

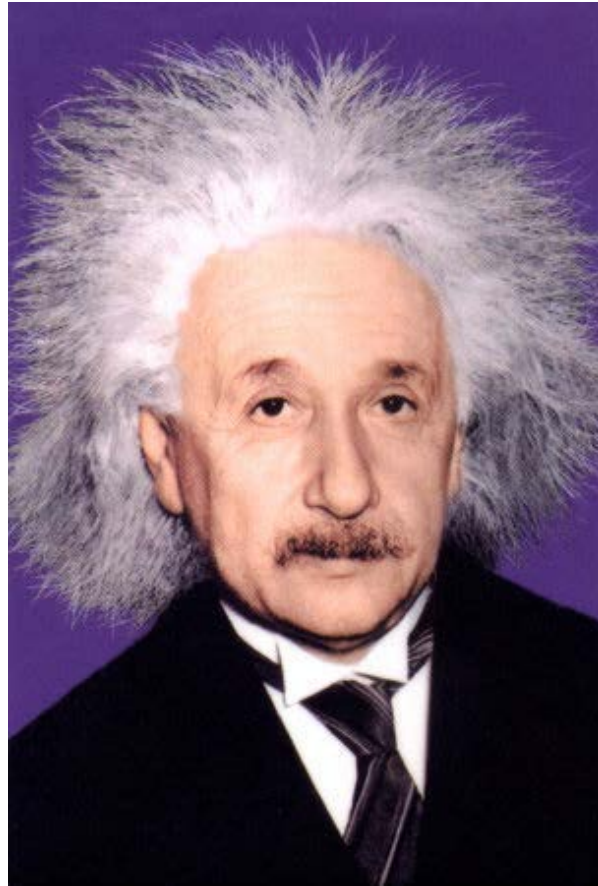
Social Relationships and Scientific Creativity

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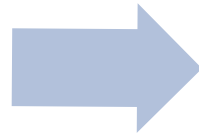
Emory University

Eminent Creatives and Personality



A Social Psychological Perspective

Context
(examples)



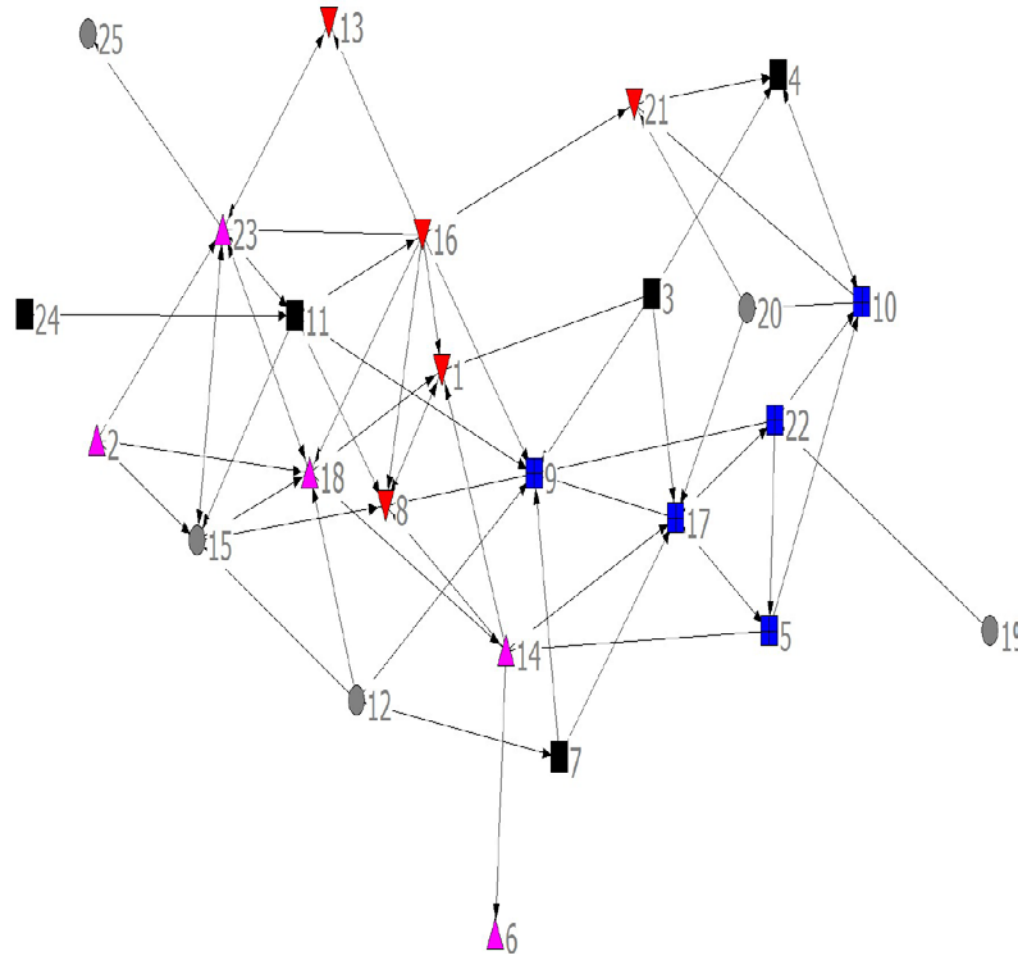
States
(examples)

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

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

Lone Genius or Creative Collaborator?

