree centrality and brokerage tend to be very highly correlated in organizational settings (Kleinbaum, 2018; Sasovova et al., 2010), they are conceptually different, and it is possible that even the most popular actors' connections are mutually connected (Casciaro et al., 2015). To measure brokerage, we considered both incoming and outgoing ties and used the UCINET 6.684 software of Borgatti et al. (2002) to compute a constraint measure proposed by Burt (1992). Specifically, we used the transformation developed by Kleinbaum et al. (2015) to reverse the sign of the variable to indicate the absence of constraint (i.e., brokerage) and to normalize its distribution.

5.2.4 | Control variables

We sought to control for alternative explanations for the hypothesized effects, placing emphasis on variables relevant to popularity and powerful structural position. In this vein, we controlled for age, as in Study 1, as well as for gender, which might influence an individual's popularity and ability to obtain brokerage positions (Brands et al., 2022). Age was measured in years, and gender was a binary indicator, such that the value “1” indicated female and “0” indicated male. In addition, we controlled for the level of education of the respondents, as highly educated individuals tend to be especially sought after for their advice and information. We also controlled for

employees holding a managerial position in the organization, which might make an individual a recipient of a higher number of incoming ties. Level of education was captured on a five-point scale, with the scale values ranging from 1 = “lower than high school” to 5 = “doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.)” Following Grosser et al. (2019), we measured occupying a managerial position as 1 = “manager” and 0 = “others.” Finally, we controlled for the separation motivation of the individual, because keeping others separate might help preserve an individual's brokerage positions. For this, we used the same six-item scale as in Study 1 ($\alpha = .92$).

5.3 | Results

The descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 3. Confirmatory factor analyses provide support for the discriminant validity of the measures used in this study, as the three-factor model including TI orientation, separation motivation, and network building provided a good fit ($\chi^2_{87} = 152.13$; CFI = 0.93; IFI = 0.94; RMSEA = 0.085; SRMR = 0.066) that was significantly ($p = .000$) better than that of any of the alternative one- or two-factor models (more detailed results are available from the authors upon request). To test our hypotheses, we began by specifying a series of models in which variables indicating network positions were regressed on TI orientation and other explanatory variables. Because our centrality measures (outgoing and incoming ties) are count variables, we used negative binomial regression models to test these effects. Model 1 in Table 4 shows that TI orientation is a significant predictor of outgoing ties to others ($\beta = .36$, $p = .002$), replicating the test of Hypothesis 1a. In Model 2, we included network building, which is shown to be a significant predictor of outgoing ties ($\beta = .33$, $p = .001$) while simultaneously rendering the effects of TI orientation nonsignificant ($\beta = .06$, $p = .673$). This offers preliminary evidence that network building might be a full mediator in the relationship between TI orientation and outgoing ties. Model 3 shows that TI orientation is also positively related to incoming ties ($\beta = .25$, $p = .009$),

TABLE 3 Study 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations for variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Outgoing ties	16.34	14.14									
2. Incoming ties	13.83	10.05	.40								
3. Brokerage	1.92	0.56	.41	.98							
4. Age	35.72	9.09	.20	.32	.31						
5. Gender (1 = female)	0.09	0.28	-.12	-.05	-.10	-.09					
6. Educational level	3.49	0.80	-.00	-.09	-.07	-.16	.07				
7. Managerial position	0.15	0.36	.35	.35	.33	.29	.06	.07			
8. Separation motivation	1.41	0.58	.02	.04	.09	-.06	-.02	.72	.08		
9. Network building behavior	2.99	1.02	.45	.39	.47	.13	-.13	.09	.40	.12	
10. Tertius iungens orientation	3.66	0.67	.34	.25	.26	.07	-.02	.27	.28	.11	.56

Note: $N = 104$. Correlations of .20 or higher are significant at $p < .05$ level; correlations of .26 or higher are significant at $p < .01$ level.

TABLE 4 Results of negative binomial regression analysis on outgoing ties in Study 2.

	Outgoing ties Model 1		Outgoing ties Model 2		Incoming ties Model 3		Incoming ties Model 4	
	CE (SE)	<i>p</i>	CE (SE)	<i>p</i>	CE (SE)	<i>p</i>	CE (SE)	<i>p</i>
Age	0.01(0.01)	.593	0.00(0.01)	.723	0.02(0.01)	.053	0.02(0.01)	.040
Sex (female)	−0.53(0.27)	.053	−0.45(0.24)	.061	−0.23(0.21)	.265	−0.15(0.19)	.430
Educational level	−0.09(0.11)	.425	−0.08(0.11)	.489	−0.09(0.09)	.340	−0.06(0.08)	.475
Manager	0.54(0.21)	.001	0.38(0.21)	.067	0.34(0.17)	.047	0.15(0.18)	.384
Separation motivation	0.01(0.10)	.965	0.01(0.11)	.949	−0.02(0.09)	.861	−0.10(0.09)	.916
Tertius iungens orientation	0.363(.12)	.002	0.063(0.15)	.673	0.25(0.10)	.009	0.06(0.13)	.635
Network building			0.334(0.10)	.001			0.25(0.11)	.023
Log-likelihood	−381.52		−376.64		−367.29		−364.44	

Note: *N* = 104.

TABLE 5 Results of multiple regression on brokerage position in Study 2.

