Creativity at Work: The Role of Context

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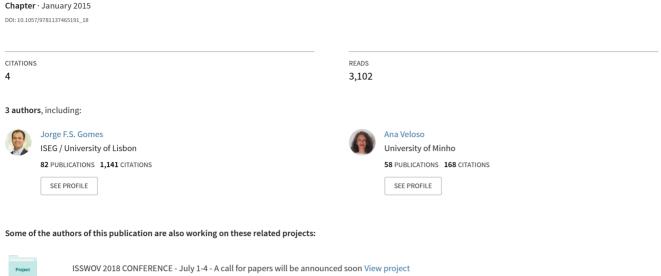
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Creativity at Work: The Role of Context

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Introduction

Creativity has been at the core of much research in individual and organisational sciences. Whilst the first theories and models focused on the individual, more recent perspectives suggest that contextual factors play an important role in creativity and innovation (Shalley, Zhou & Oldham, 2004). In this new paradigm, creativity is as much the result of social interaction, as it is of individual action (Aggarwal & Bhatia, 2011).

The context of creativity is particularly relevant to organisations, as creativity feeds other key organisational capabilities, such as continuous improvement and innovation. It does not come as a surprise then, that research over the last decades has turned its attention to the environment in which creativity takes place. However, despite some progress, knowledge concerning the context of creativity is still surprisingly scarce and underdeveloped. The abovementioned authors provide some important insights into the interplay between creativity as an individual phenomenon and organisational settings. However, amongst others, they do not entirely address such questions as: what is the context of creativity, what context factors matter most?, or how do context factors affect the creative individual?

The purpose of this chapter is to put forward a set of integrative notions with regards to the context of creativity in the workplace, and to point to possible avenues for future research in this area.

From creativity *out* of context to creativity *in* context

Early interest in the scientific study of creativity focused on the measurement of individual attributes related to creativity, and most notably its

biological roots (Piirto, 2004). In this classical view, creative individuals are a rare species, rather unique amongst other humans, and who always aim for great achievements.

This lonely genius-centred vision shifted in the first quarter of the twentieth century, as a result of the study of authors such as Guilford and, especially, Stein (Ryhammar & Brolin, 1999; Glăveanu, 2010b). According to Runco and Jaeger (2012), it was Stein who unequivocally established in 1953 that which became known as the current standard definition of creativity (p. 311): 'creative work is a novel work that is accepted as tenable or useful or satisfying by a group in some point in time'. He further avowed that when speaking of creativity, 'it is necessary to distinguish between internal and external frames of reference' (p. 312). The introduction of an external framework in the definition meant that creativity was no longer depending on the individual alone, but that rather it was a social phenomenon. Furthermore, in order to be judged as *creative*, the creative person or their output needs to be evaluated within a particular *external* context, and needs to show some usefulness to outsiders.

In the sequence, research in creativity after the 1950s shifted from individual genius realisations, to the *creativity of everyday life*, i.e., from a molecular to an ecological perspective (Glăveanu, 2010a). This does not mean that research on individual aspects of creativity was abandoned. In fact, recent empirical studies show that this vein of inquiry is still extremely active (see e.g. Chávez-Eakle, Eakle & Cruz-Fuentes, 2012).

Taking the context into account provides the concept of creativity with a linkage to the processes and structures surrounding a person (Glăveanu, 2013), and it offers a more comprehensive and systemic view of this phenomenon. Many recent definitions reflect this perspective: creativity can be seen as 'A system composed of three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the domain, and a field of experts who recognize and validate the innovation' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 6). Similarly, Amabile (1996) suggests that there are several facets to understanding creativity, one of which – the social environment – includes all the factors in the environment that serve as obstacles or stimulants to creativity. Similarly to Csikszentmihalyi, Amabile (2012, p.2) defines creativity as the production of ideas or outcomes that are both novel and appropriate to some goal. Also, Sternberg and Lubart (1996, in Sternberg, 2012) defend a multifactor view of creativity, composed of various individual features (e.g., personality) which interact with their environment and context).

