Scientific Research Publishing

Psychology, 2021, 12, 2020-2041
https://www.scirp.org/journal/psych
ISSN Online: 2152-7199
ISSN Print: 2152-7180

Personality in the Light of Identity, Reputation and Role Taking: A Review of Socioanalytic Theory

Troels Gottlieb[1], Adrian Furnham[2*], Jeppe Brændskov Klewe[3]

[1]Gottlieb & Klewe—Erhvervspsykologisk Rådgivning, Copenhagen, Denmark
[2]Department of Leadership and Organisational Behaviour, BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway
[3]Bispebjerg Hospital, Copenhagen, Denmark
Email: *adrian@adrianfurnham.com

How to cite this paper: Gottlieb, T., Furnham, A., & Klewe, J. B. (2021). Personality in the Light of Identity, Reputation and Role Taking: A Review of Socioanalytic Theory. *Psychology, 12,* 2020-2041.
https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2021.1212123

Received: November 10, 2021
Accepted: December 19, 2021
Published: December 22, 2021

Abstract

This paper reviews Hogan's socioanalytic theory of personality which is an integration of evolutionary psychology, depth psychology and role theory. Personality is defined both from the actor's and the observer's points of view: Identity is how an actor sees themselves and believes that others will perceive them; while reputation, is essentially how others evaluate a person's behavior, summing up both collective observations. The paper describes the various Hogan tests. It also looks at the concept of mentalizing and how that may be integrated with socioanalytic theory. Finally, it considers issues around personality change.

Keywords

Socioanalytic Theory, Personality, Leadership, Mentalization, Role-Taking, Hogan, Dark Side Behavior

1. Introduction

This paper is description, critique and extension of socioanalytic theory as developed by Robert Hogan which accounts for the individual differences in status, popularity, and competent performance in general. In this article we first provide a broad introduction to his socioanalytic theory, an integration of grand theories of Darwin, Freud and Mead with the psychometric five-factor model tradition (Hogan, 1976, 1982, 1991, 1996, 1998, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007).

The evolutionary psychological components of socioanalytic theory draw, in part, from primatology (e.g., Waal, 2005) but more importantly from anthropo-

logical studies of primitive lifestyles (e.g., Boehm, 1999). The meta-theory states that our species survived a process of natural selection essentially by working as a cooperative collective adept for coordinating hunting, childcare, warfare etc., and, not least, by avoiding waste of resources on "free riders" not contributing to the common good of the group (Hogan & Blickle, 2018; Hogan & Judge, 2012; Hogan & Sherman, 2020).

According to the theory to survive an attachment to the effective clan is a hard wired premise with which a duality of a social and hierarchical orientation follows: People want to 1) be well liked/respected and not to risk expulsion (or even assassination), but will 2) concurrently compete for status (power, resources and mates), as fearing being dispensable or not breeding is the logic response to being at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Hogan & Blickle, 2013). Thus, human groups are characterized not only by *affectionate relational attachments*, but also by more or less manifest *constant intragroup rivalry*. Nature has imbued us with both cooperative *and* competitive characteristics (Winsborough et al., 2009), which lead to a fundamentally ambivalent existence (Hogan, 1976; Hogan & Smither, 2001). Homo Sapiens want to *get along* (and fear loneliness), *get ahead* (losing resources, status and control are depressive), and *find meaning* (chaos and unpredictability are anxiety provoking), but as Hogan and Blickle (2018) explain:

> … 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. (p. 112)

Thus, the human group—as is the case with every herd anima—needs the structure of a relatively clear status hierarchy and a leader to be fit and not waste resources on intragroup issues (Johnson & Hogan, 2006).

Group living animals are dependent on leaders who make sound decisions and ensure cohesion, fairness, and that all members contribute (Hogan, 2006; Van Vugt et al., 2008). Persuading others to transcend their egoistic interests and instead comply with particular social norms of a group, takes someone capable of communicating meaning and connection (Winsborough et al., 2009; Kaiser et al., 2013)—which according to Hogan and Kaiser (2005) is about integrity, decision-making, competence, and vision. In other words, followership mandates those as leaders who represent a resource in realizing individuals' and their *group's three basic needs in life of getting along, getting ahead and finding meaning, and builds cohesive and goal-oriented teams* (Kaiser, 2006).

1.1. Depth Psychology

Socioanalytical theory credit Freud's theory of human life as characterized by conflicting impulses (Johnson & Hogan, 2006) originated in "*… basic and largely unconscious strivings for love, power, and survival*" (Hogan, 1991: p. 881),

and the idea that "… *adult personality is often a crystallization of childhood defenses*" (Hogan, 1982: p. 56).

Hogan (1976) noted how Freud's theories all depart from the idea of *the unconscious*. According to this, people do not realize how evolutionary inherited instincts toward preservation of the species and of oneself, and not least different kinds of confusing and painful memories connected to our caregivers' socializing of such primary sex and aggression drivers, to a large degree determine their actions. Hogan describes how Freud considered a child to conform:

> … to his parents' wishes out of a fear of punishment or losing their love. When parental authority is internalized through the establishment of a superego, however, prohibited thoughts and actions are followed by feelings of guilt that persist until the person undergoes some form of punishment (p. 44).