	Model 1		Model 2	
	CE (SE)	<i>p</i>	CE (SE)	<i>p</i>
Age	0.01(0.01)	.021	0.01(0.01)	.015
Gender (female)	−0.15(0.17)	.365	−0.07(0.17)	.690
Educational level	−0.07(0.06)	.274	−0.06(0.06)	.358
Rank (manager)	0.34(0.14)	.018	0.20(0.14)	.162
Separation motivation	0.04(0.08)	.600	0.03(0.08)	.718
Tertius iungens orientation	0.17(0.08)	.029	0.03(0.09)	.718
Network building			0.18(0.06)	.001
<i>R</i> ²	.22		.29	

Note: *N* = 104.

supporting Hypothesis 2a. This effect loses its significance ($\beta = .06$, $p = .635$) when network building is entered in Model 4, indicating the possibility of full mediation via network building.

In Table 5, we regress the predictor variables on brokerage. The pattern of results is consistent with regressions on other indicators of network advantage, with Model 1 in Table 5 showing that TI orientation is positively related to brokerage, as predicted in Hypothesis 3a ($\beta = .17$, $p = .029$). After including network building in Model 2, the effect of TI orientation becomes nonsignificant ($\beta = .03$, $p = .718$) while network building is a significant predictor of brokerage ($\beta = .18$, $p = .001$). Again, this is preliminary evidence for full mediation via network building in the indirect effect of TI orientation on network brokerage. We then repeated the tests of Hypotheses 1a, 2a, and 3a without controls. In each model, the results remained essentially the same, and the hypothesized relationships were supported.

In testing Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3b, we used a sample bootstrapping approach in Mplus 8 to obtain bias-corrected confidence intervals to examine the mediating effects of network building in the relationships between TI orientation and different indicators of network advantage. In calculating the confidence intervals, we used 2000 iterations. Each model controlled for the effects of age, gender, level of education, managerial position, and separation motivation on both the mediating variable (network building) and the dependent variable

(network position). We used negative binomial models to test Hypotheses 1b and 2b because the dependent variables in these models are count measures. Consistent with Hypothesis 1b, our results indicate that there are indirect effects of TI orientation on outgoing ties via network building, as the bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals are positive and exclude zero (LL: 0.094, UL: 0.444). Furthermore, the results of the analyses support the notion of full mediation, because when accounting for the indirect effect, the direct effect of TI orientation on outgoing ties is no longer significant. When examining the effects on incoming ties, our results support mediation (LL: 0.012, UL: 0.389), as proposed in Hypothesis 2b. Similar to the effects on outgoing ties, these analyses indicate support for full mediation as the direct effects of TI orientation become nonsignificant after accounting for the indirect effects on incoming ties.

Finally, the analyses of indirect effects on brokerage show that the bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (LL: 0.036, UL: 0.256) indicate a significant indirect effect via network building. This finding supports Hypothesis 3b: Network building mediates the positive relationship between TI orientation and brokerage position in an organizational social network. As the indirect effect renders the direct effect of TI orientation nonsignificant, our findings indicate full mediation, such that TI orientation strengthens the individual's brokerage position by invoking network building behaviors. In the mediated model,

the R^2 values for network building behavior and brokerage were .40 and .29, respectively. To rule out the possibility of the biasing effects of control variables in hypothesis testing, we also tested the hypotheses without controls. The results of the hypothesis testing were the same with and without including control variables in the model.

6 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

The starting point of our research was the question of whether and how connecting others via collaboration influences one's own position in an organizational network. In contrast to the prevailing assumption that connecting others implies a personal sacrifice in terms of giving up a structurally advantageous position, we applied a paradox perspective to examining how TI orientation may facilitate contrasting organizing processes in a social network. Our theorizing suggests that “closing dynamics” associated with the TI orientation—toward connecting people—and “opening dynamics” associated with network building—toward expanding the network—may be interrelated and mutually enabling. In two studies, we show that by pursuing connections individuals revitalize—not sacrifice—their advantageous positions in the network.

Our model sheds light on what happens in a black-boxed behavioral process related to brokerage and provides a more nuanced understanding of how relationship-building behaviors emerge and unfold in the psychosocial process. On a general level, our research extends organizational behavior research by shedding new light on organizational members' organizing behaviors. Heath and Sitkin (2001) argued that the task of organizing should be at the forefront of organizational behavior research. According to these researchers, (p. 56) “if we view the field as focusing on the task of organizing, then we may force ourselves to develop better theory about how organizing happens.” Indeed, brokering and network building describe how members of an organization purposefully shape the relationship structures that are the defining characteristics of organizations (Cardinale, 2018; McEvily et al., 2014). Building on these arguments, our research advances the view that organizational behavior research should occupy a position of preeminence in studying the structuration and psychosocial processes in organizational networks.

