The London School of Economics and Political Science

***Creativity and Culture**:*

Towards a Cultural Psychology of Creativity in Folk Art

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A thesis submitted to the Institute of Social Psychology of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, May 2012

Declaration

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Abstract

The present thesis aims to explore creativity as representation, action and cultural participation in the context of a traditional folk art. It develops a cultural psychological approach to the phenomenon, one that considers creativity situated between creators, creations, audiences, and a complex background of norms and beliefs. A tetradic framework is thus formulated trying to capture the dynamic between self and other, "new" and "old" in creative production and in particular their inter-relation through processes of integration, externalisation, internalisation and social interaction. This model guided the research design, starting from the three main questions of the thesis: how people attribute creative value to the craft, what makes the activity of decoration creative and how children's engagement with this practice develops during ontogenesis. The folk art chosen for this study is Easter egg decoration in two socio-cultural milieus in Romania, the urban setting of Bucharest and the village of Ciocăneşti. This craft was selected for its rich symbolism and polyphony of practices that situate it at the intersection between folklore, religion, art and a growing market. In this context, the first research included in the thesis investigates patterns of creativity evaluation in the case of ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists and highlights their relation to the practices and beliefs particular for each of these groups. The second study uses a pragmatist-inspired model to analyse creative action in the case of decorators from the urban and rural setting and outlines the general stages and micro-genetic aspects of creativity specific for both contexts. Finally, the last piece of research considers creativity development in the two settings above as shaped by different practices of socialisation and enculturation. In the end, reflections are offered on the general conception of egg decoration as mastery in ways that bring to the fore the interdependence between tradition and creativity and suggest the existence of habitual forms of creative expression.

Acknowledgments

Writing a doctoral thesis is a long journey but fortunately it is not a lonely one. As any other journey, it is made up of encounters that enrich not only the research but also, and most of all, the researcher. I was fortunate enough to come across very special persons during my four-year "expedition", people who supported me along the way, shared my joys, my hopes and also my anxieties, understood my project and made me understand it better myself.

Now, at the end of this journey, I want to express my deep gratitude towards these wonderful companions and advisers, starting with my supervisor, Sandra Jovchelovitch, whose patient and stimulating guidance was invaluable for the present work. Travelling along the academic path I am also thankful for the advice and support received from Saadi Lahlou, Caroline Howarth, Ivana Marková, Derek Hook, Claudine Provencher and Lucia Garcia. As a student, this is of course a path one does not travel alone and I am particularly lucky to have met dear friends who made my time at the LSE and writing the PhD a lively and joyful task: Helen Amelia Green, Maria Brock, Jap Dhesi, Sara Belton, Rochelle Burgess, Ceren Yalcin, Mercy Nhamo, Ben Voyer, Soydan Soylu, Michael Zang, Morten Skovadal, Claudia Mollidor, Jacqueline Priego-Hernandez, Eleni Andreoulli, Mohammad Sartawi, Gordon Sammut, Max Hänska-Ahy, Roxana Bratu, Fryni Mylona, Caroline Léchot, Ana Moise. A very big thank you goes to Daniel Linehan, Jacqueline Crane, Terri-Ann FairClough, Steve Bennett, Steve Gaskell and Ly Voo for making a timely completion possible by kindly offering me all their support. And, as any voyage, this could not have started without financial means; the present research was generously funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Institute of Social Psychology (LSE), and Raţiu Family Foundation.

Outside of the School, my PhD journey took me also to the "field", in this case paradoxically mostly to the mountains where the village of Ciocăneşti is located but also to the southern part of Romania, to my home-town, Bucureşti. In the former I was very fortunate to be part, for a few months, of an idyllic community whose members received me with open arms and generously shared with me their time, their values and their art. My gratitude goes in particular to Marilena Niculiță from the Museum of the Decorated Egg and Claudia Sandu, headmaster of the local school. In Bucureşti my first encounter with the fascinating topic of folk art was facilitated by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant whose dedicated team of ethnographers helped me immensely by introducing me to the Museum's Easter egg collections. I am also thankful to Julieta Mihăilescu, headmaster of the school where I completed part of the research. In the end, it was each and every participant in my studies that made this journey possible, all showing me the way forward, teaching me something about their world and their love for egg decoration.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Ioana-Corina and Petre, the ones who taught me the meaning and value of creativity.

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Introduction: Creativity, culture, and craft

Aims of the research

The present thesis has a threefold aim. Its particular interest is to explore creativity in Easter egg decoration by understanding how people attribute creative value to the craft, what makes the activity of decoration creative, and finally how the engagement with this practice develops during ontogenesis. At a higher level, these concerns relate to folk art more generally and to artistic expression as a whole. Thus, a second aim of the study is to shed light on the social and symbolic dynamics of creativity in a folk art context, hoping to inform broader conceptions about the value and significance of art for individuals, groups and communities. Last but not least, what the present research tries to achieve at the highest level is to reconnect the study of creativity with greater debates concerning the relation between continuity and change, between the "new" and the "old", between creator and society. An important argument here is that contemporary psychology, in its study of the phenomenon, pays little if any attention to such issues and therefore loses sight of essential interrogations situated at the core of creativity as a notion and as a process. This has not been always the case however and one needs only to go back to the intellectual legacy associated with thinkers like Gabriel Tarde and James Mark Baldwin to realise that *novelty emergence* is central for theorising human behaviour and human society. Indeed, Tarde (1903) built up an entire system of thinking on the notions of invention and imitation, both seen as "elementary social acts" (p. 144). In his view there is no conflict between these fundamental processes, since all inventions spring from combinations of different imitations and, when successful, end up being themselves imitated. A similar perspective has been put forward by Baldwin (1903), when he referred to the link between the elementary principles of habit and accommodation. Reuniting continuity and change within the same framework is characteristic for all "genetic" orientations in psychology (see Piaget, 1950; Moscovici, 1984), sociology (see Bourdieu, 1993), and related disciplines.

In light of these interconnected aims, the discussions and illustrations presented in the next chapters will be characterised by a similar ethos: that of *recovering* ideas from foundational social psychological sources and *applying* them to the study of craft. This is done with the double purpose of, on the one hand, finding the best theoretical and methodological approaches for conceptualising creativity in Easter egg decoration and, on the other hand, hoping to abstract from the set of empirical data insights that can enrich the theoretical

base. And there is great scope for achieving this when it comes to a topic like creativity which is enormously complex and in need of further investigation. Considered to stand at the intersection between biology, psychology and philosophy (Barron, 1995), creativity has attracted considerable attention on the part of psychologists, resulting in different definitions (e.g. as achievement, ability, disposition, etc. see Barron & Harrington, 1981), different areas of study (by academics, policy-makers, arts educators, etc. see Banaji, Burn & Buckingham, 2006) and different paradigmatic views (mystical, psychoanalytic, pragmatic, psychometric, cognitive, and social-personality; in Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Best approached as a "syndrome or complex" (Runco, 2007, p. xi), this phenomenon poses a series of difficulties to any scientific endeavour and can often make creativity researchers seem not to know "what they are talking about" (Amabile, 1996, p. 19). Regardless of this however, the topic itself raises continued interest, especially since creativity can be considered "an important element of the zeitgeist in the early twenty-first century, world-wide" (Craft, 2005, p. ix). Its role and significance go much deeper and relate to the very appearance and evolution of our species. In the words of Festinger (1983, p. 6), "with an animal that could and did invent, does the story [of human civilization] start".

The contributions this thesis hopes to make respond to several shortcomings in classic psychological research on creativity, most of them deriving from a clear endorsement of *individualism*. In effect, one can agree with Kasof's (1995, p. 311) assertion that, "throughout history, creativity has been attributed primarily to the souls, genes, brains, personalities, values, cognitive styles, and special abilities of 'creative people' and 'geniuses'", all of which say something about the individual and almost nothing about the social and cultural context of the creator. The well-established tradition of cognitive studies has dominated research efforts in this area for decades and it is no surprise to find today creativity defined primarily in terms of decision-making (Sternberg, 2003), problem-solving (Weisberg, 1988) or divergent-thinking (Guilford, 1950). In this theoretical landscape, "the social psychology of creativity is the least developed area" (Amabile, 1996, p. 264; also Mayer, 1999). While Amabile lamented this exclusive focus on the individual, her own proposal of a "social psychological" approach constitutes a good, but ultimately limited, starting point in this direction (see Chapters 1 and 4). The main problem is that it falls short of recognising the social environment as something beyond an *external factor*, a critique that can be equally applied to contemporary cross-cultural investigations. Overall, "very little effort has gone into examining the influence of culture on creativity" (Bhawuk, 2003, p. 3) and, the little that has been done, fails to properly conceptualise the relationship between

creativity and culture (as a symbolic environment and not "cultures" – sets of external variables described by cross-cultural psychology).

The last decades however have brought a regained interest in the workings of culture and its impact on the human mind (see Jahoda, 1992) and some of the most notable efforts to investigate this relationship came to constitute what is known as the discipline of *cultural or socio-cultural psychology* (Cole, 1996; Shweder, 1990; Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). It is precisely this socio-cultural theoretical perspective that will be employed here to conceptualise creativity and this, in itself, is not very common within psychology outside of writings dealing with collaborative activities (see John-Steiner, 1992, 1997; Littleton & Miell, 2004), mostly inspired by a Vygotskian approach. As such, the studies included in the present thesis aim both to contribute to and advance our cultural psychological understanding of creativity. And one central point of interest for cultural psychologists is represented by the dynamic of everyday and community life. It is for this reason that folk art was chosen for the following research – an excellent example of how creativity exists and is manifested not by individuals in isolation but as part of larger communities and in the context of traditional practices.

Folk art as an object of study

Art and folk art have been a favourite theme of reflection for many psychologists and philosophers in the first half of the last century. John Dewey (1934), for instance, based his philosophy of experience on a discussion of aesthetics, considering that it is an "esthetic quality that rounds out an experience into completeness and unity as emotional" (p. 43). For Dewey great works of art do not stand alone and separate from the life of the community that produced them, in opposition to current practices of glorifying high art and ignoring mundane expressions. In the end, what brings them together is the fact that works of art "like words, are literally pregnant with meaning" (p. 123), and this *meaning* has its origin in past experience. The societal foundations of art were of great concern for Lev Vygotsky as well, whose first psychological writing was in fact dedicated to the "Psychology of art" (1971). Vygotsky stressed the important premise that:

> "Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual, it does not mean that its essence is individual. (...). Art is the social technique of emotion, a tool of society which brings the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life. It would be more correct to say that emotion

> becomes personal when every one of us experiences a work of art; it becomes personal without ceasing to be social" (Vygotsky, 1971, p. 249).

For him art is therefore a thoroughly social phenomenon and this is equally valid for both "folk" and "high" art. Vygotsky strongly believed that "there is no fundamental difference between the processes of popular and individual creativity" (pp. 16-17) and, when comparing old Russian popular poetry with poems by Pushkin, he refused to conceive the "superiority" of the latter. For the narrator of popular stories too "introduces changes, cuts, additions and he reshuffles words and parts", while every great poet "passes on the immense heritage of literary tradition" (p. 16) but does not invent it. This is a crucial observation about the relationship between art and folk art, pointing to the social and cultural substance they both share. In the words of Gardner (1982, p. 102), "the artistic achievement emerges as intensely personal *and* inherently social – an act that arises from the most profound levels of one's own person and yet is directed to others in one's culture".

Despite these connections, creativity research and psychology on the whole, while concerned with artistic expression, have never dedicated much attention to folk art. This state of affairs has many potential explanations, primarily the fact that definitions of creativity tended to dissociate it from tradition and community life (see Chapter 1). However, folklore was an important topic for early psychologists such as Frederic Bartlett, who became preoccupied with symbolism and the questions of "How do symbols come into folklore? Why do they stay there? and What do they do there?" (Bartlett, 1924, p. 270). He elaborated his answers in several publications for example addressing the process of "conventionalisation", to answer the first question, in his celebrated book on Remembering (1932). Important for us here is Bartlett's consideration of the functions of symbols in folklore, functions that, beyond simply satisfying artistic impulses, are used to maintain social harmony and to serve "the preservation of the group" (Bartlett, 1924, p. 289). His particular interest, and most of his studies in this field, related to folk or popular stories. Considering them "a social product", Bartlett (1920a, 1923) rejected purely psychological and purely sociological accounts and tried to integrate both into a more comprehensive, social psychological perspective. This allowed him to consider the psychological and social mechanisms at work when stories pass from one person to another, from one community to the next. What happens to these stories (and, we can add, also to "decorative" or "figurative" art forms) is that they undergo many successive changes based on omissions (of the irrelevant, the unfamiliar, and the unpleasant) and transformations (guided by principles

of familiarisation, rationalisation, and dominance) (see Bartlett, 1920b). Processes like these testify for the *creative dimension of folk art* and they can be considered first instances of creativity in craft, resulting from continuous repetition by individuals and groups.

Creativity, will be argued here, is the defining characteristic of traditional practices such as Easter egg decoration in Romania. This assertion is supported not only by the diversity of techniques employed and the uniqueness of each resulting artefact, but also by the intricacies of the work itself. Referring to this craft, Irimie (1969, p. 609) observed that "in the creation process, technical skills necessarily mix with talent, everything suggesting the art of old miniaturists". Against a conception of tradition as "a single chain of meanings and values extending back, link by link, into the past" (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 103), creativity and change stand in fact at the very core of decoration procedures. Traditional Easter egg decoration is a site of many transformations, confirming several of Bartlett's discoveries about social transmission. These transformations are reflected in the motifs, materials and techniques used, and resonate with the significant changes taking place in the Romanian society, especially in rural settings (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992). The strong ties between Easter egg decoration and rural and urban communities makes this craft particularly interesting for a socio-cultural study of creativity. Within it, the act of "creating" is *distributed along an intersubjective space* of relations between folk artists and their families, neighbours, and the "consumers" of their productions. The decorated egg brings thus together folklore, religion, art and market (see Chapter 2), in ways that both express and reinforce a local and national identity.

Finally, another advantage of investigating this craft is represented by the existence and use of ornaments or motifs and their hugely *symbolic value*. As Valsiner (2008, p. 67) contends, "our lives are ornamented lives" and the patterns and textures that surround us are more than simple "aesthetic accessories"; they turn into devices for the cultural guidance of our conduct. Indeed, this becomes transparent in egg decoration where motifs simultaneously satisfy a variety of purposes: ornaments identify and locate the work, communicate meaning, remind of Easter celebrations, re-present elements of the natural world, allow for individual expression, etc. These functions capture the great value of this tradition, recognised by the Romanian society and celebrated as part of a common cultural heritage. For characteristics such as these, craft products in general have slowly progressed in contemporary societies in relation to "established" forms of art (see Becker, 2008), becoming more and more appreciated as instances of deep and meaningful creativity.

Outline of the thesis

The present thesis is divided into seven chapters: the first addresses the theoretical background, the second takes a closer look at the particular context of the study, the third chapter includes considerations related to the overall design and the methodology of the project, the following three chapters present research findings and the ending chapter consists of a general discussion. A final concluding section focuses on the contributions of the thesis (at an empirical, theoretical, and methodological level) and future perspectives. What is particular about this research is, one the one hand, its *theoretical scope* and, on the other, the *nature of its case study*. Regarding the first point, and in relation to the aims mentioned at the beginning, the first and last chapters (theoretical background and general discussion) address the broader level of creativity research: Chapter 1 in order to substantiate the cultural approach adopted throughout the thesis, Chapter 7 in an effort to bring together research findings and connect them to larger concerns about creativity and everyday action. Regarding the case study – Easter egg decoration practices in urban and rural Romania – three particular aspects have been chosen, in agreement with a cultural psychological perspective (see Chapter 4 for overall design and rationale): creativity evaluations, creative activity and the development of creativity in craft. Each one is presented in a separate research chapter; these chapters, because of the different topics considered, include brief theoretical sections before describing and discussing the empirical findings. However, the intrinsic unity of the whole research is assured not only by keeping the same case-study of Easter egg decoration in focus, but also by adopting a coherent socio-cultural orientation and drawing on compatible theories to illuminate different aspects of the craft (e.g. social representations in Chapter 4 dealing with creativity evaluations, pragmatist-inspired action models in Chapter 5 dedicated to creative activity and a Vygotskian perspective in Chapter 6 exploring creativity development).

In summary, the thesis progresses as follows:

- Chapter 1 develops a cultural psychological theory of creativity and locates it among the three main paradigm of research in the field (He, I and We). It then introduces a broad tetradic framework of creator – others – creation – existing artefacts as the basis for the analysis of creative phenomena, and discusses each of the four elements while highlighting their interdependence. Several implications of using this

framework are mentioned and a conclusion offered regarding the relation between creativity and everyday community life;

- Chapter 2 introduces the research context of folk art. It starts with a consideration of the notion of everyday life creativity and challenges a common misconception portraying tradition as the very opposite of creation and transformation. Some examples of folk art studies are presented, many of which come from disciplines other than psychology. A large part of the chapter is dedicated to Easter egg decoration in the Romanian society, covering the actors, outcomes, procedures and uses of decorated eggs. In the end, change and creativity are located at the core of this traditional custom and its expression;

- Chapter 3 is dedicated to the overall research design and methodology of the project. It begins by outlining and critiquing the methods used in mainstream psychological research on creativity and introduces alternatives specific for a cultural psychology approach and its focus on ecological studies, emic perspectives and rich description. The three researches included in the thesis are examined in light of this approach, both in terms of the rationale for their aims and questions and the practical choice of methods and participants. The research contexts of the project (urban setting of Bucharest and rural setting of Ciocăneşti) and research methods (interview, observation, drawing) are also discussed;

- Chapter 4 includes the first study focusing on creativity evaluations in the context of Easter egg decoration. The chapter opens with a consideration of existing methodologies for the study of evaluations, specifically the Consensual Assessment Technique (Amabile, 1996), and reformulates them by drawing inspiration from social representations theory. The multiple feedback method is proposed and applied with four groups of participants: ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists. Results highlight two main patterns of evaluation in relation to the practices and beliefs specific for each community targeted in the study;

- Chapter 5 considers the activity of decoration and, in contrast to classic cognitive models, advances a pragmatist-inspired framework for the analysis of action (Dewey, 1934). The chapter includes two studies. The first one, based on interviews

and observation with adults from both the urban and rural setting, explores the general phases of egg decoration. Its conclusions point towards different creativity processes in the two contexts, considering the dynamic between doing and undergoing. The second study takes a closer look at traditional decoration activities in the rural setting and makes use of the subjective camera and interview to capture micro-genetic expressions of creativity. Results indicate variations in the activity flowchart attributed to personal style and level of expertise;

- Chapter 6 presents the research on creativity development in Easter egg decoration, in the urban and rural setting. It starts by formulating a socio-cultural view of development as participation in community practices (Rogoff, 2003), one that conceptualises the active and constructive aspects of socialisation, enculturation and internalisation processes. The research is cross-sectional in nature and uses drawing and interview with children in first and fourth grade, and observation and interview with seventh graders. Findings highlight differences of engagement based on participants' age as well as their social context;

- The final chapter, Chapter 7, is dedicated to a general discussion of the three studies guided by the tetradic framework. Opening with a brief overview of the main results, it focuses on the central relationship – present throughout the thesis – between creativity and tradition, imitation, habit. Recovering insights regarding the nature of habit (from foundational sources within psychology, philosophy and sociology) allows for defining and examining the notion of "habitual creativity", as well as making further distinctions between habit, improvisation and innovation. Creativity in Easter egg decoration is considered to reflect habitual action and, towards the end, is discussed in terms of mastery over highly exercised practices.

A final note is needed concerning the information presented in this thesis. The following chapters make at times use of some sections or ideas from materials accepted for publication or published by the author in the years of research leading to the completion of the present doctoral work. In most cases previously published text has been updated or revised before inclusion in the thesis. For instance, Chapter 1 reproduces passages from the articles 'Paradigms in the study of creativity: Introducing the perspective of cultural psychology' (Glăveanu, 2010a), 'Principles for a cultural psychology of creativity' (Glăveanu,

2010b) and ‘Creativity as cultural participation’ (Glăveanu, 2011a). The section on Romanian Easter egg decoration in Chapter 2 is an updated version of what is included in ‘Creativity in context: The ecology of creativity evaluations and practices in an artistic craft’ (Glăveanu, 2010c). Chapter 3 integrates segments concerning the subjective camera from ‘Through the creator’s eyes: Using the subjective camera to study craft creativity’ (Glăveanu & Lahlou, 2012). Chapter 4 brings together elements of theory published in ‘A multiple feedback methodology for the study of creativity evaluations’ (Glăveanu, 2012a) and research findings presented in ‘Creativity in context: The ecology of creativity evaluations and practices in an artistic craft’ (Glăveanu, 2010c). Chapter 5 integrates and expands previous work on creativity, action and pragmatism from ‘Creativity as action: Findings from five creative domains’ (Glăveanu et al., under review) and ‘Through the creator’s eyes: Using the subjective camera to study craft creativity’ (Glăveanu & Lahlou, 2012). The findings from the rural context were also presented in an article entitled ‘Creativity and folk art: A study of creative action in traditional craft’ (Glăveanu, forthcoming a). An abridged version of Chapter 6 is currently under review for publication in Thinking Skills & Creativity (‘Creativity development in community contexts: The case of folk art’). Finally, the discussion about habit and creativity in Chapter 7 was published as ‘Habitual creativity: Revisiting habit, reconceptualizing creativity’, in Review of General Psychology.

1. Creativity and cultural psychology

Chapter summary

The present chapter outlines a novel theoretical approach to creativity inspired by cultural psychology. To locate this approach, the presentation starts with indentifying three paradigms of creativity theory and research in psychology and beyond. Traditionally the study of creativity revolved around the individual and, in particular, the individual mind of the genius (He and I paradigms). Extending this view, and considering the social aspects of creativity, a We-paradigm perspective led to what became known in the 1980s as the "social psychology of creativity". The cultural psychology of creativity builds on this last theoretical approach while being critical of some of its assumptions. This relatively new understanding investigates the socio-cultural roots and dynamics of all our creative acts and employs a tetradic framework of self – other – new artefact – existing artefacts to conceptualise creativity. For cultural psychology creativity is thus a simultaneously individual and socio-cultural process. Relying on a vision of the individual mind as social and of human culture as an open and dynamic system, this perspective emphasises the fact that both creator and creation can only exist and function in a setting described by social relations and accumulated cultural artefacts. Each facet of this complex reality is analysed in detail: a) creative externalisations as examples of cultural expression, b) socialisation or integration of the new artefact in existing cultural systems, c) internalisation as a form of enculturation, and d) the explicit and implicit connections between "creator" and "audience" in every creative act. In the end, implications of adopting the cultural approach are discussed. These range from a contextual and generative definition of creativity, a theoretical emphasis put on the notion of meaningful action, up to the need for ecological research concerning this phenomenon. Finally, the role of communities in fostering and assessing creativity is suggested as a more realistic solution to the individual – society debate.

> "(...) just as electricity is equally present in a storm with deafening thunder and blinding lightning and in the operation of a pocket flashlight, in the same way, creativity is present, in actuality, not only when great historical works are born but also whenever a person imagines, combines, alters, and creates something new" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 10)

Understanding creativity means understanding the various systems that contribute to its development and manifestation: from the biological to the cultural, from individual expression to social dynamics. This systemic view dominates today's literature on the topic, being explicitly adopted by Hennessey and Amabile (2010) in their most recent Annual Review presentation of creativity. The two authors, while supportive of this approach, also warned against fragmentation and lack of dialogue between specialists working at different "ends" of the creativity system. By definition, a system includes both components and interactions and "the 'whole' of the creative process must be viewed as much more than a simple sum of its parts" (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010, p. 571). And yet creativity in psychology has been very often "read" at one level alone, the individual one, and only relatively recently have social and cultural perspectives been acknowledged as valuable for its study. This chapter aims to bring the two general levels of analysis together, arguing against segmentation and partial understandings that treat creativity as *either* individual *or* socio-cultural. The main argument developed here is that creativity is *both* individual *and* socio-cultural mainly because individuals themselves are socio-cultural beings. As a consequence, creative expression is *also* a form of cultural expression and, ultimately, one of the most illustrative forms of *cultural participation*: engaging with cultural artefacts to produce new cultural artefacts, employing culture to generate culture.

Creativity, or the capacity to bring about the new, has always fascinated humankind. This is reflected both in the numerous attempts to conceptualise it (in disciplines ranging from philosophy and theology to neuroscience) and in the strong contemporary belief that creativity is "good for the economy, good for the individual, good for society and good for education" (Jeffrey & Craft, 2001, p. 11; for an account of its "dark side" see Cropley, Cropley, Kaufman & Runco, 2010). However, the complexity of the phenomenon confronted specialists with several "difficulties of meaning" (Williams, 1961, p. 3) and made E. P. Torrance (1988, p. 43), a towering figure in the psychology of creativity, state that "creativity defies precise definition". Due to this complexity, creativity has been approached differently

by different authors, either as achievement, as ability or as a disposition or attitude (Barron & Harrington, 1981). Very fruitful for scientific investigation are those definitions that focus on the creative product and, in this regard, there is quite a general consensus among specialists that something is creative when it is both *new and useful*, *appropriate or meaningful* (see Stein, 1953; Martindale, 1994; Richards, 1999). Other authors have added to this traditional "pair" more criteria: the heuristic task (Amabile, 1996), purpose and duration (Gruber and Wallace, 1999), as well as the conscious intention to create (Craft, 2001) (for more on definitions see Chapter 4).

In the end, to simplify the presentation, one can identify two basic perspectives that dominate today's theoretical landscape. In the words of Sefton-Green (2000, p. 220) these are the *romantic* and the *cultural* model of creativity. In essence, this distinction signals a deep and fundamental division between how scholars conceive of and, consequently, study the phenomenon. Following a traditional "romantic" model means associating creativity with great creators and great creative achievements. Working with a "cultural" framework is reflected in more concern for the social and cultural context of creativity and its everyday dynamics. The romantic view, heavily enforced by the 18th century portrait of the genius (Banaji, Burn & Buckingham, 2006), defines creators as exceptional, fertile, superior, and often "pathological" (Montuori & Purser, 1995; Mason, 2003; Negus & Pickering, 2004). This traditional position proposes a reading in which:

> "creativity is on the side not only of innovation against convention, but also of the exceptional individual against the collectivity, of the present moment against the weight of the past, and of mind or intelligence against inert matter" (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 3).

These series of dichotomies have severe consequences for the ways in which we understand creativity, we "discover" or "validate" it in the real world, including how we end up evaluating our own creative potential. Challenging the "lone genius" and individualistic perspectives that dominated the first half of the last century (see Barron, 1995; Paulus & Nijstad, 2003; Craft, 2005; Glăveanu, 2010a&b), the past three decades brought a general shift "from person-centered to social dynamic conceptions of creative cognition" (John-Steiner, 1992, p. 99), one "away from naturalism and individualism towards social understandings" (Jones, 2009, p. 63; see also Miettinen, 2006a, p. 174). In this context, socio-cultural theories of creativity (as well as learning) were reaffirmed and it became

generally recognised that "culture clearly has a profound influence on [the] conceptualisation of creativity and on creative expression" (Rudowicz, 2003, p. 285). The present chapter will thus start with a brief review of these paradigmatic stages that shaped creativity theory and research over centuries and particularly in recent decades. Then it will introduce the cultural psychology perspective, its definition of the phenomenon and preferred theoretical framework. In the end some important consequences of adopting this framework will be formulated.

1.1. Three paradigms of creativity theory and research

The study of creativity has known three paradigmatic stages: the genius, the creative person and the "social" stage (see Glăveanu, 2010a&b). By making reference to historical times long before the words "creativeness" or "creativity" – from the Latin *creatio* meaning to make or grow – entered our vocabulary (for English this is the 18th-19th centuries; Mason, 2003; Weiner, 2000) or before psychology became a science, this section will also consider centuries of pre-psychological thought concerning humans' capacity to create. Although a historical progression is implied, it is likely that "instances" of these paradigms coexist at different times and they are certainly intertwined in today's scientific landscape.

1.1.1. The He-paradigm: The lone genius

The image of the genius is probably one of the most persistent representations in human history. With roots in Greek and Roman antiquity, the first links to be made were those between genius and *divine inspiration* (Friedman & Rogers, 1998; Sternberg, 2003). Yet, the Latin origins and meaning of genius as a guardian spirit of the family changed in the following centuries (Negus & Pickering, 2004; Arnheim, 1974). One turning point is considered by most to be the Renaissance (Montuori & Purser, 1995), when the influence of God started to be replaced by that of *genetic inheritance* (Dacey, 1999). This process of individualisation of the genius continued on two different fronts: arts and the exaltation of the imagination during Romanticism and sciences and the exaltation of reason during Enlightenment (Weiner, 2000). Embracing such ideas about unique individuals, the He-paradigm, or the paradigm of the genius, has put considerable emphasis on two main features of acknowledged creators: *exclusivity and disconnection*. Creativity is from this perspective "exclusivist" because only few are chosen for it (initially by God, later on by their biology), and the very few that are must, as a prerequisite, stand apart from the masses

because of their capacities. They create *ex-nihilo* (Negus & Pickering, 2004) and therefore need nothing to tie them to the world of others or existing knowledge. The He-paradigm, ("He" since the creator is often a *male other*; see Albert & Runco, 1999, p. 18), thus takes the strongest individualistic stance in the conceptualisation of creativity.

Undoubtedly the father-figure of the "modern" He-paradigm, Francis Galton offered the world through his 1869 "Hereditary Genius" the first scientific study of great creators (Simonton, 2003). His assumption was that, in the "competition between nature and nurture", when all conditions are equal, "nature certainly proves the stronger of the two" (Galton, 1874, p. 16). By this Galton took genius out of the mists of the supernatural and gave it a solid basis: human biology. He also described it in terms of intellectual ability and eminence (Terman, 1947/1970). While intellectual ability has to do with the creator's individual brain, there is a factor of social reputation in appreciating eminence. Nevertheless, the connection to the world of previous knowledge and existing scientific (or artistic) communities is not understood here as interdependence but as the mere effect of the genius on current social and cultural structures. Therefore, creativity in this paradigm refers strictly to the highest levels of creation, or what is known as *historical creativity* (Boden, 1994; Fischer et al., 2005). The only things worthy of being called creative are those that introduce novelties, generate new schools of thought, and constitute landmarks in the history of a domain, sometimes even the history of humanity.

In concluding, the He-paradigm, based on the individuality, insight, outstanding ability and fertility of the genius (Mason, 2003), gives an *elitist and essentialist* account of creativity (Negus & Pickering, 2004). A direct consequence of it is that it detaches the creator from community and, by this, ends up building a pathological image of him/her. As Montuori and Purser (1995, p. 76) argue, the fate of the genius is often represented as that of a person who is misunderstood, eccentric and even anti-social. Such an account also excludes the role of co-creation or collaboration in the process of reaching "great discoveries" (Barron, 1999). Its implications go above the scientific and also reach the *ideological* since recognising or not outstanding performance is often a highly politically-charged action (Negus & Pickering, 2004). Ultimately, it is rarely creativity alone that decides who is a genius but institutional structures reflecting power relations between and within social groups. However, it is to be noted in the end that what the discussion about argued against is a certain portrayal of the genius and not the mere existence of individuals who might be included in this category. A genius or, more widely speaking, a gifted individual, is defined by a specific *relation* to the

social and cultural world (and a capacity to "exploit" this relationship to the maximum) that affords exceptional creative production. A person characterised as a creative genius may very well "stand out" but it never stands "alone". Examples of how exemplary individuals are able to synthesize the best a social network and a cultural background have to offer can be found both in science (Schaffer, 1994; Collins, 2007) and art (Becker, 2008).

1.1.2. The I-paradigm: The creative person

If the He-paradigm has deep roots in pre-psychological thought, the I-paradigm largely emerged once psychologists started to focus on creativity. Put simply, this paradigmatic shift replaced the genius with the "normal" person while *keeping* the individual as a unit of analysis. It is what can be referred to as a democratization of creativity (Bilton, 2007; Hulbeck, 1945; Weiner, 2000). Everyone is capable now of being creative since creativity is no longer a capacity of the few chosen by God, biology or their unique psychology. With this shift, the use of the term genius declined leaving space for notions such as *gifted* and *creative* (Friedman & Rogers, 1998). The birth of the I-paradigm and its terminology was affected by forces working from within the field of psychology and from the outside: the socio-political context in the U.S. after the Second World War.

> "In the presence of the Russian threat, 'creativity' could no longer be left to the chance occurrences of the genius; neither could it be left in the realm of the wholly mysterious and the untouchable. Men *had* to be able to do something about it; creativity *had* to be a property in many men; it *had* to be something identifiable; it *had* to be subject to the effects of efforts to gain more of it" (Razik, 1970, p. 156).

It was the background of an individualistic society that gave the perfect context for the emergence of the I-paradigm. As shown by Slater (1991), the Individual versus Society worldview is predominant in America. This myth is associated with the dream of escaping the influence of the *outside* society and culture seen as entities one can connect to and disconnect from (p. 154). These assumptions continue to underline much of Western, "ethnocentric" creativity research (see also Raina, 1993).

In psychology the voice behind the I-paradigm was that of Joy Paul Guilford, remembered here for his historical APA presidential address in 1950. While calling the attention of

psychologists to the topic of creativity, he also gave them a clear agenda: "the psychologist's problem is that of creative personality" (p. 444) and "creative acts can therefore be expected, no matter how feeble or how infrequent, of almost all individuals" (p. 446). And Guilford's message was heard: for the following decades psychologists looked intensively towards personal attributes of "ordinary" individuals (personality, intelligence, etc.) and their link to creativity (Amabile, 1996). Unsurprisingly then, in 1981, when Barron and Harrington published an important review of creativity studies, they offered it the title "Creativity, intelligence, and personality". Also within the I-paradigm a special class of studies locates creativity not in the individual's personality but in his/her *unconscious* and acts of sublimation (see Freud, 1908/1970; Noppe, 1999), or even in *pathology* (see Storr, 1972; Eysenck, 1994; Richards, 1999). Perhaps the most prominent manifestation of the I-paradigm though can be found in *cognitive* research looking at processes of "creative cognition" (see for example Finke, Ward & Smith, 1992; Ward, Smith & Finke, 1999; also Martinsen & Kaufmann, 1999). What all these diverse approaches have in common is an attempt to relate creativity to something from *within* the psychology of the person.

Along with advances in theoretical models, the I-paradigm was also fruitful for research methodologies (see Mayer, 1999). Psychometric approaches flourished, most creativity tests being developed to measure divergent thinking and problem-solving abilities (Sternberg, 2003; Barron & Harrington, 1981). In the spirit of the I-paradigm, these tests were validated on and applied to non-eminent persons (Runco, 2004) but remained open to criticism since they consider primarily the end product but not the creative process behind it (Barron & Harrington, 1981). Overall, taking into account both theory and research methods, it can be concluded that the I-paradigm largely encouraged *methodological reductionism* (Montuori & Purser, 1997) by focusing on intrapsychic processes to the exclusion of other levels (for more on creativity assessment techniques see Chapter 4). This generates partial theoretical models that explore individual cognition and personality in a social vacuum and conceptualise creativity as a quality of the lone individual. A sustained critique of this decontextualised view led to the emergence of the We-paradigm.

1.1.3. The We-paradigm: Towards a social psychology of creativity

Driven by an attributional error commonly described in psychology, both laypeople and researchers generally locate creativity at the level of the creators' internal dispositions ignoring nondispositional influences (Kasof, 1999, p. 156). Several notable attempts have

been made to correct this error in recent decades by initiating the first research programmes meant to investigate the role of social factors in the creative process (Amabile, 1996). Along with these a new vocabulary emerged, one bringing to the front terms such as *social creativity* (the creativity that results from human interaction and collaboration; Purser & Montuori, 2000), and showing a renewed interest for *group creativity* (Paulus, Brown, & Ortega, 1999; Nemeth at al., 2003; Paulus & Nijstad, 2003). In short, the We-paradigm ambitiously aims to "put the social back" (Hennessey, 2003a, p. 184) into the theory of creativity and starts from the assumption that "creativity takes place within, is constituted and influenced by, and has consequences for, a social context" (Westwood & Low, 2003, p. 236; see also Raina, 1999). Rejecting atomistic and positivistic standpoints and adopting *more holistic and systemic ways* of looking at creativity, psychologists promoting the We-paradigm acknowledge the social nature of creativity (Purser & Montuori, 2000), a process that spurs out of transactions between self and others, self and environment (Stein, 1975).

However, although formally a "social psychology of creativity" has been proposed as such by Teresa Amabile since the beginning of the 1980s, much of the work done within it still endorses a vision of the social that corresponds more to individualistic paradigms than to a truly "societal" perspective (see Himmelweit & Gaskell, 1990). In making this claim I rely on Marková's (2003) discussion of external Ego-Alter relationships considering self and other, the individual and the social, two distinct and interacting units. This kind of conceptualisation, common to modern social psychology (Farr, 1996), ends up portraying the social as an *external environment*, a set of stimulations that facilitate or constrain the creative act (the "press" factor; Rhodes, 1961), and therefore remains oblivious to the societal roots, dynamics and functions of creativity. For example, Amabile's social psychology of creativity grants social factors a "crucial role in creative performance" (1996, p. 6). In her extensive work she, along with collaborators, used a variety of methods to investigate the role of *intrinsic motivation* in creativity. Their conclusion, important for the psychology of creativity, is formalised as the Intrinsic Motivation Principle of Creativity, and states that intrinsic motivation, or doing something for its own sake, is usually associated with increased creativity, while extrinsic motivation, or the motivation to do something for an external goal, often leads to a decrease in creative performance (Amabile, 1996; Hennessey, 2003b). The role of motivation is reflected in Amabile's *componential model* of creativity comprising domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and task motivation. Considering the above, a legitimate question arises: where is the social in this model?

Disappointingly, the answer offered is that, “largely because they affect motivation, social factors can have a powerful impact on creativity” (Amabile, 1996, p. 3). This is in tone with the declared aim of Amabile’s social psychology of creativity, “to identify particular social and environmental conditions that can positively or negatively influence the creativity of most individuals” (p. 5). Consequently, the discussion of the social in her book is constantly framed in terms of choice and constraints, reward, competition, modelling, stimulation, evaluation, peer pressure, surveillance, etc. (see Amabile, Hennessey, & Grossman, 1986; Amabile, Goldfarb, & Brackfield, 1990) and therefore does not abandon the understanding of creativity as an individual-level phenomenon “conditioned” by social factors.

From the account above it becomes clear that what a social psychology of creativity would need is to be able to bring together both individuals and societal structures. Systemic models of creativity represent, from this perspective, perhaps the greatest achievements of the We-paradigm. A well-known example is offered by Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1999), who proposed the connection in creative production between a *person* (with his/her genetic pool and personal experiences), a *field* (social system) and a *domain* (system of symbols, related to the idea of culture). Although it mainly pays attention to historical creativity rather than more common instances of the phenomenon, this model is nonetheless essential for a We-paradigm since, being an ecological, systemic approach, it “recognizes the inter-connectedness between the self and the environment and attempts to discover relations between them” (Montuori & Purser, 1995, pp. 81-82). Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1998) repeatedly stressed the *contextual* and *generative* nature of creativity. This means that creativity is explicitly considered as embedded within social-historical milieus and that every act of creation must start from and build upon the existing knowledge within a domain. It is because of these qualities that systems approaches in general have a great appeal for social psychologists involved in the study of creativity and we can now find a series of successful applications of these perspectives (e.g., in the case of families of gifted children, see Moon, Jurich & Feldhusen, 1998).

The systemic and ecological frameworks of the We-paradigm bring with them a series of advantages. First and foremost, they *contextualise* creative acts and give a more comprehensive account of how creativity takes place in all its complexity. Second, they are much better equipped to investigate *both* historical creativity (initially the He-paradigm) and everyday creativity (looked at by the I-paradigm). Third, on a practical note, they open an entire world of opportunities for *influencing* creative behaviour now conceptualised as less

dependent on innate abilities and personality traits (Amabile, 1996). Despite these benefits, reactions against the We approach didn't take long to materialise. Analysing the social ethos in much of today's literature on creativity, Runco (1999a) fears it is *misleading* and that, in comparing social with individual factors, "it is the social factors that are not necessary for creativity" (p. 237). The author even proposed to separate creativity from reputation (and therefore cut the process from its context) since this would eliminate the "social noise" affecting the inner (and "real") dynamic of creativity. In a similar vein, Weisberg noted that, "if one makes the definition of creativity depend on the evaluation by the field, the term may lose much of its meaning" (Weisberg, 1993, p. 245). Needless to say, this chapter is intended to show that the social does not perturb creativity but *allows* it since, without the social context, there would be no creativity. In the words of Csikszentmihalyi (1988, p. 336), we must go beyond the Ptolemaic view putting the person in the centre of creativity in favour of a Copernican model. This is also the aim of the newest development within the We-paradigm: the cultural psychology of creativity.

1.2. Creativity and cultural psychology

As argued above, the "social" of the We-paradigm often fails to go beyond an external-influence model and to see how creativity takes place within relations. In other words, the We-paradigm still has to rightfully acknowledge the *interdependence* between Self and Other, Ego and Alter (Marková, 2003, p. xiii) in every creative act. This is the starting point for one of the newest perspectives in the field: the cultural psychology approach to creativity (see also Glăveanu, 2010a&b, 2011a). It must be said that the following proposal doesn't aim to replace the social psychology of creativity but to build on its conclusions and to reveal "another side" of the We-paradigm: the social and cultural working from *within* creative persons and processes. This is the contemporary retake of an old theme in creativity theory, what Arieti (1976) called the "individual-psychological versus the sociocultural origin of creativity" (p. 303). The cultural psychological position in this debate is that there is no "versus" between the two but, on the contrary, they *co-constitute* each other.

However, before introducing in more detail the cultural psychology framework of creativity adopted in this thesis, the next section will briefly discuss the characteristics of cultural psychology and focus on reviewing some theories or concepts within the discipline that address (or could address) the problem of creativity.

1.2.1. The cultural psychological approach

Not only are cultural psychology perspectives on creativity relatively recent, but cultural or socio-cultural psychology itself has only (re)taken shape in the last few decades and is now not a unified but an *emergent* field (Valsiner, 2009). Reacting to the search for inbuilt and universal processing mechanisms that took over general and cross-cultural psychology after the cognitive revolution, cultural psychology is, in the words of Shweder (1990), a study of how "cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche" (p. 1). To understand these processes, cultural psychologists start from the basic premise of the interdependence between human beings and their socio-cultural context. Therefore, the focus is not on the two as separate entities, but on the *transactions* that define both of them and generate a symbolic world (Zittoun, 2007b). This symbolic world spurs out of processes of meaning-making and co-construction of knowledge (Valsiner & Rosa, 2007) and this is why cultural psychology envisions human existence as essentially *mediated* through the system of symbols and norms that constitute culture. Consequently, the research focus in cultural psychology is on mediated action in context, on the sociocultural genesis of mental functions, and the analysis of everyday life (Cole, 1996).

A paradigm meant to examine systemic, interactive, and mediated phenomena (Zittoun et al., 2007, p. 208; also Markus & Hamedani, 2007), cultural psychology developed a specific understanding of culture described as *a web of significance*, an interworked system of construable signs, not external power but *context* (Geertz, 1973). Furthermore, these meanings and symbols "stick" through time (Jovchelovitch, 2007), they are preserved and transmitted to new generations offering our symbolic universe a certain degree of stability. Simultaneously they are open to change, elaboration and transformation through collective processes of action and communication. Perspectives on culture that emphasise the construction and use of mediators are most easily integrated by cultural psychology, for example Cole's (1996) understanding of culture as a *system of accumulated artefacts* of a group (p. 110). The artefact, at once material and conceptual in nature (illustrations ranging from language to physical objects), mediates the relation between subject and object and is a result of communication between self and other (persons, groups or societies).

In this context, creativity both relies on accumulated artefacts and enriches culture through the generation of new artefacts. As such, creative processes should constitute a key point of interest for the discipline of cultural psychology. While there is so far no formally

constructed "cultural psychology of creativity", several socio-cultural directions have recently inspired empirical research on collaborative creativity, resulting in books (see John-Steiner, 1997; Littleton & Miell, 2004) and journal special issues (see Thinking Skills and Creativity, 3/2008). At a theoretical level, different traditions within cultural psychology can be built on in constructing a cultural approach to creativity and, among them, the cultural-historical Russian school, especially the writings of Lev Vygotsky, are particularly relevant.