The superego not only functions as conscience, telling us what not to do. It also contains what Freud referred to as our *ego ideal*, which is an idealized parental image telling us what to do. In reality, though, we are far from virtuous: "*… every friendship is tinged with a bit of secret resentment or competition*; *conversely*, *we are in some ways secretly drawn to our bitterest enemies*" (Hogan, 2004: p. 11). Yet identifying with our egoistic and hedonistic motives instead of with the ego ideal, provokes anxiety. It associates to the fear of punishment, lost love, and lack of control experienced in our first years of life, why people generally repress these tendencies, not only in their behavior, but also from their self-understandings. Self-deceit is thus a fundamentally normal psychic defense against the unpleasant reality of not living up to the ego ideal. This happens in various ways. Defense mechanisms developed in the first years of life, are often referred to as primitive, e.g., *identification* (the phantasy of being like someone else and adopting—and idealizing—that person's beliefs and behaviors), *projection* (attributing unacceptable ideas, feelings, or impulses to someone else), and *splitting* (keeping separate the good and the bad self and object representation). When utilized rigidly and persistently in adult life, these tendencies become pathological. In contrast, so-called mature defense mechanisms developed later—e.g. *rationalization* (explaining away one's egoistic behaviors with logical reasons) or *sublimation* (transforming sexual or aggression drives into sociable, acceptable endeavors, e.g. science, arts, or sports)—are inconspicuous (Willick, 1995).

However, by emphasizing evolution over the classical psychoanalytical focus on the child's dramatic experiences of its caregiver's disciplining free instincts into civilization (Hogan, 1998), socioanalytic theory offers an alternative explanation and thus views the unconscious levels of human psychic life as principally comprehensible: the "nature of human nature" is not an idiographic chaos of individual memories and narratives. It can in fact be reduced to a few, realizable, biological universals: We are borne naturally egocentric, predisposed to status, approval, and predictability—but individual differences in such needs are in-

evitable. Also, cultural causes—the norms of our culture that we assume to be true—can be identified (Hogan & Smither, 2001).

1.2. Ambivalent Object Relations

Inspired by Karen Horney, who accommodated the Freudian intrapsychic insights about unconscious motives, phantasies, defense mechanisms, etc. into an interpersonal model, socioanalytic theory anticipates that people struggle with feelings of inadequacy and fears of criticism, and an inherent tendency toward relational ambivalence of simultaneously being drawn to and being anxious about relationships (Hogan & Hogan, 2007; Hogan et al., 2011). Thus Hogan (1991) argues that the most important and dangerous part of our everyday environment becomes "… *other people*, *and the success of our plans and aspirations depends to some degree on our ability to anticipate and predict their reactions*" (p. 877) accurately. As an extension of the fight, flight, and freeze repertoire of animals, Horney thus theorized that people manipulate the nearness/distance in relations by either moving against, moving toward, or moving away from others to cope with the relational ambivalence, which is different from Freud's intrapsychic defense mechanisms.

Even if defensive, our fundamental skepticism to other's intentions described by Horney—the dark sides of personality in socioanalytic terminology—can help individuals reach their goals by aggressively or subliminally pressuring others to either act or stop acting. Paradoxically though, in a long-term perspective, such behaviors usually become counterproductive. When an individual succeeds in protecting themselves from what might be (experienced as) an ego-restriction, by making others withdraw their expectations when for example either blowing up (moving away), showing up (moving against) or conforming (moving toward), this risks being a short term solution, in fact eroding precious relations (Kaiser et al., 2013). For groups, too much "get along" can lead to group-thinking and mindless conformity, too much "get ahead" to unscrupulous behaviors, and too much "get structure" to religious fanaticism (Hogan & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011).

1.3. Identity and Reputation

As dark side behaviors are contemptuous—and to a large degree unconscious-relational strategies, we generally do not identify ourselves with these. Others, though, are alert of such traits (Hogan et al., 1994), threatening social order and predictability, and will at this point start gossiping about when they are (compulsively) repeated. This leads to the complicated human condition that people never gain complete insight into the (mis)match between one's identity (our personal narrative) and one's reputation (others' descriptions of us summarizing our past and expected future behavior) (Hogan & Blickle, 2013; Hogan & Holland, 2003). Thus, "*reputation describes a person's behavior*; *identity explains it*" (Hogan, Hogan, & Barrett, 2007: p. 366).

1.4. Role Theory

Individual experiences with authority and development of conscience (the super-ego) are considered consequential. However, in socioanalytic theory social life and the role-playing we perform among peers outside the family outweighs the classic psychoanalytical preoccupation with intra-psychic structures of our hopes, dreams, fears, and aspirations as essentially settled within the first five years of life. Because we are not all neurotic as was Freud's axiom, and siblings with identical parents and comparable role models in their early life sometimes develop quite different personalities, Hogan (1991) observes. Opposite to the Freudian *intra*-psychic focus on learning to live with oneself as a prerequisite for being able to live with others, socioanalytic theory assimilates George Herbert Mead's *inter*-psychological model, in which "… *the big problem in life concerns learning to live with other people—which makes it possible to live with one self*" (Hogan & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015: p. 620).

