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In direct breach of managerial edicts: a practice approach to creative deviance in professional service firms

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Drawing on practice as a meta-theoretical lens, we explore creative deviance (CD): wilful violation of managerial orders by employee(s) to pursue creative ideas. Data for our inquiry comes from in-depth interviews with middle managers and employees in two professional service firms (PSFs). We argue that two distinct organising processes are necessary for the emergence of CD in practice: organising configuration and formalisation of R&D processes. We develop these dimensions to produce a typology of interrelated ideal types of outcomes when employees are explicitly instructed to stop pursuing an idea. We found three salient organising practices (technical concerns for efficiency and metrics, suppression of *metistic* knowledge and disjointed managerial responses to violations of sanctioned organising procedures), which may operate in combination or serially, to foster CD in practice. We conclude with some key implications for the theory and practice of creativity in PSFs.

1. Introduction

Creativity plays a central role in the generation and capture of sustainable value relevant for competitiveness (Gotsi et al., 2010; Slavich and Svejenova, 2016). Creative employees have, therefore, become the most 'sought-after resources' in the pursuit of organisational objectives and stretch goals (Andriopoulos, 2003; Sitkin et al., 2011). Some organisations go as far as establishing idea generation

schemes to source ideas during the initial stages of the creative process (Van Dijk and Van Den Ende, 2002; Toubia, 2006). Nevertheless, organisations' efforts in cultivating and encouraging creativity are inconsistent with their efforts to deploy the creative potential at their disposal optimally (Mueller et al., 2012). For example, 'creative' employees frequently experience the setback of being asked by managers to stop working on an idea because it challenges established routines, opens up avenues for uncertainty or dissipates

scarce organisational resources (Staw, 1995; Olin and Wickenberg, 2001). Individuals may wilfully choose to defy the managerial order to pursue the idea irrespective of any potential consequence. This kind of direct breach of managerial edicts has come to be known as creative deviance (CD). Following Mainemelis (2010, p. 560), we define CD as 'the violation of a managerial order to stop working on a new idea'. Building on early sociological work on the violation of accepted social norms and individual creativity, which emphasise autonomy, non-conformity and openness to stimuli, recent studies have shed some light on the emergence of CD, highlighting its regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive dimensions (Mainemelis, 2010; Criscuolo et al., 2014).

Despite this progress, existing theoretical efforts have overlooked how the adaptive formal and informal emergent structures governing the situated practices of organisational actors (Sarpong and Maclean, 2012) may facilitate (or constrain) CD. We argue that processes and practices which are actively reproduced and re-embedded in everyday situated organising have the potential to facilitate or impede the enactment of CD in practice. Our explanation centres on the argument that CD is determined by two distinct organising processes: organising configurations and formalisation of R&D. We contribute to the broad creativity literature and the nascent subject of CD in the following ways: extending our understanding of the emergence of CD in practice, we unpack salient organising practices that may operate in combination or serially to foster the enactment of CD in organising; additionally, employing a qualitative case-study approach, we suggest a rethink of why members in some organisations may be more prone to CD than others.

We develop our contribution in the context of two PSFs embedded in industries (Media and Software) which tend to prioritise creativity in delivering bespoke and innovative expert advice and services to their clients (Von Nordenflycht, 2010). This paper is structured as follows: First, we examine the literature on organisational creativity and deviance exploring linkages between them. We then present a framework that specifies employees' potential responses to being asked to stop pursuing an idea. Following our research methodology, we present the findings from our study and conclude with some implications from our study for the management of CD in organising.