The above authors focus on creativity in an organisational context, but research in other areas confirms that other settings are also critical. First and foremost, the family, and especially parents, seems to affect in a decisive way the creative child and her/his creative capabilities and personality (Piirto, 2004). Sulloway's evolutionary model of personality, for example, defends that first-born children are less open to new experiences and less innovative-driven than their siblings (Sulloway, 1995, in Piirto, 2004), which is explained by differential parental investment in their children.

A second decisive influence factor is education. In his talk on TED in 2006, Robinson makes substantial criticisms of the formal education system, which, according to him, does not stimulate the children's creative potential and capabilities. Other leading authorities such as Sternberg (2012) are also strong critics of traditional education systems, and in fact, recent empirical studies by Chávez-Eakle and colleagues (2012), confirm that traditionally-oriented education does not favour creativity.

A third crucial component is the socio-cultural context. This has been extensively discussed by authors such as Csikszentmihalyi (1997) and Glăveanu (2013). For example, in Csikszentmihalyi's system view of creativity, the *domain* is a key element of the theory; it consists of a set of rules and symbolic procedures which are culturally and socially defined, and that not only sanctions creative outputs, but are also eventually changed by such outputs. For instance, national culture is a powerful factor which affects creativity, as it stimulates or restrains creativity, influences the number of creative activities and more or less pushes people towards the arts, amongst other impacts.

A fourth and final element is organisation, which is presented in the next section.

Creativity in an organisational context

The emergence of the social-psychological interactive approach

Organisations and industries have shown a great deal of interest in creativity over the recent decades, due to its impact on important outcomes, such as R&D, innovation, and intra- and entrepreneurship. This widespread interest meant that creativity then entered new scientific and research fields, and was no longer confined to psychology. Currently, the concept is discussed in various areas of management and business, such as strategy, innovation, technology and knowledge management;

moreover, it has led to the emergence of similar constructs, such as team creativity and organisational creativity.

As explained above, until the 1980s, research on creativity in organisations was essentially focused on the individual, but during the 1980s and the 1990s, theoretical developments nearly came to a halt, as authors started to realise that person-related factors did not suffice to explain such a complex phenomenon.

The social environment surrounding individuals caught scientists' attention, which led to the emergence of a social-psychological interactive approach to creativity. This approach emphasises the 'mechanisms that govern the interplay between experience, behaviour and the person's environment or situation' (Ryhammar & Brolin, 1999, p. 268). Creativity is therefore a phenomenon which cannot be understood outside a 'larger system of social networks, problem domains and fields of activity' (p. 268). What such a system, problem domains and fields of activity actually mean, however is, to a large extent, not yet entirely clear nor explicit in the literature, as shown below.

This new perspective was fuelled by the contributions of various studies. Ekvall's pioneering study of creative climates called attention to the organisational conditions that stimulate, or hamper creativity and innovation, and led this author to elaborate a creative climate questionnaire with ten dimensions (Ekvall, 1996, in Isaksen, Lauer, Ekvall & Britz, 2001), which were later refined to nine factors by Isaksen and colleagues: challenge and involvement, freedom, trust and openness, idea time, playfulness and humour, conflict, idea support, debate, and risk-taking.

Oldham and Cummings (1996) combined personal characteristics with organisational-context attributes in their study, and found that creative performance is enhanced when both types of factors are operating in work settings. In particular, they found that the relevant context variables include complex and challenging jobs, as well as supportive and non-controlling supervision. This was an important study, because it pointed to factors in the environment which may have a contrasting and opposing influence on creativity. In fact, if supportive supervision has a positive effect on employees' creativity, then a contrasting style – autocratic supervision – has a strong negative impact on the overall creative output of teams and individuals.