Mead too understood our psychology as deeply rooted in biology as formulated by Darwin, but emphasized that the roles to play in 'the game of life' are written by society, not primarily created by identification with our family's internalization hereof. For Mead, neurosis should be traced back to "… *man's needs for order and social approval rather than to his sexual and aggressive needs*" (Hogan, 1976: p. 203). Though still fairly stereotypical, more roles are available than the ones our parents might hope that we choose from when forming our identity, for example the high school roles of being an athlete, scholar, deviant, femme fatale, etc. (Hogan et al., 1985). Yet, our private conceptions of people's expectations on how being well-liked versus competing for status and in what way they can be gained, rest on an inner reference group including also teachers, peers and others. Thus, the roles people play and with which strategies rest on their individual schemes of how to get positively evaluated by others. But people differ in the degree to which they are oriented toward the demands of their reference group or peers. Thus Hogan (1982) explains how "*… those with an inner or reference group orientation are autonomous, self-absorbed, and perhaps socially inept. Those with an outer or peer group orientation are often hysterical and trendy*" (p. 78-79).

In contrast to Mead, who believed that "… *the self-concept is a function of one's roles, the present* [*socioanalytical*] *view suggests however* […] *that roles are a function of one's self-concept*" (Hogan, 1976: p.193), not excluding that "identities begin with temperament: Being shy will constrain a person's interactional style in certain ways" (Hogan, 1996: p. 168). Yet, what a person is trying to achieve and how their efforts are evaluated, are two different phenomena (Hogan & Shelton, 1998). Therefore, individual differences in the role-playing competencies, which "*involves thinking about oneself from the perspective of others* […] *and regulating one's behavior based on what one thinks others expect*" (Hogan & Roberts, 2004: p. 212), lead to individual differences in getting along and getting ahead. Some people approach these challenges confidently and

enthusiastically; "*… others expect to fail, they approach the game defensively, and they seem generally worried and anxious*" (Hogan & Shelton, 1998: p. 138).

Synthesizing evolutionary psychology and depth psychology, the fit person—socioanalytically speaking—gains insight into themselves and others, as well as gains self-discipline. Moving up the status hierarchy may happen with intensity when fueled and directed by one's dark sides, as is for example seen with charismatic persons. However, getting one's position stabilized, securing that neither those hierarchically below or above you will talk up a suspicious reputation and erode your position, conversely takes consistent behavior and relations, and the ability to distinguish between one's own and other's interests, values, and motives. The mature person is capable of loving and working, as Freud notoriously thought (Hogan & Roberts, 2004), and generally people throughout life develop skills to interact with a wide range of others in socially appropriate ways without supervision. Mature persons "*attend to both peer evaluations and the requirement of their inner audience or conscience*" (Hogan, 1982: p. 79), and balance their egoistic and altruistic impulses and their self-critical and self-accepting tendencies (Hogan & Roberts, 2004).

Another prerequisite for negotiating status successfully is to be able to manipulate others unnoticed, but not being deceived yourself. Such politically skilled individuals, with the ability to get along and get ahead simultaneously, are "*adept at understanding and interpreting others and social situations, and they portray themselves and their desires in ways that influence co-workers*" (Dietl et al., 2017: p. 4) and persuade others to agree with their self-presentations. Most of the time, this includes not displaying their private motives, thoughts, and feelings—an ideal far from the popular idea that being authentic leads to the good life. Instead, socially competent individuals are "strategically self-aware" when playing different roles as a means to realizing varying agendas without damaging their reputation; they are attentive to their limitations and how these compare with others (Hogan & Benson, 2009). The socially incompetent on the other hand, are "*… unable to disguise their motives to get ahead …* [*and*] *… likely to be perceived as forceful, bossy, and coercive, rather than engaged in behaviors actually indicative of initiating structure*" (Ewen et al., 2014: p. 377). Therefore, the socioanalytic perspective suggests role-taking as the 'g-factor' of social interaction (Hogan & Roberts, 2004). It is what translates motivation into accomplishment, and identity into successful reputation, and "*… can coexist with deeply flawed personalities—where flaws are defined in terms of insecurity and selfishness, strange and irrational goals, and a disposition toward treachery and deceit*" (Hogan & Shelton, 1998: p. 135).