2. Creative deviance in organising

Creativity, the 'production of novel and useful ideas' Amabile (1998, p. 126), which may result in future innovation, is embraced in most organisations without reservation. Yet, it may be unrealistic to think of an ideal organisational situation where opportunities are provided to explore all creative ideas further (Mueller et al., 2012). This challenge has prompted research interest into creative forecasting and the organising context within which creative ideas get accepted or rejected (Rietzschel et al., 2010; Berg, 2015). The emerging consensus is that there is actual competition among creative ideas for scarce organisational resources, including money, time, space and technical logistics (Levitt, 2002; Gotsi et al., 2010). In this regard, employees are frequently asked by managers to stop pursuing some creative ideas. Rather than obeying the managerial edict to stop working on an idea, some individuals engage in CD (Mainemelis, 2010) – wilful violation of a managerial order to stop pursuing a creative idea. By engaging in CD, employees defy the norms of legitimate workplace processes in a bid to explore creative ideas. Identifying structural strain as the main facilitator of CD, Mainemelis (2010) goes on to argue that the very factors which promote creativity may operate in combination either simultaneously or serially, to encourage employees to engage in CD. Thus, for example, while the presence of pro-creative conditions might spur employees to come up with ideas, a lack of resources to pursue these ideas can induce employees to seek alternative (albeit deviant) ways of pursuing their ideas. While CD raises ethical concerns that could potentially precipitate organisational failure (Cropley and Cropley, 2011), its benefits to organisations are the potential positive outcomes frequently highlighted. For example, Thatte et al. (2012) examined employee use of information technology prohibited by their organisation in performing their duties and romanticised such activities' potential for innovation despite the risks associated with rogue practices. In an extension of the theory of CD, Criscuolo et al. (2014), found that some R&D personnel surreptitiously pursue ideas which have no organisational support. Referring to the phenomenon as 'Bootlegging', they explored how individuals come to secretly organise corporate innovation without official authorisation, leading to significant positive outcomes for their organisations. They note however that the benefits of these acts depend largely on the importance organisations place on strict conformance to workplace guidelines. However, whereas CD entails an actual contravention of a managerial order to stop working on an idea, bootlegging entails secretly working on an idea with no managerial permission (Lin et al., 2013).

Recent literature has also extended our understanding of personality traits as dispositional antecedents to CD (Kusá, 2006; Cropley and Cropley, 2011), and what determines how organisations are likely to

respond to acts of CD (Jefferies, 2007; Soda and Bizzi, 2012). In particular, aberrant personality traits such as narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy has been highlighted (Wu and Lebreton, 2011). For Lin et al. (2013), the likely managerial responses to CD may include forgiving, rewarding, punishing, ignoring and manipulating. Relatedly, Röder et al.'s (2014) study of deviations from established routines as a result of gaps in predefined work processes found that management were likely to tolerate employee 'workaround' behaviours if they expected gains in efficiency and perceived weaknesses in existing processes (Lopez, 2007).

Surprisingly, while the emerging stream of literature implicitly or explicitly acknowledges the salient role of internal context and industry embeddedness, there is no empirical work focussing on the interplay between formalisation of working practices and how the structural orientation of an organising context may influence CD. Most importantly, what remains underaddressed is how organising practices – the everyday mundane activities and practices that come together to define the way work is organised – could extend our understanding of employees' responses to an order to stop working on an idea. In the next section, we chart a framework to classify employees' potential responses to a managerial order to stop pursuing an idea.

3. Employee response to managerial orders to stop working on an idea

While prior research has extended our understanding what constitutes CD, its logic and complex paradoxes in its management in context, in this article, we suggest that a detailed conception of the influence of organising practices on CD is needed. That is, we argue that in order to understand the variation that occurs among employees in responding to managerial orders to stop pursuing a given idea within organisations, we present a framework built around two lines of attention with significant implications for employee deviance in practice. Thus, in establishing these dimensions along a continuum, we are able to categorise in a more nuanced and revealing way than has previously been the case, potential employee responses to managerial orders to stop pursuing an idea within an organising regime (see Table 1).

The first dimension is organising configurations. This relates to an organisation's structure, strategy and leadership which implicitly (or explicitly) specify institutionalised power structures, control systems and rituals, all of which shape what organisation members can or cannot do in their situated practice. Building on early community-of-practice work examining workplace practices (e.g. Brown and Duguid, 1991), we suggest that the nature of a given configuration (rigid or flexible) shapes the everyday mundane activities and practices of organisation members, which come together to define the way work is organised and done.