6.1 | Research contributions

Our research contributes to the burgeoning literatures on brokering and networking behaviors, each of which examines a different aspect of individual agency in organizational networks. First, our research contributes by advancing a more nuanced and integrated understanding of how individuals “make” their positions in organizational networks (Tasselli et al., 2015). Moving beyond explanations focused on stable differences such as personality traits (Fang et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2004; Mehra et al., 2001; Oh & Kilduff, 2008), our model enriches prior research by demonstrating *how* organizational members shape relationship structures. By presenting a model based on what

we know about the role of purposeful, self-regulated human agency (Bandura, 2001), our research integrates previous research that has separately investigated individuals' network structures and agency to change these structures. While Casciaro et al. (2015, p. 1162) argued that “network and psychological studies of organizations are complementary and can synergistically improve our understanding of organizational phenomena,” one of the enduring limitations of social network research has been an inadequate understanding of the roles of behavioral strategies and processes in social networks (Kilduff & Lee, 2020; Tasselli et al., 2015). In addressing this limitation, we contribute by opening the black box of the brokering process and explaining the roles of motivated, behavioral actions in changing relationship structures. These contributions are important in light of the assertion by Zou and Ingram (2013, p. 107) that the focal question for research is “about the social networking orientation that can give rise to effective network structures.”

Beyond facilitating a closer integration of behavioral and structural approaches, our research integrates literature streams that have separately examined different behaviors related to the agency of the individual in an organizational network. Earlier research on network agency has tended to evolve in two distinct camps, one focusing on brokering (i.e., building ties between others; Halevy et al., 2019; Grosser et al., 2019) and the other focusing on networking behaviors (i.e., building ties to others; Bensaou et al., 2014; Casciaro et al., 2014). In these examinations, the connections between different forms of individual agency have largely remained unexplored, with a few notable exceptions (see Brands & Kilduff, 2014; Ebbers, 2013; Kuwabara et al., 2018). According to our theory and findings, changing the relationships of others and developing one's own relationships are interdependent activities. We thus emphasize the importance of jointly considering the roles of different types of relationship-building behaviors in shaping networks.

Second, our research contributes by providing a new theory on the interplay between contrasting behaviors in obtaining an advantageous position in an organizational network. Existing brokering research has tended to rely on the assumption that individuals' network positions are direct reflections of their brokering styles (Quintane et al., 2022). For example, connecting activities would lead an individual into a denser, or even entirely closed, network by closing structural holes (Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973; Hansen, 1999; Krackhardt, 1999). Our new paradox perspective on the brokering process is that instead of being limited to one behavioral trajectory, brokering processes thrive on contradictions and the juxtaposing of polarities (Farjoun & Fiss, 2022). In this vein, we add to existing knowledge by demonstrating that in order to have new pairs of actors that would benefit from connecting or collaboration facilitation, individuals need to engage in seemingly contrasting opening activities, that is, to build new relationships and connect with distal actors. By doing so, individuals revitalize their social network positions, as they increase the number of outgoing ties, attract incoming ties, and interact with actors outside their regular social circles.

Applying the paradox perspective provides a novel view on the ongoing debate on whether an individual's pursuit of brokerage roles

or cohesive collaboration networks is more likely to facilitate the effectiveness of organizational members (Fleming et al., 2007; Kogut, 2000; Ter Wal et al., 2016). On the basis of the paradox viewpoint (Lewis, 2000), our stance is that both sides of the polarity are required. Instead of seeking to find a balance or an ideal configuration between brokerage ties and cohesive parts of the network (Burt, 1992; Capaldo, 2007; Perry-Smith, 2006; Tiwana, 2008), our paradox approach suggests that there is an ongoing interplay between simultaneous opening and closing dynamics within the agentic process. In essence, by facilitating connections and collaboration, actors might motivate opening dynamics, which invite a larger group of peripheral actors to become acquainted and connected with the TI-oriented individual. Furthermore, although beyond the scope of our empirical inquiry, our theorizing indicates that new connections and structural holes might, in turn, enable TI-oriented individuals to pursue closing activities (i.e., connecting and facilitating collaboration). On these bases, our argument is that closing and opening are interdependent and mutually enabling behavioral phenomena in building network advantage.

Third, our research enriches the literatures on individuals' brokering and networking behaviors with insights from social motivation theories. Consistent with studies on prosocial orientation and behaviors (Crocker et al., 2017; Grant & Berry, 2011), a focal implication of our research is that other-oriented behaviors in social relationships—that is, enabling and facilitating collaboration between other actors—will eventually benefit those who facilitate these collaborations. This other-oriented perspective has largely been missing from existing studies on networking, which have focused on advantageous network positions accruing to those who are “social chameleons” (Oh & Kilduff, 2008; Sasovova et al., 2010) or “players” (Bensaou et al., 2014) in relational behaviors. We recognize that the prevalence of a competitive and instrumental perspective deriving from structural network brokerage research (see Burt, 2004; Burt & Soda, *in press*; Kang et al., 2007) is a major reason researchers have continued to assume that the TI orientation entails personal sacrifice (Ebbers, 2013; Soda et al., 2018). Consistent with the findings of Zlatev and Miller (2016), our findings indicate that helping others and self-interest are intertwined in relational processes; thus (seemingly) altruistic behaviors will indirectly serve one's self-interests. In most organizational settings, where relationships are long-term and encompass repeated interactions, other members of an organization may respond negatively to attempts to control, restrict, or manipulate information exchanges and other resources necessary for shared goals. Therefore, it might be more advantageous for an individual to reap the goodwill and trust that accrue to a proactive connector instead of coming across as a person who is “playing games” and cultivates separation or competition between others.