The extensive work of Amabile is perhaps among the most relevant in terms of promoting the context-view of creativity. Her componential theory (Amabile, 2012) links individual creativity with organisational innovation. In other words, the components of individual creativity

interact with the stages of the creative process, which, in turn, affect the stages and outputs of the entire innovation process. There are three components at the individual level: domain-related skills (which include knowledge, expertise, technical skills, intelligence, and talent); creativity-relevant processes (which include the cognitive style and personality characteristics which stimulate creativity); and task motivation (defined as a passion for carrying out work, i.e., intrinsically-lead actions rather than extrinsically-lead). The social environment completes Amabile's model, which includes 'all of the extrinsic motivators that have been shown to undermine intrinsic motivation, as well as a number of other factors in the environment that can serve as obstacles or as stimulants to intrinsic motivation and creativity' (Amabile, 2012, p. 4). Work environment factors are numerous, such as: organisational norms, political issues, top management attitudes, supervisors' attitudes, and the absence/existence of mechanisms for developing new ideas.

Another set of studies that influenced the social-psychological view are Csikszentmihalyi's writings (1997). As mentioned above, this author considers creativity to be a system, which includes three elements: (a) the creative person; (b) the domain that is hypothetically affected by the novelty; and, (c) the field, which is composed of individuals who act as gatekeepers for the domain, and therefore decide whether a new idea or product should enter and change the domain. Although much of Csikszentmihalyi's ideas are essentially about intrinsic motivation, positive psychology and the concept of flow, his conception of the environment brings additional elements to the question of what is context in creativity, as highlighted in the next sub-section.

The various meanings of 'context'

An important point should be stressed with regards to Amabile's task motivation concept. Although task motivation pertains to the individual level, as it refers to how individuals perceive their work characteristics, it can nevertheless be influenced by how the organisation designs and implements work activities and processes. Task motivation is therefore the link between individuals' inner attributes, and their external world. The way the organisation and its management design work, structures and processes are actively perceived and interpreted by employees whose motivation levels and behaviours consequently become affected. Task motivation encapsulates, thus, both an internal and a context element in its definition. This means that the notion of context in Amabile's model is, in fact, represented by task motivation and social environment: the former is concerned with a context that is

closer to the person, whereas the latter refers to a context that is more distant to the person.

This is corroborated for example by Alencar and colleagues (Alencar & Bruno-Faria, 1997) who show that there are ten stimulants for creativity, including challenging tasks or missions; freedom and autonomy (which would be included in the notion of task motivation, in Amabile's view); and organisational support and salaries and benefits (extrinsic motivators in the componential theory). Alencar's studies contribute to the discussion on the context of creativity in two further ways. Firstly, they pinpoint a second category of environmental factors, which were named 'obstacles to creativity in organisational settings', which include aspects such as a lack of training and personal relationships. Secondly, her studies were conducted mainly in Brazil, adding important insights related to cultural issues that influence the context of creativity. Culture may indeed influence creativity in many ways: Ferreira, Fischer, Porto, Pilati & Milfont (2012) explored the structure and function of *jeitinho*¸ which is an indigenous Brazilian construct which is associated with problem-solving tactics that results in people circumventing obstacles that confront them in their lives. The Brazilian *jeitinho* is related to creativity, flexibility and intuition, and it shares corruption-like features with the Mexican *mordida* (Yankelevich, 2012), on one hand, and with the spontaneous improvisation style of the Portuguese term *desenrascar* (Cunha, Clegg & Kamoche, 2006), on the other hand. Although these concepts largely point to the small 'c' of creativity, they nevertheless alert one to the need to take the cultural context into account, if one wishes to fully comprehend the complexity involved in creativity in context (Glăveanu, 2010a, 2010b).

Csikszentmihalyi's view of context adds other elements to the discussion. Firstly, context is both a set of symbolic rules and a group of observers or judges. Secondly, and related to the previous element, context exists at various levels of analysis and it establishes different interactions with a creative person. And thirdly, context is something that may be changed by the action of a creative person, but it is also a factor that authenticates whether or not a novelty is worth such a description.

Further to the above considerations, various contextual factors have been mentioned in the literature (e.g. Aggarwal & Bhatia, 2011, Alencar & Bruno-Faria, 1997, Dul, Ceylan & Jaspers, 2011, Shalley et al., 2004); Table 18.1 shows some of these factors and their respective definitions.

