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Socioanalytic Theory: Basic Concepts, Supporting Evidences, and Practical Implications

Robert Hogan & Gerhard Blickle

Hogan Assessment Systems, Tulsa, USA, University of Bonn, Germany

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Edited by

Virgil Zeigler-Hill & Todd K. Shackelford

SAGE Publications Inc., 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320

Abstract

Socioanalytic theory of personality provides a perspective on human nature based on insights from: Charles Darwin about human evolution; Sigmund Freud about unconscious motivation; and George Herbert Mead about the dynamics of social interaction. This chapter presents the basic assumptions of socioanalytic personality theory, reviews supporting empirical evidence and practical implications of the theory in the fields of leadership and faking in personnel selection. Finally, socioanalytic theory is positioned in the context of trait and clinical theories of personality. Socioanalytic theory differs from the other two theories of personality primarily by rejecting introspection as a valid source of data. In addition, trait theory has a "pure science" agenda with minimal concern for applications, whereas clinical theories and socioanalytic theory have an applied agenda—helping people improve their lives.

Socioanalytic theory provides a perspective on human nature based on insights from: (1) Charles Darwin (1871) about human evolution; (2) Sigmund Freud (1913) about unconscious motivation; and (3) George Herbert Mead (1934) about the dynamics of social interaction. All three writers assume that, because we evolved as group living animals, we have deep, organic needs for the universal features of human culture—collective rituals, family relations, authority structures, morality, etc.. When evaluating theories of personality (or anything else), the first question to ask is: "What question is the theory trying to answer?" The pioneers of personality psychology (e.g., Freud, Jung, Adler, Horney, Maslow), for example, wanted to explain the causes of psychopathology. Trait theory wants to identify the structure of the trait descriptive universe and trace its neurological foundations. Socioanalytic theory wants to predict and explain individual differences in peoples' ability to: (1) acquire social acceptance and support; (2) attain power and the control of resources; and (3) find purpose and meaning in life (the theory applies to Maoris, chimpanzees, musicians, politicians, scientists, drug dealers, etc.). The first part of this chapter presents the basic assumptions of socioanalytic theory; the second part reviews supporting empirical evidence and certain practical implications of the theory.

Basic assumptions

Two adaptations gave early humans an advantage over chimpanzees, baboons, and other competitors: an upright stance and tool use. The upright stance freed hands to grasp tools. Superior tools ─ clubs, spears, and sharp stones ─ gave early humans an advantage in hunting and fighting with other primates. Better weapons continue to give human groups an advantage when competing with other groups. The arms race associated with tool creation ─ and culture in general ─ stimulated the development of larger brains, which then facilitated the development of more sophisticated tools and weapons.

Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989) notes that "The basic principles of human society are fully developed in hunter-gatherer peoples" (p. 615). Hunter-gatherers live in groups of 20 to 50

people, groups that contain grandparents, parents, and children. They live in fixed territories which they must defend against other groups. They maintain morale and solidarity by gift giving and other forms of exchange, and by ritualized social interaction ─ which includes festivals and religious ceremonies. Some groups are egalitarian, some are authoritarian, but all have status hierarchies. Most believe that they are a special people and distrust foreigners. Finally, disputes inside the groups and warfare between the groups are constant. Groups with superior technology and social organization overwhelm, enslave, or destroy groups with inferior technology and social organization. Technology and social organization are the keys to group survival, which makes it important for the younger generation to learn the culture of its group.

These themes reflect about 1,000,000 years of human experience and are the unconscious background for the development of individual personality. People lived in hunter gatherer groups until the invention of agriculture about 13,000 years ago; agriculture allowed much larger communities to develop. Modern industrial society is about 150 years old and has led to huge urban centers. Life in large cities is easier in some ways than life in a hunter-gatherer group ─ food, water, and electricity are generally available ─ but more difficult in other ways ─ we no longer know or trust our neighbors. We are adapted to living in conditions that no longer exist, and that explains much of the malaise of modern urban living ─ which Durkheim (1897) referred to as *anomie*.

Basic motives

Sociology, anthropology, and primate research contain three important generalizations about human nature (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Fardon, et al., 2012; Mead, 1934). The first is that people always live in groups; this suggests that they are inherently social, that at a deep and unconscious level, people need companionship and social acceptance (cf. Baumeister & Leary, 1995). These tendencies reflect the fact that group living has crucial survival implications ─ solitary primates and humans do not live very long. The second generalization

is that every human (and primate) group has a status hierarchy; this suggests that, at a deep and unconscious level, people (and primates) need status—because status permits better choices in mates, food, and other commodities that promote fitness. Finally, anthropology tells us that religion is an ancient human practice and a cultural universal. This suggests that people need predictability—to understand how the world works, and their place in it. The need for predictability leads to religion, culture, and technology; the need for predictability has obvious evolutionary significance.

People have physiological needs (food, air, water, and sleep), but they are not distinctively human. The three motivational themes described above answer the question, "What do *people* really want," and what people *really* want reflects what early humans needed for reproductive success. However, the fact that people are motivated by biologically based impulses does not mean that consciousness is irrelevant. Biology sets life's problems, but consciousness allows us to solve the problems. A model of motivation based on evolutionary theory answers the question of how people are all alike. But we must also account for the individual differences among people. People differ most importantly in terms of the strategies they have developed to deal with the problems of getting along, getting ahead, and finding meaning, and some strategies are more effective than others.

As we noted, at a deep and often unconscious level, people are motivated by needs for: (1) attention, approval, and acceptance; (2) status, power, and the control of resources; and (3) predictability and order in their everyday lives. We refer to these themes as "getting along," "getting ahead," and "finding meaning." These are powerful motives ─ people will kill to gain acceptance or status, they will kill to avoid losing them, and they will sometimes kill themselves when they think they have lost a sense of meaning and purpose. These needs represent the universal themes in human affairs ─ e.g., "It's still the same old story, the fight for love and glory….as time goes by." (Hupfeld, 1931)

The first two motives are familiar themes. In social theory, David Bakan (1966) argued that participation in larger social units (communion/getting along) and efforts at self-promotion (agency/getting ahead) are universal themes in human affairs (cf. Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). In evolutionary psychology, Buss (2015) observed that successful reproduction depends on forming alliances (getting along) and negotiating status hierarchies (getting ahead). In anthropology, Redfield (1960) noted that the survival of any social group depends on its members *living together* and *getting a living*. In sociology, Parsons and Bales (1955) demonstrate that every human group depends on successfully completing two activities: socio-emotional tasks (getting along) and tasks related to group survival (getting ahead).