The second is the formalisation of R&D processes, which relates to the degree to which creativity is governed by formal rules, standard policies and procedures which emphasise conformity as opposed to autonomy. This dimension relates to previous work in which scholars have examined the adaptive formal and informal emergent structures embodying and governing the emergence of creative exploration and exploitation of potential past and future possibilities

Table 1. Employee responses to managerial order to stop working on an idea(s)

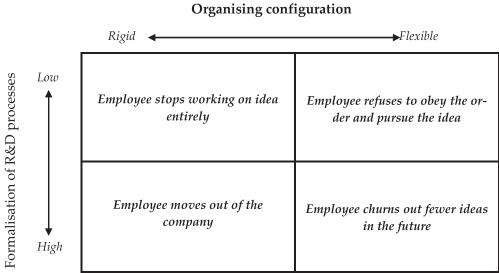|	Organising configuration	
	Rigid ⟷ *Flexible*	
Low	Employee stops working on idea entirely	Employee refuses to obey the order and pursue the idea
High	Employee moves out of the company	Employee churns out fewer ideas in the future

(Formalisation of R&D processes)

Table 2. Comparative biographical sketches of the case organisations

Case organisation	Area of activity	Products and services	Turn-over[1]	Staff[2]
Paragon	Specialised software development for cash logistics sector	Vault management software, note deposit notification software, branch cash recycling, bulk cash consignment tracking software	£75m	35
Web Media	Media agency specialising in digital marketing, print and editorial	Fully functional marketing services-television, internet, audio and games, fashion, advertising, direct mail, proof-reading, copywriting and editing.	£96m	116

[1]'Turnover' refers to the case organisations annual turnover per year in pounds sterling.
[2]'Staff' refers to the number of people employed by the case organisation at the time of data collection.

and present limits (Kijkuit and Van Den Ende, 2007). We follow Mainemelis (2010) to argue that renouncing proposed ideas could be one the most difficult setbacks creative employees confront in their careers, partly because they have conceived and nurtured these ideas over time and grown attached to their potential breakthrough. Our conceptually derived typology therefore produces four interrelated types of outcomes when a manager directs an employee to stop pursuing a given idea: (1) the employee may obey the managerial edict to stop working on the idea but continue to come up with other ideas in the future (2) (s)he may give up the idea entirely and perhaps consider fewer ideas in the future (Zhang and Bartol, 2010) (3) the employee who is not prepared to give up on their idea may simply decide to move out of the company and explore their ideas further under more supportive circumstances (Shalley et al., 2000), (4), (s)he may refuse to obey the managerial order and go ahead to pursue the idea (Mainemelis, 2010). The fourth outcome, CD, is the focus of this article. Distinguishable in terms of their tolerance for managerial edicts in practice, these outcomes are mutually exclusive and account for multiple casual relationships which shape any given organising setting in practice. In this regard, we ask: How can organising practices facilitate (or impede) CD? We empirically examined this question in the context of everyday organising in two atypical PSFs operating in the South West of England. In the next section, we present the research methodology guiding our empirical inquiry.

4. Research methodology

We develop our contribution in the context of PSFs – service firms that prioritise high levels of innovative performance, offering customised knowledge-based services for their clients (Von Nordenflycht, 2010). Employing a multiple case design (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002), two PSFs embedded in the global software and media industries served as our research sites. Our choice is premised on the fact that these industries tend to place a lot of emphasis on creativity in their established work groups and thrive on unclear work processes and outcomes (Banks et al., 2002; Stuhlfaut, 2011). Our Software and Media firms both operate in high velocity markets characterised by fleeting technologies and thrive on creativity in creating and capturing value from their service offerings. In order to preserve their anonymity, the firms go by their pseudonyms Webmedia, and Paragon. An overview of the two firms is presented in Table 2.

Given the paucity of empirical research on CD in practice, we adopted an exploratory research methodology (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Maxwell, 2012), enabling us to develop greater theoretical insight into the context within which CD plays out in real life organising. We chose to focus on 'exceptionally creative' individuals working in the two firms. In identifying these creative individuals, we opted for peer nominations to avoid the creative ability syndrome (Eisenman, 1999; Ng and Feldman, 2012). In this regard, we developed a short peer nomination scale (Balda et al., 2005), seeking to identify individuals who were 'original, effective or useful in their originality, had new ideas, were able to come up with solutions to problems that most could not, could think in ways that went beyond the conventional and come up with helpful solutions etc.' (Eisenman, 1999, p. 206). Our administrative instruction required individuals to nominate two (2) of their colleagues whom they considered to be exceptionally creative. The nomination forms were distributed to 150 employees from the two firms, out of which 103 were completed and returned.