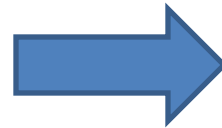
- May work alone but still influenced by others
- Relationships as extension of individual
- A social network perspective of team composition



Creativity as a Social Process

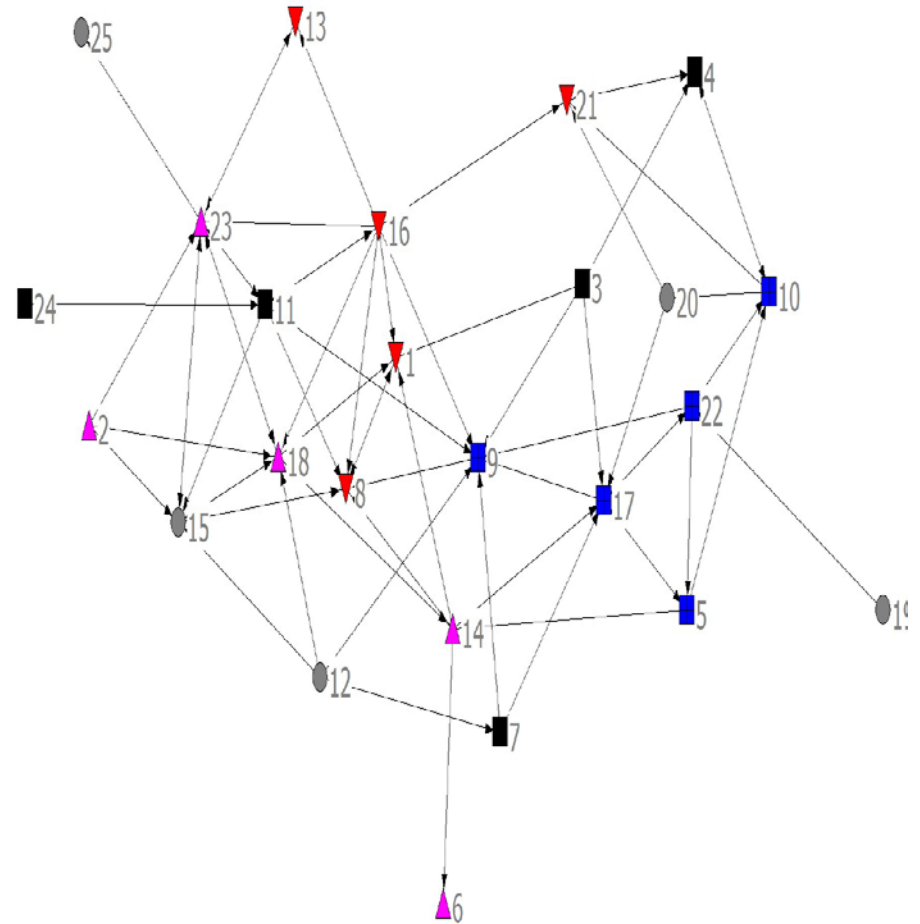
Why a network perspective?

- 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)

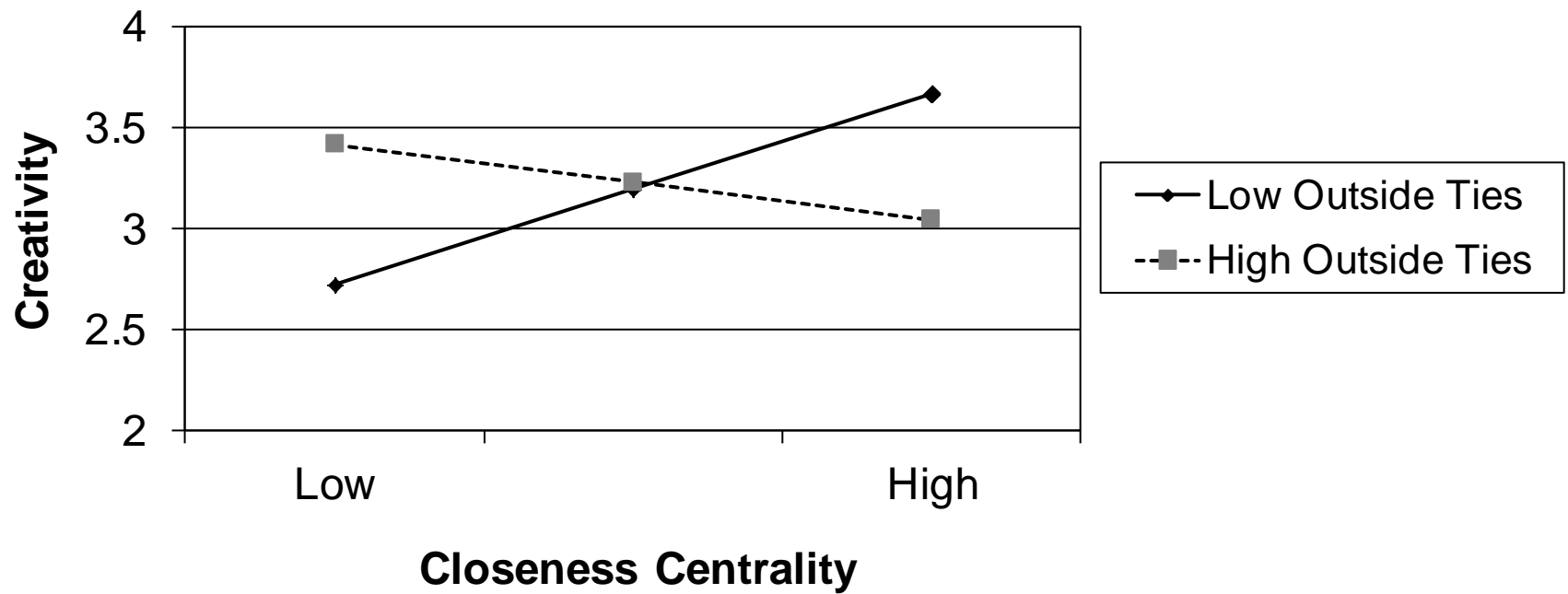
Perry-Smith, J.E. (2006) Social yet creative: The role of Social relationships in facilitating individual creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 85-101.