1.5. The Trait Realist Tautology

According to Hogan, Jones, and Cheek (1985) "*a person's self-concept is the result of a process of identity negotiation that begins at birth and culminates in an internalized character structure that is relatively stable throughout adulthood*"

(p. 183). Though departing from evolutionary psychology and the assumption "that personality is constrained by some stable structures in the brain" (Johnson & Hogan, 2006: p. 213), Hogan opposes the trait realist position that personality is biologically inherited and a kind of destiny, not modifiable through evaluation and negotiation (Hogan & Roberts, 2004; Hogan, 2005). Hogan and Hogan (2007: p. 14) even find that "*trait psychology has been a major disaster for personality psychology*", a reductionist and tautological model mistaking description for explanation (e.g. Mike Tyson's aggressive behavior is caused by his trait for aggression which is caused by his neuro psychic structures) (Hogan, 2005; Hogan & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2015).

In socioanalytic theory the five-factor traits, Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability, are considered a universal taxonomy of *reputations*. Like the mainstream intra-psychic interpretation, socioanalytic theory considers traits not only stable but also that they can predict future behavior. But here, "*other people don't have traits*; *rather*, *we assign trait terms to them as a way of summarizing recurring themes in their behavior*" (Hogan, 2005: p. 335), and "…to evaluate their potential as resources for the group" (Hogan, 1998: p. 60). They "*… can be seen as prewired categories of social cognition used to sort the behavior of others and to give some predictability to social life*" (Hogan, 1991: p. 879).

1.6. The Hogan Inventories

The three early tests were the Hogan Potential Inventory (HPI) (Hogan & Hogan, 2007; Hogan, Hogan, & Warrentfeltz, 2007), Hogan Development Survey (HDS) (Hogan & Hogan, 2009), and Motives, Values and Preferences Inventory (MVPI) (Hogan & Hogan, 2010). Alternative to the classical test theory and the mainstream notion that personality measures are self-reports, socioanalytical theory argues that responses to items on personality scales are self-presentations, mirroring the dynamics behind social interaction in general (Hogan, 1991). Hogan, Hogan & Roberts (1996) argue that "… *responding to questionnaire items is like talking with an anonymous interviewer. People use their item responses to tell an anonymous interviewer who they are and how they would like to be seen*" (p. 470).

The HPI is based on the FFM and aims at providing information on the personality's "bright side". That is, characteristics that either facilitate a person's ability to interact with others and achieve their educational and employment goals, or obstructs them when for example they become an extreme disposition, that either leads to too much of one behavior or inhibits the use of an opposing but complimentary conduct (Kaiser & Hogan, 2011).

The HDS on the other hand, is based on DSM-IV Axis II personality disorders and aims at providing information about a person's "dark sides", that is, dysfunctional interpersonal dispositions, which can exist alongside talent, ambition, and good social characteristics. The "dark sides" are considered extreme versions of the FFM dimensions (Hogan & Hogan, 2007), and high scorers " *… to be sel-*

fish, self-absorbed, deceitful, and unable to win the trust of their staff and therefore unable to build a team" (Hogan & Sinclair, 1997). Unless monitored by a combination of solid self-awareness and strong motivation to reach one's long-term goals, they tend to work out counterproductively (Hogan et al., 2011). For instance, while narcissistic personalities can appear remarkably charming in a job interview and even perform extraordinarily for some time, their initial inspiring impression may change. When having reached a managerial role and ample discretion, what initially seemed charismatic in an inspiring sense, may transform to boldness, arrogance, or even mischievousness, and to a threat of workplace cohesion and well-being. The dark sides are thought to leak when the individual is not focused on retaining his or her good reputation. This happens, for example, when an individual either lacks inhibition or is stressed by work overload, fatigue, high emotion, ambiguous situations, or lacks social vigilance (Nelson & Hogan, 2009).

The HDS remains a unique instrument which has been used in a number of studies in business psychology (Furnham, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020; Furnham & Crump, 2005, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2015, 2016a, 2016b; Furnham et al., 2012, 2016).

Following socioanalytic theory, the Hogan Assessment Systems have not only supplemented the five-factor model with a dark side assessment, but also with an interest measurement. In contrast to the bright- and dark-side measures, which sample a person's typical reputation (public observable behaviors) the MVPI samples identity (a person's values and aspirations)—"the inside" of personality.

The bright side, the dark side, and the inside of personality, "*are related but not identical*, *supplemental*, *not mutually exclusive*" (Hogan & Blake, 1999: p. 54).

Test and theoretical validity

In a theoretical design, structured by the socioanalytical meta-concepts of "getting along" and "getting ahead", the idea that performance is both about "*behavior that gains the approval of others*, *enhances cooperation*, *and serves to build and maintain relationships* […] *as behavior that produces results and advances an individual within the group and the group within its competition*" (Hogan & Holland, 2003: p. 103), HPI-validities of job success have been estimated far stronger than what is found in mainstream exploratory studies reporting Conscientiousness to be the only noteworthy predictor of overall performance. The figures are: .43 for Adjustment (the degree to which a person appears calm and self-accepting, or, conversely, self-critical and tense—correlating .73 with NEO-PI-R's Neuroticism), .35 for Ambition (the degree to which a person seems socially self-confident, leader-like, competitive, and energetic—correlating .56 with NEO-PI-R's Extraversion), .34 for Sociability (the degree to which a person seems to need and /or enjoy interacting with others—correlating .62 with NEO-PI-R's Extraversion), .36 for Prudence (the degree to which a person seems conscientious, conforming, and dependable—correlating .51 with NEO-PI-R's