In academic psychology, McAdams (2001) showed that the stories that people tell to support their identities can be organized around two themes that he calls intimacy and power. Similarly, social exchange theory (Foa & Foa, 1980) argued that social interaction is organized around the exchange of love and status, and Wiggins and Trapnell (1996) proposed that the exchange of love and status is the principal dynamic in social life.

There are two major consequences associated with getting along and getting ahead. First, these issues make social interaction unavoidable—because we receive attention and status during interaction. Second, if we are successful, others will resent us even as they congratulate us; conversely, to be accepted by others, we must conform to their expectations ─ which makes high achievement difficult. Thus, there is an inherent tension beneath the surface of social life as people try to advance themselves without alienating others.

The need for predictability and order also has a long history in psychology. Pavlov (1927) showed that dogs become neurotic when they are required to perform in unpredictable circumstances. Hebb and Thompson (1954) pointed out that chimpanzees have a strong need for predictability, are highly sensitive to small changes in the behavior of others, and become upset when others deviate even slightly from their normal behavior. George Kelly's personal

construct theory (1955) begins by assuming that people need to be able to predict how others will respond to them. Finally, Durkheim's (1897) key concept, *anomie*, refers to peoples' psychological experience when their lives no longer make sense in traditional terms — i.e., the concept of *anomie* assumes that people need the predictability and meaning provided by established culture and tradition. There is also a tragic tension associated with the need for meaning; people want it and there is none.

Over time, people with more status, social support, and control in their lives had a reproductive advantage — they had better choices of marital partners, food supplies, shelter, and other resources (Daly & Wilson, 1988). With some qualifications, this is still true today. To summarize this discussion, at a deep and often unconscious level, people need structure and predictability, attention and approval, and status and control of resources. People meet these needs during social interaction — the unique features of human evolution compel people to interact. But because human nature is rooted in biology, individual differences are inevitable. Thus, some people need more social acceptance than others (e.g., actors versus hermits), some people need more status than others (e.g., politicians versus social workers), and some people need more predictability and meaning than others (e.g., the religious orthodox versus nonobservant). Finally, some people are more successful than others in attaining these goals, and these individual differences are what socioanalytic theory tries to explain.

Identity

Following G. H. Mead (1934), socioanalytic theory postulates that the self (how we view ourselves) develops based on feedback from others during social interaction. Once the self is formed, it guides our actions vis-à-vis others, and it is further shaped by subsequent feedback from others. The self, in this sense, is the same as our identity.

We think of human development in terms of four broad stages which are cross-cultural universals—they occur in every culture. The first stage concerns the individual forming an

"attachment bond" (Bowlby, 1969). Normal parents are programed to want to care for their babies, and the babies need caregivers. This typically leads to the development of an "attachment bond" (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), a strong emotional link between an infant and its caretakers. The quality of the mother-child relationship is the basis for an infant's sense of security and well-being, and the platform on which subsequent social relationships are built.

Children expect their parents to coddle them, and the experience of being coddled creates childish egocentrism. In the second phase of development, children must learn to interact with their peers. In order for children to interact successfully, they must outgrow their infantile egocentrism. The opposite of egocentrism is social sensitivity, and this develops, as George Herbert Mead (1934) pointed out, through playing games in childhood, "By playing together in the children's group the members learn what aggravates others and which rules they must obey" (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989, p. 601). Children learn how to interact with their parents and other adults by following adult rules; in contrast, they learn how to interact with other children by anticipating their expectations, and they learn to do this by playing games.

The third phase of development (adolescence) concerns developing a sense of identity (Erikson, 1968). Our identities are idealized views of ourselves that answer the question of who and what we are, what we stand for, and how we should be treated. During adolescence young people try out a variety of identities ─ musician, cheerleader, mystic. Feedback from the peer group ─ e.g., "Who do you think you are?" ─ gradually determines the final choice. Our identity guides our behavior during social interaction by controlling the roles we are willing to play and how we play them. For example, the people in a college classroom are all in the role of student, but they play the role differently depending on their identity. The two major tasks of adolescence, therefore, concern choosing an identity and developing the skills needed to survive as an adult.

Adulthood is the final developmental phase. Adult social life consists of an extended series of interactions, usually with the same people over and over, in the process of trying to have a career. As noted above, the goal of adult interaction is the pursuit of status and social acceptance (i.e., a career), and there are two major strategies for interaction: competing and trying to outperform others, and affiliating and trying to build coalitions. Acquiring status depends on the support of others, which involves building relationships. But status also depends on aggression, on the desire to outcompete others and to defend one's position against other challengers.

As Wiggins (1996) noted, social interaction is an exchange process: after each interaction ends, there is an accounting process which results in each person gaining or losing a little bit of status and a little bit of acceptance. Interacting with others is a skilled performance; athletes, actors, and politicians are only as good as their last performance, and the same is true for the rest of us. Because interaction is so central to adult social life, it is useful to ask what is needed in order to interact? The answer is, there are two requirements: (a) a pretext for the interaction ─ e.g., let's get together and watch football ─ and (b) roles for the participants to play ─ e.g., you be the host and I will bring some beer.

Note that engaging in play provides children with attention in a structured and predictable manner. Note also that adults do not simply get together and bask in one another's company, they get together and pretend to "do something" ─ have a cup of coffee, drink a beer, talk something over ─ and these interactions are essentially identical to the way 3-year olds play. To interact with another person, we need a pretext and a role to play. Outside of our roles, we have nothing to say to one another. Persons with good social skill have a talent for inventing pretexts for interaction and for negotiating who plays what role.

Where do identities come from? Generally speaking, other people teach us who we are. This is true, but we also choose our identities from the menus that are available in our cultures. The menu is usually found in the entertainment world—in movies, books, TV shows,

etc. But the larger point is that our identities—the persons we think are real—come from menus provided by society. We may reject the identities that are available in our culture, but we will have to find substitutes before we can join the game of life and begin interacting with others. Our identities include our values, and our values are tied to our social class. For example, wealthy people with working class values seem working class, whereas working class people with good taste and civil manners seem "well bred." Consequently, personality─ identity─ is linked to social class through our values (Allport, 1961).