As the studies in the table illustrate, creativity seems to be affected by various work-related and organisation-related factors, which range from job characteristics to relationships with peers and supervisors,

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Table 18.1 Context factors influencing creativity

Factor	Description
Work challenges and complexity	Work complexity and challenging tasks demand creative skills
Peer support	Positive relationships with peers
Autonomy	Autonomy to take decisions regarding how to conduct tasks and work activities
Organisation structure	Flexible rules; decentralisation of decision-making
Organisation support	Creative work is acknowledged and mechanisms are in place to support it
Physical settings	Furniture, colours, indoor physical climate, sounds and smells
Salaries, benefits and rewards	Salaries and rewards promote creative work
Supervisor's support	Supervisors provide feedback and encouragement for creative behaviour. Trust is also important
Technological and material resources	Available resources for stimulating new ideas
Training and development	Specific training on creative competencies
Time to think	There is no time pressure on thinking of new ideas
Organisational climate	Workers perceptions, emotions, dispositions and behaviours about what organisations inform as important (e.g. innovation)

Source: Aggarwal & Bhatia, 2011; Alencar & Bruno-Faria, 1997; Dul, Ceylan & Jaspers, 2011; Shalley et al., 2004.

through to organisation, culture and climate. In the innovation literature, the human resource management (HRM) function is regarded as an essential ingredient for fostering innovation (and creativity) at both individual and group levels (Escribá-Carda, Canet-Gine & Balbastre-Benavent, 2014). As HRM acts at various levels of the organisation, it has the potential to integrate various of the contextual factors shown in Table 18.1, and hence its extended impact on creativity (and innovation), both direct and indirect, is still needs to be understood in full.

Another implication that emerges from Table 18.1 is the following. Although the socio-psychological interactive perspective has conquered an important place in creativity research, one of its central tenets – the

concept of context – may mean different things to different authors and may play a distinct role according to the various perspectives. Furthermore, explanations concerning how contextual factors interact with the individual are largely absent in the literature. In the following section, the concept of context is examined further.

What is, and what is not, context

Creativity in context provides the concept with a new set of properties, which include: value, utility and a social string that connects the individual to its surroundings. The focus below will be on the various contextual elements that interact with the individual and thus can somehow affect a person's creative output.

The influence of surrounding and environmental variables has been at the core of several scientific areas for a long time. Anthropology, linguistics and sociology, are all fields that strongly rely on environmental attributes in order to generate and develop theory. In psychology, the individual has been the traditional unit of analysis, hence little or no attention has been paid to context until very recently. Lewin was perhaps one of the first psychologists to call attention to the role of context, with his force-field theory, but with regards to the concept of personality, for example, the heated debate between research streams that unfolded during the 1960s resulted in the emergence of new theories, of which Mischel's seminal view (1973) was an interesting case. Mischel challenged the dominant stream in personality theory, which defended that traits were the greatest influencing factors of human behaviour, as far as personality is concerned. Mischel recognised that some earlier writers had pointed to the importance of the 'S' part in the 'Person X Situation' classic equation, and further argued that, in fact, individuals actively engage in perceptual and cognitive processes to assess and evaluate situations. Final behaviours are a product of complex interactions between inner states, cognitive processes and situations. Mischel was, in this way, one of the pioneers of what would later be known as the 'constructivist' perspective in psychology.

Although context is currently part of most psychological research, a difficulty still remains in defining and delimiting it. Clitheroe, Stokols and Zmuidzinas (1998) distinguish between several notions with similar meanings: context, situation, environment and setting. All these concepts share some features, but they also refer to different things: environments include the relatively stable attributes of the physical and social surroundings of people and groups. Settings and situations denote

the dynamic interactions between individuals and their surroundings; settings are defined as being more structured and situations less structured in nature. Context is concerned with 'a particular kind of interdependence that exists between selected aspects of a given environment, setting, or situation' (p. 105). Context, therefore, is especially concerned with the interdependencies that certain surrounding aspects establish with certain focal (or target) variables. These focal variables directly affect final behaviours, and they can be of various types: independent, dependent, moderating and mediating. Clitheroe and colleagues' definition of context is a useful one, since, not only does it contribute to differentiating similar constructs, but it also emphasises the distinctive impacts that focal and contextual variables may establish between each other. Moreover, their conceptualisation reinforces the view stated by authors such as Bamberger (2008), who stated that recent advances in methodology and statistical analyses are helping researchers to design and test more complex models in creativity research.

