

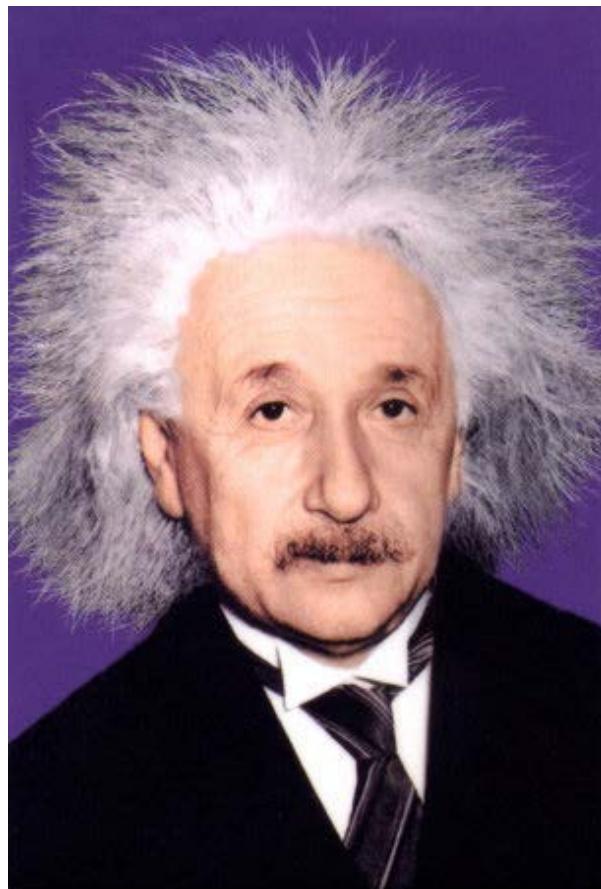
# Social Relationships and Scientific Creativity

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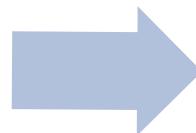
Emory University

# Eminent Creatives and Personality



# A Social Psychological Perspective

Context  
(examples)



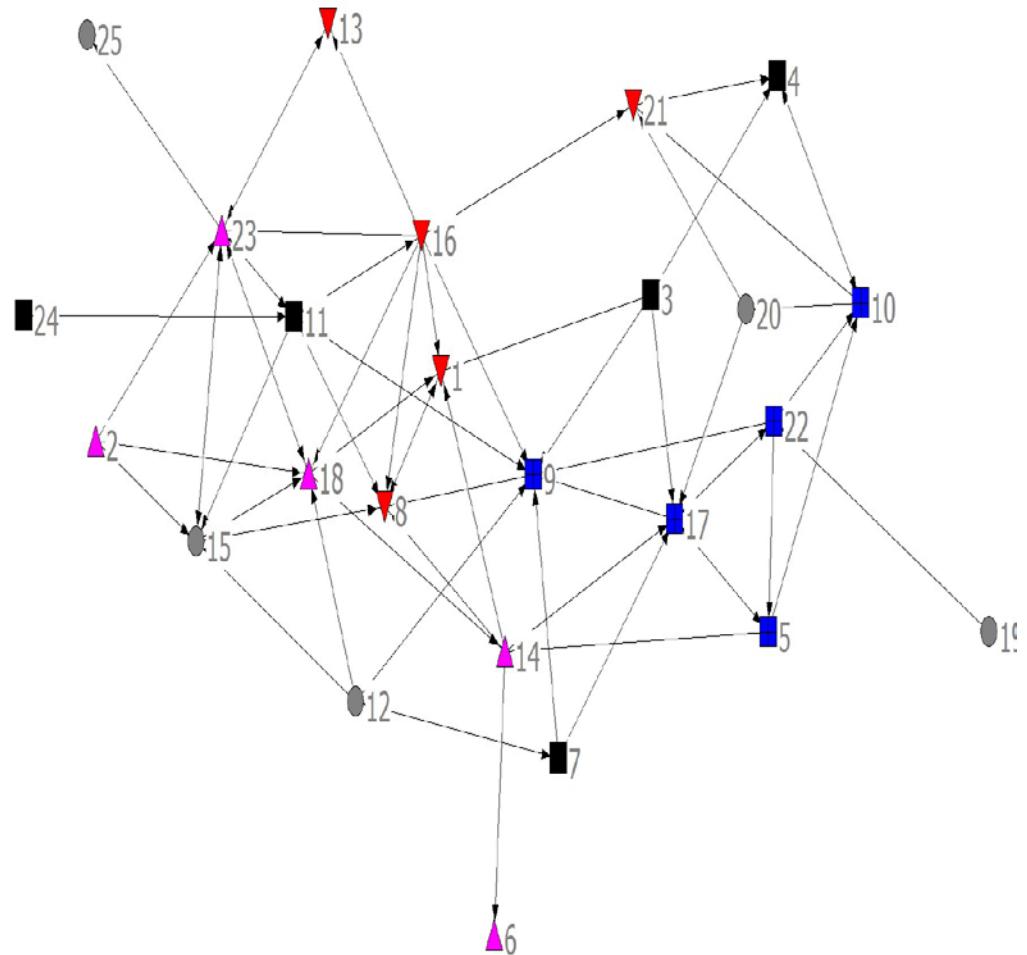
States  
(examples)