As one of the father figures of socio-cultural psychology, Vygotsky (1960/1997) pointed to the importance of cultural mediation through the use of tools and signs for the development of all higher mental functions. Vygotsky's early work on imagination and creativity in childhood (1930/1998) laid the *foundations* for a cultural approach to creativity by asserting that: 1) creativity exists in the everyday and not only in great historical works, and 2) every creator is a product of his/her time and environment. What transpires from the cultural-historical perspective is thus the fact that creators employ culturally constructed symbols and tools to produce new cultural artefacts (see also Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). Furthermore, Vygotsky was primarily interested in the ontogenesis and microgenesis of creativity and in creativity as a process occurring in real-life "collaborations" (paradigmatic being in this regard those between child and adult). It is because of such preoccupations that the Vygotskian perspective remains central to any cultural perspective on creativity and this includes the proposed framework to be discussed further in the chapter. This framework also combines ideas from several other lines of thought, three of which are briefly presented below: Winnicott and the notion of potential space, dialogicality and creativity as dialogue, and the everyday use of symbolic resources.

Similar to Vygotsky, who proposed that "creative imagination develops from children's symbolic play interactions with caregivers" (Smolucha, 1992, p. 51), Donald Winnicott (1971) developed an important thesis claiming that creativity and cultural experience are *twinborn* in a *potential or transitional space* through creative playing in early childhood (see also Glăveanu, 2009). The notion of potential space, central for the conception of the author, is that of a relational area "between the individual and the environment" (p. 100), a space of experiencing the world between inner self and external life; this concept came to be equated with the arena of intersubjectivity. Creativity therefore has a strong social basis as it *emerges primarily in a relationship*, that between the mother and the child. Besides establishing creativity as relational, Winnicott's account can be considered an excellent theoretisation of everyday creativity in its most basic form. For him, creativity is not

embodied in products but it is primarily a process, what he described as "creative living", a healthy way of living that leaves room for personal expression and spontaneity. If Winnicott's account can give us an idea of *where* creativity is located, and that is in the space of interrelations, we further need to understand *how* exactly creativity emerges in relations and it is here where notions of dialogue and dialogicality become instrumental; for dialogue:

> "is the meeting ground on which new questions are raised, the mating ground on which new combinations are found, and the testing ground in which novelties are critically evaluated and assimilated into the body of shared knowledge and thought" (Gruber, 1998, p. 139).

Continuing his argument, Gruber asserts that all creativity requires, at least at certain points in the process, some form of communication or social exchange. This is not only applicable to explicit moments of social interaction since, for the cultural psychologist, human mind itself is *dialogical*, meaning that it can "conceive, create and communicate about social realities in terms of the '*Alter*'" (Marková, 2003, p. xiii). The relevance of this perspective is supported by Barrett (1999) who recognised knowledge creation, therefore both thinking and creativity, as *inherently* social-dialogical processes. This means that, even when alone and apparently creating in complete solitude, we are still engaged in dialogue with internalised "parties" such as our mentors, audiences, critics, etc., always anticipating how they would respond to or receive the work (Becker, 2008, p. 200). In the words of Negus and Pickering (2004, p. 23), creativity entails a communicative experience, intersubjectivity and interactive dialogue. This dialogue is made possible by the use of cultural elements and it is these elements that constitute the substance of our creative acts. The question remains of *when* we are more likely to use cultural elements in a creative manner.

This leads us, finally, to the notion of *symbolic resources* developed by Tania Zittoun (see Zittoun, 2007a; 2007b; also Gillespie & Zittoun, 2010). The main thesis of this conception is that whenever people find themselves facing a discontinuity, a break or rupture of their taken-for-granted ordinary experience (of their inner self, of the relations with others or connection to the environment), they engage in processes specific to "*transitions*" and resort to symbolic resources to elaborate meaning and externalise the outcome (Zittoun et al., 2003; Zittoun, 2007b). Needless to say this outcome (not necessarily material) is most often creative, especially since it comes out of a situation where there is no learned or practiced solution (Torrance, 1988). To qualify as a symbolic resource, the element must be

used by someone for something, usually re-contextualizing meaning into a newly resulting socio-cultural formation (Zittoun et al., 2003, p. 418). Symbolic resources vary in nature, from concrete artefacts to conceptual and procedural elements. All symbolic resources emerge within social interaction (Zittoun, 2007a) and require a symbolic labour, the necessary work in the terms of Willis (1990, p. 9) "to ensure the daily production and reproduction of human existence".

From the perspectives outlined above, some conclusions can be drawn about the cultural psychology conceptualisation of creativity: 1) *it considers creative acts socio-cultural in nature and origin*; 2) *it stresses the role of intersubjectivity and dialogical interaction for creative expression* and 3) *it looks at how cultural symbolic elements come to form the texture of new and creative products*. All these basic premises stand at the core of the creativity definition and framework discussed next.

1.2.2. A cultural definition of creativity

As mentioned earlier, to the best of our knowledge no "cultural psychology of creativity" has been formally constructed up to now. Nonetheless, what we reviewed before are important theoretical leads that could support such a construction. A *cultural definition of creativity* would need to take into account the social embedment of creative acts as well as their relation to cultural resources. In the literature on creativity some of these features tend to be considered in a number of definitions:

> "a creative individual solves problems, fashions products, or poses new questions within a domain in a way that is initially considered to be unusual but is eventually accepted within at least one cultural group" (Gardner, 1994, p. 145).

> "I define creativity as [the] activity that produces something new through the recombination and transformation of existing cultural practices or forms" (Liep, 2001, p. 2).

> "Much human creativity is social, arising from activities that take place in a context in which interaction with other people and the artifacts that embody collective knowledge are essential contributors" (Fischer et al., 2005, p. 482).

Supported by these formulations, we can define creativity from a cultural perspective – a *complex socio-cultural-psychological process that, through working with "culturally-impregnated" materials within an intersubjective space, leads to the generation of artefacts evaluated as new and significant by one or more persons or communities at a given time*. Novelty is considered above a condition of possibility for the creative act in very general terms, as artefacts that are appreciated for their "creativity" need to be generated and not already in existence (in this sense, they are considered new[1]). However, these is a second aspect coming into scientific definitions of creativity and that is originality (or degree of novelty), meaning not only that artefacts are different from what existed before but also taking into account the extent of this difference. It is to be noted in any case that the meaning of creativity and how it is evaluated by local communities is culturally-bound (see also Chapter 4) and so the criteria of novelty and significance are the most common in the literature (and perhaps in popular perception) but are not the only standards people use to distinguish the creative from the less or non-creative (see Chapter 4). Finally, as outlined before, the socio-cultural-psychological creative process is essentially a dialogical one, culturally-impregnated materials are symbolic resources (signs and tools in a Vygotskian perspective), and the intersubjective arena is a potential space, between creator and community. Adopting this definition opens up a new world of possibilities for studying creativity without individualising it or looking exclusively at its cognitive aspects.

1.3. Theoretical model: Creativity as a cultural act

The main assertion supported here is that creativity is a *socio-cultural-psychological process*, and this means that creative expression is *at once* an individual, social and cultural act. Creativity is individual because it relies on the individual's set of abilities and types of knowledge as expressed in the production of creative outcomes. Creativity is socio-cultural because: a) the set of skills and types of knowledge that individual actors possess are developed through social interaction; b) creativity in itself is often the result of explicit moments of collaboration between individuals; c) creativity is largely defined by social judgement or validation; and d) creativity exists only in relation to an established ensemble of cultural norms and products that both aliment the creative process and integrate its outcomes. This last point deserves particular attention since it postulates a very close connection between creativity and culture; an acknowledgement that led anthropologists

[1] This does not exclude the fact that existing artefacts (like a painting by Picasso) can still be considered creative, despite not being "new", by reference to the historical time of their production.

like Wagner (1981, p. 35) to affirm that invention *is* culture. The “new” and the “old”, in their never-ending interaction, characterise human culture and also define each other through this very process. To use a suggestive illustration for this kind of interdependence one can think of the Yin and Yang symbol. The two terms exist only in interaction and contain the seed of their “opposite”.

Figure 1 below synthesises a conception of creativity, *the tetradic model*, that brings together self and others, the new and the old and captures the intricate connections that tie all of them together in the form of creative activity. At the core of this diagram we find the fundamental relationships between creator, creation and audience (what in art for example is the “core trinity of creator, work, and perceiver”, R. Wilson, 1986, p. 110; also Dewey, 1934). “Audience” has been chosen here as a general term meant to signify all instances of otherness involved by the creative act. Stein (1953, p. 320), using this term, referred to critics, patrons, followers and “the population at large”. At least three major types of audiences can be identified in our context: “collaborators” (persons who directly contribute to the creative work), “users” (persons who utilise the creation) and “perceivers” (persons who are simply in contact with the creation). All the elements of this creator – creation – audience triad are immersed into culture, into a world of existing artefacts taking the form of material objects, beliefs, norms, values, representations, conventions and everything else that makes up the life of human communities.

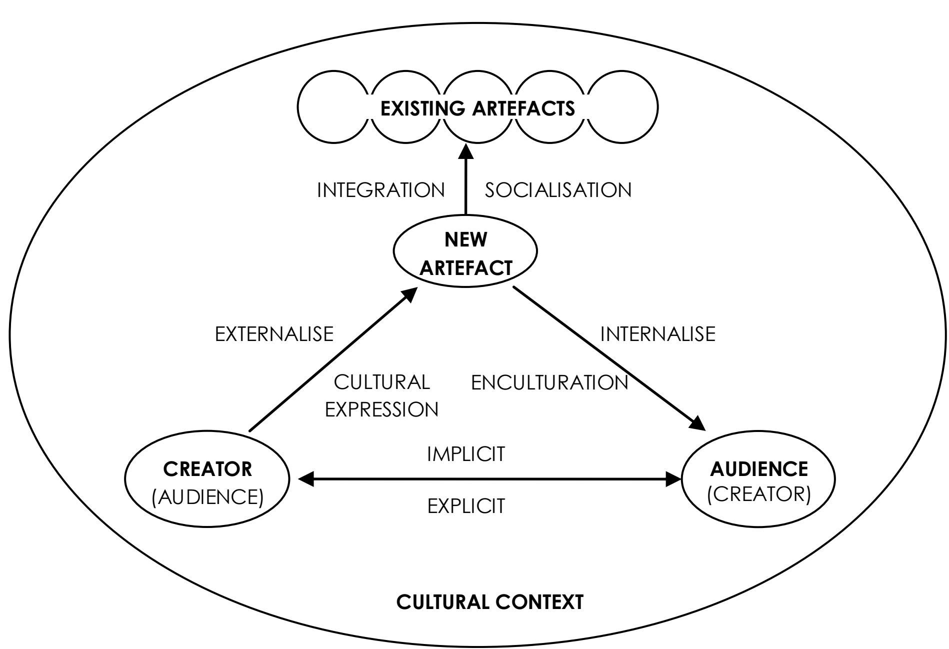


Figure 1. The tetradic model of creativity as a socio-cultural-psychological process

The framework discussed here relies on models and terms elaborated by several authors, including Ernest Boesch and in particular the cultural-historical psychologist Lev Vygotski. In one of his essays, “The sound of the violin”, Boesch (1997a, p. 183) described the invention of an object as a form of *objectivation*, the mastering of the object as *subjectivation*, and the integration of the object in “common frameworks of action and ideation” as *socialisation*. Furthermore, the mastery of any object or subjectivation is in itself a form of *enculturation* of the user and, we can continue, the objectivation or production of the object can be considered a form of *cultural expression*. In a similar vein, Lev Vygotski discussed in his work processes of *externalisation*, resulting in “materialised meanings”, and *internalisation*, “the appropriation of cultural tools and social interaction” (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 63; see also Valsiner, 2007). Creativity in his model, according to Moran and John-Steiner, is equated mostly with the act of externalisation, while internalisations lead to development, allowing the creative cycle to continue. Several very important ideas come out of these distinctions and are captured by Figure 1:

1. the creator is him/herself audience for all the creations of others and audience members become creators by using both new and existing artefacts;
2. creator, audience and creation exist and function in a socio-cultural setting described by social relations and accumulated cultural artefacts;
3. creative acts are simultaneously forms of externalisation and cultural expression;
4. the creation is always socialised or integrated in pre-existing cultural ensembles and this requires social agreement, debate and interaction;
5. audience members internalise creations as part of their enculturation;
6. creators and audiences interact in multiple and dynamic ways in the creative act and in the reception of every creation ;

In the following sections each one of the main connections depicted in Figure 1 will be analysed separately in order to gain a better understanding of the *microgenesis* of creative phenomena, from “great” creative achievements to the “minor” creations of everyday life. This is a difficult task since the processes referred to above are interconnected and concurrently contribute to the generation of the new. Final conclusions will refer to key implications of adopting this perspective on creativity.

1.3.1. Externalisation and cultural expression

Creativity requires some form of externalisation (Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004). Creative ideas can be put into words, into music, into drawings and pictures, into social practices or physical objects, etc. When it comes to artistic creativity for example, it is obvious that most ideas take some kind of material shape, "*something* which can be seen, heard, held" (Becker, 2008, p. 3). Artistic products serve therefore as "extensions of the individual projected into the world and materialised in visual and physical forms" (Zittoun et al., 2003, p. 429). They are expressive of the creator as well as the socio-cultural context of the creator, an observation that is easily lost from sight by strictly cognitive theories of creativity. The individualisation of the creative process has led to the general opinion that creativity takes place "in the mind" as a kind of unseen, personal and mysterious process unfolding more or less quietly in a social vacuum until expressed by the creator in a certain behaviour. Of course one can agree that creativity presents, along extrapsychic manifestations, an intrapsychic dynamics and outcome (see Barron, 1995, p. 31) but at the same time it could be argued that there are no cases of absolute non-externalisation of creativity. Human beings think, feel and act and there always tends to be a unity and coordinated expression between the three, one well reflected by creative processes. In the words of Negus and Pickering (2004, p. 22), "*creative experience requires a will to expression, and to communication with others*".

In effect, since early beginnings creativity, or the act of creating, has been associated with the generation of products through processes of externalisation. Historical analyses of existing literature on the topic from 18th and 19th century reveal for example that the tree main metaphors used to describe creativity were those of "expression", "production" and "revolution" (Joas, 1996). Creativity is meant to leave a "mark" on the world, on the life of individuals, of communities, often of entire societies and this, to an extent, is exactly its defining characteristic. Creative externalisations or objectivations have been glorified by romantic views of creativity so much that, in the field of fine arts for example, "when an art product (...) attains classic status, it somehow becomes isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience" (Dewey, 1934, p. 1).

If traditional psychology speaks about creative products, using here the notion of *artefact* serves to underline the socio-cultural nature of every creation, for as "minor" as it might be

in terms of utility or value. An artefact, described by Michael Cole (1996, p. 117), is simultaneously ideal (conceptual) and material (objectivised in a certain form, including a behavioural one). Artefacts are made by individuals and exist only for individuals; they require communication, attribution of meaning, mediation between self and other, "creator" and members of the "audience". Artefacts emerge and function only in relation to other people and other artefacts, in a cultural system. This is also the idea Feldman (1988, p. 288) emphasised when arguing that "artifacts of creative work are available to the person who desires to make further changes in the world".

Once established that new artefacts emerge in a creative process of externalisation or objectivation there is still to understand what this process actually consists of. This is certainly one of the most difficult questions and it stands at the core of creativity studies since it basically inquires about the very nature of creative expression. For the purposes of this chapter it is to be noted that mainstream psychological theory associates creativity with certain kinds of *thinking processes*, especially divergent forms of thinking, and evaluates the properties of such thinking through tests that score specific qualities of creative products (see Runco, 2004). The cognitive perspective, although excessively individualistic, is of course not to be altogether dismissed and decades of research done under its auspices have brought interesting conclusions about the mental dynamics of creativity (see Ward, Smith & Finke, 1999). Yet, the "connection" with the outside, the social and cultural world, and the permanent exchange between creator and environment in the form of perpetual externalisations and internalisations constitute the key for achieving a more comprehensive view of the creative process. Chapter 6 of the thesis develops these ideas further with the help of empirical examples conceptualising creativity as action or activity.

Finally, even after inquiring about the mechanisms of the creative process a question remains. Are creative externalisations also acts of cultural expression? If they are, is it the case for *all* of them or just the rare "big" creative achievements? The perspective advocated for here supports the view that all creative externalisations are simultaneously forms of cultural expression and that, whenever we bring about the "new", for as minor or insignificant as it may be, we are dealing with cultural production. But this of course means operating with a broad definition of culture that encompasses both its macro and micro levels, both the art galleries and inventors' fairs and the everyday life of the streets, markets, and family homes. Nonetheless, as we shall see next, not all theorists endorse a similar vision of culture and creativity.

1.3.2. Socialisation of the creative artefact

The creative artefact is "socialised", its novelty tamed or made familiar, through integration in a cultural system of existing artefacts, a dynamic that dependents on social interaction and recognition. The idea of "integration", in the form used here, designates several processes that can take place after the new artefact is externalised: *anchoring* in current systems of knowledge and practice, *communication* about and around the new artefact, social *appreciation and use* by creator and/or other people, etc. It can also signify violent dissent, outrage and rejection of the novel product and this itself is a way of positioning (integrating, grounding, conventionalising, contextualising or anchoring) it into an existing system of meanings and practices. In all the above there is an almost implicit notion that others are involved in the socialisation of the creation. This part of the creative process is by no means peripheral or redundant by comparison to the externalisation or actual generation moment and this is because no creative act is complete without being acknowledged, recognised, valued and used. In agreement with Baldwin (1906, p. 159), "the reaction of (...) social recognition upon the producer is not only the fountain of his stimulus and the test of his success; it is also the very source of his sense of values".

Ideas such as these are the cornerstone of one of the best known systemic models of creativity authored by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1999) also referred to earlier. After decades of research, Csikszentmihalyi reached the conclusion that we cannot understand the creativity of individuals outside of their particular social and historical context. In fact, creativity takes place in the interaction between:

> "a set of social institutions, or *field*, that selects from the variations produced by individuals those that are worth preserving; a stable cultural *domain* that will preserve and transmit the selected new ideas or forms to the following generations; and finally the *individual*, who brings about some change in the domain, a change that the field will consider to be creative" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 326).

One logical consequence of this perspective is that creativity judgements are a fundamental part of creativity and they are always relative to the field of evaluators, the domain in which the evaluation takes place and the historical time of the evaluation. As Csikszentmihalyi (1999, p. 314) very clearly states, creativity "is constructed through an *interaction between producer and audience*", and is not inherent to either creative person or creative product

alone. This systemic approach, both contested and celebrated, managed to remain influential in the psychology of creativity over the decades and has generated several interesting pieces of empirical evidence (for a recent study see McIntyre, 2008). The implications of a systems view are wide-ranging since, in the words of Bourdieu (1993, p. 135), who also theorised the notion on field, "the most personal judgements it is possible to make of a work, even of one's own work, are always collective judgements".

Analysing the components referred to above it becomes clear that all three constituents are equally present, to a certain extent, in Figure 1: the person or the creator, the field or the audience, the domain or the world of existing artefacts. And yet Csikszentmihalyi's theory distinguishes itself by proposing a rather *institutional* understanding of both field and domain. The "social system" and the "cultural system" are both organised and acknowledged as such. They refer to structures that enjoy public recognition: for members of the field recognition of their power to validate creativity, for domains recognition as distinct and defined symbolic systems. Also noted by Gardner (1994, p. 152), one important feature of the field is its hierarchical nature. There are gatekeepers who judge what is to enter the domain of valuable and creative productions and what is to be excluded. New artefacts that provoke dissent and outrage are therefore also denied creativity from this perspective, which is not the case for a socio-cultural understanding of "integration". There is a world of opinions and debates outside specialised institutions dedicated to the appreciation of creativity and it is within this multifaceted social universe that new products become themselves "socialised" and located.

The consequences of adopting this approach are radical. To answer the question set at the end of the last section: not all creative externalisations are also cultural expressions because they don't contribute to "culture" (or the domain) unless public agreement decides they do. This immediately *excludes* minor or everyday creativity as well as children's creativity or any other manifestation that doesn't benefit from the existence of an organised and recognisable field and domain. Needless to say, this chapter supports an alternative perspective. While operating with a consensual definition of creativity (Amabile, 1996) as rooted in social agreement (without masking the fact that reaching agreement requires discussion and oftentimes contradiction), it considers "fields" and "domains" at *all levels* of their existence and functioning. To take the example of the field, or the audience in our model, it can be represented by an institutionalised authority (like art critics) but could just as well be made up of persons who are close to the creator (such as family members or

school teachers; see Gabrielle Ivison's research on student artwork in Zittoun et al., 2003). Creative acts and social judgement occur constantly in the everyday and the fact that the vast majority of them are never "spotted" by the radar of highly formalised organisations doesn't affect their existence or their relevance (for more on the ecology of creativity evaluations see Chapter 4; also Gell, 1998, p. 8). Furthermore, the fact that creativity takes place at all these micro levels is by no means insignificant or inconsequential. On the contrary, basic forms of creativity are "an essential condition for existence" (Vygotski, 2004, p. 11) and, we might specify, for the existence of our cultures.

1.3.3. Internalisation and enculturation

If creativity emerges as a form of externalisation or objectivation its whole dynamics relies on processes of internalisation, or reception and engagement with existing cultural elements of an ideal/conceptual and material nature (from language to concrete artefacts). The importance of this connection between creator and culture, within a system of social relations, can hardly be overemphasised. The "domain", to use Csikszentmihalyi's terminology, is essential for creativity both at the level of creative expression and creativity evaluations. In effect, without this cultural basis we would not be able to identify novelty since "without rules there cannot be exceptions" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 315), "both creator and judges must know what is conventionally accepted in order to know whether something new is creative" (Craft, 2005, p. 28). In the end creative expression could never flourish outside of a system of constraints (see Stokes, 2001, 2007).

This existence of cultural domains forces us, as Sawyer (2003) considers, to think about issues of *internalisation, appropriation and mastery*. And yet, the mere notion of internalisation needs to be clarified in order to avoid certain misunderstandings about the nature of this complex process (see also Chapter 6). To be clear on this, socio-cultural theory promotes a particular conception of internalisation, one that rejects the idea of a passive actor "absorbing information from the environment without transformation or creative construction" (Sawyer, 2003, p. 46). To internalise doesn't mean to copy, to memorise or to transfer something from the "outside" to the "inside". In fact, cultural approaches contest this traditional Cartesian image of a psychological space separate from the socio-cultural world. Psychic and culture permeate each other (Shweder, 1990) and therefore to externalise or internalise in this context means to *actively engage* with cultural artefacts and other social actors. The Vygotskian conception of internalisation entails "a transformation or

reorganisation of incoming information and mental structures based on the individual's characteristics and existing knowledge" (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 63). Internalisation is thus an essential component of *enculturation* supporting the process of learning one's culture and defining a position within it.

A typical misconception concerns the static quality of the "audience" when in the presence of cultural artefacts, especially novel and creative ones. Just as internalisation is never a mere act of exposure, audience members don't simply watch the creation but experience it, use it and sometimes copy it as part of their own initiation of creative activities. All these instances are well discussed in relation to artistic creativity. To begin with, let's take the situation of the beholder or perceiver of a creative artefact. His/her role is by no means passive since the task of the perceiver, part of the internalisation process, is to "*recreate*" the object in similar ways to those the artist employed when "creating" it. As Dewey (1934, p. 56) suggests, having an aesthetic experience means "there is work done on the part of the participant as there is on the part of the artist". Certainly this work is not the same in any literal sense but involves a similar process of organisation, of abstraction, comprehension, ordering of elements and attribution of meaning. True internalisation (opposed to simple exposure) comes out of this work. As Dewey continues, those who are too lazy, idle or stuck in rigid conventions will not "see or hear"; in other words, those members of the audience who don't engage with the creation (at a cognitive, emotional, even physical level), will hardly benefit from it as a resource for their own creative processes.

This idea is extremely valuable in the context of the present chapter because it indicates that we are all *both* "consumers" *and* "performers" of novel works. Umberto Eco captured well this dimension when arguing that "every 'reading', 'contemplation', or 'enjoyment' of a work of art represents a tacit or private form of 'performance'" (Eco, 1989, p. 251). The vitality of creative artefacts, in his view, resides precisely in our capacity to constantly re-model and re-interpret them as part of on-going creative cycles. The act of improvisation is thus a constant of our daily lives. Following this line of reasoning, even the notion of "copying" gains new meanings; in the words of Ingold and Hallam (2007, p. 5):

> "Copying or imitation, we argue, is not the simple, mechanical process of replication that it is often taken to be, of running off duplicates from a template, but entails a complex and ongoing alignment of observation of the model with action in the world. In this alignment lies the work of improvisation".

Internalisation doesn't require less work, and indeed *less creative work*, than the act of externalisation or creation itself. It puts persons in contract with culture and serves the purposes of enculturation while, "by the individual variations in styles or ways of handling the object, [it generates] an *individualization* of culture" (Boesch, 1997a, p. 183). A broader discussion concerning enculturation and creativity in childhood is presented in Chapter 6, along with a series of empirical findings.

1.3.4. Relations between creator and audience

The processes of internalisation, externalisation and socialisation or integration of the creative artefact all require some kind of relation between creator and audience, between self and others. Creativity doesn't take place in a social vacuum but generally "involves some degree of social interaction" (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003, p. 326). Creative acts depend on social encounters, on intersubjective and interactive dialogues and entail communicative experiences (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 23). The intricate relationships between creator and audiences (collaborators, critics, wider public, etc.) are not always overt or explicit, but oftentimes involve more or less implicit or indirect forms of collaboration. In the end though, the argument put forward here is similar to that advocated by Barron (1999): that *all creativity is collaboration*, all creativity is co-construction of self and other. In support of this statement let us first have a look at moments of "explicit" social interaction in creative activities and then, gradually, reveal the inherently social aspects of creativity.

In everyday life there are numerous occasions in which we work together with others to generate some new and creative artefacts. Either at school or at home, very often at the workplace, individuals are part of groups and, as such, engage with other group members for the development of creative ideas. Aware of this reality, many creativity researchers have focused their attention on *group creativity* and this is today one of the growing literatures in the field (see Nijstad & Paulus, 2003; Nemeth & Nemeth-Brown, 2003; Nijstad & Stroebe, 2006). Results offered by this area of investigation are mixed, showing both positive and negative effects of participation in groups for creativity. Several scholars point to possible gaps between the "promise" and "reality" of working in teams (see Mannix & Neale, 2005). Simultaneously, an increased interest is shown by socio-cultural psychologists towards aspects of *collaborative creativity*. The difference between these two paradigms doesn't constitute the topic of the present chapter (for a discussion see Glăveanu, 2011c), but it is sufficient to say that creative collaborations denote different realities than group

creativity. “Long-term engagement, voluntary connection, trust, negotiation, and jointly chosen projects” (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 82) are all features that define collaborations and differentiate them from one-off group meetings. In concluding, the *encounter* between self and others in the context of everyday life takes many forms, some durable, some more sporadic but, nevertheless, all potentially meaningful as collective opportunities for creative expression.

Social relations are not accidental or superfluous but lie at the very heart of creative achievements. This is perfectly illustrated by Becker’s notion of the *art world*. Its main assertion is that the production of new and creative artefacts (in this case art products) is always the result of cooperation and division of labour, not only among a group of creators or a creator and his/her collaborators, but between all the people that make the production of the work possible (what Becker refers to as “support personnel”). This is valid for every kind of creative act, from the most explicitly social – like participation in a theatre performance – to the most apparently solitary activities – e.g., writing poetry. The poet’s work in this example relies on existing literary sources, continues certain literary traditions and is supported by the use of materials (paper and pencil, computer, etc.) that are the result of social collaboration between a series of other people. Although this might sound like an extreme argument, it is often the case that we forget the *social nature and origin* of the world we live in and of all its artefacts. Creation never spurs from nowhere, with no roots and no help from others but, “often requires as a minimum some dialogue and social exchange” (Gruber, 1998, p. 142).

And yet, whenever we think about human creativity and especially human creativity in the domain of the *arts or sciences*, it is not this image of collaboration that first comes to mind. On the contrary, centuries of scientific and artistic achievements are frequently summarised in terms of the breakthroughs of a handful of great creators touched by the wings of genius (see the section on the He-paradigm, this chapter). This is how “culture heroes” (Schaffer, 1994, p. 19; see also Breton, 2007, pp. 123-124) are born and how they remain present in our collective imaginary long after they are gone. Looking back at history ideas appear to be spontaneous creations of isolated minds “rather than way stations along the trails of living beings, moving through the world” (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 8). The myth of The Single Creator (Barron, 1999, p. 49) or the “charismatic” ideology (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 76) are strong political categories since the recognition and legitimisation of certain individuals as geniuses is dictated by specific social and ideological circumstances (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 147).

Concluding on this issue, it is useful to consider a suggestive analogy proposed by Collins (2007, p. 165): "Though intellectual history is written in a discourse of individuals, they are only the façade, the glamorous images of the advertisements that surround the theatre; inside, it is truly the networks who are the actors on the stage."

All the social processes above – collaboration, evaluation, recognition – are to a great extent observable when we analyse the dynamics and consequences of creative work. But there is yet another explanation for why creativity is social and dependent on the relation between creator and audience, and that is simply because the human mind is social (see Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000). A set of arguments for this idea is offered by the theory of *dialogicality* basically stating that "knowledge creation is an inherently social-dialogical process" (Barrett, 1999, p. 133). This conclusion is by no means new; in effect, John Dewey, in the first half of the last century, mentioned that "the artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works" (Dewey, 1934, p. 50). Every act of creation involves a continuous *internal dialogue* with others and the reason for this is simple: creations are generally points of connection between self and other, they are shown to others, discussed with others and, in the end, meant for others to see, to use, to appreciate.

> "Even when the artist works in solitude all three terms are present [work, artist and audience]. The work is there in progress, and the artist has to become vicariously the receiving audience. He can speak only as his work appeals to him as one spoken to through what he perceived. He observes and understands as a third person might note and interpret" (Dewey, 1934, p. 111).

Creativity is never a solitary affair. The "audience" is always there, helping, in more explicit or more implicit ways, the externalisation process, the socialisation of the creative product, the internalisation of new creations. It is social interaction that turns the wheels of creativity and, along with it, of cultural change and societal transformation.

1.4. Implications of the cultural psychological approach

The main argument put forward in this chapter was that creative acts are *simultaneously* individual and socio-cultural. In order to support this assertion it was important to advocate for a particular understanding of both the human mind and of culture. The human mind has been conceptualised as fundamentally social, "a hotbed of tactical and relational

improvisation" (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 9). Culture was defined here as an accumulation of artefacts (norms, ideas, beliefs, material objects, etc.) that is ever-changing through personal and collective acts of creativity, from the smallest and apparently insignificant ones (shaping the micro-culture of families, groups and small communities) to extremely visible achievements (leaving their mark on the history of humankind). And yet it was not very common for these two understandings to be put together since the prevailing viewpoint in the psychological literature on creativity is that creativity takes place in the "isolated" mind of the creator and culture is a rather institutionalised superstructure that only geniuses can influence. Of course there are also exceptions. Authors like Vygotski (2004, p. 30) considered creativity "a historical, cumulative process" and their work continues to inspire past and present socio-cultural accounts. Adopting a cultural psychological approach to the study of creativity has the potential to radically transform creativity theory and research.

1.4.1. Creativity as a contextual and generative process

The cultural definition of creativity is, in essence, a contextual one. Underlining this aspect we may start from traditional definitions of creative products emphasising novelty and appropriateness / usefulness (see Amabile, 1996) and problematise their meaning: novel compared to what? useful for whom? The act of *contextualising creativity* is intrinsic to the cultural approach and has been vividly addressed by Montuori and Purser who argued that "it is therefore important to develop an understanding of the 'genealogy' of creativity and the contextual influences that lead us to consider works to be creative in our present period" (Montuori & Purser, 1995, p. 71). A product (material and/or conceptual) can be considered creative only in relation to a certain time and a certain group of reference. As radical as this statement may seem it has long been acknowledged more or less openly by prestigious authors. It is this *situated evaluation* of creative products that Stein (1962) and Gardner (1994) highlighted when mentioning the importance of the significant group of others or, respectively, of the cultural group, for legitimising creativity. This assumption also echoes in the work of Teresa Amabile especially in the idea of a consensual definition for assessing creativity and therefore one that "must, ultimately, be culturally and historically bound" (Amabile, 1996, p. 37). Does this relativism eventually imply that there is no creativity since one can never formulate a definitive and much less universal statement about what is or is not creative? No, what it does mean is that any process or product can be evaluated as being more or less creative but always *in relation* to something (a group, a

domain, a historical period). The fact that we usually don't "bother" to offer these supplementary qualifications in our current evaluations of creative products should not deceive us about their generality.

Another conclusion derived from the tetradic framework is that creativity is a *generative* process; it is connected to previous knowledge and cultural repertoires and in a dialogical relationship with the old and the already-there. Innovative ideas or objects never materialise *ex nihilo*, as in the romantic visions of the genius specific for the He-paradigm. This aspect has been recognised early on in the literature, the fact that "human creativity uses what is already existing and available and changes it in unpredictable ways" (Arieti, 1976, p. 4; see also Liep, 2001; Hennessey, 2003a; Negus & Pickering, 2004). From a cultural psychological point of view artefacts (objects, language and symbols, representations, beliefs, procedures, schemas, scripts, models, algorithms, etc.) are the resources being available and it is these "culturally-impregnated materials" that constitute the foundation for any creative work. That is not to say that individuals participate in the creative process with rigid and specific cultural preset-values. Their biological endowment, personal life experiences and particular social setting, as well as their capacity to filter and modify cultural influences, make them precious and distinctive *agents* in the act of innovation.

1.4.2. New theoretical emphasis on meaning and action

The theoretical foundation of cultural psychology is largely built around notions of *meaningful or symbolic action* (see Boesch, 1997b; Cole, 1996; Engeström, 1987; Ratner, 1996; Wertsch, 1998). The fact that creative processes are themselves instances of meaningful action has not been sufficiently acknowledged by mainstream literature on creativity preoccupied, as shown before, with defining the phenomenon in cognitive terms, mostly as a problem-solving skill (reference to the I-paradigm).

Creativity is a process of meaning production and, in its unfolding, is *mediated* by various systems of knowledge and norms describing a particular cultural system (something clearly outlined in Figure 1). Without this capacity to represent and use symbols we would not be able to create and the two are closely intertwined from early childhood onwards (as discussed by Winnicott, 1971; Vygotsky, 1960/1997). Furthermore, creativity uses meaning to produce meaning; the newly generated artefact requires this quality to even be considered creative (since attributes of value and significance are part of most definitions of

creativity). A “novelty” that doesn’t make sense passes on to the realm of the eccentric and not the creative. Creations become part and parcel of everyday life precisely because they are interpreted and engaged with. However, they are very often interpreted and engaged with differently by people from different groups or socio-cultural milieus. In fact, the cultural perspective is particularly interested in the subjective and inter-subjective ways in which individuals relate to their creations or the creations of others and how they make sense of their own creativity. Principally, what distinguishes cultural research on creativity is the predominantly *emic* approach to the phenomenon (see Smith & Bond, 1998).

The focus of the socio-cultural approach on meaning-making processes around the creative output is complemented by its interest in creativity as a property of human action (and itself a type of activity). An important consequence of referring to creativity as a form of action or activity rather than simply an internal-psychological process is that, while the latter is typically understood to be “mental” or “cognitive” in nature, the former brings to the fore the interplay between and integration of psychological and behavioural aspects. Creativity, like all psychological phenomena, has both an “inner” and an “outer” dynamic and this is precisely the double-focus of the model proposed in Figure 1. Constant processes of internalisation and externalisation define creative action and make it at once psychological, material and social. These ideas are only hinted at here but they will be expended in the next chapters where the notions of “creativity as representation” (Chapter 4) and “creativity as action” (Chapter 5) are discussed at length and in light of empirical illustrations.

1.4.3. The call for ecological research

Numerous creativity studies are performed in laboratory settings and use artificial tasks. Unfortunately, the need to control for confounding variables and to standardise the testing procedures has often led to conclusions that ignore the usual, real-life contexts in which creativity takes place (see Schoon, 1992). For example, can a creativity test of word generation or creative associations employing specific verbal or non-verbal material be valid in all parts of the world irrespective of the background of the respondents? Or how creative might a group of brainstorming participants be when knowing that they are observed through a one-way mirror and that the discussion theme has nothing in common with their interests or knowledge? Such rhetorical questions may help increase awareness concerning the ecological validity of our studies and highlight the particular challenge of preserving the spontaneous, informal and contextual nature of creativity.

In terms of general methodology (see also Chapter 3), and because of the need to have an in-depth situational understanding of creativity, *qualitative methods* could be employed: from ethnographic research and case studies (gathering information about individual circumstances and the social and historical context of the creative act) to interviews and focus groups (on issues related to creative identities and creativity assessment). A preference, whenever possible, should be given to *process-observation* meaning the detailed observation of the creative process as it takes place in actual work settings and, in the case of group creativity, in the collaborative activity of the collective. Certainly quantitative methods are not excluded but quantifications (particularly for identifying patters across a large pool of data) in creativity research should be done with great care for the meaning of the constructs under study. For instance, in his historiometric analyses, D. K. Simonton (1999) aimed to determine correlations and causal patterns between a series of social, political and cultural variables and the outcomes of recognised creators across history. Unfortunately, assigning scores to social or personal situations (like war or illness; see Simonton, 1977) does not lead to a more rigorous understanding of the historical context but to a questionable standardisation working towards the exclusion of the subjective and idiosyncratic aspects of the creative process.

1.5. Concluding on creativity, individuals, and everyday community life

As argued in this chapter, traditionally a raw distinction has been made between two levels of creativity (see Boden, 1994), an H or historical one (contributions to the culture of a society) and a P or personal one (contributing to the individual's own life sphere). Yet conceptualised as such both forms end up individualising creativity either by glorifying the creative genius (the He-paradigm) or focusing exclusively on the person's life horizon (the I-paradigm). What is argued for here, in the end, is a more ecological way of situating *creativity at the level of the community* (*C-creativity*). This concept has been chosen instead of "group" or "society" because of its broad theoretical implications:

> "Not as close to each one of us as our immediate family or the various small groups to which we belong, nor as distant as the general rules and codes of practice that govern and structure the larger societies in which we live, community is an intermediate space that offers both the symbolic and material resources within which the dialectics between individual subjects and the social world is lived and played out" (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 71).

This line of thought goes back to the conception of Martin Buber who considered community the basic social framework supporting human creativity (for details see a collection of his works on intersubjectivity and cultural creativity edited by Eisenstadt, 1992) and emphasised a fundamental reality: humans live and create within communities and each community membership brings with it a distinctive set of resources and practices, a specific knowledge and identity. Placed between P and H levels, C-creativity focuses on the vital role of communities as social contexts for both 1) the *production* of creative outcomes and how the creator or creators engage with and use the "symbolic and material resources" of their groups and 2) the *evaluation* of creativity since "communities produce a common stock of knowledge that endures over time and gives to community members the points of reference and the parameters against which individuals make sense of the world around them" (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 77), and especially of the new artefacts entering this world. As observed, here the notion of community goes beyond groups of persons populating the same geographical space to signify collectives sharing similar life experiences and holding comparable knowledge systems as well as a common identity. It is for this reason that, by adopting a community perspective on creativity, we can fully come to understand the significance of the social and the cultural, of the contextual nature of creativity and its multifaceted subjective, intersubjective and objective dynamics.

Important to note in the end, the emphasis on community specific for the socio-cultural approach is not meant to displace the individual from the theory of creativity but to integrate individual and society by situating creators within culture and within history. The creative person is part of the tetradic framework proposed in this chapter and individuals are certainly acknowledged as the agents of creativity who don't lose any of their agency by being located in a broader, social and cultural whole, on the contrary, this is the only way for them to *gain creative agency*. The model put forward here is a fundamentally relational one that privileges the "in between" of creative expression and therefore requires both individuals and communities to study their complex set of relationships. By adopting these wider lenses, the explanatory power of the socio-cultural framework becomes greater than that of previous purely cognitive or purely social and institutional perspectives. It allows us to study creativity at the level of the individual, the group, the community and the society thus inviting the idea not only of an "individual" but also of a "collective" creator. Uncovering the *creativity of communities in the everyday* is precisely what animates the present research and its choice of topic, folk art, something we pass to discuss next.

2. Research context: Folk art and the creativity of everyday life

Chapter summary

The chapter starts with a discussion of creative expression in everyday life, a key concern for the cultural psychology of creativity previously outlined. This leads to addressing the relationship between tradition and creativity since very often the two are read in oppositional terms. The above misconception is challenged on several grounds and particular emphasis put on revealing how tradition works from within creativity, by supplying it with the resources it depends on and the standards it is evaluated against, and how creativity, in turn, works from within tradition, constantly adapting it to new conditions and therefore helping it to "move forward". Folk art is a perfect illustration of this dynamic and also a typical example of everyday life creativity. The chapter reviews a number of studies dedicated to the experience and practice of different crafts in different cultural contexts. What these illustrations highlight is the complexity of a phenomenon intersecting and bringing together several levels of community life, creating history and identity, and being located between the agency of creators and the material constraints specific for the products of craftwork. However, it is rarely that psychologists preoccupy themselves with creativity in folk art. One such less studied expression is represented by Easter egg decoration. A custom with very old, pre-Christian roots, this particular folk art has been chosen as a research context for its polyphony of practices and beliefs in both urban and rural Romania. The presentation starts with some general facts about the craft and situates it at the intersection between folklore, religion, art, and a growing market dedicated to the production and distribution of decorated eggs. It continues with a more detailed analysis of the actors, outcomes, techniques and uses of decorated eggs. In the end the vitality of this tradition is discussed, arguing that continuity and change support each other in conserving and adapting the "craft world" to ever-changing demands and circumstances.

> "When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals. Art is remitted to a separate realm, where it is cut off from that association with the materials and aims of every other form of human effort, undergoing, and achievement. A primary task is thus imposed upon one who undertakes to write upon the philosophy of the fine arts. This task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience" (Dewey, 1934, p. 2).

The quote above from John Dewey reflects a state of affairs much broader than artistic production alone. Celebrated creations in general, once they achieve this status, tend to be *set apart* from the mundane, community life that generated them. And the special realm they come to populate is not only symbolically but also spatially separated: the appearance of the museum is illustrative in this regard. In the words of Pierre Bourdieu, in museums "everything combines to indicate that the world of art is as contrary to the world of everyday life as the sacred is to the profane" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 236). This constitution of the "pure" gaze, as the author goes on to show, is precisely the outcome of institutionalising art by means of galleries, museums and a body of professionals to take care of and evaluate the aesthetic. The fact that art objects, as any valuable creation, get separated from the contexts they were created in has some important consequences for how we appreciate them (as lay audiences) and for the meaning they come to acquire.

In this regard Dewey (1934, p. 8) rightfully lamented the fact that works of art, once they lose their "indigenous status", become "specimens of fine art and nothing else". There is a loss of meaning at stake in the process of institutionalising and celebrating something as "art" since this cuts the creation from a series of other meanings and associations that inspired its making and original purpose. Dewey was troubled by this and insisted on the questions of why any attempt to connect the higher and ideal with "basic vital roots" is so easily seen as a betrayal of their nature and value, and why we seem to have a repulsion towards "common life, the life that we share with all living creatures" (p. 20). For him writing a history of morals could best illuminate these aspects. However, the present chapter will not attempt to write such a history. Its aim is to describe the notion of *everyday life creativity* and exemplify it with cases of folk art. Romanian Easter egg decoration, the

context of the present research, will be described at length in terms of its outcomes, procedures, and actors, paying particular attention precisely to the "continuities" between art, folklore, and community life.