Bamberger offered a different meaning of context, which was further developed by Glăveanu (2014). For these theorists, most descriptions of context stress an outside world that exists around individuals, which affects them in various and distinct ways. Referring to the works of Cole, Glăveanu asserts that such a perspective defends that context is a 'set of concentric circles revealing multiple, nested levels (…), that tells us little about dynamic relationships and continuities, and considers context as influence, a stimulus or cause'. (Cole, 1996, in Glăveanu, 2014, p. 386). In contrast, context should include two key dimensions in its definition, those of space and time. This spatio-temporal view defends that context and individuals are interlinked and are part of the same continuum as far as social-psychological phenomena are concerned. In other words, if one wishes to understand certain phenomena, then it is necessary to focus on what occurs between individuals and their environments, rather than on individuals or environments per se. As Glăveanu put it (2014, p. 385), 'context is not on the outside of the kind of functions and activities studied by psychologists, existing as a set of external variables that have the power to shape their manifestation, but it is integral to these phenomena'. Individuals construct reality, and both time and spatial elements (which include bodies, material objects, social relations, and institutional and cultural arrangements) are an integral part of such constructions. Following these ideas, Glăveanu proposes the reorganisation of Rhodes' (1961, in Glăveanu, 2013) four Ps of creativity (person, process, product and press) into a socio-cultural perspective with five As: actor, audience, action, affordances and artefacts (also Glăveanu,

2010b). Space and time are part of these five As, and provide the model with a more dynamical view of creativity in context.

A final word of caution should be spelt out with regards to the 'objective' versus 'subjective' status of context. According to Glăveanu (2014), context has an ontological existence, outside the perceiving mind of the beholders. In other words, space and time are not mere products of a player's daydreaming; rather, they are active elements in human and social construction processes.

Glăveanu's ideas are original and they bring an interesting and challengingly novel approach to creativity and its relationship with contextual factors. Combined with Bamberger's and Clitheroe and colleagues' conceptions, some further developments can be proposed to this research area. These are presented in the next section.

Toward a typology of contextual factors

Variation of contextual factors

As Table 1 showed, factors influencing creativity cover a wide range of aspects with which individual and groups engage. For example, they can refer to material subjects (e.g. physical settings), social relations (e.g. peers), or management practices (e.g. training and development). Authors have presented ways to organise such a variety of contextual factors. Aggarwal and Bhatia (2011) distinguish between internal and external factors, while Alencar and colleagues speak of stimulating and blocking factors. What these frameworks seem to be lacking, however, is a link with a more dynamical view of context, as presented in the section above.

In fact, as presented by Glăveanu, Bamberger, and Clitheroe and colleagues, if people actively perceive and interpret their context to generate meaning and to produce creative behaviour and products, then how a particular contextual factor is seen will depend on the perception of historical (time dimension) structural and social dynamics (spatial dimension). The following are some examples that help to explain these complex interactions between organisational actors and contexts.

In an experiment conducted in 2007, sponsored by the *Washington Post*, the world-famous violinist Joshua Bell performed for 43 minutes in a subway station at Washington DC (The Washington Post Experiment). He pretended to be just another busker, wearing jeans, a long-sleeved T-shirt and a baseball cap, even though he was also holding his $3-million Stradivarius that was made by Stradivarius himself in 1713. Of the 1,097 people who passed by Bell that morning, only seven stopped to hang

around and listen to the violinist for at least one minute. He made $32 during those three-quarters of an hour, in sharp contrast to the several thousand dollars that he usually makes for a large concert. Although this might not be taken as a purely representative example of creativity, it nevertheless shows how context does matter in relation to other human capacities and skills. When a world-famous virtuoso classical musician is placed outside his ordinary context, then the time and space conditions of the new context take over, and interactions between beholders and their context tend to follow the new, expected pattern. In this case, people rushing to work in a subway station would barely pay attention to 'just another' street artist.