Reputation

For socioanalytic theory, the core components of personality are identity and reputation. Our identity guides our behavior during social interaction. Other people evaluate our behavior during social interactions and their evaluations create our reputation. Identities are personality from the perspective of the actor ─ our identities concern the person that we think we are. Reputations, on the other hand, are personality from the perspective of the observer ─ reputations concern the person whom others think we are. Successful people pay close attention to their reputations.

Reputations are important for the study of personality for five reasons. First, they develop quickly and are stable over time ─ different observers tend to agree substantially about a person's reputation ─ which means that reputations can be studied objectively. In contrast, identities are more fluid and much harder to study. Second, most people spend a great deal of time and energy trying to establish and maintain their reputations. Third, because the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior, and because reputations reflect a person's past behavior, reputations are the best data source we have for predicting most aspects of social performance ─ e.g., academic achievement, occupational success, delinquency, and career choice. Fourth, we have a well-defined taxonomy of reputations: it is the Five-Factor Model (FFM; Hogan, 1996). We think about and describe other people in terms of five categories or dimensions ─ self-confidence, social presence, likeability,

conscientiousness, and curiosity/creativity. Finally, our reputations reflect the amount of social acceptance and status we have in our communities. Successful people know how to manage their reputations, and they manage them during social interaction all the time (Goffman, 1959).

Allport (1961) defined personality psychology as the study of identity and dismissed reputation as an epiphenomenon. It is worth noting, however, that after 100 years of research on identity, there is no taxonomy, no measurement base, and few significant generalizations to report. In contrast, researchers have been studying reputation for about 20 years. There is a reliable taxonomy of reputation (the Five-Factor Model), a measurement base, and a cornucopia of robust research findings. We know a lot about personality (defined as reputation) and variety of outcomes, including marital satisfaction, occupational success, substance abuse, academic performance, health status, etc.

Social skill

What is self-knowledge? Self-knowledge should be defined from two perspectives ─ the actor's and the observer's. Self-knowledge from the actor's perspective concerns what we think we know about ourselves; self-knowledge from the observer's perspective concerns what other people actually know about us. Self-knowledge from the actor's perspective concerns understanding our identity and becoming mindful of how we interact with others. Self-knowledge from the observer's perspective concerns understanding our reputation and what we did to create it. Identity and reputation are related in interesting ways. For example, the person we think we are may not be the person that others think we are; to the degree that this is true, we will have trouble achieving our goals in life.

Identities are idealized views of ourselves, and we typically try to convince others that these idealized views are true. Some people are better at this than others because their social behavior is more convincing and effective. Hogan and Shelton (1998) argued that the ability successfully to translate one's identity into a desired reputation is moderated by social skill.

They defined social skill as competent impression management—the ability to control the impressions that others form of us. The alignment between identity and reputation depends on actor's social skills, of which self-knowledge and empathy are important facets. The success of impression management also depends on selecting audiences appropriately, being sensitive to the emotional cues of others, using correct language-style, and controlling non-verbal cues appropriately. Empirical research supports the idea that socially skilled individuals more quickly identify and attend to emotional cues in others and are better able to choose appropriate facial expressions, hand gestures, body postures, voice textures, and other paralinguistic cues (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Momm, Blickle, & Liu, 2010).

The unconscious

Freud argued that we are typically unaware of the reasons for our actions, and his view is supported by modern research in cognitive psychology. We believe there are at least four sources of unconscious influence on our behavior.

The first set of unconscious influences comes from biology. As noted above, we need attention and approval, we need status and control of resources, and we need order and predictability. Although much of our everyday behavior concerns pursuing these needs, we are rarely conscious of this fact. Loneliness usually indicates a need for interaction; depression indicates lost status and control; and anxiety is caused by chaos and unpredictability. These needs become conscious primarily when they are unfulfilled. We would also include temperament and mood in this set of unconscious biological processes. Our temperament produces our characteristic mood states which serve as a filter for our attention and shape our perceptions in ways that are simultaneously profound, idiosyncratic, and unconscious.

Our natural egocentrism creates a second set of unconscious influences. That is, most of us tend to ignore what others expect or believe during interactions. For example, when we ask managers to describe how their staff evaluates them, they are surprisingly inaccurate—

managers typically see themselves in much more positive terms than their staff describes them. Similarly, couples in close relationships are unable accurately to describe how their partners perceive them. Although we constantly interact with others, the data suggest that these interactions are based on superficial mutual understanding. This raises an interesting question about how social interaction is even possible.

One answer is that the rules governing interaction are prewired in our nervous systems, so that our responses to others do not depend on understanding what they expect. Human social interaction seems to resemble the mating dance of dragonflies, wherein gestures, colors, smells, and posture trigger corresponding gestures, postures, and behavior. Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1989) argues that the rules of social interaction are inherited, that there is "...a universal grammar of social behavior according to which verbal and nonverbal interactions are similarly structured (p. 499)." The result is that "many of the basic strategies of social interaction...follow their course automatically according to phylogenetically evolved programs" (p. 516). For example, people all over the world respond to the same nonverbal gestures (e.g., sticking one's tongue out is a universal sign of impertinence) and recognize the same emotions in others. Eibl-Eibesfeldt further suggests that "...we can speak of a universal grammar of human social behavior….With the discovery of the universal interactional strategies....We have recognized the existence of a universal…regulating system governing all interactions" (1989, p. 517). Consequently, it seems that much of our behavior during social interaction ─ posture, facial expressions, gaze, pace, etc. ─ runs off automatically and is therefore unconscious. Politicians, actors, and other entertainers understand this and often go through elaborate coaching in order to master and control these very subtle and otherwise unconscious interpersonal behaviors.

The third set of unconscious influences on social behavior are the values, customs, and norms of our culture that we assume are true and that we rarely question or challenge. These include rules about what we should eat, how we should dress, how women are treated, how

members of minority groups should be treated, and how our life style is superior to that of others. This third form of unconscious influence is much more powerful than we typically realize.