To begin with, it is important to note that, despite this background of a *general dichotomy* between fine art and folk art, significant changes are taking place. In recent decades "self-taught art" or "outsider art" for example reached some degree of popularity. However, as Fine (2004, p. 4) shows, this is largely due to the characteristics of the creators, "often uneducated, elderly, black, poor, mentally ill, criminal, and/or rural" and the interest for what such authors have to express. They are not part of the mainstream art world and not defined as contemporary artists. High art, on the other hand, is no longer as distant from the masses as it used to be in the past. Modern means of reproduction insidiously corrode the classic, intangible prestige of art. In today's societies, Berger (1972, p. 32) reminders us, "for the first time ever, images of art have become ephemeral, ubiquitous, insubstantial, available, valueless, free". This process of "democratisation" can also be paralleled with the changing conceptions of creativity from a He to an I type of paradigm (see Chapter 1). The We paradigm though, both in the case of art and creativity, awaits to fully come into being. Recognising, theorising and researching the creativity of everyday and community life is an essential part of this process. Unfortunately, as Sawyer noted a decade ago, "in spite of Dewey's strong claims for the aesthetic value of everyday life, neither psychology nor aesthetics has had much to say about the creativity of everyday life" (Sawyer, 2000, p. 159).

But what is the everyday and what might everyday creativity be? There are two understandings to be distinguished here, a restricted and a broader one. In a strict sense the creativity of everyday life emerges as an *oppositional category* to what was previously referred to in terms of "big" and "celebrated" creations. As such, if the conception of creativity that inspired the He-paradigm was one of disconnection (between great creators and lay people), exclusivity (emphasis on the unique and rare qualities of great creators) and discontinuity (great creations breaking violently with the past), everyday life creativity can be said to be based on connecting creators and audiences, to be inclusive and continuous in its manifestation. On the other hand, from a broader perspective, *all* creativity can be considered to belong to everyday life contexts. Indeed, creativity permeates every dimension of life and the "where" of creativity is potentially "everywhere" (Montuori, 2011). Artists' studios and scientific laboratories, museums and galleries all exist in the "real" world of various communities. The extensive definition of everyday life creativity thus *bridges*

higher forms of creative expression with their more mundane, minor aspects and positions both in a social and cultural context. This is also the premise we are starting from, fundamental for the cultural psychology of creativity proposed in the previous chapter, and very much inspired by Dewey's call to restore continuity and not to contribute to any further segmentation of human experience. "Where 'arts' exclude, 'culture' includes" said Willis (1990, p. 2), and culture *does* include both "high" and "folk" forms of art.

2.1. Creativity and tradition: Two faces of the same coin

There are several barriers in the face of a project trying to integrate creativity and art with everyday life and culture. Perhaps the most notable one steams from a pervasive association between cultural forms of expression and "traditional" ways of doing things, conceptualising everyday life as a series of routines and mindless repetitions. If culture is tradition to a great extent than creativity certainly has little to do with it since "creativity and tradition seem to be in perpetual conflict – one represents a commitment to the past; the other a push towards the future" (Weiner, 2000, p. 12). Tradition is thus taking us backwards, creativity forwards, how can the two be reunited? What will be developed in this section is a critique of such formulations showing that not only creativity and tradition are not opposed, *but that they cannot exist one without the other* (see also Chapter 7). This is a necessary discussion in the context of the present research which explores the creativity of a traditional type of art. Any question of creativity in folk art makes sense only when set against a background of the *interdependence* between innovation and tradition, between change and continuity, the "new" and the "old", something the theoretical model presented in Capture 1 strives to incorporate. The cultural psychological definition of creativity previously proposed also reflected this when considering creativity a generative process. Creations don't come *ex nihilo*, "from spatial and temporal nothingness" (Arieti, 1976, p. 4). They are generated from within a tradition and contribute to it. Creativity is thus fundamentally a phenomenon concerned with the "recombination and transformation of existing cultural practices or forms" (Liep, 2001, p. 7) and "the human act of creation, basically, is a personal reshaping of given materials, whether physical or mental" (Barron, 1995, p. 313); of course, the nature and outcomes of this "reshaping" show considerable variation.

What is *tradition*? The complexity of the term eludes precise definition but it can broadly be considered to comprise "many different aspects of social structure and organization of individual behavior and beliefs or of cultural symbols" (Eisenstadt, 1973, p. 120). As such,

tradition operates at both a micro (individual) and macro (societal) level and constitutes a complex body of practices (revealed in human action) and representations (making up the "symbolic universe" of a certain community). For the purpose of the following presentation tradition will be discussed in light of conventions, norms and existing knowledge, as well as the array of material artefacts that regulate and give continuity to our social existence. It can already be seen therefore that tradition is never "singular" and, unlike its usual portrayal, it is not a "static" reality. In fact, creativity and tradition stand as the two sides of the same coin, distinguishable only for analytical purposes. Since this is however an analytical exercise, their relationship will be considered next in the form of a two-way dynamic.

2.1.1. Tradition working from within creativity

Creativity would be unimaginable without tradition for at least two reasons: on the one hand creative acts emerge out of existing traditions and require conventions and knowledge to engage with and, on the other, creative outcomes are evaluated in the context of traditional "ways of doing things". As Baldwin remarked at the start of last century, "every new thing is an adaptation, and every adaptation arises right of the bosom of old processes and is filled with old matter" (Baldwin, 1900, p. 218). Some might argue that the specific note of creativity is exactly departing from "old matter" and breaking with or challenging customs and long-standing beliefs. This intention may be behind some creative works (certainly not all of them) but, in the end, "creative thought (...) is, by definition, part of a cultural tradition – *even when it breaks with tradition*" (Feldman, 1974, p. 68, emphasis added). It does not materialise out of thin air or exist in a social and cultural vacuum.

The role of tradition in creativity has been discussed for a long time, albeit under different names. Becker (2008) for instance, referring to artistic creation, was keen to emphasise the importance of *conventions* or agreements made customary. Conventions dictate a series of things in art, among them: materials to be used, abstractions to convey particular ideas from experience, the form in which materials and abstractions are combined, the dimensions of the work and relations between artists and audience (Becker, 2008, p. 29). More attention has been given in mainstream literature on creativity to the contribution of the *knowledge base*. If one defines knowledge as "a capacity for action, creation and transformation" then it becomes easy to see how "knowledge strengthens creativity, whereas knowledge production demands creativity" (Sales, Fournier & Sénéchal, 2007, pp. 4-6). However, a cognitive association between knowledge and information managed to slightly obscure the

utility of starting from a solid understanding of "what is", so much so that nowadays researchers ask if it possible to have "*too much* knowledge" (Scott, 1999, p. 126). There is a current ambivalence among psychologists when it comes to this issue since knowledge can in fact play two roles in relation to creative cognition: it supplies the individual with problem solving options, but it can also inhibit his/her creative thinking by "fixating" it on existing solutions (Runco, 2004, pp. 667-668). Authors like Weisberg (1999), who dealt extensively with this tension, note that usually the relationship between knowledge and creativity is assumed to take an inverted U shape, where maximal creativity occurs at a middle level of knowledge. Weisberg's own research disagrees with this claim: "master-level performance only comes after years of extensive deliberate practice" and for individuals who are close to the maximal, not medium, knowledge level (p. 230). In sum, there is support for a vision of tradition, conventions, and knowledge working to enhance human creativity.

From a developmental perspective as well, a state of ontological security is being established through the existence of routines, patterned social relations and traditions that does not reduce creativity, on the contrary, fosters its expression. Winnicott (1971) for instance discussed at length the ontogenesis of creativity and located it in the feeling of *trust* allowing the self to try out ideas and venture into the world. Furthermore, creativity depends on tradition not only for its generation but also for its evaluation. Again in the words of Winnicott, "in any cultural field, *it is not possible to be original except on a basis of tradition*" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 99). Everything that steps outside of tradition, and does so in radical ways, becomes bizarre and meaningless since it is our conventions that help us make sense of the world and the novelties in it. Csikszentmihalyi captured this state of affairs very well in his systemic theory (see Chapter 1) where:

> "The domain is a necessary component of creativity because it is impossible to introduce a variation without reference to an existing pattern. 'New' is meaningful only in reference to the 'old'. Original thought does not exist in a vacuum. It must operate on a set of already existing objects, rules, representations, or notations. (…) Without rules there cannot be exceptions, and without tradition there cannot be novelty" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, pp. 314-315).

Of course the hallmark of creativity rests in the fact that it does not duplicate what already exists – it adds an element of "novelty", but it is a novelty that "sooner or later, ordinary thinking will understand, accept and appreciate" (Arieti, 1976, p. 4). Innovation is, in this

manner, “bound up with tradition” (Wilson, 1984, p. 196) in ways that not only make it possible, but enable tradition to be enriched, to transform, in essence, to continue. In fact, the traditions of today are always the creative innovations of yesterday and this facet of the phenomenon will be explored in more detail as follows.

2.1.2. Creativity working from within tradition

Indeed, traditions evolve in order to continue existing and they are able to do so when alimented, from within, by creative processes. Tradition is never a “pre-given, singular, unchanging, abstract cultural entity” (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 102) or it would not survive the shifting conditions and fast pace of everyday living. Becker (2008, p. 59) acknowledged this in relation to conventions, which are not static but show continuous adjustment to circumstances, changing in union with them. The capacity to change in creative ways is exactly what characterises the *vitality of a tradition* for Negus and Pickering (2004). The two authors metaphorically define traditions as bridges between “memory and imagination, meaning and value, theory and practice”, bridges that are never finished but continuously built (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 104). The elements that make up a tradition, the purposes it needs to fulfil and the actors it requires are never set once and for all and, while in appearance giving sameness and continuity to our personal and collective lives, traditions are progressing through incremental change and constant re-creation. What defines a “Great Tradition” are precisely the activity and creativity situated at its very core (Eisenstadt, 1973, p. 120).

To conceive of tradition otherwise is not only detrimental for our understanding of creativity but for understanding tradition itself. For instance, an implicit assumption that tradition is superseded by rationality, history, and progress has made “forms of collective life which we label ‘traditional’ [to be thought] of as ‘primitive’ ‘natural’ ‘cultures’ characterized by a fundamental absence of and aversion to innovation” (Wilson, 1984, p. viii). Eliminating the creative side of tradition thus ends up doing away with its value altogether. The classic division between “traditional” and “modern” societies is generally built upon such premises, proposing not only a *dichotomy* between tradition and modernity but also one between tradition and creativity (Eisenstadt, 1973, p. 10). In reality, “the process of adapting tradition to changed circumstances will always involve some degree of problem-solving, inventiveness, and/or imaginative expression” (Weiner, 2000, p. 158) and, as the author goes on to argue, the greater the creativity, the more powerful the tradition. Therefore, a

conclusion emerges that tradition is not only not averse to creativity, it depends on it as a kind of internal engine ready to propel it into the future. In the end, the very task of tradition is to "*carry on*" (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 6), and that of creativity is to do the "necessary work" (Willis, 1990, p. 9) that helps this process and makes it happen.

This vision resonates with Gabriel Tarde's (1903) conception of social life at the turn of last century, in which innovation and imitation are *cyclical* and define the ways in which societies advance and adapt to changing conditions. It is a "common misconception" to see innovation and tradition as "diametrically opposed" when in fact they are "informing and supporting each other" (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 91), to consider them "mutually exclusive" instead of "interpenetrated" (Wilson, 1984, p. 101). And there are also a series of benefits gained from adopting the latter theoretical perspective. To begin with, we become better equipped to study the mechanisms of social and cultural change – potentially explained by tensions within the socio-cultural system and the vitality of any lasting tradition (Eisenstadt, 1973). Moreover, in postmodern times, innovation and creativity have become themselves "traditions" (Wilson, 1984, p. 101) and define an ideal of approaching and solving daily difficulties. For the purpose of our research, theorising traditions as creative and creativity as rooted in customs and conventions opens up a whole new field of phenomena usually ignored by creativity researchers. While most studies in the past were dedicated to "high" or "revolutionary" art, representative for a certain period, new questions come forward nowadays concerning the art of community life, of the everyday, of the less celebrated and yet constant innovations of our predecessors and our contemporaries. In short, folk and traditional art are constituted as fields for creativity research in their own right.

2.2. Folk art research

Folk art is one of the best illustrations of what is called in this chapter the "creativity of everyday life". What makes it so is precisely the fact that it takes place in homes, on the streets or in meeting places, everywhere people interact, communicate with each other and continue their local traditions in creative and innovative ways. As a term, folk art "often implies rural life, community, simplicity, tradition, and authenticity, provides a powerful image on which to build community" (Fine, 2004, p. 29). Engaging in craftwork is *at once* an individual and community act, an act of self-expression and collective participation (see Curşeu & Pop-Curşeu, 2011). Unfortunately, the literature on craft is not a very developed

one and certainly not within (social) psychology. Anthropologists and sociologists have shown more interest towards folk art and, as follows, a number of studies will be reviewed in order to get an appreciation of what has been researched, how and with what results.

A landmark in this regard is represented by Katherine Giuffre's (2009) extensive exploration of artistic creativity in the South Pacific island of Rarotonga (part of Cook Islands). At the core of her approach lies a very similar theoretical framework to the socio-cultural model developed in Chapter 1: creativity depends on social interaction and artistic expression has a relational nature. In her own words:

> "Creativity happens at many levels: at the level of the culture, at the level of the subculture, at the level of the group, and at the level of the individual. At each of these levels, it is the social dynamic of lived relationships within structures that plays a key role in facilitating (or inhibiting) creativity. This is a study of creativity as a social phenomenon which will examine both large-scale social pressures and opportunities and also creative individuals, especially as they are embedded in social relationships that can enhance or constrict creativity" (Giuffre, 2009, p. 1).

The research was interested in the boom in artistic production of 2002-2003, when on the island different forms of art started to emerge: traditional arts and crafts, paintings and works done with the help of mixed, multi or new media. Giuffre used a network analysis technique to capture social relations between artists and different other actors of the community, and drew inspiration in her study from the works of Becker and Bourdieu. As such, the focus was directly on *networks of collaboration* (and competition!) rather than individual, isolated creators. For Giuffre creativity is thus a "collective phenomenon", not "an individual personality characteristic" (p. 1). Influenced by theories of the cultural field and the art world, her analysis emphasised the "institutional" aspects of creation or, more specifically, the beginning of this "institutionalisation" process on the island. The description therefore revolved around the role of art in the status hierarchy, its accumulation of cultural, symbolic, social, and even economic capital in recent years, and the generation of structures of looking and evaluation. The creation of an authentic "art world" in Rarotonga is related more to the emergence of "ideas about value" than the mere presence of artists or buyers alone (p. 76). In this context, local *taunga* (meaning expert or skilled craftsman) come to be appreciated by a society of peers and collectors and their work legitimised by cultural institutions such as galleries and museums. In this process local demand played a key role

(as opposed to interested outsiders and tourists) as well as the enhanced relationships between artists and their peers, leading to "cross fertilization" (p. 129). Importantly, both cooperation and competition define these relations, as is the case for any craft that leads to financial and symbolic gains.

A rather contrasting image is offered by quilt makers in Texas and New Mexico, in the study of Cooper and Allen (1999). This community activity, traditionally performed by women, was documented with the help of interviews, observations and photographs. The main conclusion of the research, interested primarily in the relationship between quilting and the lives of the quilters, was that "quilts represent an all-inclusive portrait" of the craftswomen (p. 15). Another important feature of folk art is thus reflected here: its connection to *the life history of creators and their community*. Quilts, usually made through joining together, progressively, different existing blocks to form a general pattern, are a type of art coming directly "out of [the] home, out of family interactions" (p. 17). They are made for other family members or close friends and require "education" within the family, normally handed down by the mother, grandmother, or aunt. Under these circumstances it comes as no surprise that quilts "seem to be the format in which [artisans] had condensed much of personal, family, and community history" (pp. 18-19). The expression of creativity in quilt making is also an expression of identity and community membership.

A similar case is represented by South Indian *kōlam*, a complex geometric and symmetrical design made up of lines and dots, commonly rendered in rice flour solutions on the thresholds and floors of houses and temples and having a protective function. Again a women's folk art, the creative tradition of *kōlam* has been carefully investigated by Mall (2007) to capture the intricacies of learning and making the design. The results indicated "a far greater degree of flexibility in the execution of *kōlam* than that suggested by both the current literature and women's own perceptions of their practice" (p. 70). The creative process is shaped, from one moment to the next, by interactions with the emergent form, by the experience of the creator and the accidents encountered along the way. For the participants the *kōlam* is a *self-generating shape*, one that "comes" or "doesn't come", seemingly out of its own will. Significant for folk art, creativity is "located" somewhere *between* the intentions of the artist and the material properties of the craft (p. 70). There is a great degree of unpredictability in craft, "despite" it being strongly anchored in tradition, due precisely to its embedding in variable moment-to-moment circumstances determined by past work and social interactions with others while working.

Similar conclusions have been reached by the few psychological studies dedicated to creativity in traditional forms of art. Perhaps the most elaborate of these is the one authored by Yokochi and Okada (2005) exploring the creative activity of a traditional Chinese ink painter. The two authors were concerned with the general question of "how do artists create artwork?" and, in answering it, employed a complex methodology of field observation, interviews, and field experiment. The three main conclusions of the study related to the fact that: a) painting starts with a local image and the global, final representation *gradually evolves* while working; b) as the work progresses, existing lines *constrain* future possibilities; and c) often painters draw "in the air", *rehearsing* their movements before touching the surface (p. 252). This constant interplay between planning action and monitoring results is thus a key feature of art creation (and folk art in particular), as reflected by both anthropological and psychological investigations (see also Chapter 5).

Unlike their anthropology colleagues though, creativity researchers are generally less interested in the community and identity building functions of creative work and focus more on narrower and more "testable" hypotheses. A study by Kozbelt and Durmysheva (2007) for example looked particularly at creativity along the lifespan in the activity of Japanese 'ukiyo-e' ("pictures of the floating world") printmaking. Findings suggested a "fairly consistent pattern indicating a tendency towards later-life achievement in ukiyo-e artists" (pp. 46-46) compared to their Western counterparts. Interesting to note, a celebrated Japanese printmaker such as Hokusai, in discussing his activity, emphasised knowledge, skill and experience and didn't even mention originality or departures from tradition (p. 24). It is another characteristic of folk art to *define itself* in relation to tradition and continuity and to cultivate creativity as means of enriching tradition and conserving continuity.

In summary, folk art embodies the idea of "creative tradition". It is deeply linked to community life and revealing of both local histories and identities. Individual creators engage with the craft as they interact with family members, peers, and, at times, with larger audiences interested in acquiring their productions. Creativity in folk art results out of an interplay between the intention of the creator and the forces, constraints and accidents of work itself. Although knowledgeable of customs and conventions, artisans generally don't start from a global image, but gradually develop it as they go along. Their intention is to generate novelty *in order* to illustrate and to advance their tradition.

2.3. The case of Romanian Easter egg decoration

Easter egg decoration in Romania reflects several of the features of folk art presented above while conserving its specificity in the context of other similar artistic crafts. To begin with, decorated eggs, despite the fragility of their material structure and the fact that they are generally associated with one specific moment over the year, the Easter celebration, have a great importance for *Romanian culture and identity*. As often noted, this custom is ancient in Romania, probably pre-Christian, with the first written evidences coming from the XVII-XVIII centuries (Gorovei, 2001, p. 62). In the face of a noticeable decline of this practice in Western Europe, ethnographers repeatedly stressed its continuity and great significance for Romanians (Tzigara-Samurcaş, 1909; Irimie, 1969). Today we can find entire villages in which Easter egg making became an authentic family business and, especially in Northern Romania, egg decoration is practiced both in schools and at home (Hutt, 2005).

Therefore, studying Easter eggs in general reveals precious information about community life in Romania, about the spirituality and folklore of the people and about their national identity in the context of a globalising world. However, if we turn to Easter egg making there are practically no psychological studies in this area and, even in Romania, there are just a few ethnographies that deal exclusively with egg decoration (Arthur Gorovei signed one of the first monographs dedicated to Easter eggs in 1937, reedited in 2001). As such, a research on the topic of Easter egg creativity would inaugurate this community practice as *a field of inquiry* for psychologists and also contribute to what seems now an underdeveloped literature about Romanian Easter eggs. But, before introducing the actual research, we need to first understand what egg decoration is and what it involves.

2.3.1. Easter eggs at the confluence between folklore, religion and art

The egg has always been an object of tremendous symbolic value. Throughout history and in the modern world eggs are associated with life itself, with birth, fertility, vitality, the forces of creation and the act of resurrection. Unsurprisingly, a closer investigation reveals several *archetypal forms* structuring this symbolism: the cosmogonic egg (the beginning of the world), the cosmological egg (cosmos and all its elements), the magical egg (in therapeutic, magical practices), the mystic and eschatological egg (associated with regeneration) and the festive egg (evocating important events) (Marian, 1992, p. 76). The meaning of the egg itself evolves as a function of changes in tradition through constant re-creation of practices and

rituals. In our context, red eggs used in Christianity remind both of the myth of creation and the constant re-generation of the world, through the sacrifice of God. This great *polyphony of meaning* could only be accompanied by a *polyphony of practices* since:

> "All over the world, wherever eggs are laid, they represent life and fertility and are symbolic of creation and resurrection. They appear on practically every major occasion in human life – at birth, courtship, marriage, the building of a new house, in sickness and in death, as well as on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Day and Easter Monday, when they are enjoyed as a strengthening food or given in return for holy water. Eggs are offered as gifts, paid as a due, and ornamented as a favourite decoration on festive occasions. They have been used in magic spells and in foretelling the future, in love potions and medicine, and have been thought effective in promoting healthy and fertile crops and animals" (Newall, 1984, p. 21).

This complex system of beliefs and practices associated with decorated eggs is an integral part of the Romanian culture and, it can be argued, *Easter eggs today stand at the confluence between folklore, religion and art*. Eggs have been part of folklore and local mythologies since times immemorial. In ancient India, China, Tibet, Egypt, Phoenicia, Persia, and Greece (see Marian, 1992; Gorovei, 2001; Newall, 1967, 1971) they were often connected to the origin of the world or the idea of totality. Traditions, especially in rural areas, still preserve some of the richness of practices related to coloured or decorated eggs from pre-Christian times. Nevertheless, in Romania and many other Christian Orthodox countries, folk practices associated with egg decoration have largely been attributed to their incorporation by religious rituals where, "the egg provided a fresh symbol for the Resurrection and the transformation of death into life" (Newall, 1984, p. 22). Easter eggs, as religious artefacts, are an essential part of national identity especially in a country like Romania, characterised by "religious nationalism" and where approximately 87 percent of the population is Orthodox and 94 percent claim to believe in God (Barker, 2009; also Müller, 2008). And yet Easter egg making is not reduced only to colouring eggs, but involves all sorts of decoration techniques culminating with the highly elaborate designs used by folk artists specialised in egg decoration. With them Easter eggs acquire a new meaning, as art objects, appreciated both by the general public and experts who consider that, "among all the folk arts Romanians have, decorating eggs is, in a way, the most 'artful' of all in the purest sense we attribute to this term" (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992, pp. 15-16).

In conclusion, both the making and use or “reception” of Easter eggs in the Romanian context are rooted in a diverse body of traditions and open to a panoply of meanings and interpretations. This reminds of Umberto Eco’s notion of *open work* where the object is susceptible of “a virtually unlimited range of possible readings, each of which causes the work to acquire new vitality” (Eco, 1989, p. 21). Understandably then, the Romanian word for decoration in the case of eggs is *încondeiere*, related to the verb “to write” (*condei* is used to denote a writing tool). The colours and motifs used in decoration are rightfully compared to a language (see Tzigara-Samurcaş’s, 1999, reference to “the grammar of the ornament”), a system of symbols capable of reuniting old Romanian folkloric and religious traditions under the auspices of art.

2.3.2. Easter eggs as a craft-world in Romania

Describing the practice of Easter egg making in Romania basically means revealing the actors, resources and mechanisms of a *craft-world*. This notion originates from Howard Becker’s (2008) work on “art worlds” where he used the term to designate all the people, relations and activities that are necessary for the production of artistic outcomes since every art ultimately requires division of labour and therefore collaboration. In his book, Becker considered that folk definitions of craft include: a) useful objects, b) virtuoso skill in making them, and sometimes c) beauty, a criterion that brings craft objects even closer to artistic products. As argued before, Easter egg making is such an “artistic craft” and, consequently, a presentation of its specific world in a Romanian context would focus, among others, on types of outcome, actors and networks of collaboration, resources and conventions, reception and markets (see Becker, 2008; Fine, 2004). Several of these aspects are captured in Table 1 which outlines main differences between the urban and rural setting.

Largely documented (Murgoei, 1909; Bodnarescul, 1920; Muzeul Ţăranului Român, 1991; Gorovei, 2001), in what Easter eggs are concerned there is a basic distinction to be made between coloured eggs (monochrome) and decorated eggs (usually polychrome). Moreover, coloured eggs (also called *merişoare* meaning “little apples” since it is believed that, given as charity, they become apples in the world of the dead) can be either red or of other colours. Red is very much traditional, being associated with blood and thus with life, and having a protective function recognised from Antiquity onwards. Decorated eggs have different names in different parts of Romania, *închistrite* (in Moldova, Bucovina, Banat), *încondeiate* or *scrise* / “written” (in Valahia, Banat, Ardeal) and even *muncite* / “worked” or *necăjite* /

	Actors	Techniques	Resources	Colours	Motifs	Uses
Rural context (Northern Romania)	Women usually decorate eggs but there are also male decorators. Children participate in decoration practices from early ages (6 or 7 years old). Eggs for Easter at home are typically made by women.	The traditional technique uses wax and successive immersion in colour. Wax can also be applied 'in relief' on the egg. There are also local techniques such as decoration with beads, with coloured ink, etc.	A variety of material resources are used in decoration work from different types of eggs (chicken, duck, goose or even ostrich) to colour pigments, natural wax, and chişiță (the 'writing tool').	Traditional colours used in decoration throughout Northern Romania are yellow, red and black. However in recent decades other colours started to be used such as green, blue, violet, brown, orange, etc.	There are certain widespread motifs in the region for egg decoration and they include the cross, star, rhombus, the lost way, etc. Many other motifs are 'invented' based on the combination of existing forms.	Eggs are used either at home or at the church (when not emptied and simply coloured for Easter) while most of the eggs made throughout the year are being sold by the artisans, normally at fairs and museums.
Urban context	Women and children prepare eggs for Easter. Families with small children in particular tend to go beyond colouring the egg and use different forms of embellishment (e.g. with stickers or leaves).	Since eggs are prepared only for Easter (and Ascension) they are not emptied and are dyed in colour. However, eggs can also be decorated with the help of leaves or with stickers.	Usually egg preparation requires a less elaborate set of material tools, mainly eggs (usually chicken eggs) and colour pigments. The latter can be either boiled or applied on the egg manually.	Typically eggs made for Easter are red (or at least part of them are coloured in red). A multitude of other colours can also be used for decoration and the choice is often guided by personal preference.	Usually urban eggs depict few (spring) motifs, being mostly dyed in colour. However they can also use geometric forms and/or the shape of leaves (for eggs made by applying leaves before colouring).	Eggs are made only for use at home or given for charity / shared with friends. They are knocked against each other on Easter day saying 'Christ has Risen' and answering 'Indeed He has'.

Table 1. The craft-world of egg decoration in rural and urban settings in Romania

"mournful" (this type is particularly hard to make as they require meticulous work). They all involve a traditional system of decoration (instruments, colours, motifs) that today is preserved almost exclusively in the rural parts of Romania. "Urban eggs" are often the result of other types of decoration, presupposing for example the application of leaves or stickers. On the other hand, the practice of colouring eggs for Easter, especially red, less elaborate and highly evocative of religious significations, is widespread in both urban and rural settings. This tradition is also reflected in the numerous *legends* surrounding Easter eggs, red eggs in particular, describing their first appearance during the persecution and/or Resurrection of Christ (Murgoei, 1909; see Appendix I for a summary of legends). The best known myth tells the story of Virgin Mary (or Mary Magdalene) coming with a basket of eggs at the Cross to stir the compassion of the Roman soldiers. The eggs get coloured by the blood of Christ and, since then, in commemoration of this episode, Christians all over the world make red eggs for Easter.

The main "actors" of egg decoration are *women and children* (not unlike other folk arts, Becker, 2008, p. 258), but there are also cases of men decorators. The making of Easter eggs requires collaboration within the family, less in the case of colouring and almost always in the case of decoration, where tasks are distributed among family members, from children to elders (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992). This is because many folk artists have started in the last few decades to make a living (or contribute to the family budget) by *selling* decorated eggs and therefore produce them in large numbers for what seems to be a growing national and international market (Hutt, 2005). In the end, artistic expression is not purely leisure and "art, to have value, must be commodified" (Fine, 2004, p. 209). This contributed to making egg decoration a year-long occupation, not restricted to the days before Easter (generally Thursday, depending on region; Marian, 1992) or Ascension. Furthermore, it changed the types of eggs used in decoration – eggs made to be sold are emptied and range from chicken and duck to goose and ostrich – and generated an expansion in techniques of embellishment (see also next section on the mobility and diversity of tradition).

For the moment it is important to note that "traditional" egg decoration[2] in Romania relies on a fairly unitary body of resources and conventions. Eggs are decorated with the help of a *chişiță* or *condei*, a stick with a metal pin at one end (Gorovei, 2001; Hutt, 2005), used to

[2] What is referred to as traditional egg decoration in the context of this research is decoration with wax. As such the term doesn't consider the content of decoration, where for example some distinguish between "old" motifs and newer additions, but is based solely on work technique.

draw the motifs on the eggshell (see Image 1). Eggs are successively covered with wax on certain portions according to the chosen design and then immersed in colour (traditionally yellow, followed by red and finally black; the palest colour is applied first) so that, in the end, after cleaning the wax off, the egg would show all the desired shapes and colours (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1985, 1992; Irimie, 1969; Newall, 1967). This means that artisans get to work on a "negative" image of what will be the final outcome and don't see directly the effect of their work but rely on what they know should be covered with wax at different stages (more details and illustrations of this activity are offered in Chapter 5).

Image 1. Decorating eggs with wax using a *chişiță* (the Romanian Peasant Museum)

A note on colours, initially they were all naturally obtained and prepared by peasants from various plants, in their homes (used also for painting wool, etc.). Today there are virtually no decorators who produce their own colours although some "recipes" are still kept. All colours have certain meanings, the most common being: black (symbol of the absolute, stability and eternity, also of the under-world), red (blood, life, fire, sun, love, joy), yellow (light, youth, happiness, grains, hospitality), green (the rebirth of nature, freshness, plenty and hope), blue (sky, health, vitality), orange (energy, patience, ambition), brown (earth), and purple (self-restrain, patience, faith in justice) (Zahacincshi & Zahacinschi, 1992, p. 18; see also Appendix IV). The two authors mentioned above expressed their amazement at how, with so many different colours, craftswomen manage to reach such perfect chromatic harmonies, "a science reflective of our thinking and sensibility, of our way of seeing and interpreting the

world” (p. 19). Finally, colours don’t necessarily mirror reality in the sense that they don’t usually correspond to what is actually represented (Gorovei, 2001, p. 107).

An impressive number of *motifs* is used in egg decoration (Gorovei alone listed 291) classified as: geometric, vegetal, animal, human, skeomorphic (objects), and religious (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992, p. 35). It is not uncommon for one ornament to have several versions and to be known under different names in different regions (Murgoei, 1909; this is also in line with Bartlett’s, 1923, observation that cultural materials show less variability than their interpretation). Examples of frequent motifs: the Cross (of the lamb, Easter Cross, Russian Cross, etc.), the sun and stars, the stork’s beak, the ram’s horns, the frog’s mouth or foot, the horse’s hoof, the raven’s feather, the cock’s tail, the rabbit’s ear, the belt of Virgin Mary, the “lost way”, the shepherd’s hook, the plough’s teeth, the convent, the chariot’s wheel, and many others. However, the existence of traditional motifs doesn’t reduce possibilities for innovation, on the contrary, endless *variation* of established models is possible (see Image 2 for an example of the star motif and its different depictions) and professional decorators often create new ornaments. Besides, decoration itself shows great local variability and it is not reduced to wax techniques alone but includes making eggs with leaves, with beads, painted in colour, etc. What is specific about classic Romanian egg decoration is the fact that objects are not represented in their entirety but though schematisations of their distinctive parts; repetition is also widespread, usually with an even number of depictions of the same motif (Gorovei, 2001, p. 78), as well as geometrism, a general characteristic of Romanian folk art creation (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992, p. 34).

Finally Easter eggs, whether full or emptied, simply coloured or richly decorated, are *used* in a multitude of ways, most of them connected to Easter celebrations but not only. To begin with, (coloured) eggs are present on the Easter table and family and friends knock them saying the customary “Christ has Resurrected!” (*Hristos a Înviat*!) and replying “Indeed He has!” (*Adevărat a Înviat*!). Eggs are also given as gifts, for charity or used in a form of reciprocal exchange. They have a strong *social function* (Bodnarescul, 1920; Marian, 1992) since both their decoration and use require the presence and participation of others. For example it is traditional for all family members to eat from the first red egg knocked and for unmarried girls to make decorated eggs for bachelors and compete with each other in drawing the most beautiful motifs. Typically the best “outcomes” are kept as models for future generations of decorators. For more details Appendix II makes a summary of general uses in the case of Easter eggs, at church and at home, from ordinary to medical, magical or

mystical use, and also lists interdictions for each, all parts of an intricate universe of lay beliefs surrounding this popular custom.

Image 2. Variations of the star motif (Cristina Timu)

2.3.3. The mobility and diversity of tradition

There are two types of variability shaping the tradition of Easter egg making: one has to do with diversity according to geographical place, the other with change over historical time. Looked at simultaneously, both sources of variability make egg decoration the *heterogeneous practice* it is today in Romania and come to confirm the fact that traditions are never immobile or rigid, but exist only in a dialogical relationship with the “new”.

Many authors have commented on the rapidly evolving nature of this craft, some being positive about recent additions, some lamenting the loss of traditional motifs and technologies. What is clear for all is the fact that Romanian village life itself has changed and folk artists did nothing but adapt to these shifting conditions (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992, p. 17), at times by exacerbating or anticipating them. The “market” dictates to a large extent what is produced every year and artisans, foreseeing the taste of consumers, propose novel interpretations of the craft. This is how for example *Christmas eggs* emerged in Romania, introducing eggs embellished with Christmas or winter decorations. A rather striking “innovation” for a generally conservative local market, these eggs are apparently known in other countries (e.g. Denmark) and, as observed by Newall (1984, p. 28), they turn the egg from a traditional object into a decorative artefact.

Such "evolutions" are not uncommon. Over centuries each region in Romania has developed its own set of decoration techniques, legends about Easter eggs and practices related to them (see Gorovei, 2001), of course with different degrees of similarity and overlap. Nowhere is this "unity in diversity" more obvious than in Easter egg collections such as the *Zahacinschi collection* located at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest. It has well over 4000 pieces from different regions of Romania, with some eggs as old as 1930 (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992; Hutt, 2005). Visiting the collection in 2009, the author was guided though the presentation of eggs from several historical provinces by a museum expert. This made it possible to witness, firsthand, the differences in decoration illustrated in Appendix III. At the same time there seems to be great uniformity in terms of decoration techniques, most of the eggs being worked with the usual procedure with wax. There are also similarities in the colours used, normally tones of red, orange, yellow, alongside black and white. Nowadays the most obvious *change* in what colours are concerned in both urban and rural settings is passing from natural to artificial pigments (Gorovei, 2001). Moreover, another noticeable innovation at the level of work techniques has to do with how wax is used in decoration. Especially in rural Northern Romania a new type of egg decoration has flourished in recent years, one in which models are depicted from the start with coloured wax that remains "in relief" on the egg (see Image 3).

Image 3. Eggs decorated with wax in the traditional technique (front)
and eggs with wax in relief (back) (Zinici family)

It is not by accident that communities in Northern Romania are the source of several of these innovations since *Bucovina* (corresponding to the Suceava district) is one of the most prominent centres of Easter egg decoration in the country. This region has always been appreciated by ethnographers like Zahacinschi who considered that here Romanian folk art reaches some of its supreme forms of expression (see also Dranca, 2010). Typical for Bucovinean decorations is the fact that they are strongly geometric, the motifs are greatly stylised and occupy less space (some eggs, especially from Putna monastery, being able to compete with the most intricate work of skilled miniaturists). Important to note, in Northern Romania the unity of different folk art practices is very obvious, the same set of traditional motifs being found on clothes, drawn on houses and depicted on wood and Easter eggs (see Chapter 3, section about Ciocăneşti village). This testifies to the existence of a strong cultural background in the manifestation of creativity, which borrows from it and advances it with each and every new re-presentation. It is in this place were Easter egg making turned from a tradition to a *profession* and, to this day, the secrets of the craft are faithfully transmitted from generation to generation. Unsurprisingly, the majority of decorated eggs in most collections, including the Romanian Peasant Museum one, come from Bucovinean villages.

2.4. Is Easter egg making creative?

The question above stands at the core of our concern here with studying creativity in the context of this particular folk art. And yet, when formulated directly, it seems a bit striking. This is because we don't often think about Easter egg making, and most everyday activities for this matter, *in terms of creativity*. The products of our daily life can be useful or not, appropriate or not, carefully made or not, but can they also be called creative? The disjunction between creativity and everyday life, referred to at the beginning of the chapter, is well echoed in the division between *fine art* and *folk art*. A widespread idea is that, "folk art, when contrasted with fine arts, shows a high occurrence of borrowing, repetition, use of conventional themes, plagiarism, and disregard for spontaneity and originality" (Cincura, 1970, p. 170). Becker also pointed to the fact that members of art worlds often distinguish between art and craft, recognising that both require technical skill, but insisting that "artists contribute something beyond craft skill to the product, something due to their creative abilities and gifts that give each object or performance a unique and expressive character" (Becker, 2008, p. 272). However, things are changing for artisans and artists alike. Becker notes for instance that museums have opened their gates to "products of family and community industry" and became more and more dedicated to preserving crafts and

recognising their merit; moreover, contemporary artists themselves are beginning to exploit the "aesthetic possibilities" of folk art and craftsmen, in their turn, start to "accept beauty as a criterion". A new category of artist-craftsmen thus emerges, people with an ambition to generate novelty and to move the craft forward in artistic ways.

Craft in general – and the craft of egg decoration in particular – is never the result of mechanical action. In the words of Sennett (2008, p. 11), "the good craftsman (...) uses solutions to uncover new territory; problem solving and problem finding are intimately related in his or her mind". Indeed, the work of an egg decorator is *simultaneously* a work of tradition and one of invention, of keeping what was transmitted for generations and passing this inheritance forward always with a difference. We can also be reminded here of the distinction between the workmanship of risk and that of certainty outlined by Pye (1968). If, according to the author, the former is defined by the fact that "the quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making" (p. 20), then this is precisely the condition of any egg decorator, independent of whether he or she might want to create or reproduce a motif. The deep links between egg decoration, tradition and routine can teach us about the interconnectedness between creativity and habit in virtually all instances of creative production, something we will consider in more detail in the final discussion (Chapter 7).

Finally, if we keep artistic expressivity as a criterion for Easter egg creativity, then it is commonly noticed that egg decorators tend to get closer and closer to aesthetic ideals by prioritising *beauty* above all other things (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992, p. 50). Few would contest the fact that Easter egg making requires special abilities and each folk artist brings a personal note to his or her work (Irimie, 1969). There are of course egg decorators who, under the pressures of making a large number of eggs to sell, may repeat models copying them almost to perfection and there are also general guidelines in terms of work technique, colour choices and design of motifs that cannot be easily disregarded. And yet*, this is exactly what creativity in the context of tradition is all about*. Following the "old" and generating the "new" go hand in hand since each becomes a reference point for the other. This is the characteristic note of Easter egg making, where:

> "In their overwhelming majority, these peasant-artists respect the classical cannon, the old techniques, the traditional rigours of stylisation, as well as the severe chromatic code, considered a sacred treasure. When they innovate (…), they do it not by rejecting, but enriching the classical means, correcting the effects,

crystallising them, and through this do not falsify, but work with spirit, confirming for themselves the stylistic matrix they come from" (Zahacinschi & Zahacinschi, 1992, p. 31).

And yet is this enough to call Easter eggs "creative"? Is creativity a quality shared by all or some products of the craft? What actually makes egg decoration creative? And how is creativity developed in the context of the craft? We can argue that all these enquiries can be answered best with the help of *a cultural psychology approach to creativity* (see Chapter 1) and this is because they all require an understanding of Easter egg making and evaluation in terms of interconnected processes taking place in communities and drawing from a unique background of practices and conventions. Decorated eggs exist in what Danto referred to as an "atmosphere of interpretation" (cited in Becker, 2008, p. 149) and it is precisely the complexity of such an atmosphere that the tetradic framework introduced in the previous chapter was designed to study.

3. Research design and methodology

Chapter summary

The present chapter begins with a brief outline of the main methods used in mainstream creativity research before introducing methodologies specific for cultural psychology studies, characterised by features such as ecological nature, focus on emic aspects, and rich, qualitative description. The choice of research methods and settings is discussed in light of these general principles. Interviews, observation and drawing are not uncommon tools for data collection in creativity research (except for the subjective camera, a methodological "novelty" introduced in the study of creative action) but their use here is guided by a cultural psychological approach to the phenomenon. The particular locations for data collection are presented next – Bucharest and the village of Ciocăneşti in Northern Romania, chosen for the local community's strong commitment to the craft of decoration. Following these necessary clarifications about method and research context, the overall design is introduced with the help of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 1. The design focuses, in turn, on the fundamental processes for creative expression outlined within this model: the integration of a new artefact in existing systems of meaning, creative externalisation and the gradual internalisation of norms, values and practices. This leads to the three empirical studies included in the thesis, the first considering creativity as representation (Chapter 4), then as a form of action (Chapter 5) and finally as cultural appropriation and participation in the case of children (Chapter 6). Socio-cultural differences are captured in this research by considering members from various professional groups in the first study, and performing the second and third study in an urban and rural setting. Details concerning the aims, participants and data collection procedures for each of the three researches are offered towards the end. Finally, the last section is dedicated to a discussion of quality in qualitative investigations following accountability criteria.

> "(...) grasping creativity is like trying to catch the wind. Creativity is more gerund than noun – more a creating, a process, than a thing to be located" (Borofsky, 2001, p. 69).

Creativity is notoriously difficult to study. This is equally valid for attempts to "locate" and measure it, to analyse the processes that make it possible or the conditions that are favourable or unfavourable for creative activity, as well as its manifestation throughout the lifespan. The reasons for this state of affairs take us back to several past and present debates about the nature, expression and evaluation of the phenomenon. In the words of Mayer (1999, p. 451), outside of agreeing on the fact that creative products are both original and useful, there is disagreement on such basic issues "as whether creativity refers to a product, process, or person; whether creativity is personal or social; whether creativity is common or rare; whether creativity is domain-general or domain specific; and whether creativity is quantitative or qualitative". It is not hard to see, from the list above, how creativity denotes *a multi-faceted process and transcends simple dichotomies*. However, it was only in past decades that researchers started to question the traditional person-focused, creativity as rare achievement and domain-general views and yet the field still experiences attempts at "re-centring" into a broader social and cultural sphere as challenging. The dispositionalism of attribution (Kasof, 1995) in the case of creativity is very much ingrained in the discipline and methodological tools in particular reflect these implicit premises.

This is why it is all the more difficult to conceive of and apply alternative methodologies for the study of creativity, that would look at the phenomenon in a contextual, qualitative way, and thus depart from the overpowering psychometric orientation. The research developed in this thesis aims to employ and promote the use of such methodologies. A study of creativity in craft particularly requires *methodological innovations* due to its focus on local and culture-specific processes that link creativity to notions of meaning, identity and community. As Valsiner (1997, p. 20) pointed out, a "methodology cycle entails mutually constraining relations among assumptions, theories, methods, phenomena, and data". The present chapter is dedicated to exploring these relations. It starts with a brief overview of creativity research and adds to it a cultural psychological perspective with a clear emphasis on emic, ecological investigations. The choice of methods for data collection (interview, observation, drawing) is then justified in light of these principles. Next, a closer look is given to the two main research contexts, the urban environment of Bucharest and the rural setting of Ciocăneşti village in Northern Romania. Finally, the overall design is introduced and

explained, considering specifically how the three proposed studies connect to each other and share a common base of theoretical concerns. The chapter ends with a discussion of quality criteria in qualitative research.