In our effort to get a satisfactory number of research participants, we adopted a basic sampling strategy where individuals nominated by at least five (5) of their peers qualified to serve as participants of the study. In all, four (4) individuals from Paragon and six (6) from Webmedia met our sampling criteria. The nominated individuals were then invited to take part in the study. In addition, three (3) individuals who almost made the cut-off were listed as reserves, to be called

Table 3. Interviewee descriptor

#	Position	Company	Number of years worked
1	Accounts manager	Paragon	5
2	General manager	Paragon	7
3	ISA Developer	Paragon	4
4	Chief software architect	Paragon	2
5	Head of development	Paragon	9
6	Software developer	Paragon	6
7	Creative head	Webmedia	5
8	Operations manager	Webmedia	8
9	Product designer	Webmedia	5
10	Web applications developer	Webmedia	3
11	Animation	Webmedia	4
12	Filming and editing	Webmedia	1
13	Brand specialist	Webmedia	4
14	Marketing assistant	Webmedia	3

upon in case any of our participant(s) decided to opt out of the study. Given the ethereal nature of CD in practice, a qualitative method of data collection was deemed appropriate to help us capture the lived experience of our research participants (Rouleau, 2010), which we considered to be of prime importance in generating insight into their everyday situated work experiences of CD. Data were collected over 6-month period through semistructured interviews. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hr and all were digitally recorded and transcribed. We asked respondents to tell us about their jobs, roles and responsibilities. We probed deeply into the way their units and firms organised and nurtured creativity and then invited them to share with us their own stories on defying managerial orders in their situated practices. In our effort to get a better understanding of the context of some of the stories we heard in the field, we went further to interview two managers from each of the case organisations. Table 3 is a summary of our interviewee descriptors.

The full data analysis then followed three steps. First, following our theoretical perspective, our initial textual analysis focussed on mapping our interviewee narratives onto the two concepts of creativity or deviance, which served as our basic social processes. Recurrent phrases were analytically converted (Grbich, 2012), to fit into the two basic categories. Second, Drawing on theoretical insights from the extant literature on creativity and deviance, the identified segments were then analysed and interpreted iteratively until common themes emerged and became saturated (Suddaby, 2006). These themes were then sorted, reconstituted (Strauss and Corbin, 2008) and

indexed to generate the analytical categories of technical concerns for efficiency and metrics, suppression of 'metistic knowledge' and disjointed managerial responses to the violations of sanctioned organising procedures. Probing further the connections and conceptual properties of the respective categories, we developed the aggregate theoretical dimensions of 'functional fixedness', 'incongruence-in-creative frames' and 'shifting sands', which we used to explore viable theoretical explanations of CD in organising (see Table 4).

Following this, the final categories in the form of thematic frameworks were applied to the entire dataset by annotating them with numerical codes which were also supported with short descriptors elaborating the headings (Braun et al., 2014). Systematic comparison of the indexed themes against existing literature enabled us to build up an understanding of the larger social, historical and intellectual context within which CD is likely to take place. In order to identify logical patterns and produce generalities, we re-arranged our data under the key themes in a matrix (Dey, 2003). Generated typologies and causal association between the various themes were then made. Finally, we used our emerging patterns to develop greater insight and form descriptive explanations as to why our research participants may engage in CD in their situated practice.
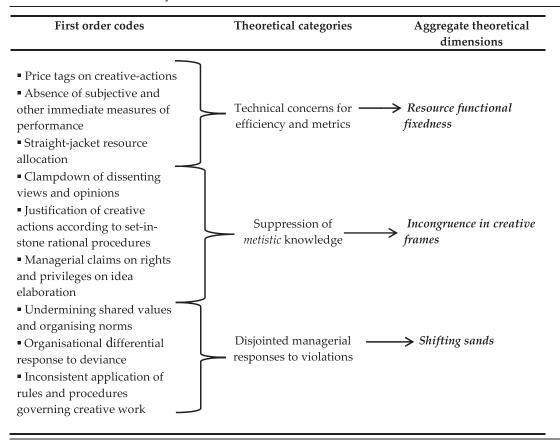
5. Research findings