Finally, our brains evolved so as to handle routine activities with automatic processes and use conscious attention to solve novel problems (Johnson & Hogan, 2006). Routine behaviors demand far less attention than new skills, so human brains are designed for a high level of automatic activity, and these automatic mental routines give regularity and consistency to human behavior. When people are learning new tasks (e.g., how to type or drive a car) their first efforts are typically halting and clumsy. With practice their performance becomes automatic, consistent, and largely unconscious. This is also true for the way we interact with others, and these processes can lead to self-defeating behavior. Self-defeating behaviors are usually adaptive when they first develop, but when circumstances change, automatic and unconscious behaviors may produce short-term benefits but may create long-term costs (i.e., they cloud judgement and hamper performance; Kaiser, LeBreton, & Hogan, 2015; Stanovich, West, & Toplak, 2013). Using feedback, people can become aware of what triggers their automated behaviors (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006).

We can summarize this discussion as follows. Although social behavior is largely guided by forces outside our awareness, many of these nonconscious influences can become conscious through social feedback, education, and self-reflection. To the degree that they remain unconscious, we are liable to act in ways that are foolish, self-defeating, or even immoral ─ e.g., engage in selfish, racist, and/or sexist behavior.

Caveat

One problem with the foregoing model of personality should be mentioned. Brewer and Caporael (1991) observed that human evolutionary theory is often put to political rather than scientific purposes. Specifically, evolutionary arguments have been used to support racism, sexism, and even genocide. The pseudo-logical argument is often constructed in the

following way: Someone notes that there are consistent differences between two groups (e.g., men and women) and then argues that the characteristics that typify the group that is in power are innately superior to the characteristics of the other group, precisely because one's group is in power (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). One is then allowed to stigmatize the other group on the grounds of one's natural superiority. We, of course, deplore these sorts of arguments because they are pseudo-scientific, circular, and hateful. To argue that what *is should also be*, is the naturalistic fallacy (Moore, 1903).

Supporting empirical evidences

The following discussion presents evidence regarding the primacy of the motives of getting along, getting ahead, and finding meaning. It also presents evidence regarding how identity determines the division of labor within groups, and how social skills support the expression of identity. Finally, we review research on the links between reputation and career success.

Basic motives

Empirical research supports the importance of the three basic (and usually unconscious) motives emphasized by socioanalytic theory. Within groups there are typically individual differences in the desire to get along and get ahead. Because culture (the rules of interaction) is constant within groups, the need for stability, predictability, and meaning becomes more salient in comparisons between groups with different cultures.

Getting along and getting ahead. Digman (1997) analyzed personality trait ratings from 14 studies ─ five based on children and adolescents, nine on adults. Seven of the studies used observer ratings of personality traits and seven used self-ratings. Digman analyzed the data using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. In all 14 studies, two higher-order factors emerged. The alpha-factor contained the traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability; the beta-factor contained the traits of extraversion and intellect (*viz.*, openness to experience). These two factors have been labeled *social interest* and *superiority*

striving by Adler (1939), *communion* and *agency* by Wiggins (1991), *intimacy* and *power motivation* by McAdams (1992), and *popularity* and *status striving* by Hogan (1982). These two meta-traits represent the motives of getting along and ahead. Recently, Ashton and Lee have proposed adding a factor they call Honesty-Humility, defined by the terms *sincere*, *fair*, and *unassuming* versus *sly*, *greedy*, and *pretentious* (Ashton & Lee, 2005). We think this factor fits nicely with the getting along motivation factor.

Finding meaning. Socioanalytic theory assumes that stable, predictable, and meaningful social interactions are essential for our psychological well-being. Chaotic social interaction is deeply stressful, and if it continues long enough, anyone will break down (Hogan, 1982). Basically, culture defines the rules which provide interaction with stability, predictability, and meaning (Hogan & Bond, 2009). Jahoda (1981) first proposed that employment in industrial societies is an important source of structure and meaning in daily life (cf. Paul & Batinic, 2009) and therefore promotes psychological well-being. Barrick, Mount, and Li (2013) also propose that striving for meaning is an important (unconscious) motive at work.

In a cross-national study of over 80 nations, Oishi and Diener (2013) report that economic scarcity is associated with lower social status, fewer educational chances, poorer health care, and lower levels of life satisfaction, but also with more religiosity and perceived meaning in life. This suggests that the stress of poverty enhances the salience of peoples' needs for meaning and predictability, a need that is filled by strong religious convictions. Conversely, when people live in societies that provide employment, education, and health care, the need for stability, predictability, and meaning is less salient.

Identity

Socioanalytic theory assumes that people must interact, that they use their identities to structure interaction (identity is the generic role people carry with them across situations), and

that social skill enhances the ability to express one's identity in different situational contexts. We now review some evidence to support this claim.

Identity and the division of labor within groups. Holland (1996) developed a widely accepted taxonomy of vocational types; every job in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles can be classified using the Holland model, and it is an indispensable starting point for any discussion of careers (see Figure 1). There are six occupational types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Thus the Holland model is often referred to as "the RIASEC model". Realistic types (engineers) prefer concrete practical activities: building, maintaining, and repairing equipment. Investigative types (scientists) prefer research and problem solving activities. Artistic types (artists) prefer creative work in art, music, and design. Social types (teachers) prefer activities designed to help others. Enterprising types (entrepreneurs) prefer money-making and status enhancing activities. Finally, Conventional types (accountants) prefer activities associated with organizing and regulating financial and other details.

Insert Figure 1 about here

These occupational (personality) types can be organized using the two dimensions of sociability and conformity (Figure 1; Hogan, 1982). Conventional types score high on conformity and artistic types score low on conformity. Enterprising types score high on conformity and sociability. Realistic types score high on conformity and low on sociability. Social types score high on sociability and low on conformity factor. And Investigative types score low on conformity and sociability. According to Holland (1996), each occupational type prefers to work in a specific environment containing specific demands and rewards: Artistic types need freedom, Enterprising types need financial opportunities, etc.

Socioanalytic theory suggests that the Holland types represent six key roles in successful human groups (Hogan, 1982). Enterprising types move into leader roles. Conventional types implement group decisions. Realistic types build and repair tools. Investigative types invent tools (and technology). Artistic types entertain people around the camp fire (and challenge dysfunctional rules and obsolete traditions). And Social types maintain group morale and cohesion.