3.1. From creativity research...

In a chapter entitled "Fifty years of creativity research", covering the work in the field done in the second half of the last century, Richard Mayer outlined the most common methodologies for the study of creative phenomena. His list includes psychometric, experimental, biographical, biological, computational and contextual ways of researching creativity. A summary of these approaches, their assumptions and characteristics, aims, advantages and disadvantages, is offered in Table 2.

From all six methodologies considered below *psychometrics* was and still is by far the most popular and commonly used in creativity research. Taking creativity to be a measurable characteristic of the personality or cognitive system of the individual resonates well with the vision of the I-paradigm and its assumptions (see Chapter 1). Indeed, psychometric research starts from the premise that "creative potential is widely distributed" and thus employs non-eminent participants, principally students (Runco, 2004). Its distinctive feature is the use of *paper-and-pencil tests*, best known instruments being divergent thinking measures (for instance the Unusual Uses Test or Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking; Stenberg, 2003). Their results are normally scored for fluency (number of ideas), originality (unusualness or uniqueness of ideas), flexibility (diversity of ideas), and elaboration (level of detail). Psychometric research however covers a much more extensive area than divergent thinking and finds applications also in the study of personality and behavioural correlates of creativity, characteristics of creative products and attributes of creativity-fostering environments (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999). Its quantifiable and standardised nature brings it close to experimental research and often tests are used within experimental designs. A review of 70 studies revealed "statistically significant relationships (...) between various divergent thinking test scores and reasonably acceptable nontest indices of creative behavior and achievement" (Barron & Harrington, 1981, p. 447). Despite of this, the psychometric qualities of popular instruments are still questioned (Runco, 2004), their definition of creativity considered trivial (Sternberg & Lubart, 1999) and their value for education and research yet to be fully demonstrated (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999).

APPROACH	VIEW OF CREATIVITY	CHARACTERISTICS	AIMS	ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES
PSYCHOMETRIC	Creativity as a measurable human factor or characteristic.	Quantitative measurement; Controlled environments; Ability-based analyses.	Measure creative ability; Compare scores; Discover relationships with other measures.	Most developed methods but can also restrict our view of creativity.
EXPERIMENTAL	Creativity as cognitive processing.	Controlled environments; Quantitative measurement; Cognitive task analysis.	Describe creativity; Compare cognitive processes; Discover factors that affect creativity.	High internal validity but may lack external validity.
BIOGRAPHICAL	Creativity as a life story.	Authentic (non-artificial) environments; Both qualitative and quantitative.	Detailed narrative descriptions; Revealing similarities and differences; Discover life events.	Offers richness and authenticity but lacks control and representativeness.
BIOLOGICAL	Creativity as a measurable physiological trait.	Focus on physiological measures (such as EEG, etc.)	Examine brain activity; Compare it; Reveal how injuries affect creativity.	Provides converging evidence but cannot give a full explanation.
COMPUTA-TIONAL	Creativity as mental computation.	Focus on formal modelling.	Model and compare creative processes; Determine changes in the model that affect creativity.	Brings high level of precision and objective testing of theories but reduces cognition to mathematics.
CONTEXTUAL	Creativity as a context-based activity.	Focus on context beyond creative thinking.	Describe creativity in context; Compare conceptions of creativity; Determine what impacts creativity.	Broadens our understanding of creativity but lacks rigorous data.

Table 2. Overview of creativity methodologies (after Mayer, 1999)

Under these circumstances one would expect the field to be actively looking for alternatives to the psychometric-experimental duo. More "recent" approaches – the biological, computational, and contextual ones – are still developing and did not have a major impact in the recent past (Mayer, 1999). Of interest for us here are *contextual methodologies*, defining creativity as a "context-based activity". Chapter 1 discussed the re-emergence of these approaches, at a theoretical level, under the auspices of a We-paradigm of creativity. Much more work needs to be done though in this area to: a) surpass a vision of the social as an external set of variables and b) add to the empirical foundation of the paradigm. Perhaps the most promising step forward in terms of both theory and methodology has been taken by Teresa Amabile and her collaborators through the formulation of a social psychology of creativity and its Consensual Assessment Technique (see Amabile, 1982, 1996). The great merit of including cultural factors into the assessment of creativity is shadowed nonetheless in this case by submitting to the same psychometric ethos of measurement, for as "local" and "comparative" as this measurement may be. A critique of Amabile's position was presented elsewhere (Glăveanu, 2011b) and Chapter 4 will try to both build on and depart from this proposed technique.

Consequently, a real gap in the literature on creativity research methodologies relates to the predominance of individualistic thinking and lack of truly socio-cultural understandings. Montuori and Purser's (1997) discussion of *methodological reductionism* is useful here. A comprehensive theory and methodology in what creativity is concerned would acknowledge its simultaneously individual and social nature and strive not to reduce the phenomenon either to intrapsychic processes or extrapsychic mechanisms. The main problem is not with the study of any one of these levels (since arguably some methods can successfully approach only a certain facet of creativity) but confining the explanation to that level *alone*. The current state of affairs in creativity research points to a serious risk of methodological individualism, steaming from an atomistic rather than holistic view of the human self (Purser & Montuori, 2000). On the other hand, the cultural psychology perspective on self and creativity distinctively adopts a holistic, systemic and interdependent framework and can therefore form the basis for new methods and avenues of research.

3.2. ... To a cultural psychological approach to creativity research

Cultural psychology was briefly introduced in Chapter 1 but it is now important to reflect on the methodological inspirations that can be drawn from this general approach. Conceived as

an alternative to mainstream, individualistic (predominantly cognitive) psychology, the theory and method used by socio-cultural psychologists inform each other and go back to the main concern with "the transactions between the individual and the society, seen as a symbolic world" (Zittoun, 2007b, p. 197). An analysis of methods by Cohen (2007, p. 197) revealed the unique approach adopted by cultural psychologists and, principally, their inclination towards *methodological pluralism*, the use of a "full toolkit" ranging from surveys and laboratory experiments to field studies, analyses of cultural products and qualitative work. For the purpose of introducing the overall research design research three broad guiding principles are abstracted as follows:

1. *The ecological principle*. Emphasis in cultural psychology is placed on experiences of everyday life and the study of these experiences in their ecological context. Real-life phenomena are thus preferred to "artificial" tasks and settings and, as much as possible, approached through field research. This preoccupation is justified by the fact that human action can no longer be meaningfully understood when separated from its context (Cranach, 1982). And this context is a social and cultural one. The core drawback of creativity psychometric studies from this perspective is the fact that they generally look at mental or personality traits in a social vacuum. They often evaluate products with no or little concern for how the products where generated. Finally, they sometimes ask people to participate in unusual tasks, at least when compared to daily routines. A cultural psychological research of creativity would, in contrast, strive to observe creative practices as they unfold in natural settings and common activities. Easter egg decoration is an example of such a practice;

2. *The emic principle*. The distinction between emic and etic is nowadays widespread in psychology and related disciplines, especially anthropology. Proposed by Pike (1967), who took inspiration from linguistic theory, it refers to the description of behaviour either from outside of a particular system (etic), or from inside that system (emic). In cultural psychology the focus tends to be on emic explanations of behaviour and psychological phenomena, and therefore on local rather than universal understandings (this is an essential point of difference from cross-cultural psychology; see Shweder, 1990; Markus & Hamedani, 2007; Triandis, 2007). The psychology of creativity gradually became sensitive to such interests, following studies of creativity in different cultures. For instance Westwood and Low (2003, p. 254) state that: "there is a strong need for research within specific, local contexts to

determine how creativity is conceptualized and to examine the processes of creativity and innovation and the factors that have a bearing on those processes". It is to be noted however that the emic – etic distinction should not be seen as an absolute dichotomy and Pike himself considered the two complementary. In any case, a study of creativity in craft could prioritise emic explanations since folk art is impregnated with cultural, context-specific elements and occupies a distinctively unique position in the life of different communities.

3. *The rich description principle*. Finally, and linked to the above, there is a need for "thick" description of creativity evaluations and practices in folk art, something that can be more easily achieved by adopting a qualitative strategy. Without rehashing the age-old debate between quantitative and qualitative (which in many regards imposes a false dichotomy), "richer", more qualitative studies tend to be encouraged by the cultural psychology classic orientation. In the case of creativity per se, in the continuum between psychometric testing and laboratory experiments at one end, and case studies of creators and artefacts in their cultural context at the other, Vygotskian researchers would favour the latter (see Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 84). This is not to devalue in any way the potential contribution of quantitative methodologies, since it is ultimately the research question asked that should determine the most adequate set of methods. In our case, the exploratory nature of the study referred to next, and the fact that it is a first investigation of its type, justifies a predominantly qualitative approach.

These three broad principles guiding a cultural psychological approach to research are the starting point for considering how different methods and the types of data they provide could be of use for a creativity scholar. From a multitude of possible choices and taking into account the nature of our present *research topic* – the craft of Easter egg decoration – and our *overarching aim* – to explore creativity in Easter egg decoration by understanding representations of what is creative, the activity of decoration itself and the development of creativity in craft – three methods were considered most appropriate for data collection and these are individual interviews, observation (including filmed observation), and drawing tasks in the case of children. Each of these will be briefly outlined as follows starting with their general characteristics, their common use in creativity research and the ways in which they are used here to develop a cultural psychological approach.

3.2.1. The use of interviews

Interviews are a common research tool in psychology, and especially in cultural psychology where the focus is on interpreting activity in terms of the actor's "meaning system and goals" which render it comprehensible (Rogoff, 2003, p. 17). Asking participants about their intentions and knowledge is therefore essential for appreciating *their own perspective*. Indeed, qualitative research interviews are meant to serve precisely this purpose, representing "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanation" (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). Or, in the words of Gaskell (2000, p. 39), "the objective [of qualitative interviewing] is a fine-textured understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the behaviours of people in particular social contexts". In light of these important advantages, it is no wonder that interviews are considered a central part of qualitative methodologies and received substantial attention in the past decades (for general descriptions of this method see Mishler, 1986; Weiss, 1994; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Seidman, 2006; Roulston, 2010).

In creativity research interviews have been employed usually for: a) the study of recognised creators, their work conditions and experiences (e.g. Dewey, Steinberg & Coulson, 1998; Pohlman, 1996); b) the creative process (e.g., Shaw, 1989; Rodrigues, Viana & Cerqueira, 2000); and c) an exploration of conceptions about creativity (e.g., Fryer & Collings, 1991; Petrocz, Reid & Taylor, 2009). In the research proposed here interviews will similarly be used to understand the attribution and evaluation of creativity (Chapter 4), the stages of creative activity (Chapter 5) and the content of children's drawings (Chapter 6). However there are also some significant differences in the way interviews are considered in the following studies, particularly the one on creativity evaluations. Typically creativity evaluations are expressed in a numerical form and there is little interest for what "judges" think about creativity or the domain of the creative product, little less for their own personal experience with the domain. Whenever qualitative accounts are asked for it is mostly to uncover conceptions and discourses, divorced from the practical (and quantitative) business of evaluation and measurement. In contrast, Chapter 4 studies *creativity evaluations in a qualitative manner* and in the context of other representations and practices of the participants. This distinguishes a multiple feedback approach from classic consensual assessment methodologies, something described in more detail in the next chapter.

3.2.2. The use of observation and subjective cameras

In studying creative action it is often impractical to use interviews alone since, as noted by Becker (2008, p. 199), "artists find it difficult to verbalize the general principles on which they make their choices, or even to give any reasons at all". Direct observation of creative work becomes thus important and has been employed here for the study of egg decoration activities with adults in urban and rural settings (Chapter 5) and also, partially, in the research dedicated to creativity development (Chapter 6). The particular ways in which observation was conducted in both these cases is discussed in their respective chapters. For the purpose of this presentation the focus will be on a methodological innovation represented by recording traditional decoration processes with the help of the subjective camera (subcam), as part of an Evidence-Based Subjective Ethnography (Lahlou, 2011).

The *subjective camera* is a miniature video-camera with a stereo microphone, usually worn by participants attached to a pair of glasses, at eye-level. It is thus a technique designed to capture first person accounts of activity, including not only movement but also sound, in particular voice, all from *the perspective of the respondents* (Lahlou 1999, 2006; Le Bellu, Lahlou & Nosulenko 2010). This is crucial in the case of craft practices where there is a continuous adjustment of the creator's action to the effect obtained through the previous act, a dynamic that cannot be easily accessed from an external position (considering in our case the small dimension of eggs and the micro-movements required by decoration). The use of subcams as part of a Subjective Evidence-Based Ethnography (SEBE) typically involves a combination of three techniques:

1. first person audio-visual recording of activity episodes with the subjective camera; this provides what the respondents saw, heard and did.
2. confronting participants with their recordings (subfilms) to collect personal experiences through evidence-based, controlled, analytic reconstruction; this enables respondents to explain what they thought at the moment of action.
3. formulating the findings and discussing the final interpretation with the participants; this makes sure we understand correctly what happened.

There are numerous *advantages* associated with applying each of these steps (see Lahlou, 2011). To begin with, the use of subcams gives the researcher a unique opportunity to record an important dimension of the lived experience of participants, their own

phenomenological tunnel made up of chains of perception-action organised in a very personal and situated way. Second, by showing respondents the recordings we enable them to formulate an account of their actions, goals and experiences that is both detailed and "grounded in evidence", while not disturbing activity as it takes place (for a discussion or recall techniques see Cranach, 1982). The phenomenon of entheasy, of watching one's own or others' actions from their private standpoint, means necessarily tapping into subjective processes in an inter-subjective way (due to the interaction between researcher and participant) and based on an objective form of evidence (the recording). Viewing the subfilm allows participants to be re-situated in the exact context of action and to re-experience the journey through their own phenomenological tunnel; doing so accesses episodic memory (Tulving, 1972, 2002) which, by its multimodal aspect, renders this reconstruction of mental states possible and accurate. Finally, inviting the respondent to give his or her own account and jointly formulating and testing interpretations about "what happened" permits not only a triangulation of perspectives but also a validation of these perspectives. This is both very rare and vital in the social sciences where researchers are used to formulating theories about human action in isolation and without considering the responses and insights of their "subjects". The final step of SEBE can therefore be said to provide a description which is acceptable *both* as emic and etic.

The relevance of subjective cameras for the study of creativity can hardly be overstated. This technology brings the unique advantage of obtaining first-rate footage of the *microgenesis of creative action* from the perspective of the creator. Accessing the subjective, phenomenological experience of the creator, tapping into his/her goals and thinking processes based on the "objectivity" of a recording is one of the few ways in which we can naturally bridge the inner and outer dynamics of creativity. Furthermore, the gulf between self and other, creator and observer, participant and researcher is also bridged through the construction of collaborative forms of interpretation, the only ones capable of doing justice to the diversity of possible meanings associated with creative work. Easter egg decoration can benefit even more from using this methodology due to the minute nature of the work, especially when it comes to traditional decoration. This is the reason why the technique has been applied primarily to the rural setting with respondents of different ages (see Chapter 5, study two). Due to time constraints and availability of the technology however, most observations in the overall project were made from an "external" position but nevertheless always complemented by interviews with the participants based on their work.

3.2.3. The use of drawing

The use of drawings is not infrequent when studying children and development. Nonetheless, an excessive focus on children's talk and language in mainstream research (Maybin, 2006) made other forms of expression remain far less explored and, even when drawings are considered, a direct connection is typically made between what the child is drawing and how he or she thinks (including the "quality" of this thinking). Indeed, Piaget himself asserted that drawing is "comparable to thought" (Piaget, 1928, p. 58) and Goodnow (1978, p. 641) catalogued it as the "visible expression of thought". It is no surprise then that drawings have often been employed, since early on, to measure *intellectual development*. The traditional use remains, to this day, psychometric in nature and focused on the diagnostic role of drawings (see for instance the Draw-A-Person test, Goodenough, 1926, updated by Harris, 1963; the House-Tree-Person test, Blain, Bergner, Lewis & Goldstein, 1981). In parallel, other authors considered drawings to be also a *form of communication* and to allow a better understanding of the child's subjectivity (Favez-Boutonier, 1970). In consequence, these productions found their place among projective techniques for the study of personality. This diversity of functions can be accounted for by the different "levels" of any drawing and their simultaneously expressive, projective, narrative and symbolic value (Wildoecher, 1965, cited in Minulescu, 2001).

The use of drawings in creativity research is relatively rare, except when they are the actual material for evaluation, subjected to forms of expert judgement or consensual assessment (see examples of this kind of research in Amabile, 1996; Hennessey, 1994; Dollinger & Shafran, 2005). The focus is less on the exact content of the drawing and what it means and more on its *level* of creativity. Nonetheless, there is also another way of considering drawings in creativity research, illustrated in Chapter 6, where these productions are explored in order to understand *how* creativity is manifested in the cultural practice of egg decoration and not *if or how much* it is manifested. Drawings for the purpose of the present study are not only "data" but a data collection method in itself. The outcomes of a drawing activity are not related in this case to "something" within the child such as a personal trait, cognitive feature, or an ability, but to the context of the particular task and its associated socio-cultural meanings. As a result, drawings are employed here to observe creative expression and not to test it, they are analysed in terms of "how the child is creative" and not "how creative the child is".

3.3. Choice of research settings

The two research settings for data collection are both from Romania (see Figure 2) where, as discussed in Chapter 2, Easter egg decoration stands among the most popular folk arts. In fact, Romania has always enjoyed a very *strong rural life* and a *multitude of traditions and crafts* associated with it, from wood carving and pottery to the making of rugs and masks, leading to some spectacular and internationally recognised cultural sites such as the painted monasteries of Moldova and the unique Merry Cemetery from Săpânța, in Maramureş county (see Curşeu & Pop-Curşeu, 2011). The country has traditionally been agriculture-based, and even today approximately 40% of the working population is involved in this sector and almost half of the population lives in villages (Pasti, 2006). It is no surprise then that, analysing the ethno-image Romanians hold about themselves, Luminița Iacob (2003) noted a past-oriented representation, with a major focus on history, peasant life and folklore. The rural life of the country experienced nevertheless a great turmoil during the communist era, due to processes of forced collectivisation and urbanisation specific for the time. More than two decades after the Revolution of 1989, contemporary Romania is still recovering from its recent past, coping with numerous processes of socio-political-economic transition (Abraham, 2005) and reconstructing its own civilisation (Pasti, 2006).

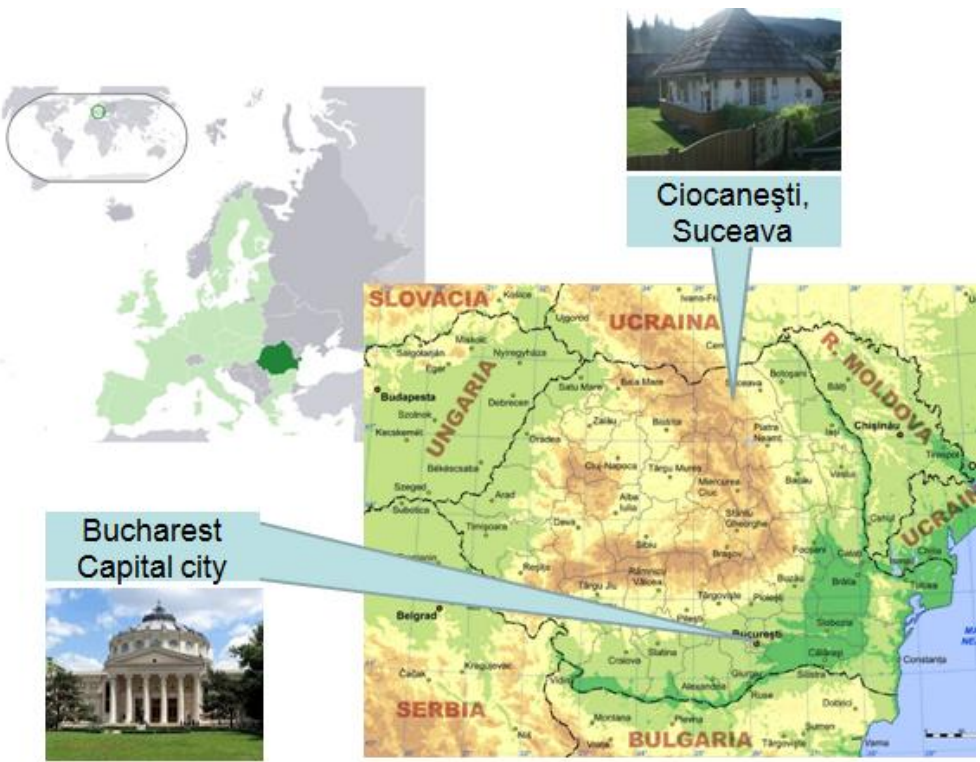


Figure 2. The two research sites in Romania

3.3.1. Bucharest: the urban setting[3]

The capital was chosen for this study as an example of an urban setting. Located in Southern Romania, the city of Bucharest is the *country's political and administrative centre*, hosting the Presidency, Parliament and Government, as well as a concentration of cultural, educational and financial institutions. It covers a surface of 228 km^2 and has a population of about two million people, making it the sixth largest city in the European Union by population within city limits. At an administrative level the municipality is considered a county, further divided into six sectors. The active population is working mostly in commerce (18.6%), industry (18.5%), real estate (14.2%) and constructions (12.3%), followed from a distance by education (5.5%), health sector (5.3%), financial operations (3.9%) and public services (3.4%); 18.3% find employment in other domains.

The city has a long history, its area being inhabited since 500 BC. However, the first documentary attestation is more recent, going back to the XVth century (1459) and being associated with the Wallachian voivode Vlad Țepeş. According to legend, Bucharest (in Romanian Bucureşti) was founded by a shepherd called Bucur (hence the name; interestingly the word also reminds of the Romanian for "joy"). The city became capital of Romania in the years after the country was founded through the union between Wallachia and Moldova (1859), later joined by Transylvania at 1st of December 1918 (celebrated as national day). Throughout its existence, Bucharest has known periods of waxing and waning, a height of prosperity being achieved between the two Wold Wars, when its beauty and flourishing cultural life made it known as "little Paris" or "the Paris of the East".

However, Second World War brought devastation, the city being heavily bombarded by the Allies, and finally by German troops. In the aftermath, Romania entered the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union and ruled for almost 45 years by a communist regime. For the capital this meant again a series of radical transformations, notably the emergence of industrial giants and standardised apartment blocks (often compared by locals with matchboxes). Many historical sites (including very old churches) were demolished during Ceauşescu's time to make room for the communist "social and urbanistic experiment", culminating with the construction of the House of People, currently Palace of Parliament, the second largest administrative building in the world after the Pentagon. A symbol of the

[3] The information included in this section was taken from the official websites of Bucharest City Hall http://www.pmb.ro/ and Romania's tourism website http://www.romaniatourism.com/index.html.

dictator's ambition, it is 12 stories tall, has 1.100 rooms and a luxurious interior including crystal chandeliers, marble columns, oak panelling, and rich carpets. Today, after the fall of communism, Bucharest remains a very eclectic city, a mixture of medieval, neoclassic and French architecture side by side with utilitarian apartment blocks and recently built office buildings (see Image 4). It is the centre of Romania's economy and industry accounting for almost 14.6% of the country's GDP while being inhabited by about 9% of its population.

Image 4. University square, Bucharest (photo available from Wikimedia Commons)

The strong rural traditions and their associated products, referred to at the beginning of this section, are exhibited in the capital in two important *museums*, the Museum of the Romanian Peasant (MTR) and the Village Museum. The first, opened in 1906, features an impressive collection of Romanian folk art with over 90.000 artefacts, including the Zahacinschi collection of decorated eggs mentioned in the previous chapter. The Village Museum, founded in 1936, is the largest outdoor museum in Europe and includes 50 buildings reflecting the history and design of rural architecture from across the country. The present research has received considerable support from MTR ethnographers in terms of visiting the collections and interviewing museum specialists (see Chapter 4).

3.3.2. Ciocăneşti: the rural setting[4]

The village of Ciocăneşti was chosen as the rural location for studies of creative activity and development. Initially suggested by folklore experts, this setting is primarily recommended

[4] The information included in this section was collected from the community's Cultural Home and also the presentation by the local guide at the Museum of the Decorated Egg (Marilena Niculiță).

by the fact that it includes one of the most active and well-known communities of egg decorators in the country. Situated in Northern Romania (Suceava county), the village belongs to the *historical region of Bucovina*, internationally renowned for its UNESCO World Heritage sites (Arbore, Humor, Moldovița, Pătrăuți, Probota, and Sf. Gheorghe monasteries) and the richness of its many folk arts. Among them, Easter egg decoration occupies a central position and Bucovinean eggs are individualised by their beautiful, typically geometric, decoration (see also Chapter 2).

Ciocăneşti itself enjoys a unique historical legacy, being associated with the figure of the famous Moldavian ruler Ştefan cel Mare (1433-1504) whose blacksmiths were said to be from here. This connection is inscribed in the name of the village, deriving from the word "ciocan" / hammer. Legend has it that the sword of Ştefan (today in Istanbul) was forged by locals using gold from the Bistrița river, traversing the village. The river relates to a second traditional occupation in this community, whose members were known as great rafters, carrying wood down to the Danube. Both these professions are no longer practiced although there are still a number of old rafters who make demonstrations for the public during the festival of the trout (August). However, together with the art of egg decoration, they are very much present in narratives and artefacts, and expressive of local identity (see Image 5).

Image 5. Two fibreglass Easter eggs, the one on the right depicting Ştefan cel Mare

The rural setting of Ciocăneşti, situated at an altitude of around 900 m at the foot of the Suhard mountain and Obcina Mestecăniş (part of the Oriental Carpathians), has a number of

1600 inhabitants and covers a distance of 16 km (including the smaller village of Botoş); it is a typical, “scattered” settlement from the region, with some houses flanking the main road and others spread on the neighbouring hills (see Image 6). Its recent history was marked as well by the communist era when, in 1968, it was forcefully united with the nearby village of Iacobeni and lost its own administration. In 1992 the current mayor reinstated the village and regained its former status.

Image 6. View of the village of Ciocăneşti

A unique and distinguishing feature of Ciocăneşti certainly has to do with the *decoration of houses*, a custom that started in the 1950s and is today so widespread that the entire village is considered an open air museum. Houses are decorated with traditional models (called by locals “pui tradiționali”) specific for the region, motifs that are can be also found on clothes, carpets and, of course, on decorated eggs. This demonstrates not only the unity of tradition and crafts but also their dynamic and vital nature, where models are permanently schematised, adapted and translated to fit a multitude of spaces and purposes. The first person to initiate this form of decoration was Leontina Țăran, whose home is now a museum (Image 7). Over the past 60 years more and more houses adopted this style and nowadays it is very rare for a building to remain undecorated (and in fact the community council decided to authorise only constructions that respect this local custom). During one of the fieldtrips the author was able to interview the oldest house decorator in the village, Silvia Şcheul, who explained how these models are made, by carving and painting them in black or brown; importantly, every house owner is keen to have his or her own “personal” ornament.

Image 7. The first decorated house in the village (Leontina Țăran)

But the main reason this location was chosen for has to do with its equally prominent *tradition of egg decoration*. It is currently estimated that about 40% of the population is involved in traditional decoration or at least knows how to decorate eggs with wax. Considered a type of activity practiced for hundreds of years in the village, it started to be documented after 1900 and it is now known for example that, in 1910-1912, it was a man (Dumitru Giosan) from the administration of the time who taught later generations of decorators. The names of late folk artists (Leocadia Roată, Oltea Ghervan, Elena Candrea) are remembered along with their work which, in many ways, was significantly different from present-day decoration. Some of the "old" eggs, from 20 or 30 years ago, are kept and considered extremely valuable and many artisans today take pride in being related to or having been taught directly by these "pioneer" artists. If before the Revolution only three or four women were known to work with wax, nowadays the craft is flourishing, stimulated by an increasing demand from both local and national or international buyers. Eggs are usually made during the winter and in the months before Easter, if not throughout the year, and they are counted in their hundreds, even thousands. The techniques of decoration diversified (for instance now eggs are also embellished with wax in relief), and so did the colours (green, blue, purple, brown, etc. joining the more traditional yellow, red, black) and motifs (geometric but also floral, zoomorphic, religious, etc.). A brief description of this "evolution", at the level of the craft, was offered in Chapter 2 and a presentation of frequent motifs, colours and their associated meaning can be found in Appendix IV.

This in itself is not atypical for other villages in the region, having a similar impressive production of Easter eggs and a long tradition of decoration. However, Ciocăneşti is individualised by several important *achievements* in terms of this folk art. To begin with, it has a National Museum of the Decorated Egg, unique in Romania and opened in 2007. This museum includes a multitude of eggs, some for sale, along with other traditional items from the village (clothes, rafts, tools, etc.). Since 2004 it has also organised a National Festival of Decorated Eggs, known in the country, gathering up to a hundred folk artists in a contest of egg decoration, as well as hundreds of tourists and visitors. Only "old" traditional eggs are allowed in the competition (reflecting activities designed to "preserve customs against disintegration", Bartlett, 1923, p. 241) and the winners have their work exhibited at the Museum. This kind of recognition and the occasion of the festival itself encouraged villagers to learn or re-start decoration and today summer schools are frequently offered for those interested in the craft (study two in Chapter 5 used one of these reunions for data collection) and there is a Young Decorators' Club at the local school, initiating several partnerships with others schools in Romania. All the activities above stimulated processes of institutionalisation and, from 2008, efforts are being made in the village to establish a National Association of Easter Egg Decorators ("The Golden Egg"). It is for all these reasons that Ciocăneşti was considered an ideal rural setting for the purpose of the present research.

3.4. Overall design

The research presented in this thesis is guided by a cultural psychological approach and the three research principles presented at the beginning of the chapter while taking also into account the numerous specificities of craftwork (see Chapter 2). In order to understand *the interconnection between creativity and culture in the folk art context of Romanian Easter egg decoration*, three distinct – yet interrelated – facets of this relationship are explored: evaluations of creativity, creative activity, and the development of creativity, each of these considered with reference to the social and cultural background (of different professional groups, urban and rural communities, etc.). If the notion of creativity has been discussed at length in Chapter 1, it is important to clarify what is meant here by culture. Following a definition by Michael Cole, culture is "the entire pool of artifacts accumulated by the social group in the course of its historical existence" (Cole, 1996, p. 110) and therefore broadly designates "something pertaining to the human group" (Wissler, 1923, p. 47), a group that can range from a cluster of huts to an entire nation. For the purposes of this research, the "cultural group" will be conceptualised more appropriately as "community".

The main argument developed throughout the thesis (and directly addressed in Chapters 1 and 7) is that creativity is the *fundamental characteristic* of the relation between self and other, community and culture, and it makes possible the transformation of both terms through their dynamic relationship. This over-arching argument will be empirically investigated with the help of a case-study of Easter egg decoration practices in urban and rural Romania. The choice of craft activities is justified by the fact that they represent a form of creative practice taking place in community contexts, ideal for an exploration of the social and cultural aspects of creativity. The particular case of Easter egg making in Romania offers precisely the complex image of a folk art which depends on self-other relationships and draws from rich and diverse conceptions, norms and beliefs – multifaceted phenomena the cultural framework of creativity (see Chapter 1) was designed to capture. In methodological terms, this research then follows a *central or critical case sampling strategy* (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 97) where the research topic and sample are chosen as a typical example in order to "test" the theoretical model. This strategy, often used in studies that propose new frameworks, is critical in the sense that the data can help to confirm the viability of the framework or, on the contrary, to dismiss its utility. Finally, the research here is exploratory in nature and adopted a qualitative approach very well suited for hypothesis generation (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 4).

The logic behind the actual design goes back to the tetradic framework presented in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1) outlining a cultural psychological approach to creativity. This framework includes several key actors and processes required by creative production. The four main elements represented by creators, audiences, new artefacts and existing artefacts stand as inter-connected through continuous processes of integration, externalisation, internalisation and social interaction. The three studies proposed as follows try to unpack this model by focusing, in turn, on a particular facet of creativity always *in the context of all other actors and relationships* outlined in the framework. This is an important observation to make since the underlining principle of a cultural approach rests precisely in the claim that actors and audiences, creators and contexts, the "new" and the "old", are deeply intertwined and focusing on one aspect to the exclusion of all others (for instance the mainstream concern in psychological studies for individuals and, within them, for cognitive functioning) can only offer a partial (at times misleading) understanding of creative phenomena. However, for analytical purposes, the "whole" of creativity can be untangled in ways that bring a certain process to the foreground while keeping the other processes in the background (and not excluding them altogether).

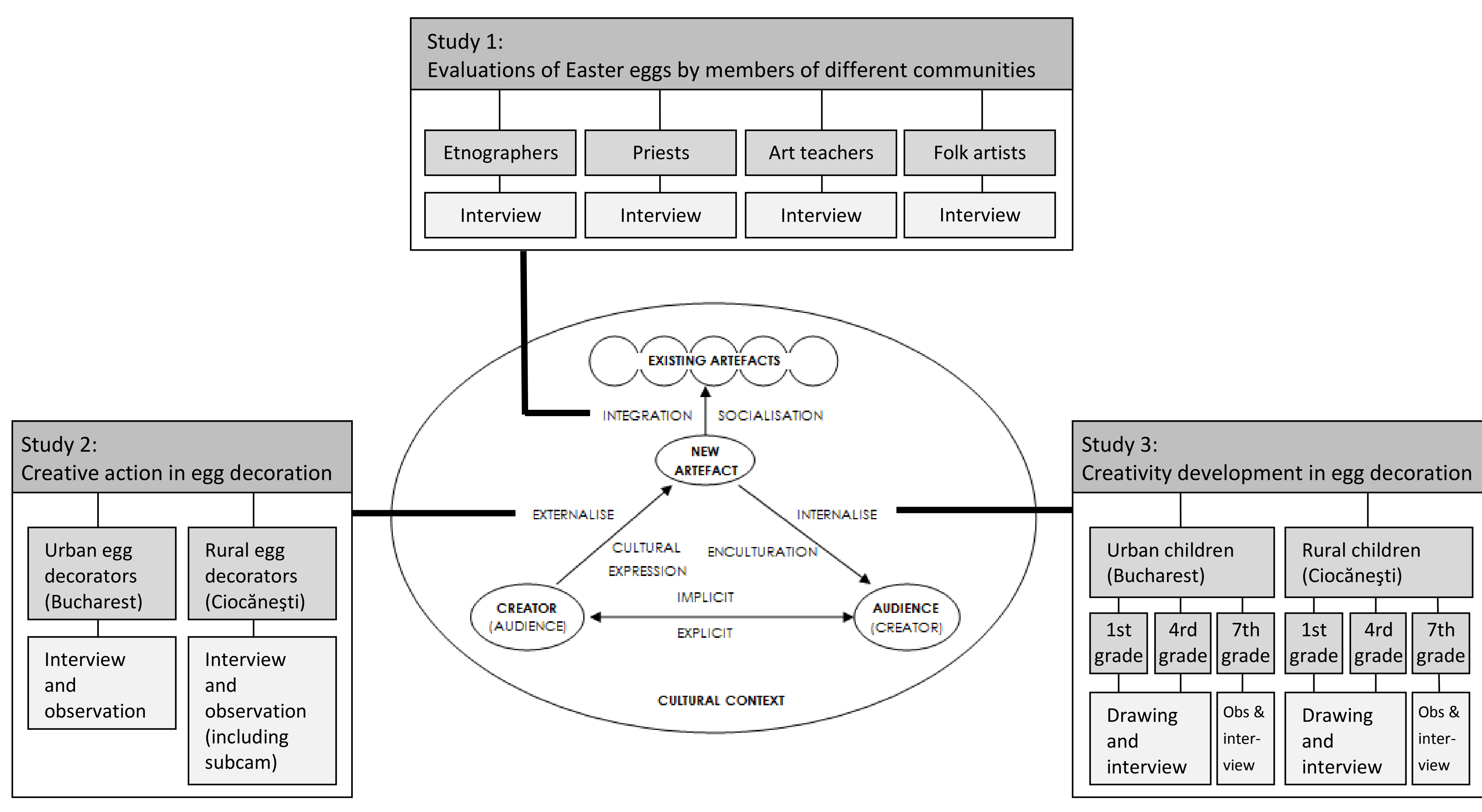


Figure 3. Overview of research design: Participants and methods in the three studies

This is what the studies included in the next chapters (see Figure 3 above for an overview and details about each research) are trying to achieve by focusing on: a) the *integration* of the new artefact in existing systems of meaning and practice (Study 1), b) the nature of creative *externalisations* in both urban and rural settings (Study 2) and c) the dynamic of *internalisation and appropriation* of the craft in the case of children from urban and rural settings (Study 3). In summary, the overall design of the current research follows cultural psychological principles by looking at ecological, everyday life practices, adopting an emic, local perspective and offering a thick, qualitative account of the phenomenon under study. Moreover, it is focused, in turn, on creativity as representation, as action, and as a developing form of cultural participation, which are themselves three key points for any cultural psychological analysis. As follows, the methodology of the three studies mentioned above will be outlined and, in the end, a discussion of quality in qualitative research offered, with an emphasis on criteria for public accountability (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000).

3.4.1. Study one: Creativity evaluations in Easter egg decoration

The first piece of research conducted (see Chapter 4) was concerned with the evaluation of creativity involved in egg decoration by members of different professional groups connected to the craft: ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists themselves. Unlike mainstream creativity research – preoccupied with assessment and thus the question of *how creative* is a new artefact, in this case an Easter egg – our interest here was to consider evaluations of creativity *embedded in greater systems of representation* concerning the craft and the tradition it belongs to, as well as the *system of practices* related to Easter eggs specific for different groups of participants. The first study is therefore primarily concerned with the "integration" or "socialisation" of new artefacts into existing bodies of practices and beliefs (see Figure 4) and considers this process not in isolation but in relation to different actors and audiences of the craft and the implicit and explicit connections between them. As such, the following *research questions* guided the investigation:

1. How do ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists evaluate the creativity of Easter eggs?
2. How are their evaluations rooted in the particular set of norms and beliefs that constitute the culture of these four different professional communities?
3. What is the engagement of ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists with Easter egg making and what kind of self-other relations does it entail?

This study included a total of 27 *participants*. Respondents were selected using convenience sampling but also paying attention to their typicality for the professional categories represented in the study. All seven ethnographers were employees of the Romanian Peasant Museum in Bucharest. The six priests served at churches in Bucharest and the art teachers, all graduates of the faculty of fine arts, taught school children at different state schools in Bucharest. The majority of folk artists came from rural Northern Romania (Suceava county) and all of them produced decorated eggs for selling, many being nationally recognised for their mastery of the craft. Respondent demographic characteristics are presented in Table 3.

	Ethnographers	Priests	Art teachers	Folk artists	Total
Female	6	0	5	7	18
Male	1	6	1	1	9
Age - mean	40.00	38.16	47.66	41.50	
Age - SD	9.94	8.84	13.55	10.07	
Total	7	6	6	8	N = 27

Table 3. Gender and age of the participants

The data collection method was represented by *individual semi-structured interviews*, perfectly equipped for providing both “factual” and especially meaning-related information (Kvale, 1996; Ruane, 2005; Gaskell, 2000). The interview guide (see Appendix V for guide and materials) included general topics covered by respondents from the four groups: a) personal experience with Easter eggs, b) considerations about this practice in the Romanian context, and c) creativity and Easter eggs. The interview opened with a free association task (first three words related to the Easter egg) and included, in the creativity segment, a discussion of four Easter egg images (dyed, with leaves, traditionally decorated and with stickers). If the first task served for mapping out the symbolic space of egg decoration, the second was useful in eliciting evaluations about specific types of Easter eggs, all commonly made in Romania. Interviews with folk artists did not include these tasks (that didn’t seem to work well for this group) and generally focused more on their involvement with egg decoration, questions that were easily answered and the artists felt more comfortable with. Notably, considering the qualitative nature of the investigation, respondents were not asked to “score” the creativity of the decorated eggs presented in the four images, since the purpose of this study was to explore creativity evaluations concerning a whole class of artistic craft products and not to “assess” the creativity of specific exemplars.

Data collection took place in March and April 2009 (Orthodox Easter was on the 19th of April). Participants were selected using a snowballing technique where new respondents are found with the help of initial contacts. In the case of ethnographers the main contact was the head of the research department at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Bucharest. She introduced the researcher to several colleagues and they, in turn, helped him locate other respondents from different departments who were both willing to participate and felt knowledgeable of the topic. Ethnographers were generally curious about the psychological approach and several commented on how it is different from their own ethnographic work. Many of the priests who took part in the research also expressed at the beginning some doubts concerning how much they could "tell" about egg decoration and recommended talking to actual craftsmen from Northern Romania. In almost all cases the discussion began with them explaining the religious significance of the red egg and the decorated egg and making comments about the difference between the two. Art teachers were generally more open to being interviewed and eager to present the work of their students (since interviews were conducted before the Easter break when children usually draw or decorate eggs at school). Ethnographers, priests and art teachers were all interviewed at their workplace, outside working hours. Folk artists on the other hand were interviewed during a national fair organised before Easter by the Romanian Peasant Museum (on Palm Sunday, during the whole weekend). Artisans came to this fair from different parts of the country but mostly from Moldova and Bucovina. Their craft was diverse in terms of types of eggs and work technique and some used folk art as a basis for more artistic interpretations (for instance Dionis Spătaru decorated eggs with prehistoric ceramic motifs from Romania). All the interviews in the study have been audio recorded and all respondents were informed about and agreed with the conditions of the research (see Ethical form, Appendix VI).

3.4.2. Study two: Creative action in Easter egg decoration

The second research dedicated to creative action and presented in Chapter 5 of the thesis is in fact made up of two studies. The first, conducted with the help of interviews and observation in both Bucharest and the village of Ciocăneşti, aimed to unpack the stages of egg decoration as an activity while the second, focusing on traditional wax decoration practices, used the subcam technology in the rural setting with a smaller number of adult and child participants. In the end, the overarching aim of the two studies reported here was to uncover the *microgenesis of creativity in craftwork* in two consecutive stages and thus contribute to our understanding of creative "externalisation" processes and the ways in

which they are shaped by different cultural milieus. As above, the focus on externalisation needs to be contextualised and, from a cultural psychological perspective, action cannot be studied outside of its relation to personal attributes and the social and material setting in which it takes place. Chapter 5 develops a pragmatist approach to the study of action greatly inspired by the psychology of John Dewey (1934) in order to explore the act of creative externalisation in relation to what creators internalise from their environment and from their relations with different audiences (in line with the tetradic framework, Chapter 1).

Interviews and observation in urban and rural settings

The first study explored Easter egg decoration activities in the urban context of Bucharest and the rural setting of Ciocăneşti, Suceava county (see section 3.4. above). These two types of milieus have been chosen considering the general premise that activity, and in this case creative activity, is shaped by socio-cultural contexts. A broad concern for this initial research therefore was to compare how creative action "takes place" in two micro-cultural settings within Romania. At a more specific level and for each setting the study of action was guided by the following *questions*:

1. What are the general stages of the decoration activity?
2. How the doing of decorators interacts at each stage with social and material elements from the surrounding environment?
3. What kinds of preparations are needed for egg decoration?
4. What are the motives and goals that aliment creative work?
5. What obstacles and difficulties does their fulfilment come against?
6. What are the emotional outcomes of these transactions between self and world?

The first study included a number of 27 *participants*, 11 in Bucharest and 16 in Ciocăneşti. Table 4 includes data concerning the gender and age of the respondents. As a first investigation of this type, and having the aim of "mapping" creative activity, a combination of *methods* – semi-structured interviews and (whenever possible) direct observation – was considered most suitable. Narrative accounts of activity are capable of situating the practice of egg decoration since they focus not only on action as it takes place, but also on the meaning of actions in the larger context of participants' daily and family lives. Field observation of decoration practices certainly plays an important role but it is not always feasible, not just considering the fact that such activities unfold in the privacy of the home,

but most of all because they are restricted, at least in urban settings, to one or two days before Easter and thus impose significant time constraints. The number of direct observations within each setting is also mentioned in Table 4.