Conscientiousness). "Getting along" criteria were best predicted by Adjustment, Prudence and Likeability, and "getting ahead" by Ambition, Adjustment and Prudence. Hogan and Judge (2012) suggest that the leadership dispositions referred to earlier, are functions of the HPI traits (except for Likeability—the degree to which a person is seen as perceptive, tactful, and socially sensitive—correlating .50 with NEO-PI-R's Agreeableness): "Integrity" is related to Adjustment, Prudence, and Likeability, "seeming decisive" is related to Adjustment and Inquisitiveness, and "seeming visionary" is related to Sociability and Inquisitiveness. "Competence", on the other hand, is a function of experience as well as of cognitive ability.

2. Theoretical Implications

The implications of socioanalytic theory appear to be that building good organizations is first and foremost about distributing status fairly and placing mature persons into power positions: those who are "*… self-accepting while at the same time realizing that he or she is not perfect*" (Hogan & Roberts, 2004: p. 214). That is, those with good self-control (as Freud taught us) *and* with the role—taking ability of interacting with a wide range of people socially appropriate without being supervised (which was Mead's more pragmatic focus on inter—rather than intra-psychological consequences). Here, fairness is a matter of individual performance in relation to the overall good of the organization. In most contexts, such performance is solid for curious, altruistic, and responsible individuals, for which reason Hogan and Roberts (2004) offer the generalization that maturity is about Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Emotional Stability. However, Kaiser, Hogan and Craig (2008) notice that what instead often happens, is that *extremely* ambitious employees, not necessarily promoting the organization's well-being, but first and foremost their egoistic career motives, emerge in key positions, resulting in many organizations suffering from more or less narcissistic leaders.

Nevertheless, socioanalytic theory could favorably elaborate on two intervening issues in particular that we will discuss below. One is the meta-theoretical question of exactly *how personality* matures, which logically leads to the other and more pragmatic question of *how to identify matureness* (people who *have* matured through the interplay with others in altering roles), and *how to identify social talents* (people who *will* mature from experiences with altering role expectations). Personality interacts with other opportunities and limitations: intelligence, relations, luck, diseases, education, culture, religion, political, and historical aspects of life also contribute to the unique life path of any individual. This, however, in no way contradicts Hogan's perspective, in which roughly "*… 50% of the variation in many organizationally relevant personality traits is genetic …* [and for that reason] *…organizations should select for these characteristics rather than trying to train them. Training for social skills makes more sense*" (Sinclair & Hogan, 1996: p. 435).

Hogan's contribution is not first and foremost a nuanced developmental theory, methodologically informative in how best to train social skills in a business context. One example is his competencies model of four overlapping developmental sequences with the latter skills depending on the appropriate development of the earlier, forming a hierarchy of trainability. From bottom and up they are: 1) *Intrapersonal skills* of self-esteem (a function of emotional stability) and self-control (a function of conscientiousness) which translates to the competence of projecting integrity; 2) *Interpersonal skills* that are about building and maintaining relationships (a function of extraversion and agreeableness); 3) *Technical skills* that can be taught and are the least dependent sequence of social skills; and 4) *Leadership skills* that are concerned with building and maintaining effective teams, and which Hogan also reduces to a handful of fundamental capabilities. These capabilities are: a) *recruiting* talented people to a team, b) *retaining* them, and c) *motivating* the team—all depending on the interpersonal skills of building positive relationships with each team member. But it is also about d) *developing a vision* for which technical competence should not be undervalued, and finally, leaders must c) possess the intrapersonal competencies of being persistent and hard to discourage to succeed (functions of Conscientiousness and Emotional Stability) (Winsborough & Hogan, 2014). The model is intuitive, and it probably structures many practitioners work on building leadership development programs. Yet more published research would be desired.

2.1. Fixation, Development and Change

Hogan's concepts of identity vs. *reputation*, and *getting along vs. getting ahead*, are not only advantageous for psychoeducation as a means to working with important psychological matters in a business context. Besides being applied in the state-of-the-art test reports of Hogan Assessment Systems, which nurtures self-insight and personal development for some coachees, these concepts also inform noteworthy research as they challenge the mainstream exploratory personality-job performance findings of weak associations. Not all others develop psychologically with their experiences—not even if they display an "impression-management-profile" of someone highly prudent, adjusted, and interpersonally sensitive. Nor do highly ambitious or very intelligent coachees necessarily calibrate the gap between their identity and reputation when, for example, they are presented with the ideas that self-insight and flexible role-taking is a path to being successful. The evidence that Hogan's tests differentiate those who reflect psychologically, learn from feedback, and cultivate good judgement framework for understanding the intersection of personality and intelligence), from those who do not, is still very speculative. In fact, an individual answering personality test items moderately might more likely mirror the kind of realistic self- and others awareness that could be hypothesized to be a prerequisite for learning from experiences, and to progress one's behavioral repertoire. Thus, we question fundamentally whether honesty (the courage to admit personal flaws to

oneself and others) *or* impression management (being self-confident, and smooth-not necessarily self and others perceptive) reflects integrity the best.