Consistent with Holland's model, meta-analyses find that the closer peoples' (RIASEC) personality types fit their work environments, the greater their training success, job satisfaction, job tenure, and job performance (Assouline & Meir, 1987; Van Iddekinge, Roth, Putka, & Lanivich, 2011). Hogan and Blake (1999) explain these findings in terms of "person-environment fit", where the environment is defined by the personalities of the other people in that environment. That is, people work more productively when they share the values of their co-workers.

It is interesting to note that the personality dimension of neuroticism is not part of the Holland model (which is designed to predict occupational success), but neuroticism is a strong predictor of job performance (Hogan & Holland, 2003). Hogan (1982) notes that for neurotics, "…anxiety, depression, and physical complaints are part of a general self-presentational program where the message is, 'I am sick, I need special attention and consideration, and don't expect too much of me under these circumstances.'" (p. 80). Meta-analytic research strongly supports the view that neuroticism predicts reduced career success (Lodi-Smith & Roberts, 2007; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005).

Mainstream personality research ignores ambition—e.g., ambition is not part of the FFM. In contrast, socioanalytic theory regards ambition as essential for career success (i.e., getting ahead) because ambition is about persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment, and accomplishment. Consistent with this claim, Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller (2012) show, in a predictive study over 30 years with 717 participants, that individual

differences in ambition predict educational attainment and prestige, occupational income and prestige, and life satisfaction.

Identity and social skill. Hogan and Shelton (1998) suggested that social skill translates interpersonal aspirations into action. More specifically, social skill translates identity into reputation—social skill allows people to portray themselves positively during social interaction. Social skill allows people to achieve their interpersonal goals just as hand-eye coordination allows people to hit tennis balls accurately. Social skill is trainable and has the following features (Hogan & Shelton, 1998): being sensitive and responsive to others' needs and moods, being flexible and adaptable, being persuasive, being able to instill trust, being consistent across social interactions, being accountable, and being able to listen to and communicate with a wide range of audiences. Self-presentational behavior guided by good social skill maximizes the approval and minimizes the disapproval of an actor's social performance.

Numerous empirical studies strongly support this proposition. High scores on a measure of social skill combined with a measure of wanting to get along with peers and supervisors predicted higher supervisors' ratings of an employee's cooperation, job performance, and promotion potential (Blickle et al., 2011). High scores on these two measures predicted higher income and marketability of new employees after two years (Blickle, Momm, Liu, Witzki, & Steinmayr, 2011). High scores on a measure of social skill and a measure of achievement striving are associated with supervisory ratings of leadership emergence (Marinova, Moon, & Kamdar, 2013). Finally, in a sample of 510 school headmasters, high scores on a measure of social skill and a measure of wanting to get ahead predicted success in leadership as rated by three to four teachers ($N = 1,881$) who reported to these headmasters (Ewen et al., 2014).

In conclusion, social skill enhances the ability of people to present themselves and control their reputation during social interaction. People with social skill are better able to

restrain, calibrate, and adjust their behavior in different and changing social contexts. This adaptability allows them to exercise interpersonal influence by gaining the trust and confidence of those with whom they interact. After every interaction, the participants evaluate the performance of one another. These evaluations ultimately turn into performance appraisals (Hogan & Shelton, 1998). On what do these evaluations depend? They primarily reflect the degree to which people are rewarding during social interactions. Being rewarding involves helping others advance their agendas, being compliant and attentive, and fitting with the culture of the group. Being rewarding has to do with making another person feel and look good in his or her role.

Reputation

One important claim of socioanalytic theory is that measures of reputation should predict performance better than so-called self-report measures of personality. "Reputation is a perceptual identity formed from the collective perceptions of others, which is reflective of the complex combination of salient personal characteristics and accomplishments, demonstrated behavior, and intended images presented over some period of time as observed directly and/or reported from secondary sources, which reduces ambiguity about expected future behavior" (Zinko, Ferris, Blass, & Laird, 2007, p. 165). Consequences of a positive reputation include: *elbowroom* ─ having more discretion to act; *power* ─ others will defer to one's judgment; *improved performance* ─ having more discretion and power to get things done; enhanced *performance assessments;* and *better compensation*. Other useful consequences of having a positive reputation include *career success* and *enhanced subjective well-being* (Zinko et al., 2007).

Observers use trait terms to describe and evaluate other people, and these descriptions/evaluations turn into peoples' reputations—which are encoded in trait words. Reputations, encoded in trait words, evaluate a person's contribution to the success of the groups to which the person belongs – tribe, family, combat-unit, or work team. Trait terms are

the units of reputation and the FFM (Wiggins, 1996) is a robust and widely accepted taxonomy of reputation. Briefly the dimensions of the FFM are: (1) Emotional stability—low volatility and performance under pressure; (2) Extraversion—sociability and assertiveness; (3) Openness—curiosity and flexibility; (4) Agreeableness—warmth, tact, and charm; (5) Conscientiousness—trustworthiness and integrity. Reputation can be assessed directly or indirectly. Direct measures of reputation use observer ratings to assess personality, whereas indirect measures of reputation use self-ratings of personality.

Direct personality measures of reputation and success. Empirical data strongly support the view that observer ratings of personality (reputation) are significantly more valid that self-reports of personality (identity) in predicting social behavior. Kluemper, McLarty, and Bing (2015) report that observer ratings of the FFM personality dimensions add significant validity to self-reports when predicting work place deviance. Kholin et al. (2016) found that peer-ratings of students' learning approach predicted academic performance in MINT-subjects (Mathematics – Informatics – Natural Sciences – Technology) much better than self-ratings of learning approach. Oh, Wang, and Mount (2011) used meta-analysis to compare the operational validities of FFM traits based on self- and other-ratings. As predicted by socioanalytic theory, they found that the validities of observer ratings are significantly higher than those based on self-report ratings. In addition, observer ratings of FFM traits yielded incremental validity over self-reports of the same dimensions in predicting performance, but the reverse was not true.