	Rural	Urban	Total
Female	15	10	25
Male	1	1	2
Age - mean	38.00	45.27	
Age - SD	6.97	11.18	
Observations	9	5	
Total	16	11	N = 27

Table 4. Gender, age of participants and number of direct observations

The *interview guide* (similar to the one used for the study of creativity evaluation - see Appendix V) started with questions concerning the personal experience of Easter egg decoration and asking for a detailed description of activities and processes (what is done, when, how, with the help of what or who, with what outcomes, etc.). Towards the end participants were asked about the broader context of the practice (Easter and Easter traditions) and then about creativity and how it is reflected (or not) in their work. Whenever observations were possible, the first part of the interview included a detailed description and explanation of actual decoration work. The researcher made notes and also took pictures of the process each time a new element was made or stage of decoration initiated. Photos were taken as well of everything else respondents have shown, from diplomas won for their craft to personal notebooks with models (in the rural setting).

Data were *collected* mostly around Easter time (to increase ecological validity), comprising a fieldtrip to the city (March-April 2009) and two to the village (September 2009 and March 2010). Both sub-groups were generated using a snowball sampling method. In Ciocăneşti the interviews covered what were considered the most active and reputable decorators in the community, usually with 7 to 10 years of “professional” experience. During both fieldtrips the researcher was able to stay with a local host who started introducing him to the best known decorators in the village. They all, without exception, were willing to discuss and show their work and seemed used to receiving attention from people outside Ciocăneşti interested in the craft. Interviews and observation were conducted in most cases at the

home of the decorator, the place where participants had their tools and kept Easter eggs (apart from one interview conducted at the Museum of the Decorated Egg). In Bucharest the selection criterion was minimal involvement in egg decoration at home (anything beyond monochrome colouring using artificial pigments). It was considerable harder than in the rural setting to find people who would accept observation of decoration practices at home, before Easter. Most respondents started by saying they "couldn't tell much" about egg decoration since they use very "simple" procedures and their outcomes cannot compare to artefacts produced by experienced craftsmen. All interviews have been audio recorded and respondents were informed about and agreed with the conditions of the study (see Ethical form, Appendix VI). Almost all decorators from Ciocăneşti wanted to be identified in the study with the exception of two persons (one who started decoration more recently and another participant who was, at that moment, working very little).

The use of subjective cameras to study traditional decoration

The aim of the second study was to explore in greater detail the intricacies of creative activity in the case of traditional Easter egg decoration (decoration with wax) as performed in the village of Ciocăneşti. Considering the fact that interview material and even the observations made in this setting could not fully document the microgenetic aspects of creative action, a Subjective Evidence-Based Ethnography (SEBE) (see section 3.2.2. above) was performed with the interrelated *aims* of:

1. Understanding the generalities and specificities of craftwork across decorators;
2. Uncovering the activity flow, the exact stages of work and their interconnections;
3. Exploring differences between "novices" and "experts" in terms of work and output.

In the end, it was hoped that a much more comprehensive and dynamic image of decoration will be generated and further illustrations added to the set of interview findings from study one concerning the emergence of creativity in craft. Moreover, due to the fact that SEBE requires participant validation (through confrontation interviews), the evaluation of creativity became a *joint enterprise* between researcher and artisan, something that contributes greatly to the ecological validity of the interpretations. As previously argued, creativity exists as much in action as it does in representation and the two are closely inter-connected. This set of data was collected during a third fieldtrip to Ciocăneşti village in August 2010. The occasion was given by a five days "summer school" for egg decoration held

at the National Museum of the Decorated Egg, open to both beginners and expert folk artists. Seven participants at the workshop took part in the research (three of which were also included in study one), all women with ages ranging from 8 to 41 (in total three children and four adults). For two of the respondents decoration was a main type of activity while the other participants worked on occasions and especially before the Easter period.

Preparation of the material aspect of the research included pre-testing the camera to see if it properly records activities performed on an object as small as an egg and held relatively close to the person's eyes. It was noticed that the usual procedure of fixing the camera to the side of a pair of glasses didn't serve to capture the decoration process well so the researcher resorted to placing it below a sun visor, in a position close to the space between the eyes. Two subjective cameras were used during fieldwork thus allowing more people to wear the devices simultaneously in each daily meeting at the Museum. Also, in preparation for fieldwork, all participants were notified about the use of camera during the summer school and *fully informed* about the methodology and the aims of the study. Their consent has been recorded and, in the case of young children, parents gave their written approval. All respondents wanted to be identified by name in the research. After using the camera, each participant was "confronted" with the recordings and actively took part in the formulation of interpretations concerning the work process (these interviews were audio and video-taped as well). It is to be noted that all the respondents were very curious to use the new technology (especially children) and didn't have any difficulty in wearing the device while decorating. They wanted to make sure their activity was properly caught on tape and checked this at several points in the process. Also, considering the fact that work sessions didn't normally last for more than one hour it was possible to review the entire recording with the participants afterwards.

3.4.3. Study three: Creative development in Easter egg decoration

Finally, the third research included in the thesis (Chapter 6) focused on creativity in Easter egg decoration from a *developmental perspective*. Concerned with the process of "internalisation" or "enculturation" of the craft in the case of children from the urban setting of Bucharest and the rural setting of Ciocăneşti, this study considered creative expression in relation to both age and cultural milieu. From the description of folk art in Chapter 2 and of the two research contexts (this chapter) it becomes clear that children growing up in the two settings, although familiar with the Easter celebration and the custom of preparing eggs for

Easter, are actually introduced to strikingly different customs and sets of practices. On the one hand we have the less sophisticate decoration in the urban environment, focused on the use of colour and experimenting with other resources such as leaves, stickers, coloured paper, etc. On the other hand traditional rural decoration, particularly in Ciocăneşti, is structured by a rich and established set of norms and techniques that organise the use of colour and depiction of motifs[5]. Under these circumstances it becomes essential to understand how these differences are internalised by the child and how they shape egg decoration practices by children in both settings (linking thus internalisation and enculturation processes with creative externalisations).

The study involved children from first and fourth grade decorating two egg shapes on paper (due to the difficulties of having them all work on eggs especially in a classroom setting where data collection took place), one representing how eggs are decorated "at home", and the other the kind of Easter egg they "want and like most". This task was followed by a brief interview with each participant based on his or her drawings. The purpose of asking children to draw a typical Easter egg "from home" as well was to have a comparison term and also to invite a discussion of how this practice takes place in their family. A small number of observations of actual egg decoration were made with seventh grade students in both contexts, again followed by interview. Three particular *questions* guided the investigation:

1. Considering the artistic medium specific for Easter egg making, how is colour used by 7 and 10-year-olds (first and fourth grade)? Are there differences between "home" and "wanted" eggs and between urban and rural?
2. What is depicted on decorated eggs by 7 and 10-year-olds? Are there differences between "home" and "wanted" eggs and between urban and rural?
3. What is specific about egg decoration in the case of 13-year-olds (seventh grade) in both urban and rural settings?

The *participants* were all school children from one class of first and fourth grade – around 7 and 10 years of age – at institutions in Bucharest (a general / state school) and the village of Ciocăneşti (the only school in the local community). These two age groups have been selected because they represent important landmarks in intellectual development: seven years of age is approximately when the child enters the stage of concrete operations, at

[5] It need to be noted however that the preparation of eggs for the actual Easter festivity is largely similar in both settings and basically requires dyeing eggs, typically in red.

around 10 children are in the later moments of this stage and at 13 they have already begun perfecting formal thought processes (Piaget, 1950). Beyond these cognitive explanations, it was important to observe school children in their engagement with a cultural practice since, as observed by Gardner (1982, p. 100): "As children enter school (and possibly, in part, as a result of this entry) they gain a heightened awareness of, and concern with, the standards of their culture". If mainstream creativity scholars associate this preoccupation with a decline in creativity (and an increase in "literalness"), socioculturalists are inclined to study it precisely because of this tendency; a stage marking not the end but the beginning of cultural forms of creative expression. The seventh graders who took part in the study were selected by the teachers for the task and worked together in a different classroom where eggs and work tools were brought for them. Overall, the total sample is described in Table 5:

	Rural			Urban			Total
	1st grade	4th grade	7th grade	1st grade	4th grade	7th grade	
Female	8	8	2	10	8	3	39
Male	5	7	1	9	8	1	31
Age-mean	7.23	9.73	13.00	7.10	10.18	13.66	
Age-SD	0.43	0.45	0.00	0.30	0.54	0.57	
Total	13	15	3	19	16	4	N = 70

Table 5. Context, grade, gender and age of participants

Drawing was the main *method* used for data collection. Since for the purpose of the present study understanding the content of drawings was essential, interviews with children were also conducted and included primarily questions about what was depicted and why (see Appendix V for interview guide). In addition, all children were asked about why they thought Easter eggs were made and what they represent and also about the way they celebrate Easter at home. Fourth graders were invited as well to formulate an opinion about whether egg decoration involves the creation of new forms or repetition of existing models. Finally, a limited number of "case studies" were performed with seventh graders who decorated one egg and were then interviewed about their work. Besides collecting data from a higher age group, this facilitated direct observation of actual egg decoration practices. Having children participate as research subjects raises some special *ethical issues* (for a review see Punch, 2002), particularly concerning informed consent, confidentiality and the effects of the research (Wyness, 2006; Shaw, 1996; Mauthner, 1997). In the case of the study presented

here there were virtually no potential risks for participants and the task was pleasant and appropriate for their age and interests.

Data have been *collected* before Easter 2009 from the urban setting and Easter 2010 from the rural one thus increasing the ecological validity of the task (children paint or decorate eggs for art classes close to the holiday). The researcher spent a few days visiting the school and interacting with children and teachers before data collection. Parents and school authorities were informed about the research and gave their consent (see Appendix VI) and children were asked if they wanted to participate and told they can withdraw from the study at any time. The only child who did not take part in the research was a first grader in the urban setting coming from a Muslim family. In class each child was given an A5 piece of paper with the shape of an egg made on it (bigger than the actual size of an egg) and first asked to "*decorate it in a way that is typical for the eggs you have at home for Easter*". After finishing, the respondent was offered another paper with the same shape and asked this time to "*decorate the egg as you want and like most an Easter egg to be*" (told also that it can resemble the first egg if that was indeed his/her favourite). All the children had colours (they were prepared for the art class) and the researcher made extra sets available. Seventh graders were given an emptied egg each to decorate the way they wanted and they used watercolours in the urban setting and wax in the rural one (the work space was set up for them by the school). The researcher observed the decoration process and took photos of intermediate outcomes whenever a new element was added on the egg. The drawing / decoration tasks lasted for all respondents between 40 and 45 minutes. Interviews took place individually after children finished work and usually lasted for about 5 to 10 minutes.

3.5. Assuring quality in qualitative research

Towards the end it is important to examine issues of quality in data collection and analysis. This is all the more necessary considering the hermeneutic nature of qualitative research, referred to in this chapter. The notion of quality in qualitative research has been very much debated in recent years, especially when comparisons are made with the more quantitative-oriented indicators of validity and reliability. In these discussions several positions were formulated, ranging from a total rejection of "positivist" criteria to an attempt to duplicate experimental standards. One of the most frequent arguments though, and the one supported here, is to search for criteria which provide *functional equivalence* to the quantitative tradition, "neither the rigid emulation of existing standards, nor the rejection of

any standards at all, but a 'middle way'" (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000, p. 343). In "mirroring" concepts of reliability and validity, Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) advocate for "justifiability of interpretations" and what distinguishes a justifiable from an unjustifiable account in their view depends on the transparency, communicability, and coherence of the analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) address in this context the issue of "trustworthiness of a research" and propose the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, authenticity. Finally, Dey (1993, p. 228) defines a valid account as "one which can be defended as sound because it is well-grounded conceptually and empirically".

The discussion of quality here though will be organised around indices formulated by Gaskell and Bauer (2000) who considered this topic in relation to the *public accountability* of research: using explicit standards as part of good practice in public knowledge activities. Public accountability is ensured by confidence and relevance markers denoting, on the one hand, how "confident" we can be that the results are not fictitious and, on the other hand, that the research is "viable" and incorporates both utility and importance. The two authors proposed a list of specific criteria to be observed and each of these is addressed in turn with reference to the present studies.

Triangulation and reflexivity (confidence marker)

In essence, these indicators aim to decentre the researcher's position and invite variability and diversity of interpretation. In this context Denzin (2006) famously referred to four basic types of *triangulation*: of data (involving time, space, and persons), or investigators (involving multiple researchers), of theory (involving the use of more than one theoretical scheme) and of methodology (involving the use of more than one method for data collection). Elements of these can be found in all the three projects discussed in the following chapters. The triangulation of research groups is at the core of the multiple feedback method proposed in Chapter 4. Triangulation of methods is present in Chapters 5 and 6 where data was collected through interview and observation (including the use of subcam) and drawings and interview respectively. On the whole there is also triangulation of theory and each coding frame draws from different strands within cultural psychology, from social representations to activity and cultural-historical theory. Notably, Chapter 5 makes extensive use of pragmatist concepts for data interpretation.

In terms of *reflexivity*, the researcher constantly deliberated on research practices and carefully considered the limitations of each study. At a broader level, the main concern was for not imposing personal interpretations on the phenomena and always checking them against the data, allowing thus for inconsistency and variation. This is why large segments in the results sections are dedicated to the description of data before passing on to abstracting "regularities" and "patters". Recoding interview data at different stages during the research (first time after the data were collected, second time before writing up the research) and using also external coders (for the analysis of drawings and subcamera films) offered a good opportunity for reflecting on the analytical framework and any biases that might be associated with applying it. Finally, the researcher tried himself traditional Easter egg decoration during one of the fieldtrips to the village of Ciocăneşti. This offered a unique opportunity to understand the processes and characteristics of craftwork first hand and approximate an insider's perspective, thus increasing the capacity to reflect on experiences and practices of decoration. These insights played a significant role in how data concerning creative action in decoration were analysed since the personal experience of obstacles and constraints (and especially the outcomes they afford the user) highlighted not only how difficult egg decoration can be for beginners but also how these same difficulties "force" decorators to become more resourceful, skilled and ultimately creative.

Transparency and procedural clarity (confidence marker)

The points above also relate to the need for transparency in research and procedural clarity. The present chapter outlined in detail methodological aspects and the procedures used for data collection. Data analysis is explained at length in each research chapter. Being transparent means that "other researchers know the steps by which you arrived at your interpretation" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 84), and this is achieved in the thesis through an explicitation of coding frames and activities. Whenever possible, the entire dataset is included along with associated codes (see Appendix IX presenting the whole lot of drawings made by child participants and their associated codes).

There is also another sense of the word *transparency* that could be employed in this context and that is being transparent in relation to your research participants. None of the studies included in the thesis required the use of deceit and all the procedures were presented to respondents well in advance of the study. This helped also in building a relationship of trust between researcher and participants that is reflected in the nature of the information

obtained from them – for instance the folk artists were not shy about discussing the financial aspects of being involved in the craft and one of them, in study one, actually admitted not being passionate about decoration work but doing it because of unemployment.

Corpus construction (confidence and relevance marker)

In essence, corpus construction designates an *iterative process* of selecting participants and analysing data, a process by which "additional strata of people or texts are added to the analysis until saturation is achieved, and further data do not provide novel observations" (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000, p. 347). This means in practical terms to select, analyse and select again in the construction of research groups.

Although no complete analysis was made while gathering data, the procedure of adding new participants and especially looking for "certain" kinds of participants was guided by the *corpus construction principle*. For example the number of interviews and observations collected was considered sufficient when no significantly different information could be obtained from further adding respondents (saturation). At times participants were chosen considering their particular characteristics and in light of their potential contribution to the corpus of ideas (e.g. interviewing the "only" known male decorator from Ciocăneşti or interviewing a person who decorates eggs with prehistoric ceramic motifs). The addition of entire groups was also based on this logic, for instance completing data collection in Chapter 6 with observations from seventh graders. The need for this additional group became obvious after collecting the first set of data from urban participants. A preliminary analysis of patterns in these drawings revealed some interesting trends (discussed at length in Chapter 6) that required further "validation" among respondents of a higher age.

Thick description (confidence and relevance marker)

This marker refers to the detailed description of situations, events and experiences, as reflected in interviews, observations, videos, etc. (see Geertz, 1973). It is often associated with the extensive use of *verbatim citations* in research reports. All the three studies included in the following chapters respect this principle by offering rich descriptions of data before interpretation and, whenever possible, direct quotations from respondents (marked by the use of *italics*). Case studies were used when appropriate (Chapter 6) and visual or verbal examples presented from filmed work and interviews respectively (Chapter 5).

Surprise as a contribution to theory and/or common sense (relevance marker)

The criterion of local surprise designates "seeking out and attempting to account for negative instances that contradict emerging or dominant ideas" (Seale, 1999, p. 73). As stated in the literature, surprises can be found either in relation to *theory or common-sense* expectations. The project presented in this thesis embodies such an orientation by fundamentally going "against the grain" of traditional (scientific and common-sense) conceptions of creativity, which tend to individualise the phenomenon (see Chapter 1). Furthermore, being exploratory in nature, the research was very much open to alternative explanations and informed by the data. It is to be noted that, although the coding process started with some generally defined global themes (except for study three were basic categories were defined after observing the drawings), the particular ways in which these categories were "constituted" or "supported" by organising and basic themes and related to one another came, in each case, from the empirical field of observation.

Examples of local surprise can be offered from all three pieces of research. For instance study one revealed a different relationship with the notion of tradition enacted by members from distinct professional communities and in particular the fact that folk artists don't often take tradition to be a standard for their work but consider it more as an open resource. Study two outlined two different approaches to decoration activities and showed how, in the urban setting, respondents work without having a clear representation of the final outcome in mind which strongly differentiates them from folk artists. However, it is the latter who are considered more creative and innovative in their expression of the craft. Finally, the last study showed how children of bigger ages, especially in the village of Ciocăneşti, draw polychrome, decorated eggs, even when asked to represent an Easter egg from home and they have no decorators in the family. These kind of findings are in need of explanation and, in many cases, it is data from *all three studies* included in the thesis that helped "make sense" of local surprises.

Communicative validation (relevance marker)

Finally, the last criterion asks for validating interpretations with the help of the original sources and obtaining their agreement and consent (Gaskell & Bauer, 2000). This type of member or respondent validation also reflects what Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p. 84) called *communicability*, whenever findings "make sense to other researchers and the

research participants themselves". A classic example of this can be found in Chapter 5 where confrontation interviews with participants meant taking them as collaborators in formulating and testing hypotheses about the data at hand.

3.6. Concluding thoughts on generalisability

In the end, consideration needs to be given to the important issue of generalisability. This is a constant preoccupation in quantitative studies focused on external validity and the overall characteristics of research samples (size, randomisation, etc.). For qualitative research the discussion is formulated in different terms. To being with, a notion preferred by qualitative researchers is that of *transferability* and their concern is not principally with the transferability of the exact set of findings but the transferability and explanatory power of *theoretical constructs* (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Seale (1999, p. 118) noted the necessary conditions for this inferential process which "is enhanced by a rich, detailed account of the 'sending' context, and may be helped by analysis of the extent to which similar conditions apply in the 'receiving context'". Great care must be exercised when generalising from a qualitative study since, in this case, findings are precisely aimed at constructing a very local and contextual account.

It is the broad patterns and theoretical models suggested by the data that can more easily "travel" from one research context to the next, but always as assumptions ready to be tested in a novel setting rather than pre-set, universal truths. Cultural psychologists are well aware of this implication and consider the question of generality "a matter for investigation" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 83). This is not or should not be though an attitude reserved for qualitative researchers alone considering the fact that, on the whole, all results of social psychological research bear the mark of their particular samples and cultural contexts. Further discussion concerning the utility and transferability of findings and concepts from the research included here will be offered towards the end of the thesis, in the concluding section.

4. Creativity as representation: An ecology of evaluations and practices

Chapter summary

The first empirical study, presented in this chapter, deals with creativity evaluations and with the question of whether Easter eggs are creative and if so why. The creativity of an artefact such as a decorated egg does not rely on its properties alone or the traits of the creator but also on the creative meaning and value of the object, its representation, constituted through dialogue between the folk artist and various other audiences. In terms of creativity "assessment" this cultural perspective takes inspiration from social representations studies and existing methods (such as the Consensual Assessment Technique; Amabile 1996) and favours the use of a multiple feedback methodology. Multiple feedback involves selecting several groups of evaluators with dissimilar backgrounds in order to understand how creativity practices and evaluations are rooted in particular contexts and to capture the multiplicity of viewpoints characteristic for real life settings. For this purpose, the present study included four groups of evaluators – ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists – all members of professional communities relevant for Easter egg decoration. Data were collected with the help of semi-structured interviews and analysed using a thematic networks approach. Findings show that respondents almost unanimously appreciated "traditional" wax decorated eggs as highly creative for their designs, aesthetics and the hard work and talent they require but opinions diverged when commenting on the creativity of other types of Easter eggs. At a more general level, two broad evaluation patterns were found, corresponding to whether respondents participate or not in decoration practices. Identifying these patterns comes to reinforce the idea that creativity evaluations, as well as creative activity, are rooted in the social and cultural contexts of the participants and these contexts share important similarities but also marked differences. Conclusions are drawn about the process of "integration" or "socialisation" of a new artefact in larger systems of meaning and practice specific for the craft of egg decoration.

> "Originality, freshness of perceptions, divergent-thinking ability are all well and good in their own right, as desirable personal traits. But without some form of public recognition they do not constitute creativity. (…) what we call creativity is a phenomenon that is constructed through an *interaction between producer and audience*. Creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgements about individuals' products" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 314).

The tetradic framework of creativity introduced in Chapter 1 outlined the importance of several key processes for creative production. Among them, the "integration" or "socialisation" of the new artefact – through dialogue, social interaction, at times fierce contestation, between creators and audiences or between members of different types of audiences – is of particular importance for understanding what is produced, by whom and how the new product is received, used, integrated, in a word represented by distinct communities. Sense-making processes thus become essential not only for "locating" novelty but also for constructing *the meaning of creativity itself*. Evaluations of what is and is not creative are necessarily situated within representational systems.

Strongly advocated by Csikszentmihalyi in his systemic approach, what we legitimise as creativity is the outcome of a dialogue between producer and audience, not the product of single individuals but of entire social structures (the field). While concurring with this depiction, we are here adopting a *cultural psychological* (rather than sociological) understanding of fields and domains. The representation and evaluation of the "creative" are commonplace not only for science award committees or critics' appraisals of works of art, they exist in the everyday and become manifest whenever we are faced with the "new" independent of its source and level of impact. Evaluating children's drawings, the cooking abilities of a friend, or the creativity of Easter eggs for this matter, do not require institutional forums but can very well rely on micro-level social conventions grounded in the symbolic resources that constitute the life of every group or community (see Chapter 1). In light of this, the chapter will start from discussing the theoretical and methodological bases on which creativity evaluations can be investigated as representational forms through the use of multiple feedback. A research applying this methodology will be presented at length, with an emphasis on the particular ecology of creativity evaluations and practices among different communities relevant for the craft of Easter egg decoration.

4.1. Creativity assessment and its epistemological assumptions

Creativity assessment, supported by a long-standing psychometric tradition (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999), is focused on evaluating the creativity level of certain products, persons or processes. Nowadays one of the most widespread types of creativity assessment relies on *expert judgments or evaluations* about the creativity of products (Lubart, 2003). Both the product and expert focus in the psychology of creativity came as solutions (as partial as they may be) for the problems of "what" should be assessed and "how". Products have the essential quality of being readily available for observation (even measurement) and most authors consider products to be creative when they are both new / original and useful (Stein, 1953; Martindale, 1999; see also Chapter 1). Since value and originality are in the end relative criteria (Glăveanu, 2011b), creativity researchers have turned to agreement between experts (essentially between their creativity scores for different products) as an ultimate measure of creativity. Social agreement, the new basis for creativity evaluation, has been both acclaimed and contested. Its supporters point to a gain in ecological validity and the capacity to reflect cultural and historical changes in the meaning of creativity (Amabile, 1996). Its detractors claim that it makes creativity assessment too relative for a scientific type of analysis (see Runco, 1999a).

The arguments presented in this chapter appreciate *social judgment* to be indeed the most suitable criterion for the evaluation of creativity but criticise current forms of expert assessment on several accounts. From the perspective of cultural or socio-cultural psychology it is argued that the "social psychology of creativity" (Amabile, 1996) stopped halfway in its theoretisation and did not explore the last methodological consequences of its position. A threefold critique is developed here:

a) expert judgments are perhaps more "ecological" than pre-set, standardised scoring systems but, in real life situations, evaluations are often formulated from *other positions* than that of expert. If an expert is understood as a person with considerable expertise in the domain of the product (usually gained through formal training) it becomes clear that most everyday life situations and products don't benefit from the existence of recognised experts. An expert approach to creativity assessment confines the phenomenon to the realms of art and science (or any other institutionalised field of cultural production) and contributes to its separation from human experience in its broadest sense (see Dewey, 1934; also Chapter 1).

b) expert creativity evaluations are regularly expressed in the simplest way possible, most of the times numerically, and thus their *origins* and particular *logic* tend to be obscured. Furthermore, creativity evaluations are usually unidimensional and concerned only with the creativity of the particular product under consideration while in fact they rest on a complex system of beliefs about the product, the creator, the domain of the creation, the assessment situation and, last but not least, about creativity itself;

c) expert assessment of creative products is fundamentally centred on ideas of agreement and consensus. The final creativity "score" is often the average or most frequent result of all evaluations and there is great emphasis placed on the fact that expert judgment tends to be highly convergent (Amabile, 1996; Kaufman, Baer, & Cole, 2009). Homogeneity in terms of assessors and assessments contradicts again ecological, real life situations where the same product is appreciated by a diversity of persons with *heterogeneous backgrounds* reaching, perhaps, different conclusions about its creativity.

To summarise, *creativity evaluations presented as simple scores are only the visible part of the iceberg, lying on top of more or less explicit systems of beliefs and practices that share both commonalities and differences across cultures, communities and socio-professional groups*. These beliefs and practices are ultimately social in their nature, expression and consequences (see Glăveanu, 2011b on the cultural reception of creativity) and, as such, can be approached with the theoretical and methodological means offered by the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984, 2001, 2008). Understanding that creativity evaluations about a certain product are rooted in and expressive of social representations of that product co-constructed by members of different social groups would reconceptualise and transform our understanding of creativity as follows.

4.1.1. Social representations and the construction of meaning

Social representations theory (SRT) is one of the major contributions of European social psychology, taking shape in the 1960's through the foundational work of Serge Moscovici. In essence, SRT (Moscovici, 1981, 1984; Jodelet, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2001, 2007; Marková, 2003) is a theory of *social knowledge*, of how systems of practice and belief emerge and transform in the communicative relation between persons, groups and communities about an "object" (the object of representation). The role of the social representational process is,

according to Moscovici (1984), to make something unfamiliar, unfamiliarity itself, familiar. Here we find the first points of connection with the idea of creativity, a phenomenon claimed to generate new and original, thus, "unfamiliar" objects and realities. Creative outcomes become appropriated, understood by persons and groups and they find a place in the symbolic world through interaction and communication leading to their social representation (also Glăveanu, 2011e). Meaning-making processes around the new are constantly taking place, from the very creator of the new artefact to the communities that come in contact with it. Representation is a dynamic socio-psychological process, emerging in relation to particular socio-cultural contexts and reflecting their transformation. Dialogue, debate and contestation stand at the core of representation.

The original study of Moscovici on the reception of psychoanalysis in France in the 1950s reflects such a controversy (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008). The object of representation in this case was extremely complex, the psychoanalytic approach to the human mind, a theory that argued for a very unsettling (and *creative*?) vision of the human psyche and its relation to sexuality. As a knowledge system, psychoanalysis was both influential and important for its political nature: it constituted a potential alternative ideological system, rivalling the other ideologies of the time (political, religious, etc.). Moscovici's book "Psychoanalysis, Its Image and Its Public" (original edition 1961; English translation 2008) looked closely at how psychoanalysis came to be represented, integrated, transformed or rejected by members of different more or less institutionalised segments of the French society: the Communist Party, the Liberals and the Catholic Church. His methodological approach, of great interest to us here, was to collect data about the representational efforts of these three communities in relation to psychoanalytic knowledge. Although belonging to the same society and historical time, members of these distinct groups reflected different socio-cultural positions, organised around particular understandings of the world: the message of the social and political revolution for the Communists, the message of spiritual salvation for the Catholics, etc. For them psychoanalysis was not only a new and foreign doctrine but a strong competitor that needed to be understood, positioned and ultimately dealt with.

What can this teach us about the study of creativity and creativity evaluations? Although Moscovici's study was not concerned with creativity per se, the *methodology* he established – collecting data from members of different groups or communities about the same social reality – has shaped research in the social representations tradition ever since. His concern was with how knowledge is constructed within particular groups and how it "travels" by

means of interaction and communication to members of other groups who problematise and transform it in ways that suit their projects and vision of the world. Ultimately, knowledge is bound to socio-cultural contexts and so are any evaluations about the object of representation. *Creativity evaluations* make no exception: it is through exploring the socio-cultural contexts of various groups and communities that we can understand the convergence or divergence of evaluative judgments.

4.2. The multiple feedback methodology

Inspired by the social representations research model, a multiple feedback methodology is proposed in this chapter, reflecting a cultural approach to creativity "assessment". Perhaps the *consensual assessment technique* (CAT) is most similar until now to the method described in this section. Amabile's (1996, p. 33) claim was that "a product or response is creative to the extent that appropriate observers independently agree it is creative". As we have seen from above, the cultural approach operates with such contextual definitions of creativity. However, what is central to consensual assessment is, of course, the quest for consensus. This means that, presumably, "appropriate judges" sharing a similar background and forming a homogenous group will operate with comparable definitions of creativity. The cultural psychology method of assessment proposed as multiple feedback can be said to emphasise *diversity* instead of consensus since it purposefully looks for several groups of "appropriate judges" having dissimilar backgrounds in order to understand how creativity evaluations are rooted in particular socio-cultural contexts.

Consensus about the creative quality of different artefacts can be attained within groups and/or between groups as a result of dialogue and debate which means that disagreement and diversity of opinions are often the starting point, essential conditions in fact, for reaching a final consensus. Conversely, what might seem consensual (for instance when averaging scores like mainstream evaluations of creativity often do) typically hides a multiciplicity of positions and supporting arguments. Because of this, the idea of *creativity rooted in social agreement* is concerned with how representations and evaluations become "shared"; however, a socio-cultural perspective considers sharedness to be an achievement of interaction and communication rather than a given within a certain social context.

The multiple feedback method elaborated as follows is by no means new to psychologists and we can recall of course the *360˚ feedback* considered by some "the most notable

management innovation of the 1990s" (Waldman & Atwater, 1998, p. ix). In essence, this type of evaluation in organisations meant providing an employee with feedback not only from upper management but also from subordinates, peers, customers, etc. (Payne, 1998). The observation that led to this form of assessment was that people from different groups have divergent perceptions about a common "reality" (Brogden & Sprecher, 1964): the performance of an employee and, by extension in our case, the creativity of a new artefact.

This is not only an interesting empirical observation but it is of utmost importance if we want to understand everyday contexts and operate in them. "Perceptions" or "conceptions" are not inconsequential. On the contrary, in the words of Westwood and Low (2003, p. 238), "if creativity as a notion and construct is conceived of differently around the world, then it is likely that it will differ in form and practice". The multiple feedback creativity assessment then brings together, as depicted in Figure 8, different groups characterised by distinctive socio-cultural backgrounds (members of different communities, professional groups, groups sharing divergent interests, etc.) but nevertheless all relevant for the evaluation of a particular creation. Moreover, it considers how social interaction and communication both *within* and *between* groups impacts on the formation and dynamic of consensus regarding the creativity of certain people, artefacts or processes.

Its graphic depiction is an adaptation of the "wind rose" model of social representation put forward by Bauer and Gaskell (2008) and the tetradic framework presented in the first chapter. In Figure 4 the creation itself is perceived by members of different groups (becoming C1, C2, etc.) as a function of different representational systems constructed around it (REP-1, REP-2, etc.) in the interaction between group members (P1, P2, etc). These constructions and their associated evaluations can be dissimilar (the case of Groups 1 and 2), or share spaces of similarity (Groups 3 and 4) accounted for in terms of the "proximity" of their socio-cultural contexts, including overlapping group memberships (e.g. the case of P6). What is depicted in the Figure below is the formation of *frameworks of meaning* in the case of creativity, something that engages numerous people from different communities. It is not to be forgotten that, in real-life group interactions, there are also important motivations at stake and relations of power set in place, often crucial for determining how a reality "ought to" be represented, evaluated and acted towards. Moreover, in line with Bauer and Gaskell's initial conception, this model has an implicit temporal element intrinsic to it whereby representations are forged and changed in time through social interaction thus acquiring an important historical dimension.

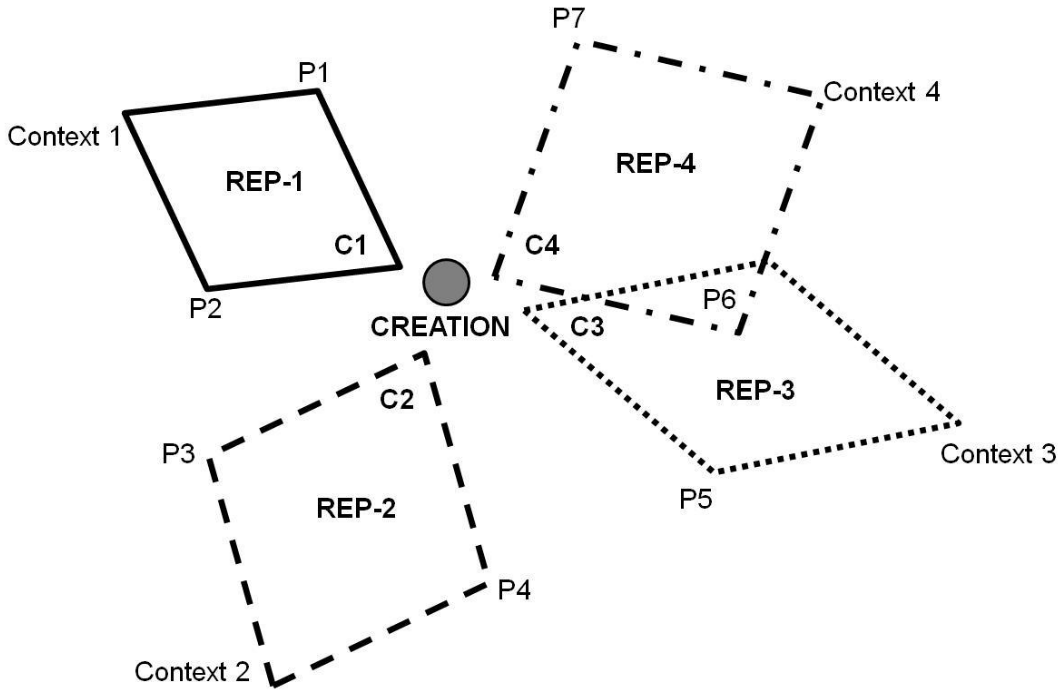


Figure 4. A schematic representation of the multiple feedback method

4.2.1. Aims of the method

Why should we use a multiple feedback approach to study creativity? One answer is that the multiple feedback method constitutes one of the most *comprehensive and ecological* forms of creativity evaluation. The three interrelated aims of this technique are:

1. To study representations of creativity, *how* creativity is attributed by members of different groups and *why* these attributions are made. Research on local or lay understandings is today one of the newest tendencies in the field, something commonly referred to as "implicit theories of creativity" (Plucker & Renzulli, 1999; Runco, 1999b);
2. To appreciate the ways in which the attribution of creativity is *rooted* in and *reflective* of socio-cultural environments. This goes a step further than implicit theories and looks at how different evaluations draw from a background of norms and beliefs that constitute a more or less distinct cultural reservoir for each group of assessors;
3. To explore how evaluations of creativity *emerge* out of and have *consequences* for creator-community relations, including the creator's own activity. In the case of this method there is more emphasis than ever before on understanding the creator's point of view and how it is developed in relation to a series of others: collaborators, competitors, peers, critics, etc.

By comparison with traditional psychometric measures, the multiple feedback method does not offer a "result", *one* final outcome. There are potentially more results depending on the group of reference and, what is fundamental for the cultural psychology approach, there is *no hierarchy* to be set between them. Some might argue that expert judgments certainly value more than other opinions (see the debate about science and common sense; Jovchelovitch, 2007, 2008) but this is not an exercise of confirming or disproving lay judgments. Striving to reach "objectivity" by averaging ratings is what motivates the 360˚ feedback method as used in organisations (Payne, 1998) or the application of the consensual assessment technique (Amabile, 1996) but this is not the case for the multiple feedback described here. This method *aims to capture the multiplicity of viewpoints in what creativity is concerned and to understand their origins and their consequences*.

4.2.2. Using the method

The multiple feedback method can be employed for the assessment of virtually *any form of creativity*, from the most mundane and "private" creations to publicly celebrated creative achievements. This is because, in line with the cultural framework (Figure 7), there is room for flexibility and appreciation of multiple levels in what is meant by creation/new artefact, other/public and culture/existing artefacts. To give an example, when the creations are a child's stories the others involved in their evaluation could be parents, teachers, friends and peers, and the existing artefacts that support their appreciations may well differ for each (parents may compare them with stories from other children, teachers could use school-based definitions of achievement, etc.). In the case of a famous sculpture, of course, the "appropriate" others will change: fellow sculptors, members of the general public, the fine arts academy, etc.

The key question here is: how do we *choose* these "appropriate" judges? Which groups or communities should we consider? This has always been a difficult issue and answers largely depend on the theorist and the purpose of the assessment. In CAT, the main criterion used is that of expertise/familiarity with the domain of the product and the validity of self-assessments is often questioned since they rarely match expert judgment (see Kaufman, Evans, & Baer, 2010). In the case of the 360˚ feedback, significant others are "knowledgeable about the individual and are people whose opinions are valued by the individual and the organization" (Tornow, 1993, p. 211). The multiple feedback method follows similar ecological criteria for determining its participants. In principle, all persons who are *in contact*

with the creator and/or creation could offer their evaluation. In practice, the following types of persons/groups should have priority:

- Those directly involved in the creation of the new artefact (creator / collaborators);
- Those who necessarily "experience" or "interact with" the creation in their daily life;
- Those who use the creation or for whom the creation is important in several ways;
- Those who are interested in the creation (from viewers to potential buyers);
- Those who have some form of power over the "distribution" of the creation;
- Those who are considered experts in the domain of the creation.

There is of course an argument to be made that some degree of *knowledge* is necessary in order to perform any evaluation. It would be hard to believe that persons who don't know much about a new artefact can express an opinion about it, especially if that artefact belongs to a highly specialised domain. However, it needs to be stressed that evaluations obtained though a multiple feedback methodology are not judged on the basis of their "correctness" or "completeness". Even the most technical creative products, once they reach lay audiences, start to constitute the object of representation, Moscovici's example of psychoanalysis being eloquent in this regard. These representations are important in their own right for how the creation is received, used and finally understood, independent of its technical details or the initial intention of the creator. Moreover, "lay knowledge" about the novel product is usually a *source of inspiration* for the creator him/herself and it oftentimes informs new developments and opens new perspectives for creative expression.

Once the groups are established, a second question concerns the exact ways in which data can be collected. There are no prescribed methods for data collection but typically this could include interviews and/or focus groups, complemented by observations and analysis of creative products, but also more quantitative methods such as surveys and even experimental designs in case some particular assumptions need to be tested. In essence though, the researcher should be as unobtrusive as possible in terms of imposing his/her own conceptions about the creative artefact or about the experience of the participants.

4.2.3. Strengths and limitations of multiple feedback

What do we gain from using multiple feedback? When should we use it? Answering these two questions outlines the method's strong points and limits of applicability.

First, as we could see from above, multiple feedback is capable of *contextualising creativity*. The direct consequence of this is a much more comprehensive picture of how creativity "happens" or is "discovered" in real-life contexts and, once this is achieved, a much more in-depth understanding of the situation and also the possibilities to intervene in it (should intervention, for creativity enhancement for example, be the final purpose). The results of a multiple feedback research are relevant for everyone involved in the generation and appreciation of the creative artefact. Furthermore, these results come out of a dialogical type of investigation (see Jovchelovitch, 2007) where the knowledge and experience of each participant and community are considered in their own right and recognised as valuable and motivated by particular socio-cultural positions.

However, this approach is not suitable for all investigations at all times. To begin with, it requires quite a laborious process of participant selection and a lengthy period for data collection and analysis. Second, this type of research is likely to be more appreciated by social psychologists (or social scientists) since it puts considerable emphasis on the social context of creativity. Researchers interested in the neurobiology of creativity or strictly the cognitive and/or personality dimensions of the phenomenon might be dissatisfied with this focus. Research purposes will dictate the choice of approach and experimentalists who use creativity scores as one of their study variables would probably rely on psychometric measurement rather than multiple, socially constructed evaluations.

4.3. The creativity of decorated eggs: Applying a multiple feedback approach

The first of the three studies conducted to explore creativity in Easter egg decoration was concerned with the evaluation of creativity and how these evaluations are embedded in larger systems of representation and practice specific for different professional groups in Romania. As argued above, an investigation focused on *heterogeneity* within and between social groups is best served by a multiple feedback type of methodology. For the purposes of our research, and taking into account the main actors of the craft, the participants were ethnographers, priests, art teachers, and folk artists. What is specific about these groups is the fact that their members engage with the craft of decoration as part of their *professional life* at the Romanian Peasant Museum, at the church, in schools or at home respectively. They are therefore involved in studying and evaluating Easter eggs as products of folk art (ethnographers), receiving them as religious objects (priests), decorating eggs and teaching others to decorate either before Easter (art teachers) or throughout the year (artisans).

More specifically, this research asks: a) how ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists evaluate the creativity of Easter eggs? b) how they evaluations are rooted in particular sets of norms and beliefs specific for each of the groups? and c) what kind of personal engagement and self-other relations does the craft entail? The *methodology* of the study (aims, participants, method, data collection) has been outlined in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.1.). Data analysis procedures and main findings are presented as follows.

4.3.1. Thematic analysis of interview material

The data in this study was represented by a total of 27 interviews. All interviews have been transcribed verbatim and coded using *thematic analysis*. This procedure, well-established in the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006), involves "meaning condensation" (Kvale, 1996) through revealing patterns in the information described as themes (Boyatzis, 1998). The analytic process, facilitated by the use of ATLAS.ti 5.0, followed the classic steps of coding: a) stating the research concerns and theoretical framework and selecting the relevant text; b) grouping together related passages and generating themes; c) grounding the themes into abstract concepts consistent with the framework and finally creating a theoretical narrative by retelling the data in terms of the theoretical constructs (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 43). In practice, the analysis followed closely the approach outlined by Attride-Stirling (2001) and *thematic networks* were created for each of the four groups, where codes generated in the first stage of the analysis formed basic themes, these in their turn helped to build organising themes and in the end all informed the global themes of the study.

The coding process was *both data and theory driven* since the four main elements of the tetradic framework (self, other, new artefact and existing artefacts) served as global themes and their exact constitution in terms of organising and basic themes came directly from the participants' answers. Considering the inter-relation of elements within the tetradic framework, the use of double coding was not uncommon. For the purpose of testing the reliability of coding, the whole data set was re-coded by the researcher a year after the initial analysis and very few changes made (under 5%).

A summary of the main codes and their subcategories is given below:

1. *Self*: Included all codes that made reference to personal experiences with decorated eggs and egg making in the context of Easter (or over the whole year for folk artists) both during childhood and at the adult age;

2. *Other*: Included all codes referring to people the self interacts with directly or indirectly in the process of decoration (from family to larger community) or in the use and/or distribution of Easter eggs (professional contacts);
3. *New artefact*: Included all codes that referred to particular Easter eggs made by self or family (types, number, etc.) as well as beliefs about decorated eggs (issues of classification, value) and Easter egg creativity;
4. *Existing artefacts*: Included all codes referring to the system of norms, beliefs and practices related to Easter eggs (from Easter as a religious celebration to resources involved in egg decoration) and also existing representations of creativity.