- Feedback or evaluation
- Rewards
- Deviance opportunities
- Supportive leadership

- Intrinsic motivation
- Mood (positive, ambivalence)
- Domain relevant knowledge

# Lone Genius or Creative Collaborator?

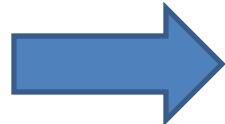
- May work alone but still influenced by others
- Relationships as extension of individual
- A social network perspective of team composition



# Creativity as a Social Process

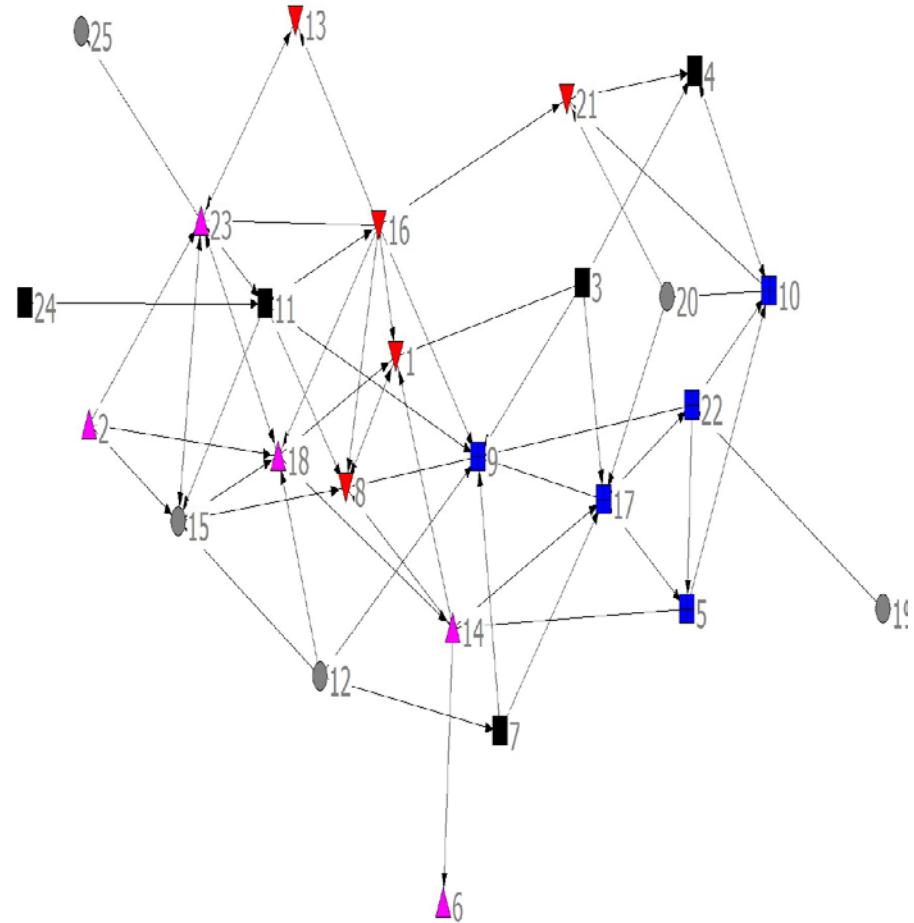
Why a network perspective?