Our data analysis suggests our PSF firms did not only prioritise and emphasise employee autonomy, they also had no explicit guidelines on what constitutes their normative creative boundaries in reaching their stretch goals. Systemic and rife in both firms, we found CD in organising to be facilitated by salient practices that may operate in combination or serially and which may lead individuals to engage in CD. We categorise these practices around three specific lines of attention: 'functional fixedness', related to the excessive emphasis on the cost of resources in justifying creative actions; incongruence 'in creative frames', when there is non-progressive correlation between individuals and managerial vision of the future and how goals should be met; and 'shifting sands', which encompasses the frequent changes on creative organising practice. We now present the fine details of our findings.

5.1. Resource functional fixedness

Resource functional fixedness, as used in organising our findings, refers to organising bias which restricts creative employees to using resources only in one accepted way. The upshot of this fixedness is a tight

Table 4. Overview of data analysis

First order codes	Theoretical categories	Aggregate theoretical dimensions
▪ Price tags on creative-actions ▪ Absence of subjective and other immediate measures of performance ▪ Straight-jacket resource allocation	Technical concerns for efficiency and metrics ⟶	*Resource functional fixedness*
▪ Clampdown of dissenting views and opinions ▪ Justification of creative actions according to set-in-stone rational procedures ▪ Managerial claims on rights and privileges on idea elaboration	Suppression of *metistic* knowledge ⟶	*Incongruence in creative frames*
▪ Undermining shared values and organising norms ▪ Organisational differential response to deviance ▪ Inconsistent application of rules and procedures governing creative work	Disjointed managerial responses to violations ⟶	*Shifting sands*

process of assigning and managing scarce resources (including time and money), by prioritising technical metrics. Its influence on CD manifests itself when management over-emphasise the cost, returns and efficiency of all creative actions. As argued by one of our managers:

> I have come to realise that as a business, we need to stick a balance on allocating resources and if you spend too much money on certain things whose value cannot be quantified or justified, the business will suffer [Operations Manager].

While the manager's emphasis on balancing the books seems fair and logical, some employees observe that his 'over emphasis' on efficiency and returns gave them little room to test ideas which frequently do not require huge investments. For these employees, economic arguments trump their efforts to be creative.

> They keep saying there is no money. We have a creeping audit culture that makes it impossible to 'think the unthinkable'. When feasible, I just ignore their bean-counting stuff and do my own thing on their blind side when I feel it does really matter [Marketing Assistant].

We argue that feeling bold to pursue ideas on the blind side of management set the stage for this individual to wilfully defy managerial orders to stop working on their ideas. Emboldened by such ventures, it is likely (s)he may covertly start work on ideas even before attempting to seek permission. This was the case of another respondent:

> My actions have always been to persuade and sell my idea to ensure it is bought. When not bought for unjustified financial reasons, I feel very disappointed and in such instances, you've got to find other ways of doing it [Software developer].

Consistent with strain theories which argue that deviance will thrive when social structures systematically close off access to legitimate means to achieve goals (Cohen, 1999), this developer mentioned he is actually exploring a different avenue, most likely an unapproved one, to further explore his recent idea that was 'unjustifiably' shot down in the name of resource constraint. The withholding or efficient resource prioritisations, at the expense of creative exploration, breeds feelings of frustration, confusion and resentment towards the organising regime.

On one hand they are telling you to be creative but you suggest things to them and they simply respond, no money. It's like black box testing where you just see input, you don't get to see what happens to processing and output levels [Product Designer].

We found such incongruity in expectations to be a source of stress and confusion for most of our respondents (Patil and Tetlock, 2014). While we did not find any direct consequence of such frustrations on the propensity for people to engage in CD, we observed that such frustrations have the potential to embolden people to defy managerial orders and pursue their ideas without paying attention to the potential consequences of these actions.