Connelly and Ones (2010) also conducted a meta-analytic study of the links between observer ratings of actors' personalities and ratings for job performance. Their results strongly support those reported by Oh et al. (2011). How well does reputation (observers' ratings of personality) predict job performance – compared to other assessment procedures? Schmidt and Hunter (1998) report that General Mental Ability is the best single predictor of overall job performance ($\rho = .51$; for a more accurate estimate, see Schmidt, Shaffer, & Oh, 2008) and

work sample tests (ρ = .54; for an alternative estimate, see Roth, Bobko, & McFarland, 2005). Structured employment interviews (ρ = .51) are the best non-test predictors of job performance. However, Connelly and Ones (2010) found that observer ratings of conscientiousness are slightly more valid overall (true score correlations ρ = .55; for operational validity estimates, see Oh et al., 2011). For comparison purposes, other popular procedures yield the following validity coefficients: reference checks (ρ = .26); biographical data measures (ρ = .35); assessment center performance (ρ = .37); unstructured employment interview (ρ = .38); and integrity tests (ρ = .41). In sum, socioanalytic theory predicts individual differences in peoples' career success.

Successful people use superior social skills to manage their reputations. Empirical research also supports this claim. For example, peer ratings (indices of reputation) of academic aptitude significantly predict the academic performance of university students with good social skills over more than one year (ß = .43) but not among students with low social skills (ß = .02; Kholin et al., 2016). In many, if not most cases, career success depends on peoples' reputation and the manner in which they present themselves to others. People who are successful in the game of life are mindful of these issues.

Indirect personality measures of reputation and success. Several personality inventories based on the FFM are available to researchers. These inventories are typically called *self-report measures.* Trait theorists assume that, when respondents complete these inventories, they consult their memories and then report on their "true" thoughts, feelings, and past behaviors (Allport, 1961). In contrast, socioanalytic theory assumes that, when respondents complete these inventories, they respond in ways that tell others how they want to be regarded. That is, respondents do not provide self-reports, they provide self-presentations. We believe people use items on personality questionnaires to express idealized views of themselves and hope others will believe accept these views. In addition, socioanalytic theory

argues that these self-presentations are not necessarily conscious because, over time, self-presentation tends to become automatic role behavior.

Additionally, others find us likable or disagreeable depending on the degree to which we support the identity they want to project. Thus, employees who comply with the requests of their supervisors and respect their status will be seen as rewarding because they help their supervisors look good. Supervisors rarely think about their subordinates in terms of the subordinate's goals, fears, and aspirations; rather, supervisors think about subordinates in terms of how rewarding they are—defined in terms of protecting, supporting, and enhancing supervisors' identity. The same is true for peers.

Social skills are also needed in order to control others by counseling, persuading, and suggesting rather than by ordering, criticizing, and coercing them (Blickle, Kane-Frieder, et al., 2013). Although identity is rather stable, social skills are, in principle, trainable. Moreover, good social skills can coexist with deeply flawed identities – where flawed is defined in terms of insecurity, selfishness, strange and irrational goals, and a disposition toward treachery and deceit (Leary, 1995).

As socioanalytic theory predicts, many studies show that social skill moderates the predictive validity of standard personality measures, including the validity of measures of: agreeableness (Blickle et al., 2008); conscientiousness (Witt & Ferris, 2003); extraversion (Blickle, Wendel, & Ferris, 2010); openness to experience (Blickle et al., 2013); honesty-humility (Diekmann, Blickle, Hafner, & Peters, 2015); trait sincerity (Meurs, Perrewé, & Ferris, 2011); and proactive personality (Sun & van Emmerik, 2015). Socioanalytic theory regards these personality dimensions as "bright side" characteristics (Hogan & Hogan, 2001) because they appear during social interactions when people are self-consciously trying to get along and get ahead.

Socioanalytic theory distinguishes between "bright side" and "dark side" behavior. Bright side behavior is what we see when people are behaving themselves; the FFM is a

taxonomy of bright side behavior. In contrast with bright side characteristics, dark side characteristics (e.g., narcissism, psychopathy) emerge when people let down their guard— when they are angry, tired, or "just being themselves", and usually when they are dealing with subordinates or people with less power. We also assume (Hogan & Shelton, 1998) that good social skills can compensate for dark side personality tendencies. Recent research supports this assumption.

Narcissism is a dark side characteristic defined by a grandiose but fragile sense of self, feelings of entitlement, preoccupation with success, and demands for admiration (e.g., Owens, Wallace, & Feldman, 2015). It also includes being self-centered, self-absorbed, extremely self-confident, and exploitive. O'Boyle, Forsyth, Banks, and McDaniel (2012) found in a meta-analysis that narcissism predicts counterproductive work behavior ($r = .35$). However, Owens et al. (2015) also report that, when narcissism is combined with humility (i.e., social skill) – admitting when one makes mistakes, being aware of others' strengths—such leaders receive high ratings of effectiveness and followers show high levels of job engagement and objective job performance.

Primary psychopathy (Lykken, 1995) is characterized by fearlessness, attention seeking, manipulative tendencies, and an inability to learn from experience. Lilienfeld and Widows (2005) refer to psychopathy as "fearless dominance". Based on socioanalytic theory, Schütte et al. (2015) suggested that: (1) people with high scores for both psychopathy and social skill should succeed in organizations; whereas (2) people with high scores for psychopathy and low scores for social skill should fail. Schütte et al. (2015) report that people with high scores for psychopathy and low scores for social skill displayed high levels of counterproductive behavior and low levels of productive performance at work. Conversely, people with high scores for both psychopathy and social skill demonstrated low levels of counterproductive behavior and high levels of productive performance.

In sum, people with social skill are flexible, able to establish rapport via an unassuming and effective communication style, and able to behave in ways that are situation-specific, appropriate, and influential. Thus, people with extensive dark side tendencies who have good social skills are often able to control their negative behaviors and be successful.

However, these studies of narcissism, psychopathy, and social skill are cross-sectional. We need longitudinal studies to determine whether persons with strong dark side tendencies use social skill to deceive others while selfishly extracting resources from the group (Jones, 2014). Some parasitic animals use complex deception tactics based on slow resource extraction, careful integration into the community, and avoidance of detection, and their behavior has severe long-term negative consequences for the host community.

Practical implications of Socioanalytic theory

Socioanalytic theory has many practical implications; in the following we review two that substantially impact our daily lives, namely leadership and faking in personnel selection.