- Access to knowledge
- Alter cognition of focal scientist



# Individual Situated within Network

- Informal relationships
  - Advice seeking
  - Organizational sense making
- Relationship strength
- Network position
- Cross boundary ties



# Social Networks of Creative Scientists

## “LabCo”

Network Characteristic	Key Finding
Tie Strength	Weak ties facilitate creativity; strong ties do not
Network Centrality	Centrality facilitates creativity if low outside ties
Ties Outside Lab	Outside ties facilitate if low centrality (periphery)

Perry-Smith, J.E. (2006) Social yet creative: The role of Social relationships in facilitating individual creativity. Academy of Management Journal, 49, 85-101.

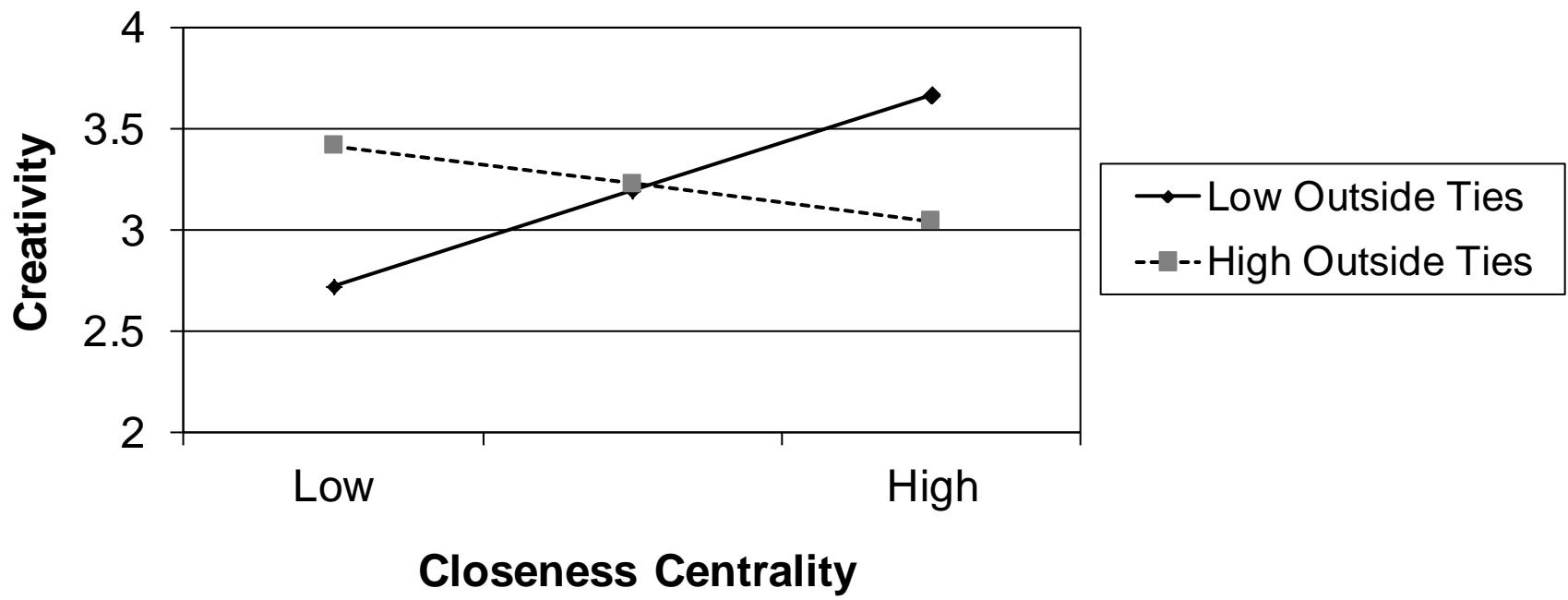
# Why Number of Weak Ties?