2.2. The Value of Honesty

The latent issues of those undervaluing their incompetency (Dunning et al., 2003), which often gets confused with "hard-hitter" promotion-potential, are far more problematic than manifest insecurity and stress among some employees. It is surely ill-timed when a young doctor, who might understand and present herself as someone who "criticizes people, when they need it" (an item loading negatively for Interpersonal Sensitivity), "caused trouble at school" (an item loading negatively for Prudence) and could not keep "calm during a crisis" (an item loading negatively for Adjustment), cancel a given operation due to feeling inappropriately supervised. But at the same time, both her patient and superior really ought to appreciate such honesty over the socially responsive behavior of "playing the game" and following through what was planned. Maybe such a not highly agreeable, conscientious, and emotional stable person over time will develop the appropriate self-confidence (alongside her technical skills) so that she does not call in a specialist or cancel the planned operation more often than is really relevant in order not to run the risk of causing harm. Conversely, someone less anxious, might not develop at all, or with time even end up generally overvaluing her competence.

Hogan and Warrenfeltz (2003) acknowledge that it is in fact:

> … the people with average self-confidence who are the easiest to educate. They are self-critical and willing to believe negative feedback, but they have enough self-confidence to be willing to try new ways of thinking and behaving (p. 81).

But even if a company selects for charismatic leader potential—the talent of assembling people's longings for a strong leader (Freud, 1950/1919)—rather than reflectiveness and self-criticism, how does the Hogan Assessment Systems tests differentiate this from sprouting narcissism (or even psychopaths' intentionally lying)? In Freudian intra-psychic terms, some denial of a mismatch between people's ideal ego (the flawless person I want to believe that I am) and reality, is a normal psychic defense from the anxiety associated with the incoherent and unflattering self-image that might follow with self-consciousness (Freud, 1961/1920). But confirming all such items as "I always practice what I preach" (Prudence), "I work well with other people" (Interpersonal Sensitivity), and "I rarely feel guilty about the things I have done" (Adjustment), might mirror the previously mentioned primitive defense mechanism of splitting—a narcissist not in contact with anything that challenges his identity as being all good.

Again, Hogan principally agrees that extreme HPI-scores might be associated with exaggerated strengths, and state that the HDS-measures are extensions hereof, substantiating the level of risk of dark-side derailment (Hogan & Fico, 2011).

Also, Kaiser and Hogan (2011) support that personality-performance relationships are curvilinear, as they have found scores about 1 standard deviation above the normative mean (and scores slightly below the mean) to be associated with excessive behaviors. Indeed, Hogan has contributed to a current extension of socioanalytic theory (Ewen et al., 2014), testing for political skill—"*the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives*" (Blickle et al., 2011: p. 291)—as a moderating condition in personality-job performance relations. To exemplify this, Blickle, Wendel, & Ferris (2010) report finding an extraversion x political skill interaction for car sales people; for those high on political skill, higher levels of extraversion were associated with higher levels of sales, while for individuals low on political skill, higher levels of extraversion were associated with lower levels of sales. Further, Schütte et al. (2018) even report political skill to attenuate maladaptive behaviors, as they found people high on fearless dominance (a facet of psychopathic personality) to more effectively package their agentic desires in order to get along when also being high on interpersonal influence (a facet of political skill). Nevertheless, it is not clear to us if Hogan Assessment's own tests differentiate mature from pathological defense mechanisms, or which narcissists that have the compensating social skills to maintain professional success instead of derailing into self-absorption. Paradoxically, this is intentionally avoided, as it would be discriminating against personality disordered people to test for selection purposes and thus illegal to apply.

2.3. Emotional Intelligence

Currently, the so-called Emotional Intelligence (EI) test, aimed at assessing "… *the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others*" (Mayer et al., 2000: p. 356) is more prominent than the above mentioned promising social skill paradigm. The tests within this domain can be classified into three streams: 1) ability-based models using objective test items, 2) self-report or peer-report measures based on the four-branch model of EI (perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions), and 3) "mixed models" of emotional competence. All three are positively related to the FFM traits and to cognitive ability. Streams 2 and 3 incrementally predict job performance over and above cognitive intelligence and the FFM. This suggests, that EI is something distinct from these traits, which is the reason why O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (2011) suggest developing integrative models instead of seeing cognitive intelligence, the FFM, and EI as competing measures. But incorporating EI in socioanalytic theory is not in itself a solution to the issue of becoming a deterministic theory and individualizing tool to apply in the corporate world. In the hands of the HR-practitioners, EI might just be another individual trait to select for. Instead,

to better understand, explain, measure, and *develop* "strategic self-awareness", we suggest that the socioanalytic theory develops by integrating it with a third paradigm—the clinically well-established school of mentalization theory.

