



***Does Density Imply Collaboration? The Moderating Effect of a Collaborative Work Context on the Relationship Between Network Structure and Creativity***

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A long research tradition has not found a definitive response to the old question of whether bonding ties, relative to bridging ties, are beneficial for innovative outcomes. This discussion has largely developed without much consideration for the broader context in which network ties exist. In other words, network research has implied that “the network is the context” (Borgatti et al. 2014: 21). As a result, there is a lack of understanding of how contextual factors moderate the relationship between network structures and outcomes. In particular, the causal chain connecting dense network structures and outcomes is underspecified and ignores the possibility that dense structures may not automatically lead to collaboration. We address this problem by modeling collaboration as a factor that is exogenous to the network, and exploring if and how it combines with a dense social structure in predicting knowledge acquisition, and, in turn, individual creativity. We find that dense social structures lead to knowledge acquisition and individual creativity *only if*—and not *because*—they are also experienced as highly collaborative structures.