5.2. Incongruence in creative frames

Organisational members through their professional training and work socialisation frequently share some fundamental 'creative frames' on how to reach stretch goals (Baia et al., 2016; Kach et al., 2012). Nevertheless, there could be non-progressive correlation in the creative frames of managers and employees, especially when it comes to choosing between alternative pathways to reach a given stretch goal. Our case evidence suggests managers frequently resort to suppress the '*metistic* knowledge' (Chia and Holt, 2009) of employees to resolve incongruence in frames. Reflected in practice and experience in local ways, we refer to *metistic* knowledge, as the acquired practical skills and intelligence, and 'ways of knowing' in responding to changes (Spender and Mahoney, 2000), in environments characterised by flux and transformation. The responses we received in separate discussions with an employee and manager are instructive:

He will not allow me to work on [*Sepentia*] because he is scared that I will get the name for it. I've told him…it will be a blast but he doesn't want to listen. I programme in C++ and he's a VB.Net specialist so I know what I'm talking about [Animation specialist].

While his manager explained that:

… We are currently interested in developing what I will call a generic version of a new product we are pioneering. In the future, we may want to add additional features. Some things may seem interesting for now but we are simply not going that route. Some people can be creative, fine, but they also need to have patience [Creative Head].

This employee interpreted his manager's action as a sign of disrespect for his skills and knowledge. The manager on the other hand felt he was getting the employee to work within a set-in-stone rational procedure. While some studies in the past (e.g. De Dreu, 2006; Chen et al., 2017) have shown that moderate task-related conflicts in work teams may enhance creativity and innovativeness, this curvilinear effect exists only for task conflict and could potentially militate against the attainment of short-term goals. Unresolved, such disagreement may result in the employee experiencing negative affection because she is being limited in deploying his repertoire of knowledge (Weiss et al., 1996). The following excerpt is illustrative of the potential outcome of incongruence in frames:

Your views simply do not count if it doesn't fit in with theirs. There are no safe spaces to voice your concerns. The guys in charge do not appreciate your contribution. At worse, they will claim ownership of your ideas. It's better to go somewhere I will be appreciated [Software Developer].

Caught-up in such an organising milieu where this respondent claims her dissenting voice and views are being subjugated, she went on to argue that CD has become part of her everyday life because it seem to be the only logical way to 'fight back' and get people to appreciate your voice and what you can do.

5.3. Shifting sands

'Shifting sands' as used in organising our findings refer to the frequent changes and inconsistencies in the organising relations, reporting lines and how acts of CD are dealt with by management. In particular, all our respondents were of the view that (un)necessary changes in both reporting lines and line managers during the course of a project frequently contributed to their propensity to engage in CD. As noted by one respondent:

Every organisation has people who call the shots and such people have the discretion for changing course. Mine was unique as it changed when the guy steering stuff left. I tried to sell the idea to the new captain but he wouldn't buy it mainly because he wanted nothing to do with John (predecessor). I had to stop as it was not going to be used and funding was immediately cut [Developer].

This Developer interpreted this event as de-skilling and the corrosion of her trust in the organisation's much trumpeted values on creativity. Apart from the

potential negative impact of such changes in the 'rules of the game' on morale, we found that such performative re-ordering of organising relations frequently resulted in differential managerial responses to acts of CD in practice, sending 'wrong signals' to employees about the consequences of defying managerial orders to stop working on ideas. For example, a respondent who explicitly defied managerial orders claimed:

> I just carried on working from home. By the time Leon (the manager) discovered, I was almost done. And frankly, it didn't even cost as much as they were exaggerating [Product Designer].

In the above instance, the designer claimed she was not reprimanded and was keen to do the same again when she feels strongly about an idea. Maninemelis and Ronson (2006) assert that such tolerance of deviance can be good as it could potentially to lead to remarkable outcomes. In a related development, we were told of the story of the creator of the NQA software at Paragon (a product widely adopted by cash logistics companies), who received an award for his tenacity in developing some critical modules for the product in his own spare time when the company abandoned it half-way because they thought it was too complicated. Summing up his experience, the creator of the software had this to say:

> While my company has zero-tolerance for disobedience, they were quite accommodating because what I did delivered a very good result. When NQA was completed, everyone was talking about it and I think they all appreciated my ingenuity [ISA Developer].