There are several *benefits* of employing a thematic network analysis at this stage. As argued by Boyatzis (1998, p. 5), thematic analysis enables scholars "to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner that increases their accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations, and organizations". Furthermore, the network presentation proposed by Attride-Stirling (2001) is extremely useful when operating with the tetradic framework since it allows for the construction of a very suggestive visual representation of all elements, it helps to identify emerging patterns and connections between elements, and makes comparing groups easier. Graphic depictions of the resulting networks outlining global, organising and (a summary of) basic themes for each of the four groups of respondents are offered as follows and the full list of themes included in Appendix VII for ethnographers and art teachers. In section 4.4. the presentation will be structured around the research questions of the study. In order to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, ethnographers received code names, from E1 to E7, priests from P1 to P6 and art teachers from A1 to A6. Folk artists agreed to be named in the report.

4.3.2. Building thematic networks: Overview of findings

Ethnographers: Easter eggs and the creativity of folklore. The seven interviews with ethnographers working at the Romanian Peasant Museum in Bucharest started with a *free associations* task. This opened the discussion and revealed the fact that, in most cases, Easter eggs were associated by respondents with religion (Christ, Resurrection, Easter celebration, etc.), followed by words reflecting the family universe (childhood, family, grandmother, etc.). The thematic network below (Figure 5, see Appendix VII for full coding frame) clarifies the importance of these associations.

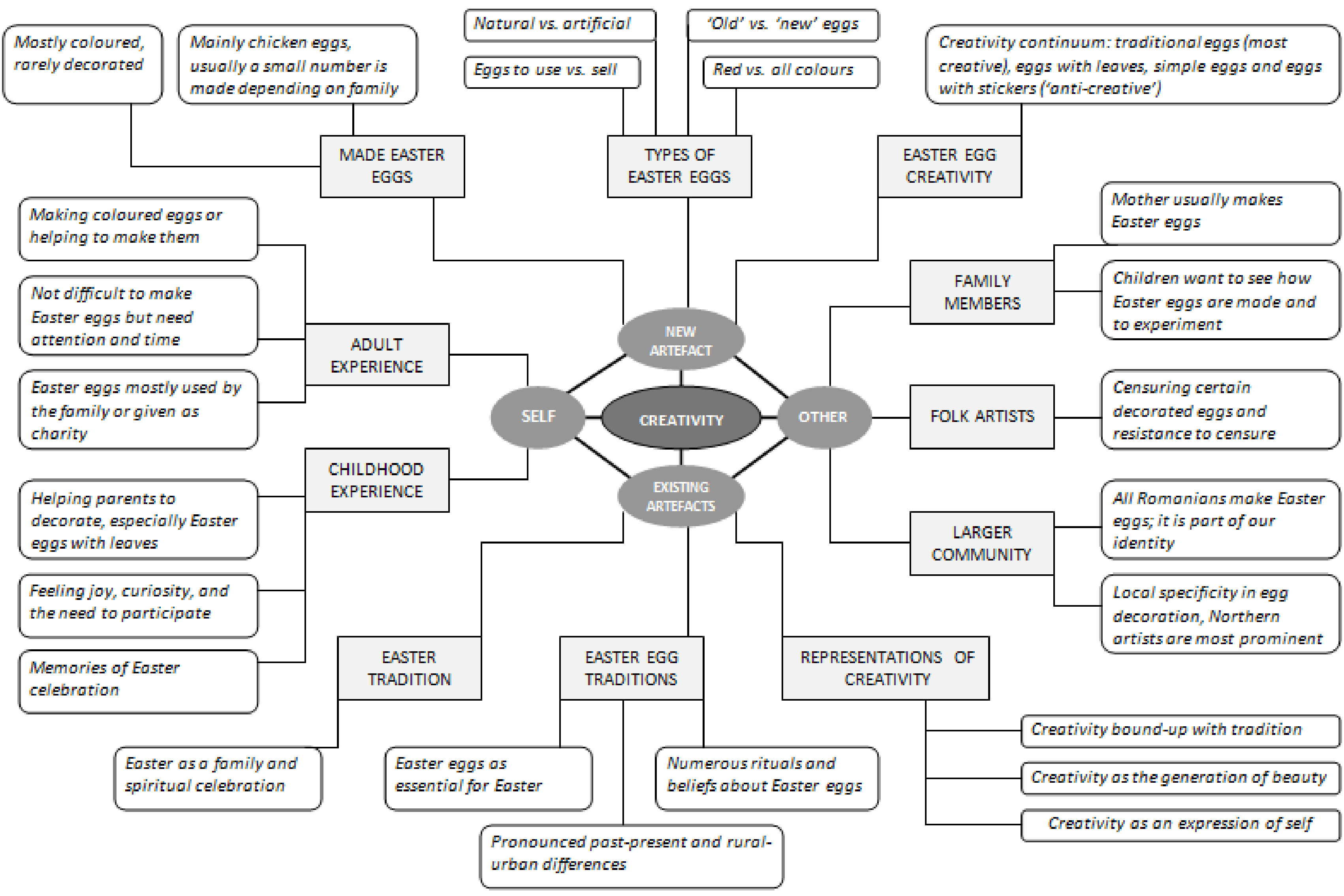


Figure 5. Thematic networks – Ethnographers

When it comes to Easter egg decoration, for most ethnographers in our group childhood memories are related to helping parents (especially mother) to decorate eggs, celebrating Easter and feeling joy, curiosity and a need to participate in this family ritual: "*it was almost like a small event, I couldn't wait for Easter to come because I knew red eggs were made*" (E5). As adults, ethnographers colour eggs for Easter or help others in the family to colour them and, although it is not considered a difficult task, time pressures make most of them less involved in this practice then they would like to be. In the family it is the mother/wife and children or grandchildren who are the main "actors" of Easter egg making. At times they have a motivating role: "*I can re-live this [the egg making] with my grandchildren, I get their joy and become more involved*" (E1). Moreover, living in Romania there is little chance of not participating in one way or another in egg making since at Easter "*everyone decorates. So you can't [not do it], it's something important, I haven't seen an Easter meal without red eggs. Everyone makes them*" (E5). Most Easter eggs are used in the family and charity is quite common (including among relatives, neighbours, etc.).

A special category of others in the case of ethnographers are the *folk artists* they interact with when organising museum fairs and exhibitions. In this regard there is some controversy about the criteria for choosing artists and judging their creations since most ethnographers tend to "resist" major changes in decoration that radically depart from traditional practices and are likely to be considered "kitsch". For this group of respondents Easter eggs exist in dichotomies: red eggs vs. eggs of other colours, old vs. new eggs, eggs to use vs. eggs to sell, and so on. Often associated with this categorisation are evaluations and preferences, mainly for "old" or traditional eggs. When it comes to creativity evaluations, traditional eggs are appreciated the most:

> "*Yes they are [creative], it's clear they are strongly creative (…) Plus there are so many models, it's clear someone thought about them, right? Someone created them. And there are probably women who create models even today*" (E5).

In addition, ethnographers' repertoires of Easter symbols and traditions is vast and for them creativity is often considered to be "bound-up" with tradition. Especially in the case of customs that have to do with decorating and using eggs, respondents commented on several practices, associated with life in the village and/or kept in their family (e.g. washing your face, on Easter morning, with water in which a red egg was placed). Knowing and appreciating these practices makes any changes in today's Romanian society even more

visible and experienced as such. Modernity is "*a space of speed, of rush*" (E2) where Easter egg practices transform, for better or for worse, in order to survive. Connected to this view, the representations of creativity ethnographers hold often link tradition and creativity since:

> "*Tradition [is] understood not as something that is stuck but as a re-living of accumulated things, accumulated in time, filtered, accumulated as viable, and carried on in a way similar to a snowball that adds more and more*" (E1).

Priests: Easter eggs as a religious symbol. The six interviews with priests from Bucharest also started with a *free associations* task and what came out as a clear tendency (in about half of the associations made) was the strong anchoring of Easter eggs in a universe of religious symbols: church, sacrifice, blood, faith, celebration, crucifixion, Resurrection, etc. This inclination is also very salient in the thematic network presented below (see Figure 6).

From childhood most of the respondents in this group, not unlike ethnographers, have memories of helping parents to colour or decorate eggs and feeling joyful both because of this practice and the coming of Easter. This celebration was commonly experienced as a sacred connection with God and the Church:

> "*I went to church since I was a child and Resurrection always gave me a special joy. After praying and fasting, after you see the church dressed in black, you see it in white for the night of the Resurrection and you see that contrast of red [from the coloured eggs] and white. White, hope and faith, and red, the blood of the Saviour spilled for us*" (P2).

At present priests admit not participating very much in egg decoration and leaving this task for the women of the family and for children. After they are made, eggs are used in the family and given for charity including to strangers or to the poor at the church. Participants in church rituals at Easter time also bring coloured eggs with them, eggs that although most priests agree should be red, are often made in different colours. In the end though, all community members celebrate Easter with eggs and these are "*very important; some know their significance, others don't, but absolutely everyone takes part in the practice*" (P4). This is, as repeatedly pointed out, part of "*our Romanian Orthodox Christians identity*" (P1), which is to be both cherished and preserved.

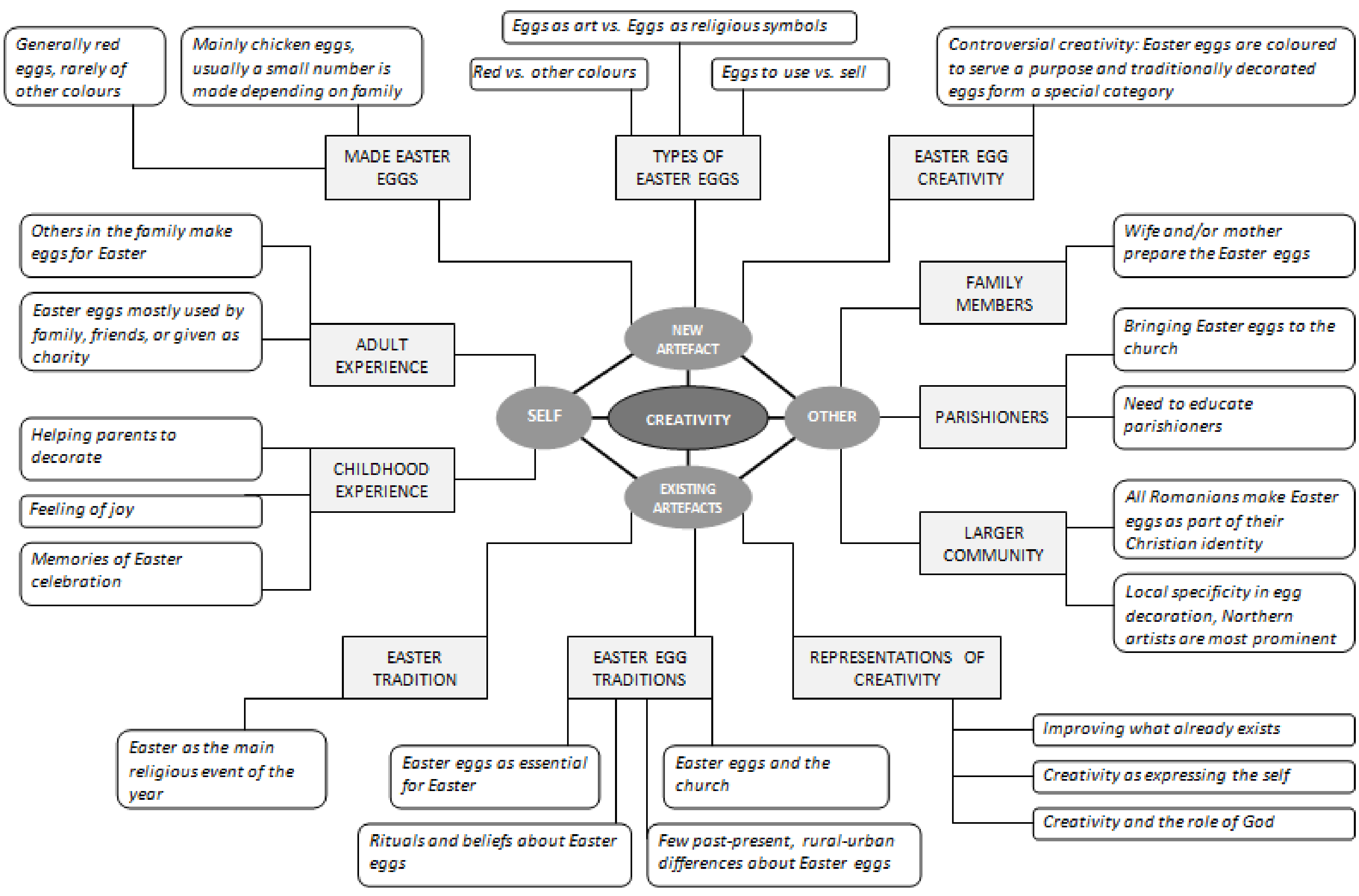


Figure 6. Thematic networks – Priests

Egg decoration is considered an integral part of Easter, catalogued as the most important religious event of the year. Easter eggs are essential for Easter because of their symbolism, all relevant for the Resurrection: the egg is like a tomb that contains life (P1); the eggs are the logos, the seed, the word of God embodied in human nature (P3); the use of eggs reminds of sacrifice (P4). Priests complain about globalisation and secularisation that seem to infiltrate even rural Romanian communities, but overall "*techniques [in egg decoration] are changing [but] the symbols are not, the ritual is not, tradition is not, it is kept*" (P6).

Very often eggs are coloured red and only red in the family, this being in conformity with "*their Christian signification*" (P4). Red eggs vs. eggs in other colours is a dichotomy often mentioned by priests, along with that between eggs to use and eggs to sell and eggs as artistic vs. eggs as religious objects. In all cases the underlying assumption is that Easter eggs should reflect religious meaning through their appearance since this constitutes their "real" value and gives them authenticity. This is why creativity in egg making is a rather *controversial* topic. While red eggs are accepted for being beautiful they are not considered particularly creative and eggs with more elaborate designs represent a break with what Easter eggs are supposed to mean. A "solution" is to incorporate decorated eggs in religious rituals as sophisticated forms of religious expression and recognise their qualities:

> *"[Traditional eggs are made by] those with material resources, with more religious education, that have both possibilities and a more elevated artistic taste. Not only taste but also more theological knowledge [reflected in] the symbolism they represent*" (P3).

Art teachers: Egg decoration as a form of art. The free associations task included in the six interviews with art teachers from Bucharest revealed mixed associations, most of them with artistic (creation, creativity, beauty, colour) and symbolic elements (life, genesis, universe, rebirth of nature), but also with joy and religion. The thematic network (Figure 7 and Appendix VII) resonates with this heterogeneity of meanings, a combination of artistic, religious and folkloric elements that mark both participants' experiences and judgements.

Helping parents with decoration as a child is accompanied for most art teachers by specific memories of Easter and the emotional aspect of this celebration: the joy of knocking eggs (A1), the smell of cleanness in the house (A5), etc. As adults, some of the art teachers are engaged only in colouring eggs, although a few go beyond this and try more or less elaborate

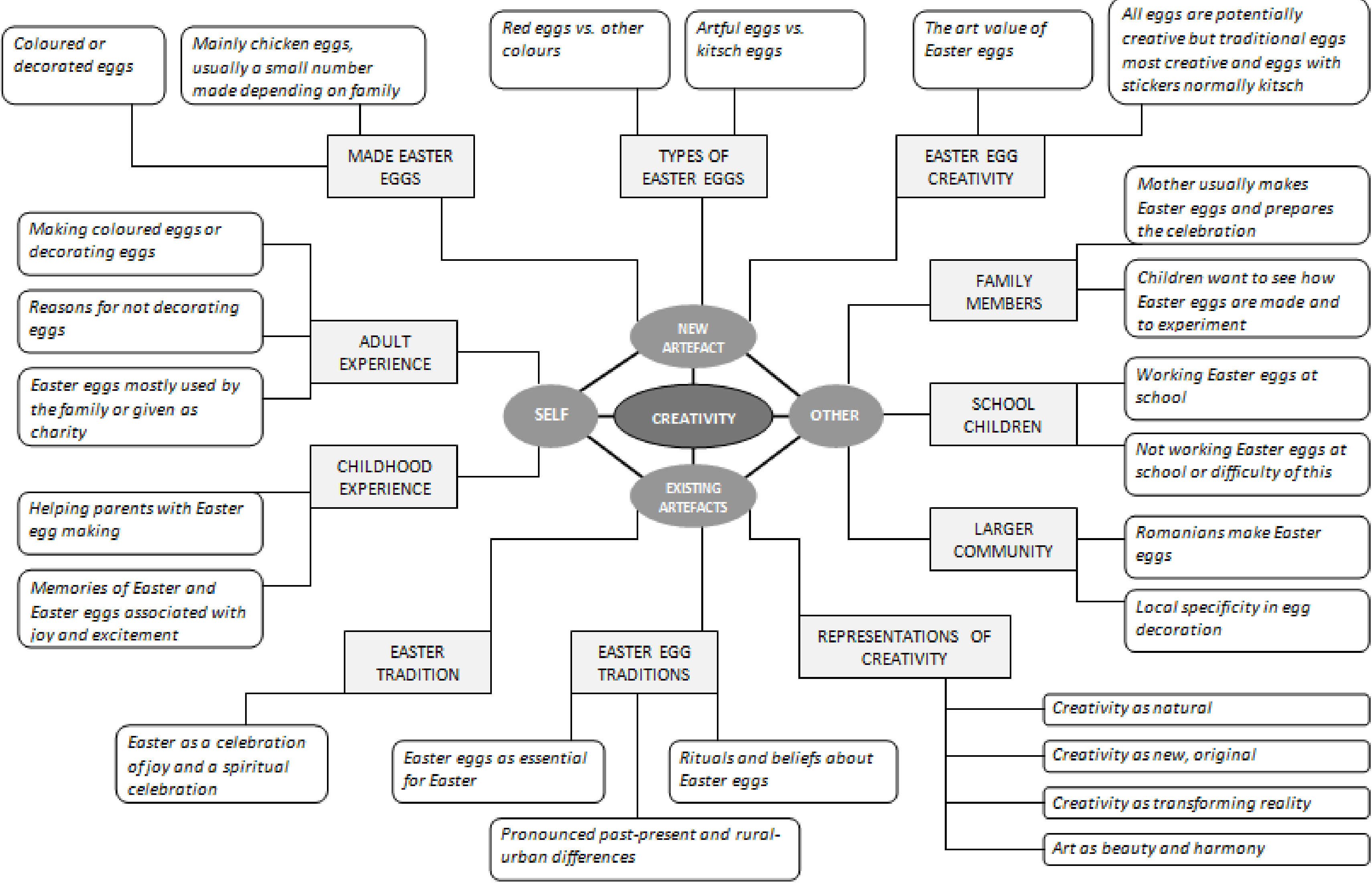


Figure 7. Thematic networks – Art teachers

forms of decoration (from combining colours to painting on the egg) and it is only rarely that they don't participate at all in this process. Usually when this happens justifications are given such as lack of proper training or a perfectionist nature. As in the case of ethnographers and priests, art teaches use the eggs within the family and often give some for charity, "*for everyone to rejoice, every Christian, every brother of ours*" (A1). When it comes to their activity at school, most teachers enjoy working (or drawing) eggs with students and students themselves ask for this activity (A5). There are cases though when teachers are overwhelmed by the difficulties of this task (improper conditions, restless pupils, etc.).

In terms of larger Romanian communities what is recognised is both a sense of unity of practice (all Romanians make Easter eggs) and of local specificity in decoration (the great significance egg decoration has for people from Bucovina for example, A1). For the majority of art teachers coloured eggs are a "*key element*" (A1) in the Easter festivities and an Easter meal without them would be "*unconceivable*" (A4). A series of rituals and beliefs that have to do with Easter eggs are mentioned by art teachers and there is also a sense of pronounced past-present and rural-urban differences in what eggs are concerned. However these appreciations are more general, unlike the representations of creativity (and art) that tend to be precisely formulated and include ideas about novelty, originality, and chromatic harmony. Distinctively, respondents in this group appreciate creativity as "*natural*", a resource we all have and which is stimulated by the beauty around us.

Finally, the Easter egg as a new artefact was considered by respondents in terms of the eggs they make at home, types of Easter eggs and their creativity. A very diverse picture came out of the interviews since many art teachers tend to colour eggs or use simple decoration while others, for example A6, try various forms of decoration (including with wax, but not using the traditional technique). Easter eggs are not divided by this group into a multitude of classes but there is a clear notion of artful eggs as compared to kitsch eggs (related also to the definitions of art respondents use). There was a general consensus that Easter eggs have an obvious artistic value (as a form of "*decorative*" and "*folk art*") and some suggested there is always room for expressing creativity in egg decoration.

> *"[The egg] is a quintessence. Indeed the egg is also a symbol, it is from all points of view a form of art, and an art that is very, very complicated because you work on a surface that is not easy to decorate, you can see three-dimensionally the whole universe in this small piece of matter*" (A5).

Folk artists: Re-creating a traditional practice. The eight interviews with folk artists didn't include a free associations task or direct questions about personal definitions of creativity but focused more on the practicalities of decorating eggs and the experience of the decorators (synthesised by the thematic network depicted in Figure 8). The majority of folk artists in the group came from families that had several generations of decorators and, again in most cases, they themselves had trained or were training future generations (children and/or grandchildren). Their adult experience with egg decoration was extensive and most of them used different techniques to make Easter eggs: traditional wax decoration, wax in relief, eggs with beads, etc. At home they made simpler Easter eggs for the family and also gave them for charity, at the church, etc. On the whole, many had built an *identity* as innovators since their work was spanning several years, even decades:

> "*We seem to renew tradition, how it goes, we think of some new things, not to be only what our parents worked. To also put from ourselves. To show how inventive we are [and] that we work*" (Veronica Iamnițchi).

Egg decoration is a craft that is learned in the family and involves multiple types of collaboration between family members. Children are gradually taught how to decorate eggs, they start with the easiest parts ("filling" certain segments with wax for example; see also Chapter 6) and always work under the supervision of adults. There are also relations established with other egg decorators from the community and a strong sense of both national and local specificity in Easter egg making. In the words of Maria Zinici, what is put on the egg "*symbolises our life, with what we live, what we wear, what we do*". Similarly, complex relations are formed with buyers from the village, from the entire country and from abroad. Some of the folk artists participate at several international events and frequently travel abroad to exhibit their work. The most direct influence buyers have is expressed in the oft-stated justification: "*we make what the people want*".

In the case of folk artists there is a solid base of existing artefacts, cultural means (norms, tools, knowledge) that inform and facilitate egg decoration. Under this global theme three categories can be found: general Easter egg traditions, specific resources for Easter egg decoration as well as comments about the source of ideas and relation with tradition. Folk artists have a clear perception of the changes that took place in Easter egg decoration in the last decades, the novelties that emerged and even who proposed them. Perhaps the most important moment was the change from "full" to eggs emptied of content:

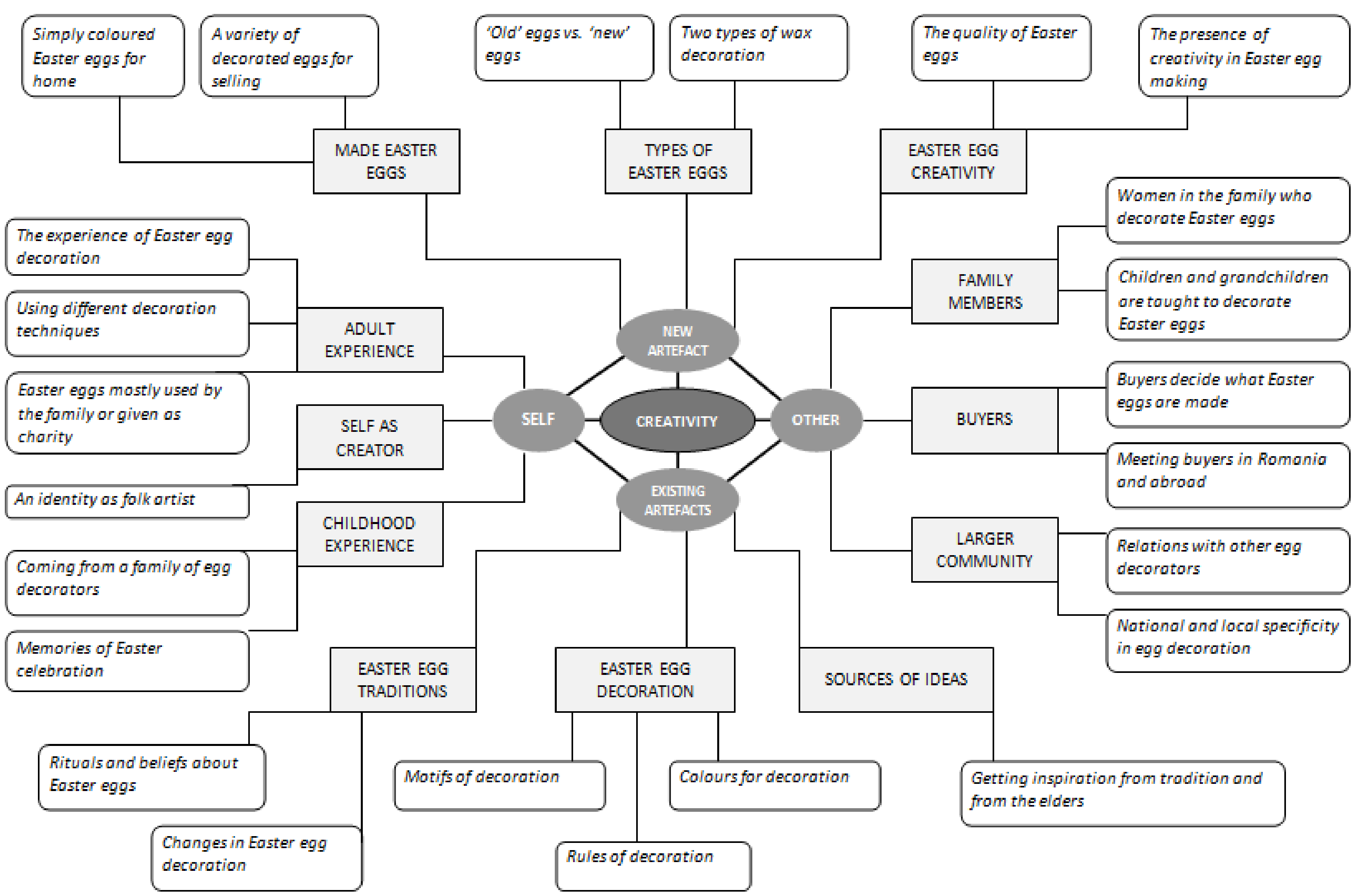


Figure 8. Thematic networks – Folk artists

"*More than 30 years since we do this. Because we started to work all year long and for them [for the eggs] to be kept longer, because if they are 'full' they rot, as any other aliment. (…) Because a lot of work is put for it to be an ornament, not to be eaten*" (Maria Zinici)

This innovation allowed Easter egg practices to develop on a large scale. Today folk artists are able to name a great number of motifs and colours used in decoration and their rich experience makes them aware of the rules one must follow to be effective in this work. The learning process is based on practice and ideas given by elders, taken from books, models on traditional costumes, etc. Being an Easter egg decorator means paying constant attention to the elements of your *environment*, to the patterned world one lives in especially in the rural setting (a theme that is well represented also in the next chapter on creativity as action).

In the end there are several types of eggs folk artists produce, several classifications of eggs they use and quite a coherent view of creativity in Easter egg making. In all cases eggs made at home for Easter are much simpler than those made throughout the year to be sold. Despite the great variety (see Appendix III) of particular motifs, types of eggs used (from chicken to ostrich) and diversity of colours, there is a simple way of distinguishing between some large categories like eggs with "old" motifs as opposed to "new" eggs (old eggs usually have motifs learned directly from the elders of the village), or eggs decorated with different techniques (most using wax, including fixing beads on the egg or, commonly, on a wooden egg). All these are an expression of both well-established modes of decoration and the constant changes folk artists adopt in their work. This is why there is an almost unanimous opinion that Easter egg making involves creativity. In the words of Rodica Berechea: "*We keep the tradition. But in every egg, in the colours, there is a little piece of us*".

4.4. Results from multiple feedback: Creativity evaluations in context

Following the above description of thematic networks in the case of the four groups, the present section will consider the findings, in turn, in relation to the *three main research questions* of the present study exploring: a) how ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists evaluate the creativity of Easter eggs (section 4.4.1.); b) how evaluations are rooted in sets of norms and beliefs specific for each of the groups (section 4.4.2.), and c) the personal engagement and self-other relations entailed by the craft (section 4.4.3.).

4.4.1. The heterogeneous meaning of creativity in craft

Easter egg creativity: consensual views. A main result of this application of multiple feedback for the assessment of Easter egg creativity is that, across the four groups of evaluators, *a high consensus can be found in appreciating that there is creativity in Easter egg making*. When asked if they could think of Easter eggs as creative products, the vast majority of respondents agreed this is the case. Just rarely were decorated eggs considered to be outside notions of creativity (P2) or "only" a minor form of creative expression (A3). Another observation is that, when explaining why Easter eggs are creative, it became obvious that most participants took into account "traditional" Easter eggs, decorated with wax and specific nowadays for rural Northern Romania. These eggs, and not those coloured or decorated with leaves, come to embody creativity in the practice of Easter egg making:

> *"[Easter eggs are creative] only if they are decorated [încondeiate; traditional decoration], are made. When it's just the red egg it is not necessarily something creative because it's too banal, if I could say so, anyone can do it. When [eggs] are decorated and made with soul and beautiful yes [they are creative]*" (P4)

High appreciation for traditional egg decoration was often articulated with enthusiasm and some of the respondents expressed astonishment at how peasant women are capable of making such beautiful artefacts and how they have time for this craft: "*because these women that made eggs and worked enormously for them, had children, had a husband, had work to do outside, work in the house*" (E6). What was repeatedly stressed was the meticulousness involved in this kind of decoration, a complexity that determined even art teachers to recognise they would not be able to reach "*such rigour and such beauty*" (A5). All these points above are mirrored by the literature on Easter eggs where authors like Zahacincshi and Zahacinschi (1992, p. 32) consider egg decoration to be represented by its "preciseness, wealth and nobility of the motifs, harmonic conjugation of colours, explosive imagination, spontaneity with which the craftswoman solves, 'as they happen', some of the most difficult artistic and technical problems".

Another common point in discussions about Easter egg creativity was the frequency with which the *idea of art* came up, again across the four groups of participants. Decorated eggs are artistic creations that "*lead you to the church*" (P3) and entail "*thoughtfulness, composition, line, colour, everything involved by the domain of visual arts*" (E1). Art teachers

themselves were quick to catalogue Easter eggs as "*very creative, very; surprisingly creative*", a form of "*pure art*" (A6) and to locate them in the domain of folk or decorative arts (A2). At the same time, even within traditional decoration and between folk artists, there are certain differences that need to be acknowledged. As one of the ethnographers noted, "*indeed, there are some artists, but we can't include everyone in this category*" (E7). Similar delineations were expressed by folk artists themselves who were ready to appreciate the creativity of colleagues whose work they knew and, with just one exception in the group of eight decorators, their own creative expression. Notably, that exception was also the only person to say she took egg decoration out of necessity after losing a previous job.

What folk artists answered when asked about their work was that, while following some basic decoration rules, they "*always invent something new*" (Maria Zinici). If there is no specific client order requiring the multiplication of a certain model, there "*must*" be something differently done for each egg (Ileana Hotopilă), sometimes a completely new model. In the end there can be no perfect copy of an egg since "*eggs don't have the same size, they couldn't, and colours are changed, it depends on the state of mind you are in at that moment*" (Rodica Berechea). As Livia Balacian said laughing, "*and even if I want to make a certain model, I still have to change something, it's like it is easier to change then to let everything be the same every time*". This is the reason why most folk artists asserted they rarely know beforehand how the egg will turn out in the end, it all becomes clear in the process, and sometimes changes are "imposed" by the necessity of not juxtaposing colours (Veronica Iamnițchi) or other stylistic requirements. Even artists like Dionis Spătaru, who respect in detail specific models (in this case from Cucuteni ceramics) and are keen not to change anything in terms of design and colours, appreciated that there is great creativity in "*translating*" an image from pot to egg and in all the adjustments this work involves. This led for some folk artists to the idea that Easter egg making entails *talent* (since some can do it, some don't, even in the case of their own children). It also meant artists develop a certain style that, as all agreed, can be recognised "*out of thousands of eggs*" (Maria Zinici).

Forms of decoration and creativity: divergent views. In the interviews with ethnographers, priests and art teachers, following the general question about creativity and Easter eggs presented above and revealing a remarkable consensus, four images with different forms of decoration were shown (see Appendix V). Respondents commented on the creativity of traditionally decorated eggs, eggs decorated with leaves (applying leaves on the shell before colouring), simply coloured eggs and eggs with stickers. Folk artists made reference to some

of these types spontaneously during the interviews. What emerged is a complex picture of divergent views, some within groups but mostly *across groups*, and four types of approaches to creativity in egg decoration became salient.

Ethnographers often described creativity in Easter egg making as a *continuum*, where traditional forms of decoration show the highest creativity, followed by eggs with leaves, then simply coloured eggs and finally, at the other end, eggs with stickers. If in traditional egg decoration combining motifs and choosing colours entails "*maximal creativity*" and "*a lot of imagination*" (E6), eggs with leaves are more "*repetitive*", a form of "*small creativity*" (E1) born out of the need to make something more beautiful (E3). What seems to be underlying this distinction is the amount of *effort and skill* people invest in making such eggs. While traditional eggs are carefully "*thought through*" (E5), eggs with leaves come second because they require "*some cognitive effort*" (E2), at least compared to simple colouring. But the category that was almost unanimously disliked by ethnographers was that of eggs with stickers. Often catalogued as "*kitsch*", eggs with stickers make no sense, "*a synthesis made by people with no roots*" (E6), and only respondents who have small children admitted using them at times but without necessarily liking this practice. In the kitsch category many ethnographers also included eggs decorated with Christmas motifs (E5).

Priests referred to creativity and Easter eggs as somewhat *controversial*. Although they, on the whole, appreciated traditional decoration as "*art, culture*" (P5), working on emptied eggs departs from the original purpose of these artefacts (P2) and an Easter egg is creative:

> "*for as long as the meaning of being an Easter egg is not lost. For as long as they are not dissociated from symbolism, for as long as the ones seeing the Easter egg don't forget the tight connection it has with the sacrifice of our Saviour*" (P6).

This is why, the same priest argued, we don't consider icons for example to be works of art. In this context, simple red eggs were most appropriate for Easter followed by traditional decoration, drawing from "*the tradition of the church, then cultural traditions; from the artistic tradition of the church*" (P4). The effort of making eggs with leaves was often appreciated as well; if traditional decoration is a form of "*art looking at eternity*", eggs with leaves illustrate "*art looking at the present*" (P3). Similar to ethnographers, eggs with stickers were associated with "*no religious significance*" (P3), being "*a form of religious marketing*" (P1) and not representing Romanian traditions (P4) and spirituality (P6).

For the group of six art teachers the general admiration for traditional Easter eggs and tendency to oppose them to eggs with stickers was again present, but also left room for an image where "*all eggs are potentially creative*". First, the egg itself, as a shape, allows for multiple ways of decoration (A1). Traditional Easter eggs are creative for several reasons: they communicate deep meaning, they allow innovation, they stylise reality and are the product of hard work. Eggs with leaves were considered more "*modest attempts*" (A5), but they could increase their expressivity if different leaves are chosen and positioned on the egg in unique ways (A4); the leaf models can also be painted further with watercolours (A6). Even simply coloured eggs could become more creative by diversifying their range of colours (A5) and, as reported, art teachers often combine the colours they use when dyeing eggs. Finally, eggs with stickers were again seen on the whole as *kitsch*, "*distortions of meaning*", "*surrogates*" (A3). Still, even in this case, there was an opinion that only putting a lot of stickers on the same egg is kitsch, but sometimes a single sticker with the right kind of symbol could look "*beautiful in some ways*" (A6).

Folk artists mostly referred in their interviews to their own work and the work of other artists using traditional decoration. There was respect and recognition for the work of others ("*This is my style, how I work. The woman across has another style, not like mine, her own*"). In this sense, a general view that Easter egg making requires creativity working from within tradition was paramount. Furthermore, folk artists were less evaluative when it came to the creativity of particular forms of decoration. There was only one criterion that stood out as essential: *the quality of the work*. This relates to the dedication and skill each artist possesses and also to his or her motivation for Easter egg making. Some make eggs only for the money, putting no "*soul*" in their work (Maria Zinici). This is often the case of those who commercialise eggs with stickers and are very much disliked by folk artists because they "*trick*" buyers and destroy the value of real Easter egg making. In the end, what matters most is for the egg to be "*made by their own hands"*.

4.4.2. The dynamic nature of cultural resources for creativity

Easter eggs and the continuity of tradition*.* It has been said about art objects that they "demand interpretation" (Zittoun et al., 2003, p. 429). This is certainly valid for every decorated egg, artefacts whose creativity and meaning are appreciated only *with reference* to a larger cultural background of existing artefacts, of norms and beliefs, in this particular case, the world of traditions concerning Easter and Easter egg decoration in Romania.

Respondents from all four groups commented on this topic, acknowledging the fact that the value of Easter eggs resides in the *synthesis* they offer between constant innovation and a deep and meaningful Romanian tradition where both terms define and require each other.

Ethnographers were probably in the best position to appreciate the richness and diversity of Easter egg decoration practices. This is how one finds in their set of interviews numerous remarks about the *traditional making and use* of decorated eggs. They referred to legends about Easter eggs, to the controversy around the proper day for colouring eggs, the customs of washing your face with water in which a red egg was placed, of keeping eggs or egg shells for protection, of giving Easter eggs for charity or sending the shells on flowing water to a legendary people called *Blajini* (see Appendix II for more legends regarding Easter eggs). Local differences in decoration were put in perspective as being reflective of the different conditions of living in the north and south of Romania, in villages from the plains as compared to the mountains (E7). In the end though, all customs and variations constitute a unitary picture of Romanian folklore and confirm the fact that "*Romanian folk culture is a culture of Resurrection*" (E1). This is something priests were also in agreement with. "*The Easter egg encompasses the entire sequence of events from the crucifixion of Christ to His Resurrection and elevation to the sky*" (P6).

From the more practical perspective of art teachers and especially folk artists, participants normally involved in the actual decoration of eggs to different degrees, the practice of Easter egg making also includes a set of *conventions*, of basic rules that facilitate the decoration process and allow some forms of innovation over others. For art teachers these were primarily *artistic conventions* guiding the application of traditional elements of "*an artistic language*" (point, line, colour patches) in ways that generate chromatic harmony and structural equilibrium. Many teachers prioritised specific shapes over others, for example rhombus and curve lines (A6), and promoted the use of complementary colours to generate aesthetic contrasts (A5). Folk artists, on the other hand, have much more experience in working directly on the egg and using wax decoration. What they emphasised were *basic rules of decoration* such as: not making mistakes when working with wax, going from light to dark colours in decoration, starting with the segmentation of work fields on the egg, respecting distances in decoration and not juxtaposing similar colours, using clean wax and, for eggs made with wax in relief, applying wax in the same quantity, etc (see also Chapter 5). In the end, all creation must respect the "nature" of the craft since:

> "*You can't, no matter what you do, abandon tradition, because you would be making something else [not Easter eggs] and it would be worthless. Even if some things are added, a little flower, a square, anything, it is normal to create but you must always consider tradition*" (Rodica Berechea).

The multiple faces of change. In agreement with a cultural psychology perspective on creativity, findings about the creative value of Easter egg revealed how important "existing artefacts" are for the generation of a "new artefact". In the words of Feldman (1988, p. 288), all "previous efforts, as represented in a culture's products, models, technologies, and so forth, are of enormous value to the creator". These assertions need further qualification in terms of a *temporal dimension*. Artefacts, norms, beliefs and material objects don't just exist as a static reality. They constantly transform, grow, adapt. "Conventions represent the continuing adjustment of the cooperating parties to the changing conditions in which they practice; as conditions change, they change" (Becker, 2008, p. 59). This dynamism is clearly illustrated by the practice of Easter egg making in Romania.

Generally in all interviews, across the four groups, changes in Easter practices and egg decoration were noticed and commented on, changes that have to do with both past-present and rural-urban differences. Common observations referred to Easter eggs being made now all year long, to the use of emptied eggs and artificial colours, and the expansion of commerce often associated with a diversification of types of decorated eggs (also in Zahacincshi & Zahacinschi, 1992). This is what made some ethnographers notice that today what we call "traditional eggs" are no longer traditional in the "*pure*" sense of the word, they are the "*neo-tradition*" (E3), "*a traditional model that adapts to a very modern market*" (E5). In the end, there seems to be one constant in the process of change: eggs are and always have been central for Easter, "*there is no Easter without the eggs*" (A5).

Interviews also revealed important information about reactions to change and a rather common tendency of seeing this process as "*bad*" for several reasons. Across the four groups, participants complained that things tend to be *lost*, especially in the city (A1) and even villages are nowadays turning into "*small towns*" threatened by globalisation and uniformity (P1). Priests were especially sensitive to changes that "affect" not only Easter egg decoration but Easter celebration more generally, pointing to the "secularization of Easter" and "commercialization of the festival" authors like Barnett (1949, p. 70) also referred to. Ethnographers noticed about Easter eggs that we (including folk artists) can no longer "*read*"

traditional motifs, “*we don’t understand anymore what the women who drew the lost way, the plough, or the ram’s horns, wanted to tell us*” (E7). Losing meaning directly affects the value and importance of Easter eggs.

However, change was not perceived as bad in all cases. There were even ethnographers willing to accept the fact that innovations or novelties contribute to keeping the craft alive and even expanding (E2). Folk artists were the first to testify for the benefits of adopting many of the novelties that transformed this craft-world in the past decades. As interviews have shown, there are distinguishable “*narratives of change*” folk artists tend to share, and some include a distinctive appreciation of self as a *pioneer of change*. This is the case of Ileana Hotopilă who, along with her sister, Maria Zinici, was proud to have introduced many innovations in egg decoration. Collaborating with persons from the United States after the Revolution, both Maria and Ileana started to decorate eggs for different moments of the year, including Christmas. The range of colours and motifs expanded and very soon other decorators adopted the “*new trends*” in ways that reflected their particular style.

In conclusion, there is always both stability and change in the practice of Easter egg making and this qualifies it as a form of *Great Tradition*, or a tradition that incorporates activity and creativity (Eisenstadt, 1973, p. 120). It is a *vital tradition* in the sense that it is constantly re-created, never finished or complete (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 104), always in a movement towards the future, always “carrying on” (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 6). All these aspects were perfectly captured by an ethnographer’s comment about creativity and tradition saying that “*the world is made up of some customs that give you freedom, but this freedom is a freedom that keeps*” and does not create a “*rupture*” or “*annihilation of old creation*” (E1). This is why the multiple faces of change described in this section are all symbolically growing out of and continuing a body of tradition, the only one that can make their existence meaningful.

4.4.3. Self – Other relations and the life of the craft

> “*Culture, as well, provides us with guides and stratagems for finding a niche between stability and change: it exhorts, forbids, lures, denies, rewards the commitments that the Self undertakes. And the Self, using its capacity for reflection and for envisaging alternatives, escapes or embraces or reevaluates or reformulates what the culture has on offer*” (Bruner, 1990, p. 110).

A polyphony of practices. When turning to the *personal engagement* participants from all four groups have with the practice of Easter egg making, the resulting image is one of diversity. Some respondents (mainly priests and several of the ethnographers) don't normally colour eggs themselves but "*indirectly*" participate by helping family members with Easter preparations. When eggs are only dyed, it is usually in red or, if more colours are used, red is sure to be one of them. Art teachers and some of the ethnographers, especially those with small children, often make efforts to go *beyond* simple colouring and try to combine primary colours (obtaining different tones of green, orange and purple), to decorate eggs with leaves and even to ornate them with stickers for the enjoyment of their children. At the other extreme, folk artists decorate a large number of eggs and use different techniques (most of the times both traditional decoration with wax and wax in relief). Notably though, the Easter eggs they make for home use are simple, generally coloured in red and sometimes displaying the symbol of the cross and written Easter messages.