Why Number of Weak Ties?

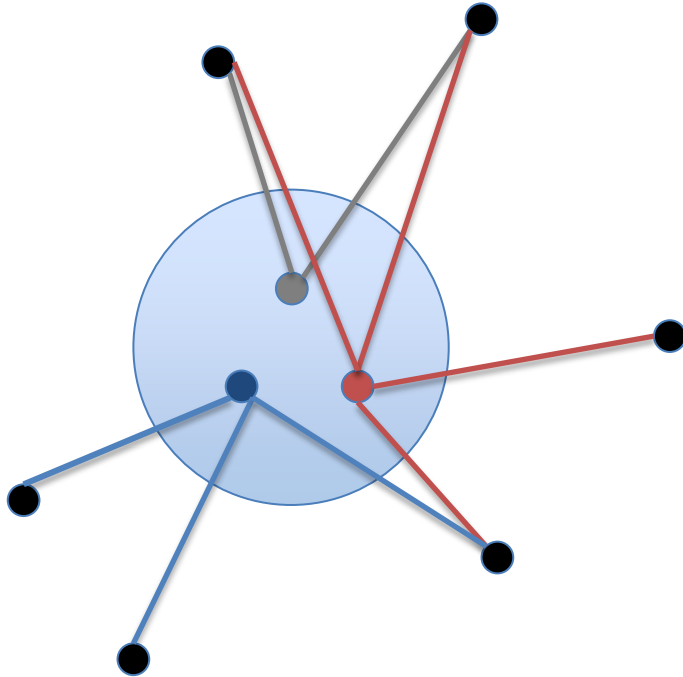
- Access to new and different
 - Different social circles
 - Little homophily
 - ⇒ New information, broader knowledge base
 - ⇒ Diverse perspectives, creative cognition
- Low social influence and conformity
 - Cognitive flexibility; autonomous thinking

FIGURE 1

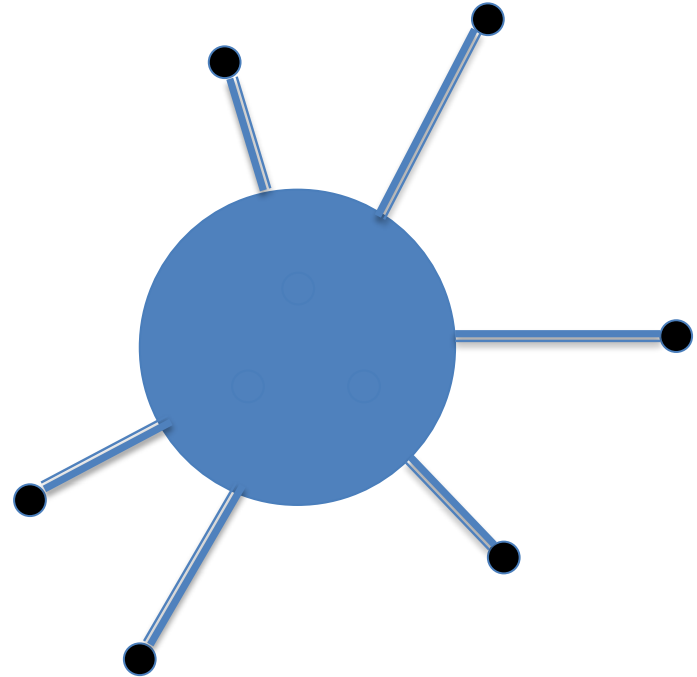
Interaction of Outside Ties and Centrality



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	

Perry-Smith, J.E. & Shalley, C.E. In progress. A social composition view of Team creativity: The role of nationality diverse configural cross cutting ties.

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