2.4. Mentalizing

Combining attachment theory and neuropsychology, Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, and Target (2002) operationalize mentalizing as the form of (mostly preconscious) imaginative mental activity that humans engage in to perceive and interpret behavior in terms of intentional mental states (e.g., needs, desires, feelings, beliefs, goals, purposes, reasons, false assumptions, and lies). Corresponding to socioanalytic theory and the notion of strategic self-awareness, they explain mentalization—the capability to understand ourselves seen from the outside and others from the inside—in the light of object relation theory and as the bedrock for good interpersonal functioning and for getting one's objectives in life met. Here too, "social brains" are a hard-wired consequence of our evolutionary history (Fonagy, 2006): "*We need allies to survive and flourish. We must learn and monitor a multitude of relationships, all on shifting sands. Who is related to whom and how? Who are our friends, and who are our enemies?*", Allen (2003: p. 97) says. According to Fonagy (2006), understanding minds develop through contingent mirroring interactions with others, and not through introspection. In other words, Homo Sapiens' extraordinary social intelligence is a dialectic phenomenon. While *emotional* intelligence first of all denotes an intra-psychic capability, mentalizing is a fundamentally profound *social* phenomenon (Bateman & Fonagy, 2013), and thus it fits Hogan's inter-psychic aspirations better. If Hogan is correct, and narcissism is overrepresented in leadership positions, it is likely that executive coachees will benefit from the Mentalization-Based Treatment (MBT) paradigm, originally developed for treating borderline personality disorder, and which has shown moderate effect in treating various personality disorders.

2.5. Behavioral Role-Taking

According to Fonagy and Adshead (2012), any psychotherapeutic method contains mentalization-stimulating aspects. Possibly some hybrid of MBT (training "having mind on minds" in group sessions) and Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (behavioral role-taking training through concrete real life "home-assignments"), is suitable for combined strategic self-awareness and flexible role-taking training programs, and for meeting what Hogan and Warrenfeltz call the two most important lessons for executives. They are: "(1) *evaluating the mental models that they hold regarding their capabilities and others' expectations of their performance*; *and* (2) *how these mental models are expressed in overt or behavioral terms* (*which is social skill*)" (p. 76).

Leaders might not see the relevance of going into therapy as if they needed something fixed. But as Hogan and Warrenfeltz observe, "*executives, as a group*,

are competitive people who are looking for any edge over their rivals, *and most of them take coaching very seriously*" (p. 82). Therefore, it might be possible to sell the idea that any leader would benefit from refining their skills to anticipate their own and others' mental states accurately through MBT. Because the aim of MBT is not insight, but to recover the capacity to understand ones experiences with others through achieving representational coherence and integration for intentional states (Fonagy, 2010). Thus, we suggest the paradigm should cover an interesting evidence base for personality development.

2.6. Personality Change

MBT, as an example, is considered having the potential of improving affect regulation, the ability to soothe oneself, and to control impulse. This probably equates becoming emotionally more stable, which increases the individual's chances of successful "getting ahead" and "getting along" in life and thus disarms the concern that applying personality theory leads to hard determinism. Also, mentalization theory opposes the concern that personality theory individualizes relational challenges. Even if lack of epistemic thrust that others' feedback can be trusted, and the "hard to reach" profile of someone not receptive of social norms might seem trait-like, such a "strong leader-profile" can simultaneously be an adaptation to being in a power position often attracting high levels of interpersonal aggression (Fonagy et al., 2017; Liotti & Gilbert, 2011). From a Freudian perspective, narcissistic longing to be perfect is not in itself dubious. Here, denial of the flaws that others will scrutinize for and project to someone in a leadership role, is a rather logical symptom of being the leader and perhaps feeling insecure or conversely omnipotent due to the pressure and limelight on such a role.

Paradoxically, charisma seems to be both a prerequisite for followership and a risk factor for derailment (Hogan & Fico, 2011). Therefore, models of how to intervene structurally may supplement the individual intervention of recruiting cleverly for key positions. No matter how social intelligent any person or group of persons might be, anyone will "… temporarily lose awareness that others have minds, and can even at times treat one another as physical objects" (p. 595). Therefore, Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2005) proposed a model for social change through the concept of *mentalizing communities*. Analogously, we suggest that Hogan's primary focus on leaders' personality structure's influence on organizations is supplemented by a more elaborate view on organizational structure's influence on persons. Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco (2005) agree with the importance of training leaders and selecting those without pathological narcissism, but stress that it is rather a coercive power dynamic in itself than the individual leader that tends:

> … to convert mentalizing individuals into self-centered ones who take care only of their own individual/immediate family needs, because the experience of coercion creates a survival mindset in them, narrowing their

perspective and increasing greediness and envy (p. 269).