This state of affairs is, to a great extent, *expressive of the type of creativity evaluations* made by members from each of the four groups. As many of the priests identified Easter eggs with red eggs and valued their deep significance, they often encouraged at home the practice of colouring eggs red. Ethnographers and priests alike appreciated traditional egg decoration but the lack of skill and time made it an ideal they felt they couldn't put into practice so most tended to use at home the simplest colouring methods. This was the case for some art teachers as well, but, because many of them saw potential for creativity and the generation of beauty as associated with Easter egg making, in several cases they experimented feely and came up with surprising and innovative results. For example A6 has a collection of the eggs she decorated in the past years using a multitude of techniques from painting with watercolours to wax dripping, from decorating pigeon eggs to painting a coconut shell (the size of an ostrich egg). In the end it is of course the folk artists included in this study who, as part of their "professional" activity, constantly develop and practice a vast range of decoration styles and techniques, and use a large number of colours, motifs and designs.

Regulation and resistance*.* Easter egg making is certainly a collective type of activity. It regularly depends on the help of others and it is always directed towards others, people to share the eggs with, to show them to, to knock coloured eggs with during meals, to sell decorated eggs to before the festivity, etc. Family members, neighbours, clients, members of the larger community, all participate in the life of this craft-world. The explicit and implicit presence of "others" is something all respondents commented on in the interviews. There

were stories of *collaboration and mutual agreement*, often described in this chapter, complemented by stories about the *imposition of certain rules and the reaction* to this imposition, illustrated more in the present section.

Some participants from the group of ethnographers took part, at times, in organising Easter fairs and inviting folk artists to display and commercialise their creations. Efforts were made in these cases to discourage those who bring eggs with colours and motifs outside of "normal" conventions (i.e. usually old traditional decoration). Still, as noted by one ethnographer (E1), a number of folk artists repeatedly found ways to surpass the "censure" by bringing different types of eggs in different bags and showing or selling them only when no museum personnel was around. When discovered they would argue that "*it is what the buyers want*" but this was not a valid argument for many ethnographers who believed artisans should take responsibility for their actions (in the words of E1, "*now they like it because you [as producer] drug them with images and stories and then everyone becomes addicted but you drugged them, you made them addicted*"). Animated by such views, some museum workers claimed it is their *professional duty* to stop the proliferation of kitsch in Easter egg making (E7) and, in an even more radical formulation, authors like Arthur Gorovei (2001, p. 110) came to assert that "the primitive art of peasant women from the depth of the mountains or the fields of the country is the only tradition that deserves to be researched". Contrary to this, other respondents disliked the idea of a selection processes for fairs and exhibitions and argued it is not aesthetics but "*truth*" and the objective analysis of current realities that need to prevail in an ethnographer's work (E5).

A similar situation was found in the case of priests, who overall considered that Easter eggs brought to the church (principally during religious service on Easter eve) should be red but regularly found parishioners coming with eggs of all colours. This is where, for many, "*the church has the role of educating people*" (P4) and so parishioners are more or less explicitly told to bring only red eggs. Nevertheless, there was also resistance to these ideas, and one of the priests mentioned that it is nowhere written in the Bible that eggs should only be red (P5). Besides, if the wife at home makes eggs of other colours or they are received as gifts, "*you can't say 'put these aside'*" (P2).

Even more flexibility in terms of decoration was promoted by art teachers. Most of those who work Easter eggs at school claimed they allow children to make "*a spontaneous, free creation, with no rules*" (A2) and encourage all students, independent of their result (A4).

But, as in any form of teaching, there are some basic notions regarding chromatic harmony, use of shapes, colours and patterns in decorative art, which teachers need to convey. In the end though, there was greater appreciation for self-expression and sometimes larger projects made with students from several classes when, for example, different materials were recycled and used as resources in egg decoration activities.

4.5. Integrating findings: Patterns of practice and evaluation

What the above exploration of thematic networks in terms of the three research questions revealed is the fact that ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists generally *agree* that traditional Easter eggs are highly creative but their opinions tend to *diverge* when it comes to explaining this creativity or the creativity of other types of decorated eggs (with leaves, with stickers, etc.). These differences can be understood only when evaluations are *contextualised* in terms of the beliefs, norms and practices related to decoration in the case of each of the four professional communities. This exploration makes clear the fact that Easter egg making, despite its relatively unitary character in Romania, shows several specificities and a range of possible interpretations: as a rural tradition, a religious practice, a form of art, a way of expressing oneself and gaining a livelihood and so on. In all these instances the engagement of the self with the craft differs as well as the relations established between self and others in a variety of contexts such as the home, the classroom, the church, the fairs and exhibitions dedicated to decorated eggs, etc.

In the end we need to ask the central question of *what is the representation of creativity in craft and how evaluations are rooted in the multitude of meanings associated with this particular folk art*. The present research has shown that creativity is anchored differently depending on what type of Easter egg is being evaluated and who is doing the evaluation. There is no single standard or criterion for creativity judgements and the classic conditions of novelty and significance or value of the new artefact are not always reflected by justifications offered in the interviews conducted for this study. Overall there seems to be a *continuum of creativity* appreciation ranging from Easter eggs with stickers (the least valued) to traditionally decorated eggs (the most appreciated). Reasons for these evaluations varied however and members of different groups found their own rationale for calling an Easter egg “creative” or “less creative”. A summary of creativity criteria used by different groups is found in Table 6 below.

	Eggs with stickers	Coloured eggs	Eggs with leaves	Traditional eggs
	LEAST CREATIVE →			**MOST CREATIVE**
Ethnographers	Kitsch, the degradation of traditional forms	A common expression of tradition	More repetitive, 'creativity in the small'	The result of imagination, effort and skill
Priests	A form of marketing, no religious meaning	The tradition of the church, especially red eggs	A creative expression looking 'at the present'	A form of culture, of art, looking towards 'eternity'
Art teachers	Surrogate, forms that lose their aesthetic effect	Could be more creative if colours are diversified	More modest attempts, could be decorated further	An art, meaningful, and the product of hard work
Folk artists	Lacking work and dedication, an unfair competitor	Decorated for home, for the Easter celebration	A less common form of decoration	A combination of creativity and tradition

Table 6. Creativity evaluations in the case of decorated eggs

What transpires from the Table above is the fact that creativity evaluations display both *commonalities* and *differences* across members of the four groups. Traditional eggs tend to be appreciated almost unanimously while other forms of decoration are considered more or less creative depending on the importance attributed to traditional forms of decoration and, most importantly, depending on the *engagement of the self* with the practice of Easter egg making. Considering the data through the lenses of personal engagement (decorating or not decorating eggs) we are able to abstract further two distinct views regarding Easter eggs, one that can be called "the view from outside" and the other, "the view from inside". What distinguishes the two is summarised in Figure 10 and a short presentation of both these patterns of practice and evaluation is included in the following sub-sections.

Before proceeding three observations are needed. First, the notion of "inside" in this context refers to direct participation in forms of egg decoration and is not meant to imply any kind of deeper or more valuable insight "insiders" have over "outsiders". Second, generating patterns may have the benefit of bringing previously disparate pieces together but this is done at the cost of losing much individual detail. Therefore, the patterns discussed next are reflective of the overall findings but may well be imperfect to describe individual cases.

Third, patterns are based on the principle of correlation, not causality. They show how practices of the self, relations with others, use of cultural resources or beliefs about new artefacts *go together* and not how one aspect determines others. These are all issues to be unpacked by further research using a different methodology.

VIEW FROM OUTSIDE	**VIEW FROM INSIDE**
Ethnographers, Priests	*Art teachers, Folk artists*
Less direct involvement in decoration	More involvement in decoration
Regulating/teaching others	Collaborating with others
Strong attachment to tradition	Tradition seen as a resource to be used and enriched
Evaluative about Easter eggs, appreciating some more than others	***Less evaluative, appreciating most types of Easter eggs***

Figure 9. Overall patterns: The view from outside and the view from inside

4.5.1. The view from outside

The starting point for generating overall patterns that would characterise the data from this multiple feedback exercise is the *actual involvement of the self in elaborate egg decoration*. Using this perspective, the view from "outside" is constructed from responses of participants who, although closely connected to the practice of Easter egg making and its products, don't generally try egg decoration outside of colouring or other simple procedures (such as making eggs with leaves). From the presentation of findings it became clear that the above refers mainly to *ethnographers, priests, and some of the art teachers*.

The focus of this creativity assessment research is on the conclusion that, for this broad category of evaluators, creativity *exists in some Easter eggs more than others* and there tends to be a clear separation between types of eggs (e.g. "old" versus "new" models). Overall, traditional decoration is appreciated as highly creative but, even here, a slight controversy over the value of certain innovative forms of decoration that radically depart from conventional ways seems to emerge. Respondents holding the "view from outside" are by and large strongly attached to the tradition of Easter egg making, folkloric and/or

religious. Basing their judgements on this consistent background of beliefs and customs, they *find it easy to appreciate certain Easter eggs more than others* (e.g. to value red eggs for their simplicity and deep significance). This is mostly why, being unable to decorate eggs traditionally due to lack of time and skill, many of these respondents are inclined not to decorate altogether and keep eggs plain but "*authentic*". Such appreciations also guide them in their contact with others where they tend to regulate in some sense the production of Easter eggs to conform to an ideal set by tradition, and therefore to teach others (folk artists, parishioners, school children, etc.) the value of working towards this ideal.

These conclusions are of great importance for understanding how creativity evaluations are made by members of groups who are in contact with and even have some kind of power over the production, selection and distribution of Easter eggs in different milieus. As Dewey (1934, p. 49) stated, "perfection in execution cannot be measured or defined in terms of execution; it implies those who perceive and enjoy the product that is executed". Ethnographers, priests and school teachers may seem on the "outside" of egg decoration as people who don't generally practice it in its most elaborate forms, but they are certainly very active "inside" the *validation* of creativity and significance in the case of Easter eggs.

4.5.2. The view from inside

It is *folk artists and the majority of art teachers* who engage in elaborate forms of egg decoration, the first involved in selling Easter eggs, the second in making them at home or during art classes. Respondents from this category formulate a different assessment of creativity, being inclined to see *most Easter eggs as creative in one way or another*, or at least having the *potential to enhance their level of creativity*. Working to decorate eggs and collaborating closely with others for this task (family, students at school, etc.), gives these participants an appreciation of the difficulties and also the opportunities inherent in Easter egg making in terms of creative combinations and generation of novelties. Furthermore, folk artists in particular are usually open to diversifying their work techniques based on requests coming from the "market". Respondents from this broad group also tend to be less evaluative about different types of Easter eggs and to appreciate each for its own virtues. When judgements are made they are grounded more in aesthetics and concern for beauty alongside the "*quality*" of the work. They acknowledge the existence of a solid tradition of Easter egg making and are more flexible in relation to it, considering its set of motifs, colours, designs and conventions as resources ready to be used in creative ways.

To clarify further, this is not to say that tradition is in any way less important for folk artists then it is for example for ethnographers and priests. Folk artists are proud of working within a strong tradition and enriching it with their work. What differs to some extent is the way tradition is approached in this case, more as a "*resource*" than as a "*standard*". If the relationship between tradition and innovation, constrains and possibilities, "can be viewed as a fight, a war, a revolution, or as an ongoing process of change and dialogue" (Montuori & Purser, 1995, p. 74), it is certainly the latter perspective that informs the practice of egg decorators and allows them to adapt to the ever-changing demands of an increasing public interested in Easter eggs, both from Romania and abroad.

4.6. Conclusion: Final reflections on the process of integration

The present study was dedicated to the "integration" or "socialisation" of new artefacts, in this case Easter eggs, in larger systems of practice and meaning by members of four professional groups: ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists. Processes of integration, an integral part of the creativity framework presented in Chapter 1, reveal the ways in which cultural products come to be *represented, evaluated and used* by a variety of people within various socio-cultural contexts. The multiple feedback methodology outlined in this chapter was designed to capture this multiplicity of positions and forms of anchoring or interpreting the new. Our focus in this first research has been on creativity evaluations since the attribution of creative value to the craft is essential for how its products are "integrated" in a series of contexts: at school, at home, at fairs and exhibitions, at the church, and so on. At the same time our findings revealed the fact that creativity, and especially the creativity of Easter eggs, is attributed differently by different people or the same attribution can be supported by various types of reasoning. Creativity is not restricted to what is "new" and "useful" (as mainstream literature in psychology informs us) but it is also about work and effort, dedication, skill, aesthetic appeal, symbolic meaning, traditional value, etc. Being or not directly engaged in the act of elaborate decoration can be associated with different views of the craft, evaluation patterns summarised above. Indeed, the significance of understanding representations of creativity rests in their close connection to *creative action*. Meaning-making processes play a role not only in defining what is "creative" but also in the very production of the "creative". This will become more obvious in the next chapter dedicated to externalisation in the case of urban and rural egg decoration.

5. Creativity as action: The microgenesis of an artistic craft

Chapter summary

The present chapter is concerned with creative externalisation in Easter egg decoration in two different socio-cultural settings: urban and rural Romania. It starts by conceptualising the creative process as a form of action or activity, an approach that foregrounds the connections between psychological and social / material facets of the phenomenon. A model of action inspired by Dewey's (1934) work on art offers the analytical framework for the two studies included in this chapter. The first research, based on interviews and observations with decorators from Bucharest and the village of Ciocăneşti, aims to describe and compare creative action in the two contexts. Its findings suggest the existence of slightly different creative processes, an exploratory one in the urban environment, and a combinatorial one in the rural area. The second study takes a closer look at rural, "traditional" decoration activities in the case of seven decorators of different ages. In order to capture and document creative action, the subjective camera (subcam) was employed as part of a Subjective Evidence-Based Ethnography (Lahlou, 2011). What this investigation revealed is the non-linear activity flow in the case of craft as well as a combination of generalities and idiosyncrasies in decoration work, several of them accounted for in terms of novice and expert differences. In the end, findings from both studies are integrated to uncover microgenetic aspects of folk art creativity as expressed in Easter egg making. Processes of exploration, combination, change and translation are discussed and illustrated and particular attention paid to the nature of "copying" in craft activities. It is concluded that variation is in fact the norm and novelties emerge, intentionally and sometimes unintentionally, from an effort to: a) adjust to ever-changing conditions of work (different properties of eggs, colours, techniques, etc.) and b) master and perfect the craft, bring a "personal note" and thus revitalise and continue a long-standing tradition.

> “(...) process is precisely what is invisible in the usual DT [divergent thinking] test used in creativity research. A problem is set, and a written answer is obtained. What happens in between is anybody’s guess, except the respondent’s, who hasn’t been asked” (Barron & Harrington, 1981, p. 443).

The present chapter explores processes of *creative externalisation* in Easter egg decoration in two different socio-cultural milieus, urban and rural Romania. As reflected by the motto, the classic psychology of creativity has often been over-concerned with end products at the expense of processes leading up to them. The creative product and its (measurable) properties became a standard for studying creativity (see Chapter 4) and less effort put into uncovering the “mechanisms” of creativity as a form of action or social practice. Furthermore, when attention was indeed paid to this aspect is was frequently from a strictly cognitive perspective which made creativity a mental, individual process (see Chapter 1). However, to create is to *act in the world and on the world* and purely cognitive models are often oblivious of this, disconnecting mind from body, psychological from material and individual from social. This limitation is precisely what a theory of creative action aims to transcend. The main purpose of the research reported here is thus twofold. At a theoretical level it is meant to advance a relatively novel conception of creativity, that of creativity as action and of creative work as a form activity. Conceptualising creativity with the means offered by the psychology of action, and in particular by pragmatist approaches, leads to the development of a *situated model* of the phenomenon. The second aim is to apply this model to interview and observation data from egg decorators in urban and rural settings (in order to obtain a context-specific description of decoration activities) and, in a more specialised study (study two, this chapter), to document further microgenetic creative processes in rural traditional decoration with the help of the subjective camera (subcam) as part of an evidence-based type of ethnography. In the end, findings from both investigations will be used to highlight the ways in which creativity becomes manifest in craft and to understand the distinctive features of this particular creative activity.

5.1. Creativity *in* and *as* action

In contrast to cognitive models, action theories of creativity start from a different epistemological premise, that of *interaction and interdependence*. Human action comprises and articulates both an “internal” and “external” dynamic and, within its expression, it integrates cognitive, emotional, volitional and motivational aspects. Creativity, from this

standpoint, is *in action* as part and parcel of every act we perform (see Joas, 1996). Creativity exists on the other hand also *as action* whenever the attribute of being creative actually comes to define a form of expression (and therefore we can talk about "creative work" as different from other types of work which, themselves, may not completely lack creativity). This is equally valid for the study of *activity*, often considered to incorporate a system of actions, and thus to have a transformative and open nature that allows the person to "step beyond the frames of a given situation", "to find means that go beyond the given possibilities", hence to participate in "historical and cultural creativity" (Davydov, 1999, p. 39). Unfortunately though, creativity and action or activity have seldom been put together, at least *in psychology*. Even the few materials that include these terms in their title show little concern for what action or activity mean and focus again almost exclusively on creativity (see Barclay & Petitto, 1989; Ford, 1996). However, the potential for reuniting the two is not on the whole absent from past and present literature (e.g. Sawyer, 1995). Woodman and Schoenfeldt (1990) for instance advocated for an interactionist model of creative behaviour, one that starts from an understanding of the "organism-in-its-environment". A strong link between creator and situation also characterises Gruber's evolving systems approach to creativity (see Gruber, 2005; Gruber & Wallace, 1999) and its emphasis on ecological, longitudinal, contextual and situated investigations. The creator is an evolving system within larger evolving systems (professional, social, political, etc.) and his or her action is always contingent on this dynamic co-evolution.

But, in the end, what is action? The term itself holds different meanings in different disciplines, from the theory of "basic acts" in philosophy (see Goldman, 1970; Enç, 2007), to the more sociological accents placed on social action and institutional frameworks. Indeed, in social sciences, the notions of act, action and activity have been theorised since the beginning of the last century by thinkers representing a multitude of schools of thought, spanning from American pragmatism to Soviet cultural-historical theory. Relatively dormant in psychology under the prominence of behaviourism and then cognitivism, these concerns re-emerged in the past decades especially as part of *social and socio-cultural psychology*. Within this latter orientation, the concept of activity became essential for understanding the development and manifestation of psychological functions in various cultural settings. This made several researchers acknowledge the "paramount importance" of action for defining the mere purpose of cultural psychology: "the relationship between cultural variables and the constitution of action by individuals and groups" (Boesch, 2007, p. 153). In this context, mediated action turns into "a natural candidate for a unit of analysis in socio-cultural

research" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 24) for being able to link person and culture though symbolic means. Culture itself is then "fundamentally consisting of socially organized practical activities" (Ratner, 2001, p. 68) and the human psyche an agent and subject of these activities. As such, activity and psychology need to be understood in terms of dialectically interrelated phenomena (Ratner, 1996; see also Cranach, 1982) and, in their turn, "mental functioning and sociocultural setting (...) understood as dialectically interacting moments, or aspects of a more inclusive unit of analysis – *human action*" (Wertsch, 1995, p. 60). In sum, action and activity integrate culture in psychology (Eckensberger, 1995) and, respectively, psychology in the broader field of culture.

Perhaps no other school has more systematically looked at these differences and the integrated and hierarchical nature of activity as the *Russian cultural-historical school*. Its central thesis was that "the structure and development of human psychological processes emerge though culturally mediated, historically developed, practical activities" (Cole, 1996, p. 108). Sidestepping here the ongoing controversy over Vygotsky's emphasis on sign or symbolic mediation and the subsequent generations' focus on object-related practical activity (see Kozulin, 1986; Zinchenko, 1995; Axel, 1997; Roth & Lee, 2007; also Glassman, 1996, for the links between the two orientations), Leontiev's contribution (1978) needs to be mentioned as an example of how complex activity systems can be approached analytically. In his view, activity on the whole relates to a motive, actions composing it to particular goals and, at the end level, operations depend on environmental conditions (see also Zinchenko, 1995; Roth, 2007; Le Bellu, Lahlou & Nosulenko, 2010). Most importantly, Leontiev acknowledged the mobility of this structure in which an action can acquire a motive and turn into an activity, or an activity can become part of a larger ensemble. This theory, influential in its day and enjoying regained interest, was also subjected to some criticism, for example for claiming to study activity "objectively" while depending on a "subjective" notion of motive (see Axel, 1997, p. 140). It has known several recent elaborations, perhaps the most renowned of which being that of Engeström (1999) who added new elements (community, rules, division of labour) to the basic subject-mediator-object triad (see also Cole, 1996).

Similar preoccupations for the social and mediated aspects of activity (leading back to the Vygotskian origins of the theory) can be found in other cultural-psychological perspectives such a Cranach's (1982) description of goal-directed action and Boesch's (1997b) proposal of symbolic action theory. What brings these models together is a view of action occurring in a

specific context and in real time, involving agency and certain behavioural forms, and, above all, being meaningful (Brenner, 1980, p. 19). Human action is thus defined by intentionality and the mediation of various systems of tools and signs that make it comprehensible and symbolic. It takes place in a setting and involves both the organism, in its unity between body and mind, and a socioculturally constructed environment. Moreover, action is often *joint action* and is both facilitated by and facilitates human social relations, "even when the individual sits in solitude" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 109). In the end, our activities bear the mark of creativity for being at once constrained by rules and circumstance and constructive of both, something that transpires most clearly from classic pragmatist accounts.

5.1.1. John Dewey, the creativity theorist

John Dewey was one of the leading names behind the pragmatist orientation in philosophy and psychology in the first half of the last century. His writings on education, democracy, nature and aesthetics continue to be influential but it is important to remember that, much like the Russian cultural-historical scholars, Dewey was also an important theorist of activity (see Miettinen, 2006b). From Dewey's rich intellectual legacy, we will be focusing here on one of his later works, "Art as experience", first published in 1934, in order to reconstruct his vision of human action (for a review of Dewey's theory of art and its implications see also Jackson, 1998). This choice is by no means accidental since it is in this particular writing that Dewey addresses directly artistic expression and therefore is able to build what amounts to a theory of creativity. But first we need to understand what brings action and creativity together for John Dewey (1934, p. 256), and that is *human experience*:

> "Experience is a matter of the interaction of organism with its environment, an environment that is human as well as physical, that includes the materials of tradition and institutions as well as local surroundings. (...) Every experience is constituted by interaction between subject and object, between self and its world".

From the above one can easily notice what defines experience – a continuous *(inter)action* between person and environment (see also Dewey, 1925). In this model experience is intrinsically related to human action *in and with* the world. A graphic representation of his conception is offered in Figure 10 below. Action starts, as depicted, with an impulsion (motivation) and it is directed towards fulfilment. In order for action to constitute experience though, obstacles or constraints are needed. Faced with these challenges, the

person experiences emotion and gains awareness (of self, of the aim and path of action). Most importantly, action is structured in a continuous cycle of "doing" (actions directed at the environment) and "undergoing" (taking in the reaction of the environment). Undergoing always precedes doing and, at the same time, is continued by it. It is through these interconnected processes that action can be taken forward and become a "full" experience. For Dewey, in the context of his 1934 book, it is an "aesthetic quality that rounds out an experience into completeness and unity as emotional" (p. 43). Indeed, mindless routines and stereotypical movement don't constitute an experience since they lack the undergoing part, the confrontation of obstacles and thus awareness and emotional drive. The role of difficulties, of the unexpected, of action failures, connects very well with a classic understanding of creativity as novelty in situations for which there is "no learned or practiced solution" (Torrance, 1988, p. 57); however, this idea that creativity necessarily requires the existence of obstacles will be scrutinised further in Chapter 7.

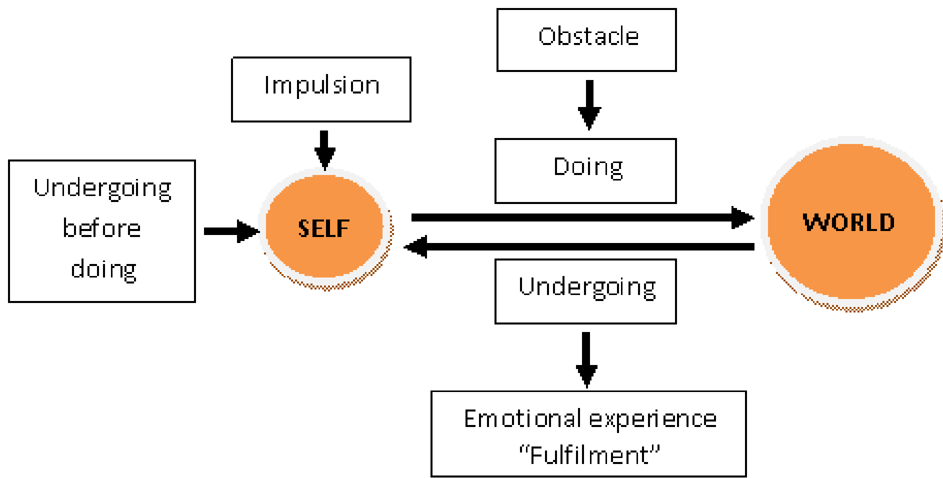


Figure 10. A model of human experience (after Dewey, 1934)

The framework presented here is particularly relevant for our understanding of creative action and Dewey himself elaborated it in relation to art and the activity of artists. The creator acts on the world in an attempt to materialise his or her artistic vision. However, this action is paired with a "reaction" from the world, one the creator needs to undergo, to be aware of and integrate, in order to continue working. In Dewey's words, art:

> "is a *developing process*. (...) the artist finds where he is going because of what he has previously done; that is, the original excitation and stir of some contact with the world undergo *successive transformation*. The state of the matter he has arrived at

sets up *demands* to be fulfilled and it institutes *a framework that limits further operations*" (Dewey, 1934, p. 116; emphasis added).

Form a pragmatist perspective, creative activity is an on-going process including series of action and perception taking place in socio-cultural environments. Most importantly, the artwork is not "there", in the mind of the creator, already finished and ready to be brought to light (as a sculpture lying inside a marble block). It is an emerging construction that requires the moment-to-moment interaction between self and world; hence, for Dewey, the artist is an *experimenter*. Moreover, art requires the creator's awareness of this interaction since "a painter must consciously undergo the effect of his every brush stroke or he will not be aware of what he is doing and where his work is going" (Dewey, 1934, p. 47). And this micro-level engagement needs also to be placed in the macro context of the broader project or long-term artistic activity of the author.

Dewey's original intuition concerning the interplay between doing and undergoing in art resonates widely in the currently literature on artistic creativity where, for example, it is stated that "making an artwork involves a process of negotiation between the artist and the developing work" (Mace & Ward, 2002, p. 185). It not only corresponds to more recent conceptualisations of artistic labour (see Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi's, 1976, discussion of the role of tension in art) but also with the experience of artists themselves. Israeli (1962) for instance, in proceeding with a series of self-observations while painting, noted that "check and evaluation of the operations and outcomes are followed quite often by plans, suggestions, and decisions which control the subsequent operations on the painting" (p. 256). Furthermore, Dewey conceived of creative artistic action as *integrating* cognitive, affective and motivational elements as well as a relation to society and material culture. This precedes by many decades present-day multivariate (Lubart, 2003) and componential (Amabile, 1983) models of the phenomenon. In his own words, "every experience (...) is not itself neither merely physical nor merely mental, no matter how much one factor or the other predominates" (Dewey, 1934, p. 256; see also 1886).

In conclusion, for Dewey artistic work is not the outcome of the artist alone, and neither of the work of art. Creative expression is precisely "located" in the interaction between self and art object (Benson, 1993). The continuous *cycle between doing and undergoing*, placed at the core of Dewey's conception, seems to express a valid approach in the case of art and,

potentially, beyond it. It is argued here that the framework depicted in Figure 10 has indeed a broader applicability in the psychology of creativity and constitutes, among other things:

- A model of the creative process based on continuous series of doing-undergoing;
- An integration of behavioural, cognitive, emotional and motivational elements;
- A re-evaluation of "impulsion" and "obstacle" as features of creative work;
- A contextual and relational account of human creativity.

From a pragmatist standpoint, it makes more sense to talk about the creativity of action than the creativity of a person and creativity permeates all our actions, not only those of exceptionally gifted individuals, and unfolds in relation to an environment. This is why Joas and Kilpinen (2006, p. 323) consider the pragmatic interpretation to be concerned primarily with "*situated creativity*". As follows, an attempt will be made to apply this generous conception to the study of folk art and to use Dewey's model of experience as a framework for decoding creative forms of activity. However, it is to be noted that there are certain *limitations* in Dewey's (1934) original model of human experience and his thinking about action in context. For instance it would seem from his writing that criteria to validate what constitutes an experience rest with subjective types of appreciation and this confines experiences, at least in terms of their validation, to the "inside" rather than the "in-between" of human life and relations. Moreover, Dewey appears to be preoccupied mostly with the world in terms of a physical environment and his book "Art as Experience" does relatively little justice to social interaction or the world of others. This is why, the way in which his model is operationalised below tries to captures his insights while correcting certain drawbacks, primarily the scarce emphasis on social forms of undergoing.

5.2. The study of action: Analytical procedures

Ginsburg (1980, p. 342) was of the opinion that to understand action it is necessary to understand its context and identify its temporal and hierarchical structure. The research presented next is committed exactly to capture the structure of activity (the "doing" part) in the case of egg decoration and to position it in relation to a social and material context (the "undergoing" part). For this purpose, operationalising the elements presented in Figure 10 above becomes an essential first step and a *coding frame* based on these factors (and other data-driven categories) was devised for both interview and observational data. Since the

entire corpus includes different types of data collected in different settings, the following presentation covers a study one, incorporating mostly interviews in urban and rural milieus, and a second study taking a closer look at rural traditional decoration practices, much more elaborate and widely acknowledged as highly creative by members of various communities (see Chapter 4). In the end, the overarching aim of the two studies reported here is to uncover the microgenesis of creativity in craftwork, in two consecutive stages: first a general description of decoration activity and its phases followed by a more detailed analysis of the "work" phase, documented with the help of subjective cameras.

5.2.1. Operationalising Dewey's conception

The first study included 27 participants, 11 from Bucharest and 16 from the village of Ciocăneşti, who were interviewed about their egg decoration activities (whenever possible, these activities were also observed). More details about the methodology of this study (questions, participants, method, data collection) can be found in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.1.). Similar to the research presented in the previous chapter (Chapter 4), all interviews have been transcribed verbatim and coded using *thematic analysis* with the help of ATLAS.ti 5.0. In this case however, the coding frame was more firmly guided by Dewey's account of human experience, although not exclusively (the focus on hierarchy and stages for instance being specific for Russian activity theory).

Coding started from an initial set of seven categories: impulsion, obstacle, doing, undergoing social, undergoing material, undergoing before doing, and emotion. After reviewing the first five interviews from each setting, some of the initial codes were *segmented* (for example descriptions about "stages of doing" were distinguished from "procedures" and "time" of activity) and new, data-driven categories *emerged* altogether (knowledge, prerequisites, undergoing final result, outcomes, setting). The final coding frame places the action of decoration (its prerequisites, impulsion, stages, outcomes, etc.) into a broader cultural context (marked by the existence of certain types of knowledge, work procedures and materials that facilitate decoration activities) and emphasises its intimate relation to both a material and social environment (through material and social forms of undergoing respectively, and different types of obstacles). Definitions of main categories, with example, are offered below in Table 7. Visual depictions of the findings are presented in the results section accompanied by verbatim illustrations from interviews (urban participants are identified using codenames, from U1 to U11).

CODE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	OBSERVATIONS
Impulsion	Motivations for action; why the action is done	To make beautiful objects, to create, to express, etc.	It can refer to the whole activity or segments of it
Obstacles	Difficulties / limitations the decorator comes against	Fragility of eggs, poor quality of colours, mistakes made with wax, etc.	It can refer to the whole activity or segments of it
Prerequisites	Qualities needed for action to take place	Patience, drawing talent, ambition, etc.	Usually personal traits
Setting	Presentation of the community and local traditions	General notions about urban - rural decoration, the "style" used in Ciocăneşti, etc.	Includes identity markers
Knowledge	The types of knowledge required by decorating work	Knowledge of Easter traditions, of motifs, of material properties, etc.	"Declarative" knowledge in the context of interviews
Procedures	The different techniques used at different stages of activity	Procedures for making colours, working on the egg (repetition, symmetry, etc.)	Here, associated primarily with "knowledge of procedures"
Stages of "doing"	The different phases of creative work and how it advances	Preparing wax, making eggs on white, yellow and red, immersing in colour, etc.	At a general level: preparation, work and finish & use
Materials	All the materials needed for decoration work	Eggs, chişiţă, wax, leaves, stickers, colour pigments, etc.	All the tools and material support
Time of work	When decoration is performed	Thursday or Saturday before Easter, during the winter, etc.	Includes also references to the duration of work
Undergoing before doing	Everything that prepared the creator for the work	Number of years of experience, learning how to decorate, etc.	This code is relevant mainly for the "preparation" stage
Material undergoing	The relation to the physical/material environment	Shape of eggs, properties of colours and wax, what has been done, etc.	Relates also to "Undergoing the final result"
Social undergoing	The relation to the social environment and social interactions	Orders from clients, tastes of customers, interaction with family members, etc.	Includes all mentioning of the role of "others"
Undergoing final result	Perceiving and judging the final outcome	Mentioning what else is needed, what worked or didn't work, etc.	Appreciations of creativity are included here
Emotion / fulfilment	The emotional experience of work	Satisfaction, surprise, pride, anxiety, etc.	It can refer to the whole activity or segments of it
Outcomes	The results of work	Types of egg, final numbers, etc.	Quantity of work

Table 7. Coding frame for interview analysis

It is to be noted that observation data was not analysed per se but used to contextualise interview accounts and for exemplification exclusively (e.g. using photos of different decoration stages). Considering the inter-related nature of the elements depicted in Figure 10, double coding was not uncommon. For the purpose of testing the reliability of coding, the whole data set has been re-coded by the researcher six months after the initial coding and very few changes made (under 5%).

5.2.2. Coding filmed creative activity

The second study used the subjective camera within a Subjective Evidence-Based Ethnography (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.) to record the microgenetic aspects of traditional decoration activities in the case of seven artisans of different ages (ranging from 8 to 41) from the village of Ciocăneşti. Details concerning the aims, participants, method and data collection procedure can be found in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.2.). The final dataset included about six hours and a half of film as well as eight interviews (Ancuța Nigă produced two subfilms). Considering the relatively short time of wearing the camera (during one workshop session, on average 45 min), it was possible to review the *entire recording* with respondents during confrontation interviews. This avoids the problem of selection of segments to be shown and discussed. A particular point of focus during these interviews was to understand the *goals* of the participant, her evaluations of work and comments concerning how things are done, when things are done "differently" and why. The coding frame for video materials was again inspired by Dewey's framework (Figure 10) and data analysis started from three broad codes: doing (actions of the creator), material undergoing (relation with objects) and social undergoing (relations with other people). In addition, accidental gestures were also coded. The recordings themselves "filled" these general codes with sub-categories in a data-driven fashion, a final summary of which is presented in Table 8 below.

The result of this coding is represented by a *moment-to-moment description of activity* organised according to the categories below (examples are given for an adult and child participant in Appendix VIII). The validity of the coding process was ensured through participant validation (during confrontation interviews and study follow-up) and also the review of key moments in the video material with a more experienced researcher. It is to be mentioned however that of course not every action or reaction was coded (e.g. a very quick look at others or the setting, uttering one or two words as a sign of listening, etc.) since this would have made the presentation of findings incomprehensible, little less the construction

of activity diagrams. Also, there were a few moments for some of the participants when the work on the egg was no longer captured on camera because of its particular position; however, in such cases, the type and duration of action were estimated considering the general movement and intermediary outcomes. Most importantly, the *interconnected* nature of doing and undergoing, as rightfully anticipated by Dewey (1934), resisted sometimes efforts to distinguish between the two (see also Dewey's, 1986, conception of the coordination between sensory and motor responses). For instance "choosing materials" was coded under "doing" but it necessarily incorporates aspects of "undergoing" (how else would participants test or select a chişiță for example?). It would be also misleading to think that undergoing took place only when coded as such (see Appendix VIII). Turning the egg around might be an explicit moment of "undergoing the result" but perception is a continuous process and it is also continuous with action. This microgenetic, dynamic aspect of action should be remembered when considering the findings presented next.

MAIN CODE	DEFINITION	SUBCODES	OBSERVATIONS
Doing	Actions of the creator involved in egg decoration	Choosing materials Drawing in pencil Drawing the belt Drawing the main motif Drawing the top/bottom Correction/completion Covering hole with wax Cleaning wax off fingers Drying colour	"Correction/completion" also included cleaning the egg when necessary. The subcodes of the "doing" category generally reflect micro-stages of the process (drawing in pencil, drawing the belt, the main motif, etc.).
Material Undergoing	Perception of the results of action	Looking at other eggs Looking at result Looking at next motif Looking at previous result Checking the model	Looking was generally coded as either "quick" (below 5 sec) or "long". Turning the egg around was taken as a sign of "looking at the result". Checking models in pencil qualified as "looking at next motif" and checking where work was left off as "looking at previous result". "Checking the model" included counting elements.
Social Undergoing	Relations and communication with other people	Looking at others Checking if help is needed Helping others Asking from others Talking on the phone	"Helping others" comprised material help and also giving advice or offering information.

Table 8. Coding frame for video analysis

5.3. Study one: Egg decoration activities in urban and rural settings

Main results from the first study are presented as follows. The discussion starts with findings from the urban group, then the rural one, and ends with a comparison of creative activity in the two contexts. For each setting graphic depictions of activity stages and their associated characteristics are offered. These figures include information summarised from the most important codes of our analytical framework: premises of work (knowledge and procedures), doing (stages) and undergoing (social and material), as well as key obstacles and difficulties. It is to be noted that the phases of doing are related by double arrows with the conditions of doing (knowledge of motifs, procedures, etc.) and forms of undergoing (relations with the world). This is in line with Dewey's premise of the *interconnection* between action, perception and previous experience. Study two will complement this set of findings with a much more fine-grained analysis of rural traditional decoration.

5.3.1. Urban Easter eggs: Re-enacting a yearly ritual

A central characteristic of urban decoration is the *creative use of colours* – colour combinations, the preparation of natural pigments, the application of shapes (leaves, stickers) on a coloured background, etc. – and there is a variety of colours urban decorators use, from yellow and green to blue, orange and purple, certainly not forgetting the traditional red. Another fundamental feature of urban Easter egg making is that it takes place before Easter (on Maundy Thursday or even on Easter Eve, for eggs to be "*fresh*"; colouring also occurs before Ascension) and is reserved (both in terms of making and use) to the family context. "Impulsions" behind egg decoration reflected very well these two features. On the one hand respondents acknowledged being "*attracted by colours*", by the "*novelty of the result*" and its "*beauty*" (U2), and thus being largely driven by "*curiosity*" (U6). On the other hand, the family traditional roots of the practice were equally important: "*I paint eggs not so much for the sake of making them, but to bring my family closer*" (U5). There is, as for any communal form of activity, a strong social and cultural background that leaves its mark in forms of "undergoing before doing". All participants had seen Easter eggs since their childhood and considered this practice a "*family legacy*" (U7). Other more elaborate forms of decoration were known to them, but believed not to reflect "*the specific of our region*" (U9). Besides, Bucharest as an urban space was associated with "*speedy living*" (U5), where there is little time left for artistic preoccupations. Moreover, among the "prerequisites" of traditional decoration respondents named "*talent*" (U3), which most of

them believed not to have; their own, "*simpler*" decoration "*is not hard, but needs a bit of patience and also taking pleasure from what you do*" (U7). Another condition was to have all materials ready, and urban decoration relies on a variety of tools and objects, from eggs (mostly chicken, sometimes duck) and colour pigments (or natural colours made from onion leaves), to stickers, leaves (for application on the egg), coloured paper, also oil or grease (as varnish), nylon or small nets (for fixing leaves, etc.), at times paintbrush and colour and even wax. The outcome of this work for members of our group was a number of 30-40 decorated eggs, depending on family size and budget (could go up to 100 for bigger families), most simply coloured but a small part of which were decorated "*in special ways*". A summary of decoration activities is presented in Figure 11.

As depicted there, Easter egg making begins with a ***preparation stage***, which includes different long and short term phases. For instance seeing others decorate eggs and helping in the family was typically the first step before "doing" this for oneself. Closer to the event more practical steps need to be taken such as buying or getting all the necessary materials (eggs, colours, stickers, leaves, etc.; for those who use natural pigments onion leaves are collected a few months before) to arranging, on the day, the "work space" (see Image 8). Picking materials was guided by different criteria: colours have to be "*as lively as possible*" (U2), "*to reflect spring*" (U1), "*to respect children's wishes as well*" (U11); stickers have to depict religious, traditional and "*joyful*" motifs (U2); leaves need to be as "*thin*" as possible (U5), and so on. Choice of colours is also informed by a series of norms and meanings for instance red should never be missed since it reflects the "*real*" tradition and any other colour is used simply "*for the pleasure of the eye*" (U3). This connects to the base of "knowledge" and "procedures" required from the preparation phase onwards. Knowledge of Easter traditions and materials' properties, the affordances (see Gibson, 1986) of decoration tools, were all called for, as well as procedures for making colours, washing and boiling the eggs beforehand, etc. For instance, in buying the eggs some knew that the very white ones are more fragile and can break more easily (U2). In all these activities participants constantly interact with a material world and undergo the physical properties of the chosen eggs, leaves, and colour pigments, and also communicate with others, often dividing preparation work between family members. Several "obstacles" or difficulties intervene from these early stages onwards, most notably the consequences of not washing or boiling eggs properly: this leads to colours not "*catching on*" the egg as they should (U9).