- Access to new and different
  - Different social circles
  - Little homophily

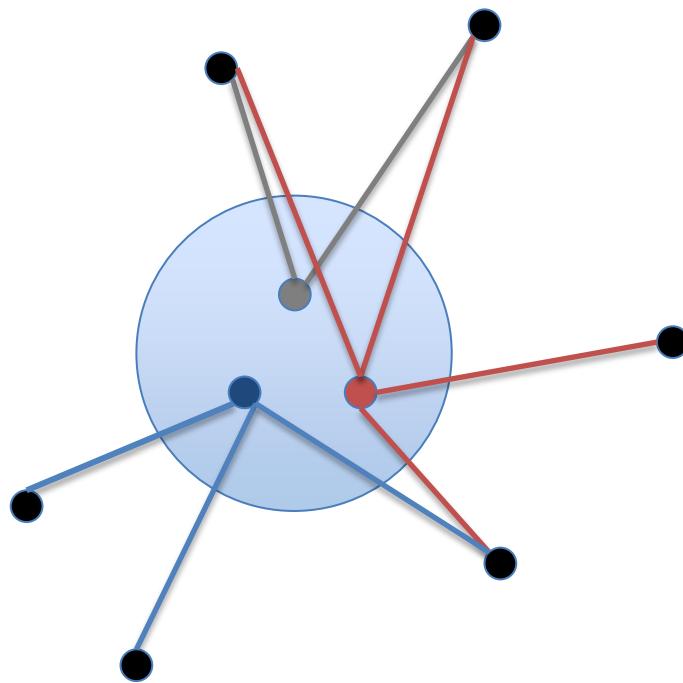
⇒ New information, broader knowledge base

⇒ Diverse perspectives, creative cognition
- Low social influence and conformity
  - Cognitive flexibility; autonomous thinking

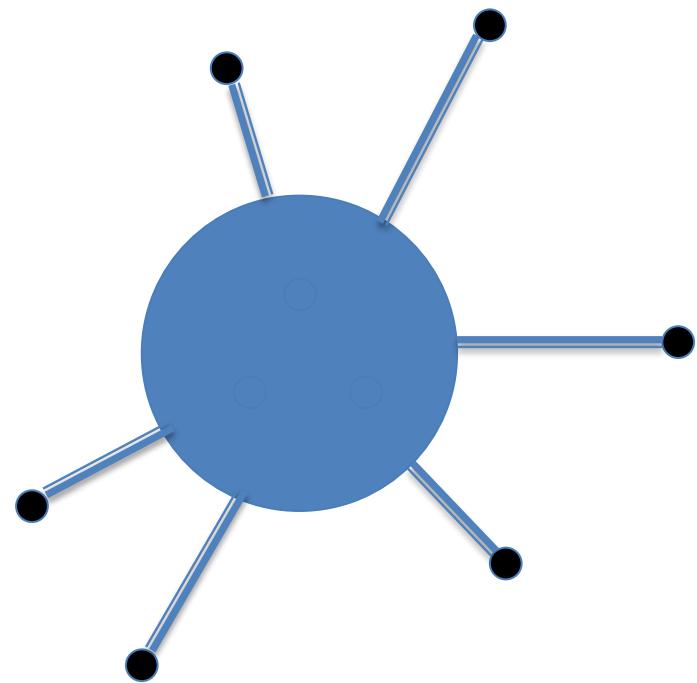
FIGURE 1  
**Interaction of Outside Ties and Centrality**



# Scientist as Team Member



Configural Cross Cutting Ties



Global Cross Cutting Ties

# Member Cross Cutting Ties

Network Characteristic	Key Finding
External Nationality Heterogeneity	Member heterogeneous nationality ties outside of the team that are weak, facilitate the team's creativity.
External tie strength	

# Practical Recommendations

- Encouraging weak ties and centrality/periphery balance
  - Move strong performers, who may be central to the periphery. Instead of moving “up the ladder,” move “off the ladder”
  - Provide internal “mini” sabbaticals across teams
- Emphasize member outside ties to achieve cognitive variation within team. Internal similarity may be okay.

# Research Recommendations

- How does the role of relationships change throughout various stages of creative pursuits (generation, elaboration, implementation)?
- How does the team leader and her networks relative to team members affect the creativity of the team?
- How do individuals effectively move from individual creative collaborator to creative team member?



# Thank You