An important stream of research on networking indicates that building instrumental ties is often perceived as self-serving, dirty, and morally questionable (Bensaou et al., 2014; Casciaro et al., 2014; Kuwabara et al., 2018). Casciaro et al. (2014) theorized that purposefully building work relationships will lead to negative self-attributions because these activities are motivated by gains to the self. According

to these researchers, “professional networking could be more difficult than personal networking to justify to oneself” (p. 708). Our research provides a new perspective on these conversations by highlighting that when TI orientation underpins professional network building, the justification for these activities may be perceived in a completely different light. TI orientation is often linked to altruism and benefiting others (Ebbers, 2013; Ibarra et al., 2005; Soda et al., 2018), in which case, the motivation for network building behavior is not only self-serving. Although additional research is needed, our research presents a new way to frame professional networking as a behavior to generate collective benefits, thus justifying the moral grounding and desirability of these activities.

6.2 | Limitations and future directions

Like any research, our research has limitations that need to be addressed in future studies. The first issue is a need for more longitudinal evidence on how brokering processes and their outcomes evolve over time. Although our research analyzed cross-lagged panel data and was able to demonstrate temporal ordering between behavioral variables, the examination covered a relatively short period and the second study used entirely cross-sectional data. To fully address the mutually enabling roles of closing and opening dynamics, future research should also examine the reciprocal effects from opening to closing behaviors. Although the logic dictates that large networks rich in structural holes provide opportunities for connections and collaboration, studies are needed to investigate whether the potential of these networks to foster TI orientation and encourage joining behaviors is realized in practice. Future studies should further explore the differentiation between TI as a motivational orientation and connecting as a situational behavioral action. While connecting behaviors typically align with a broad behavioral tendency (i.e., orientation), examining behavioral acts independently could contribute to a more intricate comprehension of transient dynamics within brokering processes.

The scope of our inquiry, which focuses on TI orientation, provides only a limited view of brokering processes. Future studies should analyze different brokering orientations more comprehensively while considering other relational behaviors that may mediate the effects of these orientations. Our investigation of social network positions and network activation is only the first step in studying how brokering orientations might relate to social network structures. Although we have provided evidence that TI orientation relates positively to different indicators of an individual's personal network advantage, other relevant network characteristics still demand research. Beyond one's own network position, it would be important to examine the effects of brokering behaviors on other actors' network positions as well as the attributes of broader organizational networks.

We studied brokering in two different contexts; however, it is possible that unidentified contextual factors influenced the relationships examined in this research. The two organizations analyzed in this research perform knowledge-intensive work and are located

in the same country. As the role of social context is particularly relevant in the study of social processes, we call for future studies to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how cultures, job characteristics, social network structures, and other contextual factors might moderate relationships in brokerage processes. In particular, studying brokering behaviors in contexts where relationships are more hierarchical or more market-like could shed new light on the effectiveness of different types of brokering processes. In addition, an important avenue for future studies is to closely examine the dynamics and interactions among brokering orientations and other individual variables. Overall, additional research is needed for a comprehensive understanding of how brokering processes unfold interactively with situational variables from various psychological and behavioral underpinnings and how these processes eventually contribute to transforming the social network and one's position in it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research has been funded by the Academy of Finland (grant number 310063).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

REFERENCES

- Adler, P. S., Goldoftas, B., & Levine, D. I. (1999). Flexibility versus efficiency? A case study of model changeovers in the Toyota production system. *Organization Science*, 10, 43–68. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.10.1.43>
- Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S.-W. (2002). Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review*, 27, 17–40. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4134367>
- Ahuja, G. (2000). Collaboration networks, structural holes, and innovation: A longitudinal study. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45, 425–455.
- Andriopoulos, C., & Lewis, M. W. (2009). Exploitation-exploration tensions and organizational ambidexterity: Managing paradoxes of innovation. *Organization Science*, 20, 696–717. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1080.0406>
- Ashford, S. J., & Black, J. S. (1996). Proactivity during organizational entry: The role of desire for control. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 199–214. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.2.199>
- Baer, M. (2010). The strength-of-weak-ties perspective on creativity: A comprehensive examination and extension. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95, 592–601. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018761>
- Balkundi, P., Wang, L., & Kishore, R. (2019). Teams as boundaries: How intra-team and inter-team brokerage influence network changes in knowledge-seeking networks. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40, 325–341. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2331>
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1>
- Baum, J. A., McEvily, B., & Rowley, T. J. (2012). Better with age? Tie longevity and the performance implications of bridging and closure. *Organization Science*, 23, 529–546. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0566>
- Bensaou, B. M., Galunic, C., & Jonczyk-Sédès, C. (2014). Players and purists: Networking strategies and agency of service professionals. *Organization Science*, 25, 29–56. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2013.0826>
- Borgatti, S. P., Everett, M. G., & Freeman, L. C. (2002). *UCINET for Windows: Software for social network analysis*. Analytic Technologies.
- Brands, R., Ertug, G., Fonti, F., & Tasselli, S. (2022). Theorizing gender in social network research: What we do and what we can do differently. *Academy of Management Annals*, 16, 588–620. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2020.0370>
- Brands, R. A. (2013). Cognitive social structures in social network research: A review. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34, S82–S103. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1890>
- Brands, R. A., & Kilduff, M. (2014). Just like a woman? Effects of gender-biased perceptions of friendship network brokerage on attributions and performance. *Organization Science*, 25, 1530–1548. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2013.0880>
- Brass, D. J. (1984). Being in the right place: A structural analysis of individual influence in an organization. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29, 518–539. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392937>
- Brass, D. J., & Burkhardt, M. E. (1993). Potential power and power use: An investigation of structure and behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 441–470. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256588>
- Brass, D. J., Galaskiewicz, J., Greve, H. R., & Tsai, W. (2004). Taking stock of networks and organizations: A multilevel perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47, 795–817. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20159624>
- Brennecke, J. (2020). Dissonant ties in intraorganizational networks: Why individuals seek problem-solving assistance from difficult colleagues. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63, 743–778. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2017.0399>
- Burkhardt, M. E., & Brass, D. J. (1990). Changing patterns or patterns of change: The effects of a change in technology on social network structure and power. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35, 104–127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393552>
- Burt, R. S. (1992). *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674029095>
- Burt, R. S. (2004). Structural holes and good ideas. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110, 349–399. <https://doi.org/10.1086/421787>
- Burt, R. S., Kilduff, M., & Tasselli, S. (2013). Social network analysis: Foundations and frontiers on advantage. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 527–547. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-113011-143828>
- Burt, R. S., & Merluzzi, J. (2016). Network oscillation. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 2, 368–391. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2015.0108>
- Burt, R. S., & Soda, G. (in press). Network capabilities: Brokerage as a bridge between network theory and the resource-based view of the firm. *Journal of Management*, 47, 1698–1719. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320988764>
- Capaldo, A. (2007). Network structure and innovation: The leveraging of a dual network as a distinctive relational capability. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28, 585–608. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.621>
- Cardinale, I. (2018). Beyond constraining and enabling: Toward new micro-foundations for institutional theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 43, 132–155. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2015.0020>
- Carnabuci, G., & Bruggeman, J. (2009). Knowledge specialization, knowledge brokerage and the uneven growth of technology domains. *Social Forces*, 88, 607–641. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0257>
- Carnabuci, G., & Diószegi, B. (2015). Social networks, cognitive style, and innovative performance: A contingency perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58, 881–905. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.1042>
- Casciaro, T., Barsade, S. G., Edmondson, A. C., Gibson, C. B., Krackhardt, D., & Labianca, G. (2015). The integration of psychological