In the literature on creativity, differences across empirical studies can also be partially explained by the aforementioned assertions. For instance, the physical environment in Alencar and Bruno-Faria's (1997) study was shown to be highly relevant, whereas in Dul et al.'s (2011) research, the physical environment only marginally affected creativity. It may be that the samples used in these two studies did not share the same historical, individual and social relations with their respective physical environments, thus creating dissimilar results for the two research experiments. Likewise, supervisors are often referred to as being critical to employees' creativity, but they can also be a neutral element amongst other, more essential, factors. Since supervisors can be conceived as the field element in Csikszentmihalyi's theory, then it is natural for many empirical studies to look at the role of direct supervisors on their employees' creative behaviours and outputs. In the sequence, some empirical works found different supervisors' attributes that affect creativity, such as personal attributes (e.g. supervisors' emotional intelligence, in Castro, Gomes & Sousa, 2012), or employee–supervisor relationships (e.g. supervisors' support, in Aggarwal & Bathia, 2011). In some other studies, though, supervisors are found to be a barrier to creativity (Liu et al., 2012).

In sum, contextual factors can be regarded in some cases as blockers of creativity, whereas in some other cases, they are passive promoters, and in some other occasions they are active promoters. Yet there are other instances where they are not part of the context as individually and socially constructed by individuals who form a particular group. How each one is conceived will probably depend on how individuals and groups engage with their unique set of contextual surroundings.

Types of contextual factors

Blocking factors are perceived and interpreted as producing obstacles and creating limitations to creative activity. They impede or actively

discourage creative flow in individuals and groups. For example, highly repetitive tasks and non-challenging jobs are usually perceived as being serious impediments to creativity and innovation.

Conversely, enabling factors are passive promoters of creativity. They are acknowledged by individuals and groups in a specific environment as facilitating and aiding creative activities and behaviours. These are factors that do not necessarily target creativity alone; they may be targeting other behaviour and work outcomes, such as commitment, absenteeism or productivity. Hygienic factors such as high salaries and rewards regularly fall in to this category.

Promoting factors are active supporters of creativity. These are perceived as stimulating and motivating elements, which directly target creativity, and hence are felt in a more powerful way than the previous ones. Specific supervisor support for creativity is frequently pointed out as being a strong incentive to creativity and innovation.

Finally, neutral factors have no impact on creativity, as individuals and groups are not even aware of their existence and/or do not take them into account in their particular view of a context.

Whether a particular factor is a blocker, an enabler, a stimulator, or has no effect, will partially depend, as previously mentioned, on the social-psychological interaction between actors and their contexts. Joshua Bell's Stradivarius violin is still the same violin, regardless of where it is played, whether it be in a subway station, or in the Boston Symphony Hall. Bell's talent and greatness is the same in both settings, and the musical pieces played that morning in the *Washington Post* experiment are some of the top classical works ever composed. These three elements – instrument, person and musical products – are key success factors if the performance takes place in a concert hall. However, in the context of a subway station, they seemed to mean little in terms of generating revenue. In other words, in a concert hall they are enablers or promoting factors, but in a subway station they appear to be neutral. The people who passed by Bell that morning were probably equivalent to those that would frequent a concert hall as, in fact, admitted by the newspaper: their experiment took place in L'Enfant Plaza station, which is situated in the heart of federal Washington, and passers-by were mostly business-related professionals and managers. The differences between the two contexts – one a subway station and the other a concert hall – are strong enough, however, to produce distinct individual and group behaviours. Accordingly, the two audiences engage in a different manner with their respective contexts, due certainly to several other factors, such as aware-ness of the artist, expected roles, and crowd behaviour.