Personality and Leadership

Sociologists, political scientists, and historians argue that leadership is the function of existing organizational and historical circumstances. Socioanalytic theory, however, argues that leadership is a function of personality and that some people have more talent for leadership than others. Good leadership contributes to the long-term success of groups and organizations (Kaiser, Hogan, Craig, 2008; Van Vugt, Hogan, Kaiser, 2008). Successful leadership involves persuading group members to set aside, for a limited time, their selfish, short-term interests and contribute to long-term group goals of their groups or organizations (Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007). Charles Darwin (1871) noted: "A tribe including many members who … were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes, and this would be natural selection" (p. 132).

To evaluate the links between personality and leadership, one needs scores for individual leaders' reputation, and quantitative indices of their performance in leadership roles. Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002) aggregated the results of 222 correlations from 73 studies of personality and leadership performance. Their sample contained more than 25,000 managers from every level in 5,000 organizations across every industry sector. They report that four of the five dimensions of the FFM significantly predict leadership performance, with Adjustment/Emotional Stability as the best predictor (.33), and Agreeableness/Interpersonal Sensitivity the weakest predictor (.07). In this study, conscientiousness/prudence, extraversion, and openness were also significantly correlated with leadership (.29, .27, and .21, respectively), and the multiple correlation between personality and leadership was .53. For people who believe in data, this study definitively settles the argument that personality predicts leadership performance across all organizational levels and industry sectors, and does so more powerfully than any known alternative.

Faking

Faking on personality inventories involves intentionally responding to items in a way that will enhance one's scores (Hogan & Blickle, 2013). Many psychologists think personality assessment lacks any inherent validity because, they argue, it is easy for people to fake their scores. Because personality assessment is the indispensable research method for personality psychology, the faking criticism represents an existential threat to the discipline. Socioanalytic theory interprets item responses in terms of impression management: people use the items on personality measures to tell others how they want to be regarded. This, then, suggests an alternative way to understand faking in the assessment process: "Deception is a conscious, deliberate deviation from typical forms of self-presentation, a deviation that acquaintances would describe as uncharacteristic behavior. This view of deception contrasts with the view that deception involves acting in a way that is inconsistent with a single 'true self' hidden inside of us" (Johnson & Hogan, 2006, p. 211). "When individuals try to act in

deceptive ways in everyday life (e.g., introverts try to act like extraverts) their natural tendencies 'leak through' and observers readily detect them … Only good actors can make atypical performances seem convincing …" (Johnson & Hogan, 2006, pp. 210-211).

Consider the process of child rearing. Small children act in ways that reflect their real desires and urges. Socialization primarily involves training children to hide their real desires and to behave in ways that are consistent with the norms of adult behavior. For a traditional view on faking, socialization involves training children to fake. For impression management theory, socialization involves training children in the appropriate forms of self-expression. Items on well-constructed personality measures sample ordinary socialized adult behavior. Most adults know the rules of conduct and respond to the items in terms of social norms rather than in terms of their real desires. Criminals and other rebels respond in ways that are closer to their real desires—in ways that are consistent with their typical behavior.

The point is that it is nearly impossible to distinguish faking from socialized behavior. Johnson and Hogan (2006) report on a study using six unlikely virtue scales. Each scale corresponded to one of six personality scales. The following is an unlikely virtue item for the Inquisitive scale: "In my own way, I am an intellectual giant", and the following is for the Adjustment scale: "I have no psychological problems whatsoever." Students completed the personality scale and the unlikely virtue scales. In addition, two people who knew each student rated that student on the six personality dimensions. Most students endorsed unlikely virtue items proportional to their scores on the personality scales. Thus, each unlikely virtue scales was most highly correlated with its corresponding personality scale and with the peer ratings for the same dimension. This implies that although the students sometimes exaggerated by endorsing specific unlikely virtue items, their exaggerated self-presentations were consistent with their rated reputations. Thus, endorsing unlikely virtue items provides information that predicts job performance because the endorsements are consistent with the

respondents' typical self-presentations; the exaggerations are deviations that acquaintances still describe as characteristic of the person.

It is also possible to test the faking criticism directly. In the only proper study of faking in a real world context, Hogan, Barrett, and Hogan (2007) tested several thousand applicants for a government job using a well validated measure of the FFM, of which a subsample of applicants were rejected. Six months later, 5,266 of the rejected applicants reapplied for the job. Because they were denied employment based on the inventory, and because they wanted the job, they were motivated to improve their scores by faking. The results indicated that 5.2% changed their scores on the second trial, but that scores *improved* for 2.6% of the sample, and scores *declined* for 2.6% of the sample. These results clearly show that only a small minority (about 5% of the sample) tried to change their scores, and of those who tried, as many lowered their scores as raised their scores. Faking (i.e., a deliberate deviation from typical individual forms of self-presentation) on personality measures is theoretically possible, but rarely happens in practice.

Summary and Conclusion

Today personality psychology consists of three major theoretical clusters, each with a distinctive focus and intent. The first cluster, clinical theories of personality (e.g., Psychoanalysis), use introspection (statements about identity) to identify the sources of individual neurosis and perhaps overcome its affects. The second cluster, trait theory (Allport, 1961), uses introspection (self-report data) to identify the structure of self-report data and trace its neurological underpinnings. The third, socioanalytic theory uses reputation to predict important life outcomes, usually in the form of career success (or failure). Trait theory has a "pure science" agenda with minimal concern for applications, whereas clinical theories and socioanalytic theory have an applied agenda—helping people improve their lives.

Socioanalytic theory differs from the other two theories of personality primarily by rejecting introspection as a valid source of data. We reject introspection for three reasons.

First, the capacity for (and interest in) introspection is normally distributed. A portion of the population (usually people with neurotic tendencies) introspect constantly with clinical psychologists possibly being part of this group. Many people engage in introspection from time to time. But a significant portion of the population is incapable of introspection—they never do it and they are unable to do it. Two examples of unusually successful people who were famously incapable of introspection are Ronald Reagan, former President of the United States (Cannon, 2000), and Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of England (Campbell, 2011). The fact that neurotics enjoy introspection whereas highly successful politicians are unable to introspect raises the question of why introspection matters.

The second reason for rejecting introspection concerns the universality of self-deception. As Freud noted, people lie to themselves about their true motives and agendas and then believe their lies. When they introspect, they dredge up invented memories and stories which they then relay to us. The third reason for rejecting introspection concerns the question of how hard it is for us, as listeners, to verify the introspective claims of other people. We focus on reputation (observers' ratings) as our data source.