- and network perspectives in organizational scholarship. *Organization Science*, 26, 1162–1176. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.0988>
- Casciaro, T., Gino, F., & Kouchaki, M. (2014). The contaminating effects of building instrumental ties: How networking can make us feel dirty. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 59, 705–735. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839214554990>
- Colbert, A. E., Bono, J. E., & Purvanova, R. K. (2016). Flourishing via workplace relationships: Moving beyond instrumental support. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59, 1199–1223. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0506>
- Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95–S120. <https://doi.org/10.1086/228943>
- Comeau-Vallée, M., & Langley, A. (2020). The interplay of inter- and intra-professional boundary work in multidisciplinary teams. *Organization Studies*, 41, 1649–1672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840619848020>
- Cooper, C. D., Kong, D. T., & Crossley, C. D. (2018). Leader humor as an interpersonal resource: Integrating three theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61, 769–796. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0358>
- Crocker, J., Canevello, A., & Brown, A. A. (2017). Social motivation: Costs and benefits of selfishness and otherishness. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 68, 299–325. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010416-044145>
- DeFillippi, R., Grabher, G., & Jones, C. (2007). Introduction to paradoxes of creativity: Managerial and organizational challenges in the cultural economy. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28, 511–521. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.466>
- DeShon, R. P., & Gillespie, J. Z. (2005). A motivated action theory account of goal orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 1096–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1096>
- Ebbers, J. J. (2013). Networking behavior and contracting relationships among entrepreneurs in business incubators. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38, 1–23.
- Fang, R., Landis, B., Zhang, Z., Anderson, M. H., Shaw, J. D., & Kilduff, M. (2015). Integrating personality and social networks: A meta-analysis of personality, network position, and work outcomes in organizations. *Organization Science*, 26, 1243–1260. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2015.0972>
- Farjoun, M. (2010). Beyond dualism: Stability and change as a duality. *Academy of Management Review*, 35, 202–225.
- Farjoun, M., & Fiss, P. C. (2022). Thriving on contradiction: Toward a dialectical alternative to fit-based models in strategy (and beyond). *Strategic Management Journal*, 43, 340–369. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3342>
- Fleming, L., Mingo, S., & Chen, D. (2007). Collaborative brokerage, generative creativity, and creative success. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52, 443–475. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.52.3.443>
- Forret, M. L., & Dougherty, T. W. (2004). Networking behaviors and career outcomes: Differences for men and women? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 419–437. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.253>
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 1360–1380. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225469>
- Grant, A. M., & Berry, J. W. (2011). The necessity of others is the mother of invention: Intrinsic and prosocial motivations, perspective taking, and creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 73–96. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.59215085>
- Grosser, T. J., Obstfeld, D., Labianca, G., & Borgatti, S. P. (2019). Measuring mediation and separation brokerage orientations: A further step toward studying the social network brokerage process. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 5, 114–136. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2017.0110>
- Gupta, A. K., Smith, K. G., & Shalley, C. E. (2006). The interplay between exploration and exploitation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 693–706. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.22083026>
- Hahn, T., Preuss, L., Pinkse, J., & Figge, F. (2015). Cognitive frames in corporate sustainability: Managerial sensemaking with paradoxical and business case frames. *Academy of Management Review*, 39, 463–487. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2012.0341>
- Halevy, N., Halali, E., & Cohen, T. R. (2020). Brokering orientations and social capital: Influencing others' relationships shapes status and trust. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 119, 293–316. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000213>
- Halevy, N., Halali, E., & Zlatev, J. J. (2019). Brokerage and brokering: An integrative review and organizing framework for third party influence. *Academy of Management Annals*, 13, 215–239. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2017.0024>
- Halgin, D. S., Borgatti, S. P., Mehra, A., & Soltis, S. (2020). Audience perceptions of high-status ties and network advantage: The market for coaching jobs in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (2000–2011). *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 41, 332–347. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2426>
- Hansen, M. T. (1999). The search-transfer problem: The role of weak ties in sharing knowledge across organization subunits. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, 82–111. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2667032>
- Hargadon, A., & Sutton, R. I. (1997). Technology brokering and innovation in a product development firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42, 716–749. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393655>
- Hargadon, A. B. (2002). Brokering knowledge: Linking learning and innovation. In B. M. Staw & R. M. Kramer (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 24, pp. 41–85). Elsevier Science/JAI Press. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085\(02\)24003-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-3085(02)24003-4)
- Heath, C., & Sitkin, S. B. (2001). Big-B versus Big-O: What is organizational about organizational behavior? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22, 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.77>
- Hernandez, M. (2012). Toward an understanding of the psychology of stewardship. *Academy of Management Review*, 37, 172–193. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.0363>
- Hirst, G., Van Knippenberg, D., Zhou, J., & Quintane, E. (2015). Heard it through the grapevine: Indirect networks and employee creativity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100, 567–574. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038333>
- Holmqvist, M. (2004). Experiential learning processes of exploitation and exploration within and between organizations: An empirical study of product development. *Organization Science*, 15, 70–81. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1030.0056>
- Ibarra, H., & Andrews, S. B. (1993). Power, social influence, and sense making: Effects of network centrality and proximity on employee perceptions. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 277–303. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393414>
- Ibarra, H., Kilduff, M., & Tsai, W. (2005). Zooming in and out: Connecting individuals and collectivities at the frontiers of organizational network research. *Organization Science*, 16, 359–371. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0129>
- Iorio, A. (2022). Brokers in disguise: The joint effect of actual brokerage and socially perceived brokerage on network advantage. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 67, 769–820. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00018392221092242>
- Kang, S.-C., Morris, S. S., & Snell, S. A. (2007). Relational archetypes, organizational learning, and value creation: Extending the human resource architecture. *Academy of Management Review*, 32, 236–256. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2007.23464060>
- Kauppila, O.-P., Bizzi, L., & Obstfeld, D. (2018). Connecting and creating: Tertius iungens, individual creativity, and strategic decision processes. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39, 697–719. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2728>
- Kilduff, M., Crossland, C., Tsai, W., & Krackhardt, D. (2008). Organizational network perceptions versus reality: A small world after all? *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 107, 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2007.12.003>