Thus, they suggest that the dominating value of competitiveness that characterizes some societies, gets balanced by institutionalizing also values of social harmony, altruism, and compassionate feelings. Corresponding to the socioanalytic idea that intense "getting ahead" atmospheres are at risk of decoupling employee's engagement in the "getting along" aspects of professional team behavior:

> Coercion creates changes in the way the mind works, which causes the mind to overgeneralize, stereotype, promote prejudice, and favor a tendency to oversimplify and deny. A coercive mindset also tends to perseverate, that is, to repeatedly apply inappropriate solutions to different problems without understanding that these solutions are inappropriate (p. 269-270).

Thus, Fonagy and Luyten's (2009) bio-behavioral switch model of the relationship between stress and controlled versus automatic mentalizing, possibly offers some explanatory power to Hogan's theories about "dark side" behaviors. Here, mentalizing is predicted to switch off when the self-protective fight-flight response turns on. Under too little arousal it does not function fully, which leads to a heightened prevalence of habitual and instinctual behaviors, such as in a familiar atmosphere with no other obvious agenda than "getting along".

Mentalization has mostly been assessed through various time-consuming clinical interviews, and not much is known about how such methods transfer to a normal population, and with what validity in predicting leadership behavior, for example. But some promising work, corresponding to the easily administered item-responding format usually used for selection, is in its initial phase. For instance, the "Reading the mind in the eyes test" differentiates reliably in a normal population people's abilities to assess others' mental states from only seeing their eyes (Vellante et al., 2013). However, borderline personality disordered individuals perform this kind of non-reflective mentalizing normally (Schilling et al., 2012), or maybe even better than control groups without disorders (Fertuck et al., 2009).

Another interesting approach aimed at mentalizing is Fonagy et al.'s (2016) work with "The Reflective Functioning Questionnaire", which might also be free from socially desirable biases even if it is in a self-report format. As Hogan has basically argued, to mentalize in the context of faking a test is about imagining correctly what others will find an inconspicuous response. And using median-scored items such as "I always know what I feel" or "I don't always know why I do what I do", a "non-mentalizer" will find it difficult to figure out that a desirable response (reflecting an awareness of the opaqueness of mental states) is to disagree or agree somewhat, while strongly agreeing or disagreeing reflects a problematic lack of knowledge of mental states. That said, one could easily learn the "correct answers" by heart in these two tests, which currently consist of only 36 and 54 (public accessible) items respectively. Curiously, while The Reflective

Functioning Questionnaire, which is becoming a tool for clinical assessment, seems inspired by IO-psychologists' easily administered and highly standardized methods, IO-psychology might concurrently learn from the clinical interview, and thus perhaps also from the use of projective tests, because vocational personality test results in many cases are validated in an interview with the candidate anyway. Intuitively, such concrete social interactions that interviews are, could be used to assess social and emotional reflective talents more directly than the current FFM-based questionnaire tradition in itself does.

3. Conclusion

Hogan's personality theory is indeed alive in IO-psychology. In our view his life-long concern that the topic is not given the appropriate weight neither in the university curriculums (e.g., Hogan, 1998; Hogan, 2005) nor amongst vocational psychologists in particular (e.g., Hogan & Blake, 1999), has been sublimated into a significant contribution for both academic and applied IO-psychology. The HPI, for example, has been taken by millions of working adults globally, all introduced to the notion that personality influences their professional lives. In addition, a lot of socioanalytical research is done these years (e.g., Hogan's framework accounted for no less than 29 presentations in SIOP's 2017 conference). In fact, the concept of personality is today consolidated to a degree that we suggest the next generation of socioanalytic theory to appreciate the reservations that are still there rather than spending more resources on proving sceptics wrong, with the potential result of exaggerating the stability and validity of the concept.

Socioanalytic theory has improved early theorists' (Freud and Mead) more speculative foundation by adding nomothetic validation of their important insights. This is the case even if it is a theory that grasps recognizable but generally tabooed everyday life tensions. For example, it is familiar to most people that others' pay-raises or promotions can stimulate envious feelings, and when experienced unfair, even slandering. Thus, the socioanalytic interpretation of human motivation might be better than the idea that people are basically altruistic and responsible, and that these traits flourish when organizational hierarchies are deconstructed. Therefore, HR-professionals and leaders might be better informed by the socioanalytic theory reminding us that hierarchies arise in human groups because they are adaptive, than they are by the idea that hierarchies are generally counterproductive. That said, people differ and *can* change (their identities, behavior, and reputations) (Hogan, 2007), but generally they react to situational factors of, for example, fuzzy or unfair hierarchical structures, with an increased likelihood of dark side behaviors (Nelson & Hogan, 2009). In other words, intervening structurally is not only about populating hierarchical top positions with mature persons. Socioanalytic theory does not say much about how to maintain circumstances wherein neither ambition nor any other bright side traits turn to dark side egocentrism, or in what way it can be stipulated that more or less narcissistic or obsessive driven career runners mature instead of

derail. We suggest that socioanalytics of the future focus on their developmental theory, and that the mentalization paradigm offers some answers as how to secure leaders to stay aware that: 1) continuous organizational success is about "getting along" and "getting ahead" simultaneously, and 2) that the awareness of others' mental states is a prerequisite for maintaining a good reputation and gain followership.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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