Combining contextual factors

As explained above, the HRM function has the potential to influence creativity in organisations, as it can impact on jobs and functions, on individual perceptions and behaviours, on supervisors and management, on groups and teams, and on organisation-level components such as culture and climate. Joo, McLean and Yang (2013) stressed that the HR Development 'can play a pivotal role in enhancing employee creativity and in building a more appropriate contextual environment for creativity by providing employees with learning and development opportunities and by changing the organisational culture and practices' (p. 392). In other words, HRM has the potential to influence not only the process but also the outcome, which in turn means that creativity is probably managed in a much more complex way than previously thought.

How these various factors and processes are managed on their own is a challenge for HRM, however; an even more puzzling challenge is how to manage them in an integrative way. In a recent study, Rodrigues and Veloso (2013) found that the presence of promoting factors does not necessarily lead to creativity and innovation at work; some creativity-oriented practices for example, do not lead to creative outputs if they are misaligned with HR management actions. The authors suggest that promoting factors (e.g. communication support facilities, tolerance to error) need to be bundled, or combined with enabling factors (e.g. performance appraisal and team work), which influence individual and organisational creativity actively, rather than passively.

As shown by Rodrigues and Veloso (2013), the impact on creativity and innovation emerges from a combination of different factors, as actually anticipated by Glăveanu (2010b) in his five As framework. Table 18.2 shows how a combination of enablers and promoters may affect creativity distinctively (for simplicity reasons, the table omits neutral and blocking factors).

The strong/weak dichotomy has an illustrative purpose, as it denotes a stronger or weaker presence of enabling and promoting factors, and relates what happens when they are combined.

In summary, creativity in the workplace is the complex product of individuals and groups acting together with a set of contextual elements that have emerged through the organisation's history as being more or less relevant and influential to the specific organisational actors. Context is not a passive player, but it is rather an essential part of a whole pattern of organisation behaviour having creativity at its core.

Table 18.2 Combining, promoting and enabling context factors

		Promoters	
		Strong	**Weak**
Enablers	Strong	There is an overall alignment of organisational elements that promote creativity	Creativity is difficult. The conditions exist, but creativity is left to the informal initiative of some individuals/groups
	Weak	Creativity happens, but often it is lost, since there are no ways to capture it. May lack some structure	Creativity does not happen; when it occurs, its potential is often not recognised; innovation is an accidental output

Source: Rodrigues & Veloso (2013)

Conclusion

Viewing creativity in context stresses the need to explore how creativity is really defined by organisational actors engaged in creative processes, whether these be related to product innovation or other types of innovation. That which in some cases might be viewed as a powerful influencing context factor, may in other instances be seen as just another company practice. Likewise, differences across organic units within the same company are probably better examined by looking at the historical and spatial pattern developed over time between individual actors and groups, as well as their unique set of contextual factors. The same reasoning can be extended to an analysis of creativity in industries and in national cultures. Only by taking into account the actors' perspective of context, can researchers be permitted to fully comprehend the interplay between the creative person and his/her context.

Furthermore, the view exposed in this text also argued that management, especially the HRM function, has a key role in bundling the contextual elements into a single powerful tool to manage creativity in the workplace, which would not only stimulate individual creativity but also create a creative capital that becomes embedded in an organisation's capabilities and culture. This, of course, assumes that creativity is a strategic goal for an organisation; if it is not, then the HRM function should follow other directions where creativity is not central to the organisation's strategy.

Finally, an ideal research proposal would be to accompany a company start-up for some time, from its very inception throughout to a moment

when its first products or services are commercialised and the first results are generated. With such a longitudinal design, outside observers would be able to explore how creativity is *created* in context, i.e., how creativity contextual patterns emerge out of the interplay between the company's founders and its various surrounding conditions and factors, including supervision and top management involvement. It would then be possible to understand what leads some factors to become promoters, enablers or blockers.

To summarise, this chapter has addressed creativity in context, and offered some additional thoughts that may be used by researchers to continue to investigate the socio-psychological view of creativity.

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