- Kilduff, M., & Lee, J. W. (2020). The integration of people and networks. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 7, 155–179. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-045357>
- Kilduff, M., Tsai, W., & Hanke, R. (2006). A paradigm too far? A dynamic stability reconsideration of the social network research program. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 1031–1048. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.22528168>
- Klein, K. J., Lim, B.-C., Saltz, J. L., & Mayer, D. M. (2004). How do they get there? An examination of the antecedents of centrality in team networks. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47, 952–963. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20159634>
- Kleinbaum, A. M. (2018). Reorganization and tie decay choices. *Management Science*, 64, 2219–2237. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2705>
- Kleinbaum, A. M., Jordan, A. H., & Audia, P. G. (2015). An altercentric perspective on the origins of brokering in social networks: How perceived empathy moderates the self-monitoring effect. *Organization Science*, 26, 1226–1242. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2014.0961>
- Kogut, B. (2000). The network as knowledge: Generative rules and the emergence of structure. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21, 405–425. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-0266\(200003\)21:3<405::AID-SMJ103>3.0.CO;2-5](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-0266(200003)21:3<405::AID-SMJ103>3.0.CO;2-5)
- Krackhardt, D. (1999). The ties that torture: Simmelian tie analysis in organizations. In S. B. Andrews & D. Knoke (Eds.), *Research in the sociology of organizations* (Vol. 16, pp. 183–210). CT/JAI Press.
- Kuwabara, K., Hildebrand, C. A., & Zou, X. (2018). Lay theories of networking: How laypeople's beliefs about networks affect their attitudes toward and engagement in instrumental networking. *Academy of Management Review*, 43, 50–64. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2015.0076>
- Kwon, S.-W., Rondi, E., Levin, D. Z., De Massis, A., & Brass, D. J. (2020). Network brokerage: An integrative review and future research agenda. *Journal of Management*, 46, 1092–1120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320914694>
- Landis, B. (2016). Personality and social networks in organizations: A review and future directions. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 37, S107–S121. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2004>
- Landis, B., Kilduff, M., Menges, J. I., & Kilduff, G. J. (2018). The paradox of agency: Feeling powerful reduces brokerage opportunity recognition yet increases willingness to broker. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103, 929–938. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000299>
- Lempilä, T., Tiittinen, S., & Vanharanta, O. (in press). Paradox as an interactional resource: An ethnomethodological analysis into the interconnectedness of organizational paradoxes. *Organization Studies*, 01708406221186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840622118671>
- Levin, D. Z., & Walter, J. (2018). Is tie maintenance necessary? *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 4, 497–500. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amd.2018.0021>
- Levinthal, D. A., & March, J. G. (1993). The myopia of learning. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14, 95–112. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250141009>
- Lewis, M. W. (2000). Exploring paradox: Toward a more comprehensive guide. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 760–776. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259204>
- Liang, J., & Gong, Y. (2013). Capitalizing on proactivity for informal mentoring received during early career: The moderating role of core self-evaluations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34, 1182–1201. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1849>
- Lingo, E. L. (2020). Entrepreneurial leadership as creative brokering: The process and practice of co-creating and advancing opportunity. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57, 962–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12573>
- Lingo, E. L., & O'Mahony, S. (2010). Nexus work: Brokerage on creative projects. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55, 47–81. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2010.55.1.47>
- Llopis, O., D'Este, P., & Díaz-Faes, A. A. (2021). Connecting others: Does a tertius iungens orientation shape the relationship between research networks and innovation? *Research Policy*, 50, 104175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104175>
- Lopez-Kidwell, V., Niven, K., & Labianca, G. (2018). Predicting workplace relational dynamics using an affective model of relationships. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39, 1129–1141. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2300>
- MacKinnon, D. P., Fairchild, A. J., & Fritz, M. S. (2007). Mediation analysis. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 593–614. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085542>
- March, J. G. (1991). Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning. *Organization Science*, 2, 71–87. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2.1.71>
- McCarthy, J. E., & Levin, D. Z. (2019). Network residues: The enduring impact of intra-organizational dormant ties. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104, 1434–1445. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000410>
- McEvily, B., Soda, G., & Tortoriello, M. (2014). More formally: Rediscovering the missing link between formal organization and informal social structure. *Academy of Management Annals*, 8, 299–345. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2014.885252>
- Mehra, A., Kilduff, M., & Brass, D. J. (2001). The social networks of high and low self-monitors: Implications for workplace performance. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 121–146. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2667127>
- Nicolaou, N., & Kilduff, M. (2022). Empowerment mitigates gender differences in tertius iungens brokering. *Organization Science*, 34, 1441–1457. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2022.1628>
- Obstfeld, D. (2005). Social networks, the tertius iungens orientation, and involvement in innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50, 100–130. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2005.50.1.100>
- Obstfeld, D. (2012). Creative projects: A less routine approach toward getting new things done. *Organization Science*, 23, 1571–1592. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1110.0706>
- Obstfeld, D., Borgatti, S., & Davis, J. (2014). Brokerage as a process: Decoupling third party action from social network structure. In D. J. Brass, G. Labianca, A. Mehra, D. S. Halgin, & S. P. Borgatti (Eds.), *Contemporary perspectives on organizational social networks*. Research in the Sociology of Organizations. (pp. 135–159). Emerald.
- Oh, H., & Kilduff, M. (2008). The ripple effect of personality on social structure: Self-monitoring origins of network brokerage. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 1155–1164. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.5.1155>
- Ozer, M., & Zhang, G. (2022). Interpersonal relationships and creativity at work: A network building perspective. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 39, 312–333. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12575>
- Perry-Smith, J. E. (2006). Social yet creative: The role of social relationships in facilitating individual creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 85–101. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.20785503>
- Perry-Smith, J. E., & Mannucci, P. V. (2017). From creativity to innovation: The social network drivers of the four phases of the idea journey. *Academy of Management Review*, 42, 53–79. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2014.0462>
- Quintane, E., & Carnabuci, G. (2016). How do brokers broker? Tertius gaudens, tertius iungens, and temporality of structural holes. *Organization Science*, 27, 1343–1360. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2016.1091>
- Quintane, E., Wood, M., Dunn, J., & Falzon, L. (2022). Temporal brokering: A measure of brokerage as a behavioral process. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25, 459–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10944281211002911>
- Reagans, R., & McEvily, B. (2003). Network structure and knowledge transfer: The effects of cohesion and range. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48, 240–267. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3556658>
- Reinhold, M., Pedersen, T., Foss, N. J. (2011). Why a central network position isn't enough: The role of motivation and ability for knowledge