We found such differential managerial response to CD in practice as not personalistic. Rather, it is conditioned by almost a Barnadian 'zone of indifference' (Courpasson and Dany, 2003) between employees and managers around the perception of sanctions for deviant actions. Regardless of the positive outcome, we observe that such illegitimate (deviant) means of achieving outcomes could have an adverse impact on those who had previously been reprimanded for defying managerial orders to stop working on an idea. As with many managerial responses to employee actions, observers are likely to perceive the differences in tolerance of such deviant behaviour as favouritism. Left to fester, such differential tolerance may compound the difficulty in dealing with multiple acts of CD by the same employees. In this scenario, CD, rather than legitimate creativity processes could easily become the norm for reaching stretch goals in organising.

6. Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we examine how organising practices in PSFs may influence employees' propensity to engage in CD. Our findings suggest that CD is systemic and rife in PSFs which appear to prioritise autonomy and set unlimited creative boundaries for employees. In such organising regimes, we noted that employees tend to engage in CD not just because they find it hard to part with ideas they have conceived, nurtured and grown attached to over time. Most importantly, when they wilfully violate managerial orders to pursue an idea, their interpretation of the adaptive formal and informal emergent structures and processes governing their situated work provides meaning for their actions. In a sense, the organising regime which is actively reproduced and re-embedded in everyday organising provides them the psychological safety (Baer and Frese, 2003; George, 2007) to proceed with ideas even in contravention of managerial orders. In addition, we identified over-emphasis on technical concerns for efficiency and metrics, the suppression of metistic knowledge and disjointed managerial responses to violations, as salient organising practices which may operate in combination or serially and which may lead in turn lead to employees engaging in CD in practice.

Our study and its findings have two main implications for the theory and practice of CD. First, our practice approach to CD highlights the phenomenon as neither a process nor an attribute of employees. Rather, it is something that employees do in their everyday situated practice. Second, in privileging the context of organising, we extend our understanding on how organising regimes and practices codetermine each other to encourage the enactment of CD. This study has managerial implications: since findings from our study suggests that managers tend to adopt different responses to CD, often for good reason, we encourage managers to provide detailed explanation to all employees regarding the rejection of a creative idea during creative forecasting and the punishment of certain creative deviant acts. This may be useful in helping to reduce the stress and confusion employees experience around actions which merit reward or punishment (Eisenberger and Selbst, 1994; Patil and Tetlock, 2014), after all, CD like other deviant behaviours in organising can be good, too much decreases creativity, and maybe leading to detrimental personal conflicts (Mainemelis, 2010). We affirm that such an approach could also help to reduce the psychological safety needed for experimenting with rejected ideas (Edmondson, 1999; George, 2007).

Our study is not without limitations, which in turn open up opportunities for further research. First, our focus on only 'creative employees' mean we were not

able to account for differences in actions taken by the wider workforce when instructed to stop working on an idea. However, our ability to examine CD focusing on people recognised by their peers to be very creative suggests patterns that provide important theoretical and empirical insight into the enactment of CD in everyday organising, which warrants further investigation. For example, we still do not know how individual personality might influence the likelihood of a person engaging in CD. Our reliance on peers in selecting our research participants could also mean that higher-ranked, white, male and possibly older employees were more likely to be lauded by peers as creative, rather than just deviant and problematic. Thus, our identified creative individuals may have idiosyncrasy credits which can make people deviate if they have high status, with little reputational cost (Estrada et al., 1995; Mainemelis and Epitropaki, 2013). Finally, care should be taken in generalising our findings to all PSFs, especially those operating in industries within a complex web of professional and statutory bodies, e.g. law and insurance, where the tendency to prescribe work practices gives little room for creativity in an employee's everyday work. In summary, more research is needed to extend our understanding of CD, its variation in PSFs, and implications for successful organising.

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