Socioanalytic theory differs from trait theory (Allport, 1961) in an important way. Trait theory uses trait words (honest, brave, creative, hostile) to describe peoples' behavior, and then uses trait words to explain peoples' behavior: e.g., Mike Tyson (an American former professional boxer) is aggressive (description) because he has a trait for aggression (explanation). This is a tautology, a logical fallacy at the core of trait theory. In our view, we do not have traits, we have agendas, goals, intentions, and our behavior reflects these agendas. Other people watch us and then assign trait labels to our behavior so that they can predict our future behavior. Traits exist in the minds of observers and in the observed behavior of actors. Traits are an inference that other people make about our behavior, and they are powerful sources of data to predict our future behavior. But it is a fundamental logical error to use traits to predict and then explain behavior.

Finally, socioanalytic theory agrees with Freudian psychoanalysis in four ways. First, we believe that, to understand human nature (personality), we need to study human origins because the evolutionary history of our species holds the keys to understanding modern behavior. Second, we believe that most social behavior is unconsciously motivated, that people typically do not know why they do what they do when they do it, but they are good at inventing explanations which they also believe. Third, we believe that development matters such that experiences early in life have a greater impact on personality than experiences later in life. And finally, Freud defined maturity as the capacity to love and to work. Similarly, we think maturity is the capacity to build and maintain healthy relationships and to have a successful career.

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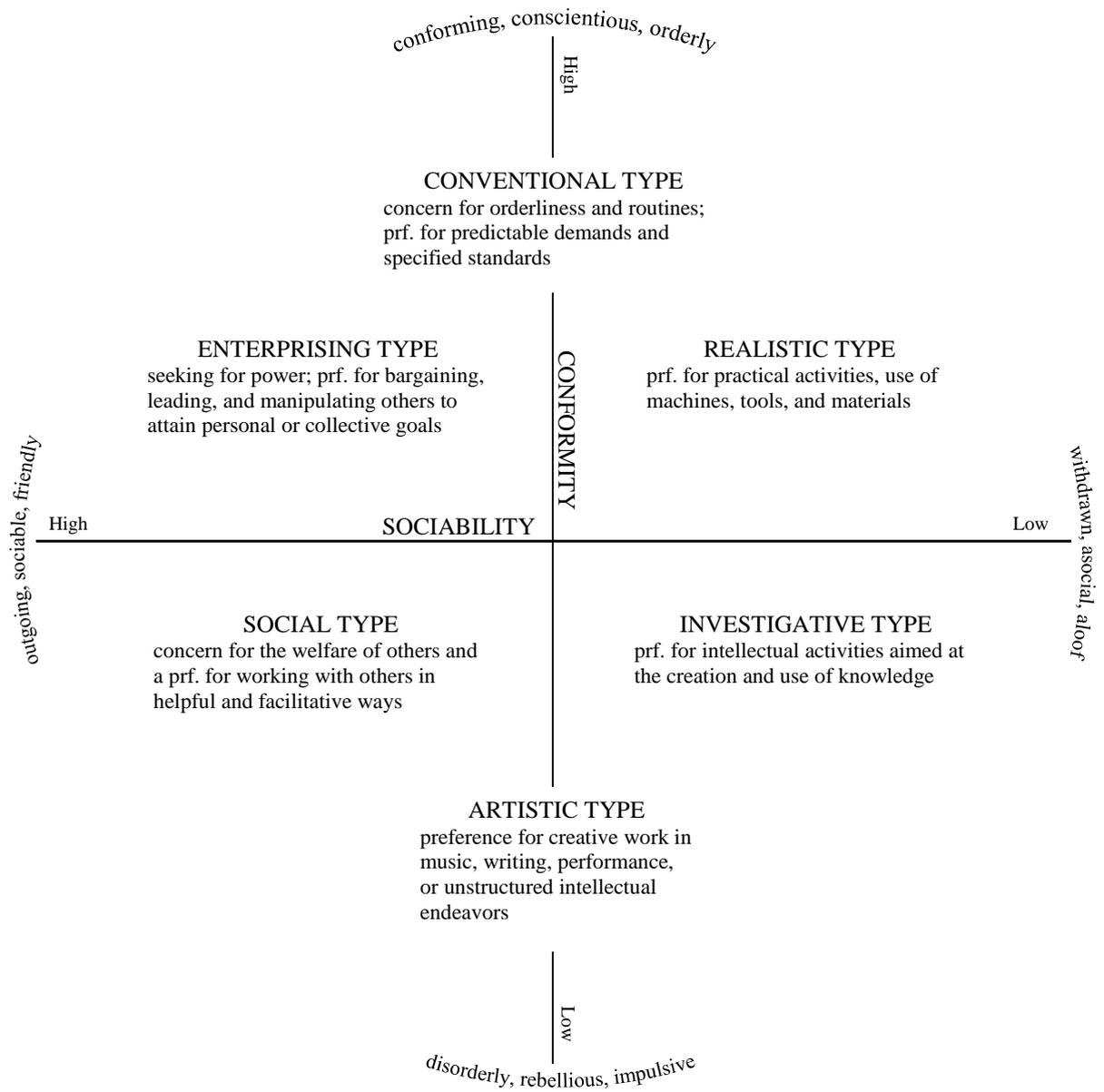
conforming, conscientious, orderly

High

CONVENTIONAL TYPE
concern for orderliness and routines;
prf. for predictable demands and
specified standards

ENTERPRISING TYPE
seeking for power; prf. for bargaining,
leading, and manipulating others to
attain personal or collective goals

REALISTIC TYPE
prf. for practical activities, use of
machines, tools, and materials

CONFORMITY

outgoing, sociable, friendly

High   SOCIABILITY   Low

withdrawn, asocial, aloof

SOCIAL TYPE
concern for the welfare of others and
a prf. for working with others in
helpful and facilitative ways

INVESTIGATIVE TYPE
prf. for intellectual activities aimed at
the creation and use of knowledge

ARTISTIC TYPE
preference for creative work in
music, writing, performance,
or unstructured intellectual
endeavors

Low

disorderly, rebellious, impulsive

Figure 1

Identity and the division of labor within groups