- sharing in employee networks. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 1277–1297. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2009.0007>
- Sasovova, Z., Mehra, A., Borgatti, S. P., & Schippers, M. C. (2010). Network churn: The effects of self-monitoring personality on brokering dynamics. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55, 639–670. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2010.55.4.639>
- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Review*, 44, 219–237.
- Selig, J. P., & Preacher, K. J. (2008). *Monte Carlo method for assessing mediation: An interactive tool for creating confidence intervals for indirect effects [computer software]*. Retrieved from <http://quantpsy.org/>
- Shea, C. T., & Fitzsimons, G. M. (2016). Personal goal pursuit as an antecedent to social network structure. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 137, 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.07.002>
- Smith, E. B., Menon, T., & Thompson, L. (2012). Status differences in the cognitive activation of social networks. *Organization Science*, 23, 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0643>
- Smith, W. K., & Lewis, M. W. (2011). Toward a theory of paradox: A dynamic equilibrium model of organizing. *Academy of Management Review*, 36, 381–403.
- Soda, G., Mannucci, P. V., & Burt, R. S. (2021). Networks, creativity, and time: Staying creative through brokerage and network rejuvenation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 64, 1164–1190. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2019.1209>
- Soda, G. B., Tortoriello, M., & Iorio, A. (2018). Harvesting value from brokerage: Individual strategic orientation, structural holes, and performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61, 896–918. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.0123>
- Sparrowe, R. T., & Liden, R. C. (2005). Two routes to influence: Integrating leader-member exchange and social network perspectives. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50, 505–535. <https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.50.4.505>
- Spreitzer, G. M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 1442–1465. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256865>
- Tasselli, S., & Kilduff, M. (2021). Network agency. *Academy of Management Annals*, 15, 68–110. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2019.0037>
- Tasselli, S., Kilduff, M., & Menges, J. I. (2015). The microfoundations of organizational social networks: A review and an agenda for future research. *Journal of Management*, 41, 1361–1387. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315573996>
- Tempelaar, M. P., & Rosenkranz, N. A. (2019). Switching hats: The effect of role transition on individual ambidexterity. *Journal of Management*, 45, 1517–1539. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206317714312>
- Ter Wal, A. L. J., Alexy, O., Block, J., & Sandner, P. G. (2016). The best of both worlds: The benefits of open-specialized and closed-diverse syndication networks for new ventures' success. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 61, 393–432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839216637849>
- Thompson, J. D. (1967). *Organizations in action*. McGraw-Hill.
- Tiwana, A. (2008). Do bridging ties complement strong ties? An empirical examination of alliance ambidexterity. *Strategic Management Journal*, 29, 251–272. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.666>
- Uzzi, B. (1997). Social structure and competition in interfirm networks: The paradox of embeddedness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42, 35–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2393808>
- Wei, L.-Q., Zou, X., & Ormiston, M. (2021). Founder need to belong, tertius iungens orientation and new venture performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 42, 48–67. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2487>
- Williams, M. (2016). Being trusted: How team generational age diversity promotes and undermines trust in cross-boundary relationships. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 37, 346–373. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2045>
- Wolff, H.-G., & Moser, K. (2009). Effects of networking on career success: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94, 196–206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013350>
- Wolff, H.-G., & Spurk, D. (2020). Developing and validating a short networking behavior scale (SNBS) from Wolff and Moser's (2006) measure. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 28, 277–302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072719844924>
- Zhang, M. J., Zhang, Y., & Law, K. S. (2022). Paradoxical leadership and innovation in work teams: The multilevel mediating role of ambidexterity and leader vision as a boundary condition. *Academy of Management Journal*, 65, 1652–1679. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2017.1265>
- Zlatev, J. J., & Miller, D. T. (2016). Selfishly benevolent or benevolently selfish: When self-interest undermines versus promotes prosocial behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 137, 112–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.08.004>
- Zou, X., & Ingram, P. (2013). Bonds and boundaries: Network structure, organizational boundaries, and job performance. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 120, 98–109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2012.09.002>

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Olli-Pekka Kauppila is a Professor of Management and Organisation at Hanken School of Economics. He received his Ph.D. in Organizations and Management from Aalto University School of Business. His research interests include social relationships, organizational learning, prosocial behaviors, individual initiative, and leadership.

Lorenzo Bizzi, Ph.D., is a professor of management at California State University Fullerton. His research focuses on social networks, job crafting, and sales. He won the 2023 Carol Barnes Teaching Award for best instructor at California State University Fullerton. He has published in journals such as *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management*, *Human Resource Management*, *Human Relations*, and *Harvard Business Review*. His work has been featured in major world newspapers and media, such as *Financial Times*, *Inc. Magazine*, *Smart Company*, and *CEO Magazine*.

David Obstfeld is an associate professor of Management at the College of Business and Economics, California State University, Fullerton. His research examines how knowledge-intensive, network-based social processes generate innovation, entrepreneurial action, and organizational change. As part of this work, he is the founder of *The Social Capital Academy*, a research-grounded program that teaches first-generation and underrepresented students to use social and cultural capital to access career-related jobs and broadened career vision. He is the author of *Getting New Things Done: Networks, Brokerage, and the Assembly of Innovative Action* (Stanford Business Press, 2017).

How to cite this article: Kauppila, O.-P., Bizzi, L., & Obstfeld, D. (2023). Opening new brokerage opportunities while closing existing ones: The *Tertius iungens* orientation as a source of network advantage. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2753>

APPENDIX A: FACTOR LOADINGS FROM PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS WITH VARIMAX ROTATION (STUDY 1, N = 204)

Scale items	<i>Tertius iungens</i> orientation	Separation motivation
I introduce two people when I think they might benefit from becoming acquainted	0.766	−0.074
I will try to describe an issue in a way that will appeal to a diverse set of interests	0.686	0.038
I see opportunities for collaboration between people	0.726	−0.140
I point out the common ground shared by people who have different perspectives on an issue	0.569	0.069
I introduce people to each other who might have a common strategic work interest	0.805	−0.126
I forge connections between different people dealing with a particular issue	0.765	−0.090
I seek to prevent my contacts from becoming too closely acquainted with one another	−0.063	0.748
In work activities, I often try to keep people apart in order to prevent them from disrupting activities	−0.129	0.766
I seek to control when and how different actors interact with each other	0.024	0.810
Sometimes I aim to strategically undermine the relationships between my contacts	−0.039	0.879
I seek to gain control over acquaintances by keeping them apart	−0.056	0.853
I access more information than my contacts because I keep them apart	−0.037	0.830