Image 8. The home work space (U3)

The actual ***work phase*** was represented by different types of “doing”, of which two stood out among the present sample. They both involve a phase of inserting the egg in a colour solution (or boiling it in colour) but while an option is to apply different shapes on the egg before colouring (such as leaves or immersing an egg with stickers or wrapped in coloured paper in boiling water) a second possibility is to apply one colour and then another in order to make combinations (certain pigments could also be applied by hand, see Image 9). Very few of the respondents used other techniques as well (like painting or even working with wax in a more rudimentary way, U6). On the other hand U4 “made” her own colours by boiling onion leaves, giving eggs a yellow-brown aspect. The work at this stage was normally informed by different types of knowledge (of meanings, of colour combinations; for instance eggs covered in onion leaves look better dyed in green then blue, U5). A series of procedures complemented this, from fixing materials on the egg (e.g. wetting the eggs before applying leaves helps the process, U1) to colouring (e.g. eggs need to be warm, even hot, when working with pigments that don’t require boiling, U2, U3). This kind of experience is formed in time as a result of “undergoing”, both social and material. At the beginning of the process, the egg’s size and shape are important for the kinds of leaves or stickers one chooses, and physical properties of colours determine whether decoration is finally successful or not (since not all pigments colour equally well, not all colour combinations “work”); constant monitoring of outcomes is thus needed in order to decide the future steps of action (U1, U3, U5). Also egg decoration, normally taking place at home, often catches the attention of children who are eager to participate, sometimes helping their parents (U10),

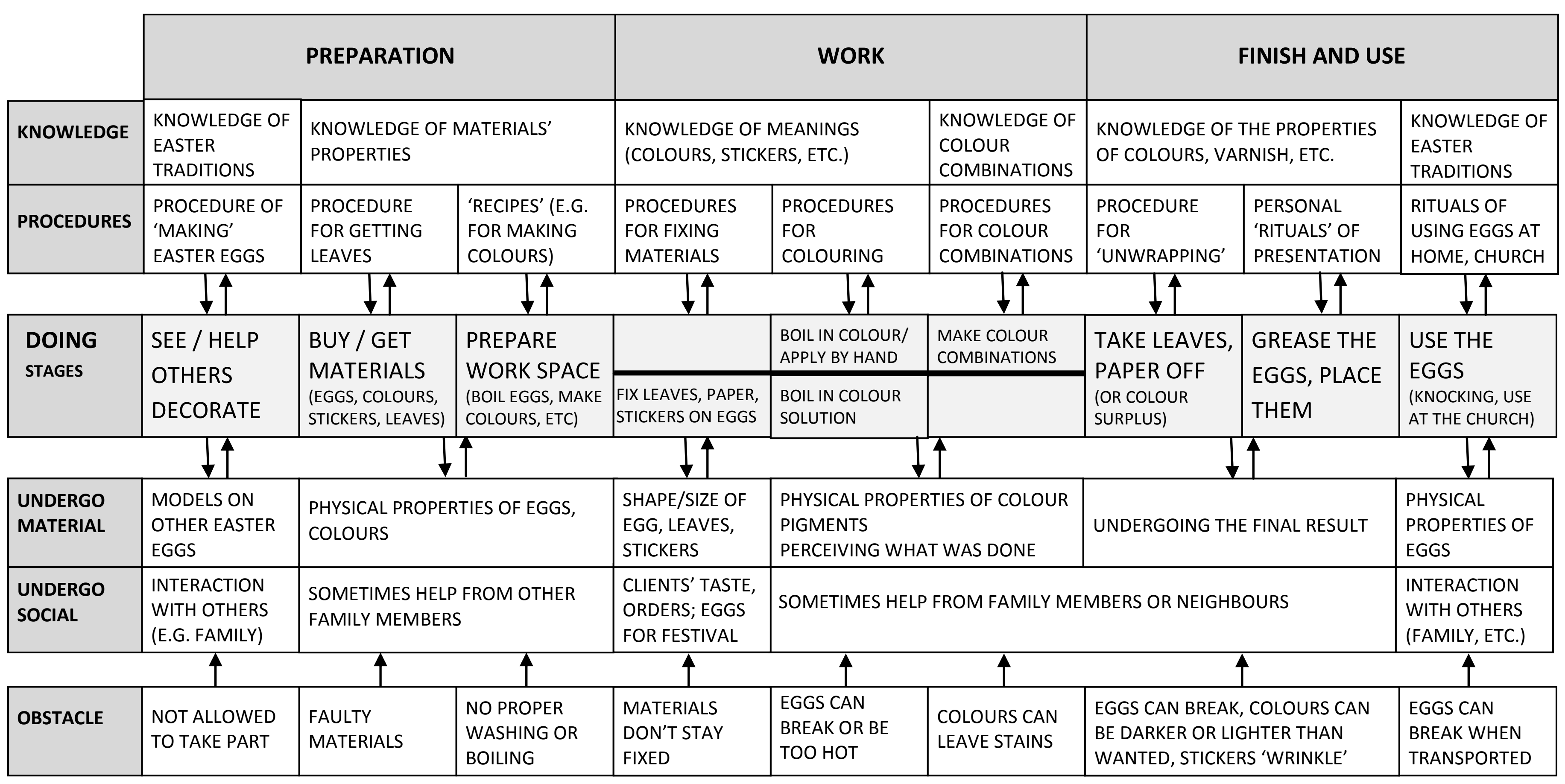


Figure 11. Decoration activity in an urban setting

other times "disturbing" their work (U9). Children are offered in such cases a few eggs to decorate, later on "*presented*" at the Easter table. Friends and neighbours can also participate and they were sometimes called in, especially when a new technique was used (U2) or simply because "*it is more pleasurable to work together*" (U5). There are also "obstacles" to be faced, whenever materials don't stay fixed on the egg, eggs break or are too hot to handle and particularly when working with colours and not using gloves (stains remain on hands or clothes, U6).

Image 9. Making colour combinations (U2)

In the final, ***finish and use stage***, leaves or coloured paper (when applied on the egg) are removed (also any colour surplus) and all eggs in the end greased (to make them look shiny) and placed in special bowls or baskets. In the three days of Easter they become an integral part of the celebration for the participants, being knocked before meals, given for charity and taken to the church for service. In essence, "*nobody should leave your home without having knocked eggs and taken cake and a red egg*" (U1). There are noticeable differences though between rural and urban festivities and some lamented the fact that living in the city "*you know little about your neighbours and cannot have the same feeling of celebration*", keeping mostly to your family (U2). Different types of knowledge and procedures feed into not only finishing decoration but also using the eggs, including for the latter several traditions such as having always a basket with eggs on Easter night on your table (U1), washing in the morning with water in which a red egg was placed (U5) and keeping one

decorated egg after each Easter (U6). These uses involve forms of “social undergoing” in relation to family and also members of the broader community. As for “material undergoing”, it was mostly concerned here with perceiving and appreciating the final result, looking at how “*beautiful*”, “*evenly coloured*” and “*shiny*” eggs are (U3). Last moment difficulties could disturb the work, due to poor colour quality or having eggs break. This is why the end was usually a moment full of emotion, both when “unwrapping” the eggs (see Image 10) and when seeing them all together (“*the most beautiful moment of all*”, U9).

Image 10. Unwrapping the eggs and taking off the leaves (U1)

In summary, urban egg decoration, although less intricate than its traditional, rural counterpart, is an activity that requires the attention and engagement of decorators, their constant attempts at creating “*beautiful*”, “*aesthetic*” products, and ingenious ways of dealing with the obstacles and difficulties inherent to working on a small, fragile object. “*Trials*” are constantly made in this process (U2) and past experience guides the doings of the present as well us imaginations for the future. In this regard, the concept of experience in Dewey’s (1934) formulation applies here and substantiates a traditional form re-enacted and re-vitalized each year in virtually every Romanian family.

5.3.2. Rural Easter eggs: Keeping and perfecting an old tradition

In the village of Ciocăneşti in Northern Romania all forms of decoration specific for the urban settings are known and indeed many of them used to ornate eggs for Easter at home

(although colouring tends to be simpler and, whenever possible, Easter messages inscribed with wax) but the types of decoration that concern us here are the ones performed regularly, all through the year. These represent what is known as “traditional” wax decoration, *using wax and colour successively* to depict a series of motifs, frequently geometric in nature. Another particularly of the village, as discussed also in Chapter 3, is the predominant use of black. Considering the variety of motifs and forms of decoration it is not surprising that this activity itself is “poly-motivated” (see also the notion of polyvalence by Boesch, 2007). There are subjective, personal reasons for participating in professional decoration, and most relate to the “*joy*” and “*pleasure*” said to accompany work (Cristina Timu) and the “*passion*” for this folk art (Marilena Niculiță). At the same time there is also an instrumental side to making eggs, and it has to do with financial reasons, with gaining prestige in the community and being able to exhibit one’s productions (including at yearly festivals). The work itself is not easy, and although it might seem straightforward for experienced decorators, all participants acknowledged certain “prerequisites” such as: a lot of patience, ambition and perseverance, and, most importantly, liking what you do. Interestingly, drawing abilities were controversial in the sense that some claimed they are not particularly needed, they can be formed (Marilena), while others saw them as necessary (Ionela Țăran; Larisa Ujică). Years of practice are in any case essential to perfect the craftwork and the “undergoing before doing” begins for most in childhood (although several of the respondents here took up decoration 5-7 years ago, encouraged by the national festivals). “*’After a thousand eggs!’ A friend of mine used to say when I was asking her ‘When, dear God, will I be able to draw straight lines like you?’*” (Maria Ciocan). The internalisation process is continuous for all (see Chapter 6) and the craft always “*stolen*” from others, from what the decorators see on traditional houses, clothes, carpets, postcards, including on old eggs that are dutifully kept. The practicalities of work also need to be learned and artisans know when to start their activity, usually preparing eggs in the summer and decorating them during wintertime. Hundreds of eggs are made by each for the Easter season (and all other occasions when tourists visit the village) and beside the eggs themselves (chicken, duck, goose, ostrich, etc.) plenty of other “materials” are involved: wax, syringe (for emptying the egg), colours (oil or acrylic for those who paint), chişițe of different sizes (work instruments), varnish, pencils, rubbers, and so on.

The activity path is summarised in Figure 12 and reflects what is specific for the main stages of preparation, work and finish / use. In what the ***preparation phase*** is concerned, it can be divided into getting models or motifs, obtaining all necessary materials and preparing the

egg (wash, empty, dry) and, ultimately, organising the work space (warming the wax, making the colours, etc.; see also Image 11). From these, washing properly and degreasing the eggs was considered essential by every respondent. All the actions above are informed by a strong knowledge base (a "social stock of knowledge"; see also Luckmann, 1982) and a series of procedures. Decorators need to know from who to get the materials (for example chişiță makers at different monasteries; ostrich eggs from certain farms in the country, etc.), and also be familiar with their physical properties. For instance it was common knowledge that duck eggs are better to work on than chicken for having a "*whiter*" shell, being more "*resistant*", more "*shiny*" and "*smooth*" (Marcela Novac, Maria Ciocan, Maria Istrate). Procedures are required to make colours (adding a bit of vinegar and salt in the solution), to prepare the wax (colour it by adding different types of oxide) and keep it (the wax needs to be kept at a constant temperature). Interestingly, certain forms of knowledge were admittedly lost, for example the "recipes" for natural colours that used to be made by the elders of the village and now largely replaced with artificial pigments. All these physical and material properties also define the undergoing processes taking place from preparation stages onwards. Deeply embedded in the material world, the decoration practice is defined by constant interaction with the egg, wax, colours, as well as social others, from family members to fellow artists. The "obstacles" faced by decorators also go back to these interactions, when for example others don't share their knowledge, and the material fails (eggs break, colours are not vivid enough, the heating is discontinuous, etc.).

Image 11. A typical work space (Maria Timu)

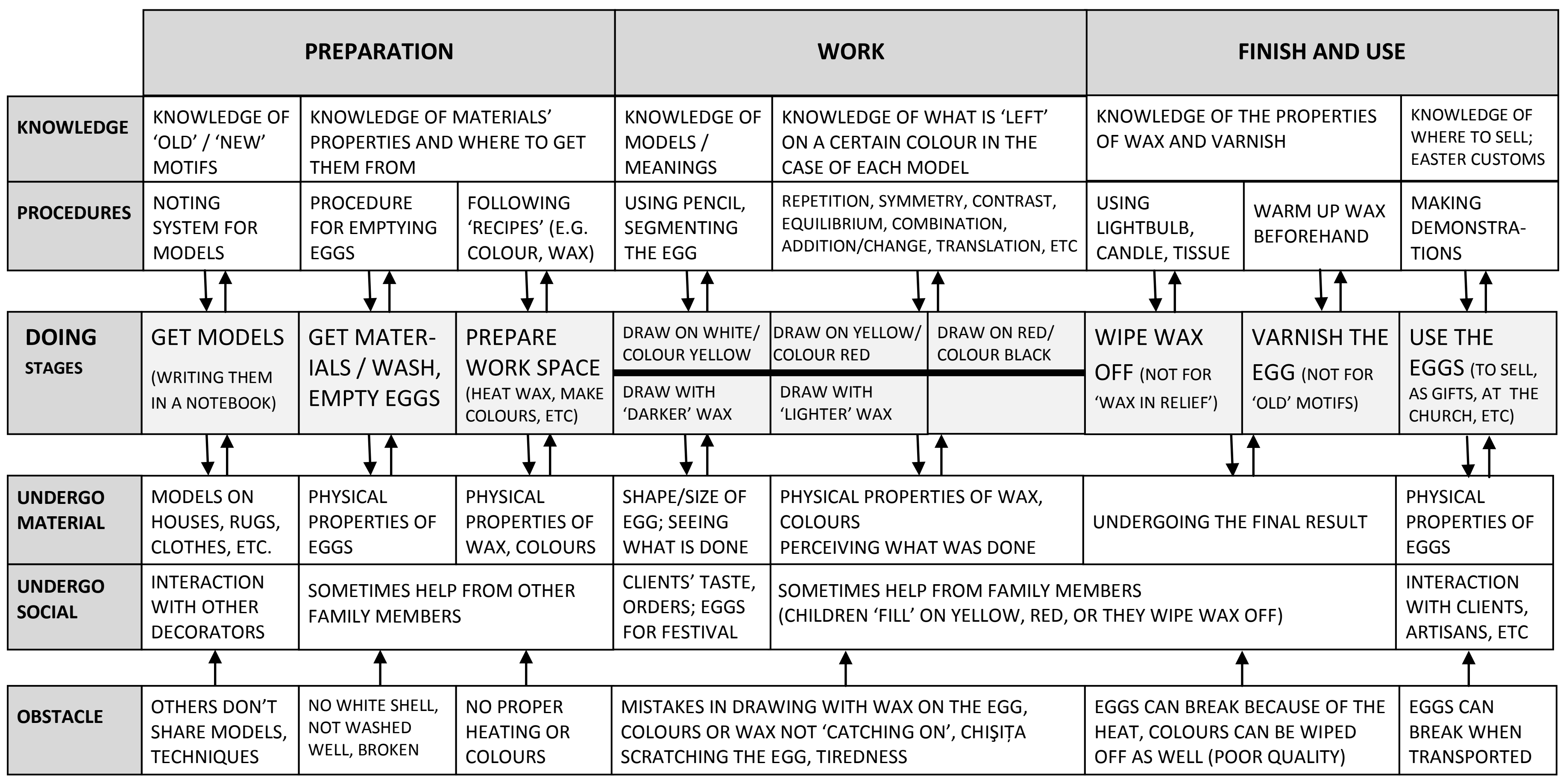


Figure 12. Decoration activity in a rural setting

The actual ***work stage*** can take many forms but what will be described here are two widespread techniques that involve drawing motifs in wax. In all cases the activity starts with segmenting the egg, normally in pencil. The traditional way of decoration then involves making the model gradually in wax while immersing the egg successively in colour (from lighter to darker colours; in Ciocăneşti yellow, followed by red, and finally black). Therefore the activity is organised in three distinct stages known as “working on white”, “working on yellow” and “working on red” (see Image 12). A more recent variation of using wax involves leaving it on the egg and working only “on white”, usually with two types of wax (e.g. lighter and darker brown). The innovation of colouring wax and applying it as such on the egg (something that “*came*” to the village in recent years from Moldovița, Paltinu; according to Cristina) is now common practice, although not “*allowed*” at the national festival.

Image 12. The three stages of work and the final product (Maria Ciocan)

Various forms of knowledge and procedures support decoration work. First and foremost craftswomen have an extensive knowledge of motifs and how they are made (what is “left” on each colour). However, being aware of the exact meanings of each motif was rare and most knew them by name and could describe the significance of basic shapes such as the net (separating good from evil), the cross (Resurrection, hope), the star (femininity, perfection) and the colour black (the absolute, eternity, permanence). Procedures ranged from how the egg is to be held properly to “rules” such as repetition, symmetry, combination, contrast, translation, etc. For the latter for instance, if the main motif is “*complicated*” the belt needs to be simpler and vice versa (Larisa). The work is thus determined by the material properties of models and eggs, their size and shape. More elongated eggs for example are better suited for motifs such as the “lost way” while rounder ones perfect for a bigger belt and quadrants. Social forms of undergoing were also present starting from clients’ demands and “*taste*”

(foreigners seem to prefer black less) to the help received from family members where children "*fill up*" the motif on yellow and red. Occasionally, bigger orders are shared with other decorators if time is limited. Among the most widespread difficulties mentioned was the fact that, for traditional eggs, once a mistake is made working with wax it is virtually impossible to repair, while eggs in relief require the uniform application of wax.

The final ***finish and use*** moments relate to finalising the work (wiping wax off as shown in Image 13 and also varnishing the eggs) and then selling, offering them as gifts and going to church with decorated eggs for the Easter service (these eggs are usually kept for the whole year afterwards). Selling for instance is done either from home (and some artists have devoted customers), or by going to different fairs across the country and also through the Museum. Knowledge of where to go and what to do in order to distribute your work is of the essence here. Social forms of undergoing are determined in this case by interactions with clients and different organisers of fairs and exhibitions. A set of practical procedures accompanied the final stages as well, for example how to "*clean*" the egg and polish it (the varnish needs to be kept warm before application). Undergoing the final result was also commented on and what respondents look for most of all in an egg is to be "*liked*" and "*beautiful*". This is why finishing the activity is always stirring emotions, from being curious and worried to being thrilled and taking pride in one's products: "*Indeed, we can hardly wait to see it at the end. We worked it, we made it, but we can't really tell [how it is] until the very end*" (Marilena). And this light anxiety is justified considering the fact that right before finishing there are still problems and "obstacles", most common the breaking of the egg for several reasons: thin shell, being exposed to too much heat, etc. (Niculina Nigă).

In conclusion, decorating eggs is never easy when you work long hours during the day (or night), when the eyes begin to hurt as well as the whole body from standing still (Ionela) and the smell of wax starts giving headaches and nausea (Marcela). And despite all this, folk artists said they "*need*" to work each and every day almost, an internal necessity or impulsion as Dewey (1934) would call it, supported by the fact that decoration, regardless of shortcomings, gives enormous satisfactions, it "*relaxes*" (Maria Ciocan) and does away with any negative emotions and tensions (Larisa). Reaching a state similar to that of "flow" (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) was specific for all those craft artists who felt "*passionate*" about their work and became absorbed by it. It is also expressed in the final reward of "*seeing how [the egg] looks, and how you created it; that gives you a satisfaction and a pleasure for making it, generating a beautiful thing with your own hands*" (Ionela).

Image 13. “Cleaning” the wax off (Cristina Timu)

It can therefore be concluded that, in the rural setting at least, egg decoration activities are a vital part of *building an identity* for oneself, that of “egg decorator” or “folk artist”, an identity very much valued by the local community (see also Chapter 3). This identity positions the participants and makes them at once creators and guardians of tradition, two aspects that are never in opposition but necessarily require each other (since no creation is valid outside of tradition and tradition cannot move forward in the absence of creativity). Moreover, the identity of being an egg decorator shows not only a commitment to the craft but also sustains it when faced with the multitude of obstacles outlined above.

5.3.3. Concluding remarks: Two types of creative activity

Findings from study one revealed the general stages of activity in the case of egg decoration in two different locations in Romania. It is now possible to make comparisons between the two, discuss their multiple similarities and, in particular, what sets decoration practices apart. Table 9 captures some of the main differences in terms of creative activity in the two settings, when and why it is performed, what it requires and what its outcomes are. Many of these differences steam from specific socio-cultural and economic characteristics of the two milieus which made some of the participants in the rural context turn egg decoration into an authentic “profession” practiced throughout the year.

URBAN CONTEXT BUCHAREST	RURAL CONTEXT CIOCĂNEŞTI
Easter Egg decoration as a form of play	Easter egg decoration as a form of work
Decoration related to Easter (religious festival)	Decoration performed throughout the year
Decoration is a family ritual	Decoration is a community ritual
It involves re-enacting tradition	It involves keeping and perfecting tradition
Weak knowledge and procedural base	Strong knowledge and procedural base
Emphasis on trial and error, experimentation	Emphasis on combination and transformation
Brings joy and curiosity for the outcome	Brings pleasure and passion for the craft
Requires basic materials and time	Requires dedication, perseverance, above all else
Offers joy to others, friends and family	Offers status in the community, means for living
Creativity associated with discovery, exploration	Creativity associated with aesthetics and mastery

Table 9. Characteristics of urban and rural egg decoration

The central proposition advanced here is that, beyond a certain degree of resemblance (e.g. in the use of eggs and colour pigments, in some of the common obstacles specific for the work of decoration and certain forms of social interaction with family members), the two activity structures presented earlier constitute different types of creative expression: *exploratory* in the urban context and *combinatorial* in the rural one. As will become clear from Figures 13 and 14 below, in both cases one can distinguish the typical preparation, work, finish & use stages and their relation to a knowledge base (including both declarative and procedural knowledge), all positioned against a background of the social and material world. However, it is "inside" these models that an important variation is outlined.

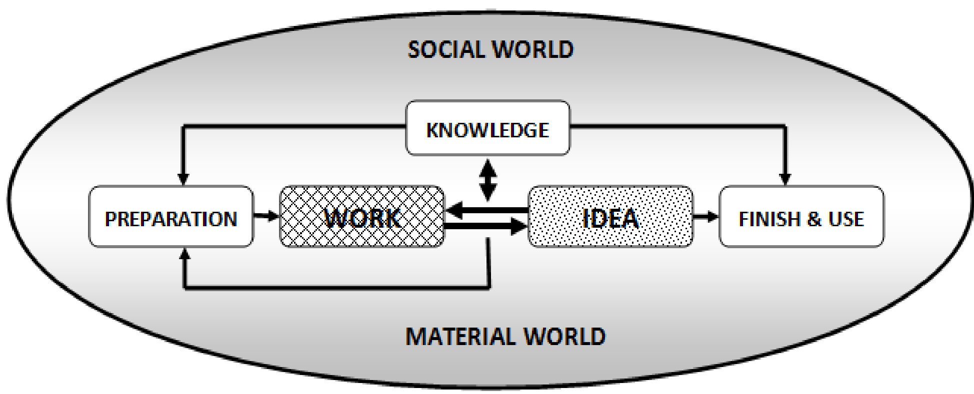


Figure 13. Schematic representation of urban "exploratory" creativity

Figure 13 above depicts the *exploratory process* defined by the fact that work is initiated through direct engagement with the materials and, as a consequence, ideas emerge about what can be done further, they are then put into practice and aliment the whole work-idea cycle. It is this "primacy of doing" that characterises urban decoration, where outcomes are rarely planned in advance (in their details, because otherwise participants do have a general notion of what *kind* of Easter eggs will result) and the work process depends on generating and testing ideas as they come along. "*It is purely a tryout, to see how it comes out, how it does, and to vary things*" (U3). This is reflected in "*activity conventions*" such as the one explained by U1 in which mother and children come together, share the eggs between them and each starts decorating his or her own, in unique ways, with "*whatever they want*". In the words of another participant, the experience of decoration "*is all motivated by pure curiosity, to play with colours so to speak*" (U11). Play is not accidentally mentioned here since indeed decoration in urban contexts can be said to exemplify Caillois's (1958) concept of *paidia* or free, unstructured and spontaneous action (although play itself is never completely free of rules, as we are well reminded by Vygotsky, 1978, p. 94).

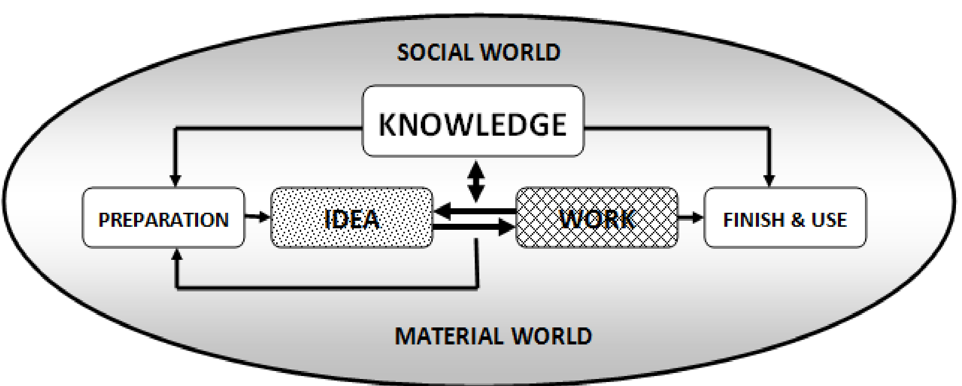


Figure 14. Schematic representation of rural "combinatorial" creativity

In contrast, decoration practices in the rural context are closer to the notion of game, Caillois's (1958) *ludus* – a structured activity with explicit rules. Traditional decoration leaves less to chance in absolute terms and the action, as reflected by Figure 14, begins with an idea (much more specific than in the previous case) of how the eggs could look like, and then its realisation. However, just like before, the work itself shapes this initial idea, oftentimes transforming it completely. And this transformation is embodied in the fundamental mechanism of *combining* already existing elements. In this case "elements" can be entire motifs or segments of a motif and their combination based on integration or juxtaposition.

A very strong knowledge base is required for this kind of creative "games" to take place since decorators need first of all to know the elements and to have practiced them numerous times; so much so that it seems "*the model is imprinted in your memory and the hand follows it*" (anonymous). *Mixing* is fundamental and frequently, when explaining their work, artisans end up saying "*this was from another model, that from another model*" (Maria Istrate). *Additions* and small changes are also the rule since "*you can make more beside that model, you can make something more, a little annex, you try a net, put some more dots if you see they look nice*" (Dănuț Zimbru). Consequently, eggs need to respect "tradition" and add something to it in doing so. This is an essential part of the identity of being a decorator made reference to earlier. Connecting this to findings from Chapter 4 about representations of creativity and egg decoration practices, being an artisan is associated with incorporating an enacting a certain system of beliefs and meanings specific for the craft. A central factor here is tradition which, when adopting a "view from inside" (see Chapter 4 section 4.5.2.), becomes a resources to be kept but also enriched through subsequent work and dedication which are part and parcel of *a vocation and identity* for rural artisans.

It is important to mention in the end that the processes above are general trends and do not describe the work of all decorators at all times. Furthermore, the presence of exploration phases in combinatorial work and, conversely, the association of elements as an outcome of this exploration are not uncommon. The fact that, in the rural context, activity always starts from "*a model we have in front of us, or one we want to make*" (Marilena) doesn't mean that it ends with it: "*I am thinking of this model that I want to make, yes, but when I finish it is no longer the same*" (Elena Crăciunescu). However, distinctions between exploration and combination are to be kept since it seems they also resonate with other findings from studying the artistic domain. Galenson (2001, 2006) for example proposed the differentiation between "seekers", or experimental innovators, and "finders", or conceptual innovators. Although not perfectly mapped into our discussion here, such categories do gain more and more empirical support. In the end though, independent of the primacy of work or idea, the existence or not of a plan and the firm reliance or not on previous knowledge, what transpires from our findings confirms Dewey's (1934) insight that "the process of art in production is related to the esthetic in perception organically" (p. 51). Processes of "constructive perception", referred to by Suwa (2003), capture an essential quality of successful artisans, something that will become clearer from the second, more in-depth study of traditional egg making.

5.4. Study two: Traditional egg decoration activity

The second study of creative activity took a closer look at the elaborate practices of decoration typical for Northern Romania, more specifically for the village of Ciocăneşti. By using the subjective camera in a Subjective Evidence-Based type of Ethnography (Lahlou, 2011), it was possible to capture and document creative work at the *micro-level of its genesis*. Detailed descriptions of activity (according to the coding frame presented in section 5.3.2., this chapter) for two of the seven participants can be found in Appendix VIII. The following sections will summarise main findings in terms of: a) the activity flowchart and its variations, b) generalities and specificities of the work process, and c) differences between novice and expert decorators. In the end, a discussion that integrates material from both studies will review the numerous ways in which creativity is manifested in a folk art context.

5.4.1. The non-linear path of creative activity

Study one helped generate broad descriptions of activity in the case of both urban and rural decoration. Primarily emerging from interview data, the resulting schemas suggested rather linear paths of action (from preparation to work and then finish & use). However, another inquiry is needed to specify what exactly constitutes the "work" phase especially for an intricate decoration process such as the traditional one. For this purpose filming the activity, particularly from the perspective of the artisan, offers invaluable insights. It allows us to unpack the micro-stages of decoration and to observe the ordering of doings, in other words, to add a dynamic element to an otherwise structural presentation. It has been said that "choosing one action always necessarily implies foregoing others" (Boesch, 2007, p. 157) and this is necessarily true of egg decoration where, beside certain conventional steps, the creator is faced with a world of possibilities. In the end there are no absolute rules regarding how the work is to proceed, for as long as it delivers the desired outcome.

Before passing to the activity diagram (Figure 15) it is necessary to note that it only reflects working on the "white stage" of the egg, initial decoration with wax before immersion in colour. This is the case because most subfilms cover this stage and also because it is the most complex of all, when the larger part of the motif gets to be depicted. In addition, a certain type of models was considered here, very common among decorators, in which the belt or girdle is distinguished from the main motif. Cases (e.g. Luminița Niculiță) where the belt constitutes the main motif are consequently not represented by the following schema.

Figure 15 offers a summary of work stages and relations between them. The central ten-step succession proposed is a "typical" one, averaging all observations available and therefore not fully describing any one decorator in particular. This is because, as side-arrows suggest, decoration work is considerably messier than any orderly, beginning to end sequence. Left-side arrows in this case indicate where the pencil was used in subsequent phases while the right-side ones indicate passings, forwards and backwards, from one stage to another.

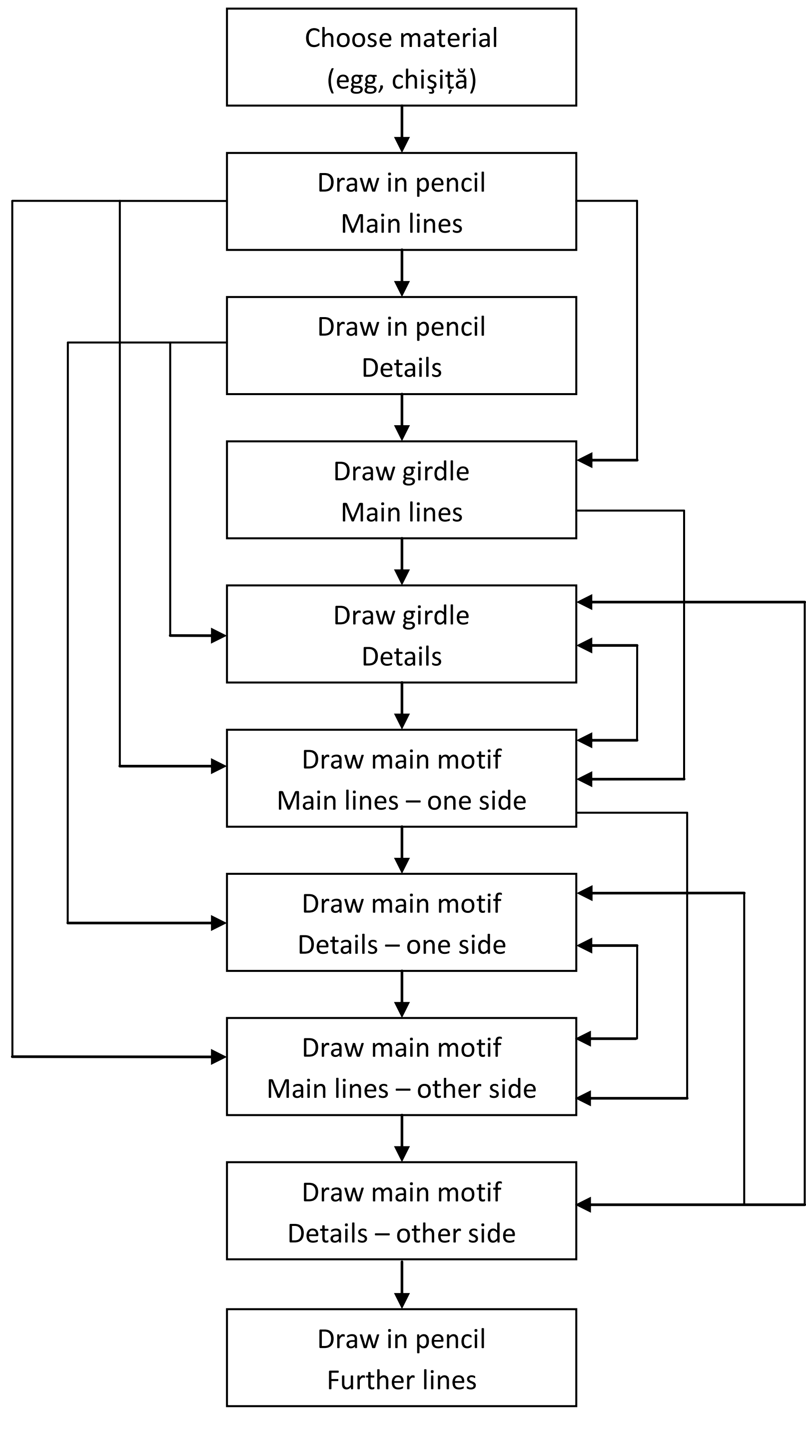


Figure 15. A typical activity chart and its observed variations (on the "white" stage)

This representation thus elaborates the “doing” part of the previous model from study one (Figure 10) without considering, for the moment, types of “undergoing”; it needs to be noted though that “looking at the result” was very common across the whole activity and especially between phases. In a *typical* succession of events, activity starts naturally with choosing materials, both eggs (in the workshop situation either fully white or with motifs already made in pencil, particularly in the case of novice decorators) and chişiță (again either from the workshop or brought from home). Most follow with drawing in pencil, main lines and some even the details (primarily beginners but not only). Those with the model already depicted can now make small additions or reinforce existing patters (e.g. Ancuța Nigă). Then wax decoration starts, on the whole, with drawing the main lines, and these are the lines of the girdle (longest of the pattern). They are doubled by virtually all decorators. Following this, the girdle is completed with details and then artisans pass to the central motif, main lines and details, on one side and then the other (“sides” here are created by the girdle). Within any one side further segmentations can be made, resulting in quadrants, usually four, and work can progress by focusing on opposing quadrants (normally holding symmetrical motifs). Finally, after finishing the “white” stage, some may use the pencil again to draw further lines, reminders of what is to be done on yellow and red.

There were many *variations* to this scheme as right and left side arrows in Figure 15 suggest. To start with, the use of pencil was not always continued by drawing main lines in wax and it was also not reserved for the beginning of the process exclusively. Main lines in pencil were sometimes made immediately afterwards in wax (Laura Niculiță, Mihaela Timu) and then details continued in pencil before using wax again. Also not all main lines or details were depicted in pencil at once, but completed or continued at different times in the decoration process (Ancuța, Mihaela, Niculina). The order of actions themselves varied and there was no one way for the decoration activity to proceed in. Variations in order of depiction between artisans were accounted for by respondents by making reference to the notion of “*personal style*” while variations within one’s own work routine were considered “*natural*” since there is no “*rule*” to say how the work should proceed (for as long as it achieves its desired outcome). For instance, in the case of working with wax, details were finished on one side, continued with the main motif on the other side and then again with details on the first side (Ancuța, Mihaela, Laura, Marilena) or main lines drawn before any details on both sides (Mihaela). The main motif was at times made before finalising the girdle (Ancuța, Marilena), for example drawing main lines on the belt followed by making the main lines of the central motif (Laura, Marilena) and details of the motif continued with the segmentation

of the girdle (Laura). What all these instances reflect is a *back and forth* type of motion where the typical sequence is disturbed generally by not finalising one kind of action and alternating between actions. Interview material clarified in many cases why these “interruptions” occurred and often explanations had to do with the fact that participants wanted to finish similar tasks first, to respect the principle of symmetry or, simply, to break the monotony of work and any routine associated with it.

5.4.2. Generality and specificity in craftwork

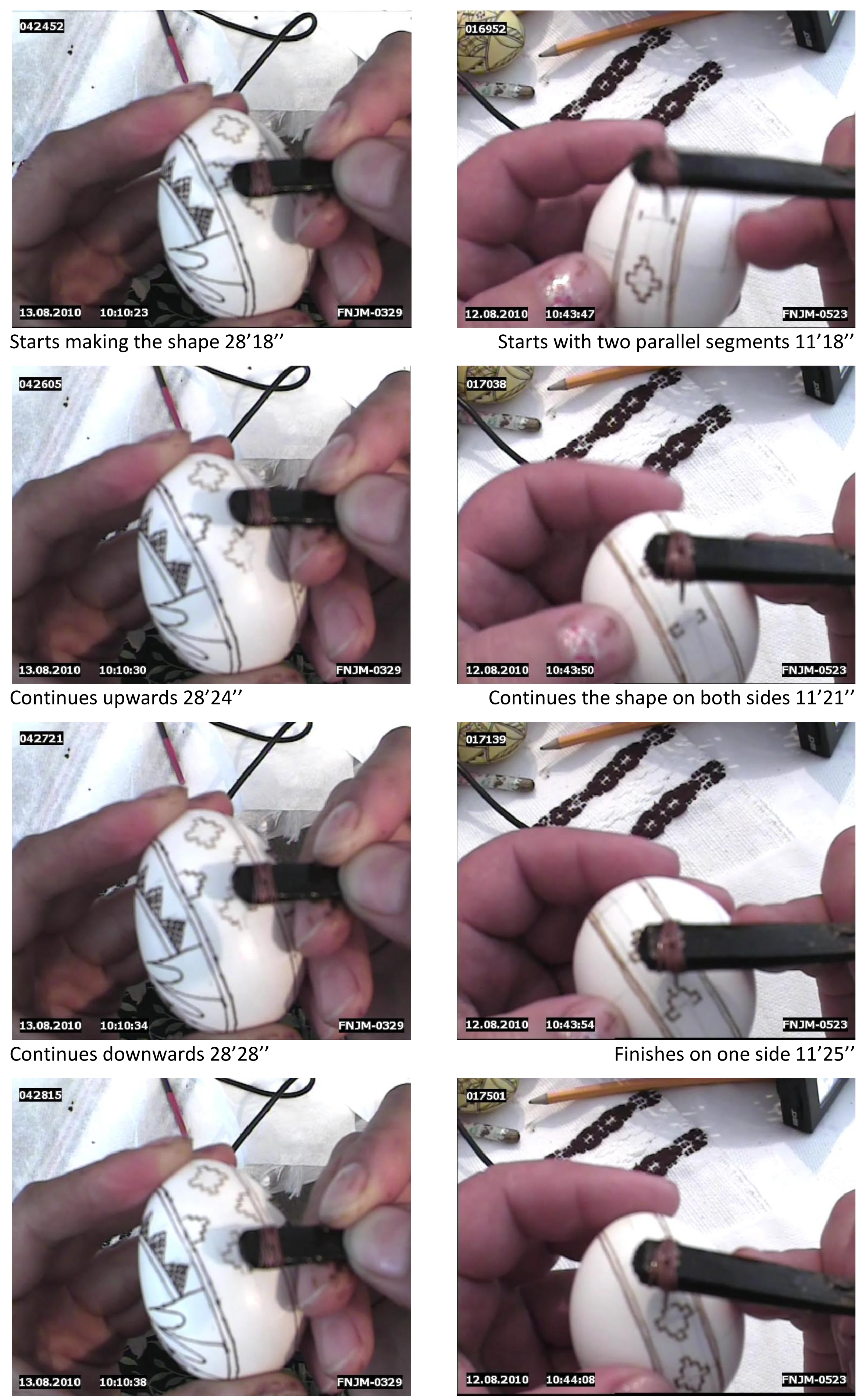
After analysing the course of activity as recorded and discussed by participants during confrontation interviews, it is important to further explore what was *common* across the sample and what were the elements that gave *specificity* to the work of particular individuals. To begin with, a general note here is that most decorators at the workshop had made eggs they knew from before and motifs they practiced for a long time. They possessed general “scripts” of decoration that did not exclude idiosyncrasies related to work preferences and age (see also next section). With the exception of Niculina who, after a first egg, wanted to “*take*” new motifs (a situation we will examine later on in more detail), and partially those who started an egg with motifs already made in pencil, all respondents had an idea of what it was they wanted to represent. However, in agreement with the dynamic outlined in Figure 14, this idea was general and became specified as the work progressed. For instance, in decorating a second egg, with a “lost way” type of girdle, Mihaela decided “*on the spot*” what to put on the sides, since “*there were many options to choose from*”. In any case, due to accumulated experience of decoration, most participants also knew what was to be “left” for yellow and red even when the actual model made had not been done before entirely. They were guided in such situations by a few basic principles of decoration (e.g. nets are made on white or yellow, filling of the double line is red, etc.) and also by personal preferences (for certain colours; for example Luminița’s liking of yellow and white).

Another interesting aspect captured by the camera was the relationship decorators had with work instruments, in particular their *chişiță*. It could be noticed that all participants easily recognised their chişiță and this happened in most cases before working on the egg, just by looking at it. Selecting a chişiță to decorate with though is not an easy process, even when you come with your own set as Niculina did, and several changes can be made during the activity (e.g. Marilena’s case). What were decorators looking for in a chişiță? Interviews revealed a unanimous consideration that a good chişiță is one that “*writes well*” and this

means it applies wax on the egg in a continuous manner, with no interruptions. This quality is complemented by others, for instance the "thickness" of the writing (i.e. "thinner" instruments are used to draw, "thicker" ones for filling). During work other particular gestures could be observed. For example, leaving the chişiță in the wax can between moments of drawing on the egg was something strongly present in the case of Ancuța and her mother Niculina, and sometimes also in that of Laura and Marilena. In the words of Niculina, this is done because "*wax catches on better*". Also, before working on the egg with the chişiță, now full of wax, most first touched it on their fingernail, a habit prompted by the fact that bigger quantities of wax can be accidentally dropped during the first application.

Another notable instrument of decoration is the *pencil* and its use demonstrates again patterns of similarity and difference between artisans. Drawing the motifs in pencil before making them in wax was common across participants but what varied largely was how much detail was in fact needed. For instance Cristina made only the main lines in pencil, just to have some basic reference points, while many of the others drew more, including the main motifs. What is particularly interesting is the fact that Ancuța drew details in pencil for part of the segments of the belt but not all, saying afterwards that they were not needed, that now she "*knew*". She also changed in wax some lines made before in pencil, as she went on. This shows a relative independence from what was previously sketched and also suggests that drawing in pencil might be done not only to guide decoration in wax but also as a kind of "motor practice" anticipating action. Pencil work itself was not a necessity for all people in all cases (or even for the same person at all times; for example Mihaela didn't need helping lines for the first egg but used them for the second, more "*complicated*" model) and can be transgressed. Finally, the use of pencil doesn't characterise preparation stages alone and can be found later when, for instance, decorators finish work and want to remember what to do in the next phases (Mihaela, Ancuța).

Perhaps the most eloquent example though of how subcam recordings help outline the individuality of work in the case of each decorator has to do with *drawing procedures*. Being a central feature of traditional Easter egg making, a number of motifs are commonly used by all decorators. This gives continuity to folk art and substantiates a sense of national and local identity. Nevertheless, beside the fact that when the same motif is made by different decorators it is never virtually identical (something we will return to towards the end of this chapter), the technical aspects of how the motif is made can also vary. An illustration of this is offered in Figure 16 where two ways of making the same traditional motif are juxtaposed.



Starts making the shape 28’18’’

Starts with two parallel segments 11’18’’

Continues upwards 28’24’’

Continues the shape on both sides 11’21’’

Continues downwards 28’28’’

Finishes on one side 11’25’’

Finishes the shape 28’32’’

Finishes the other side 11’40’’

Figure 16. Making the same motif using two procedures (left Marilena Niculiță, right Niculina Nigă)

This particular belt model takes inspiration from the decoration of houses in Ciocăneşti and the "pyramid"-like shape is quite specific in the region. In depicting it Marilena (left) adopted an orderly approach by starting from one of the sides and continuously making the top, than the other side and finally the bottom. In contrast, Niculina (right) employed a more "strategic" technique of fist making the two sides, then the whole top and, after turning the egg around, the bottom segments. The results were quite similar in both cases (although shapes are not identical and it can also be noticed how, for Marilena, the belt displays half-motifs on the margins as well which are not found in Niculina's model) but differently generated. This comes to testify that, in the case of craftwork, combinations and small changes in content are complemented by different, personal ways of representing the same content. *Procedural creativity* – the ability to discover and use new work techniques for representing specific motifs – is thus an integral part of the craft and noticing it requires a shift in attention from "what" is made to "how" things are made.

Finally, some observations relating to generality and specificity point towards forms of *material and social undergoing*, specific ways of interacting with the physical environment and with other people, particularly family members. It was common across the sample for respondents to turn around and look at the egg quickly every time a segment of work was completed (even minor details), or when the chişiță was left in wax for a few moments (predominantly in the case of Ancuța). Why did decorators proceed like this? Confrontation interviews revealed the following: younger artists wanted to see if they didn't miss anything, others like Mihaela looked to see if she "*liked it*" because "*first, I need to like it*". More experienced decorators often looked back at their work to remind themselves of what is to be done next and check "*if everything is perfect*" as Cristina put it. Other reasons included looking to see if the wax was still on the egg since sometimes, depending on room temperature, if can fall off (Marilena). The constant monitoring of one's work progress confirms Cranach's (1982, p. 64) vision of goals as both action-preceding (since all decorators have an idea of what the outcome should look like) and action-accompanying (since this envisioned outcome needs to be checked and, at times, changed in more or less profound ways). Changes can come about through talking with others, including asking for advice. It was noticed from the videos that while a number of participants tended to work in silence (indeed Mihaela said she prefers it), others were more talkative and open to social interaction (Laura). Some of these differences can be accounted for in terms of novice-expert distinctions, considered next.

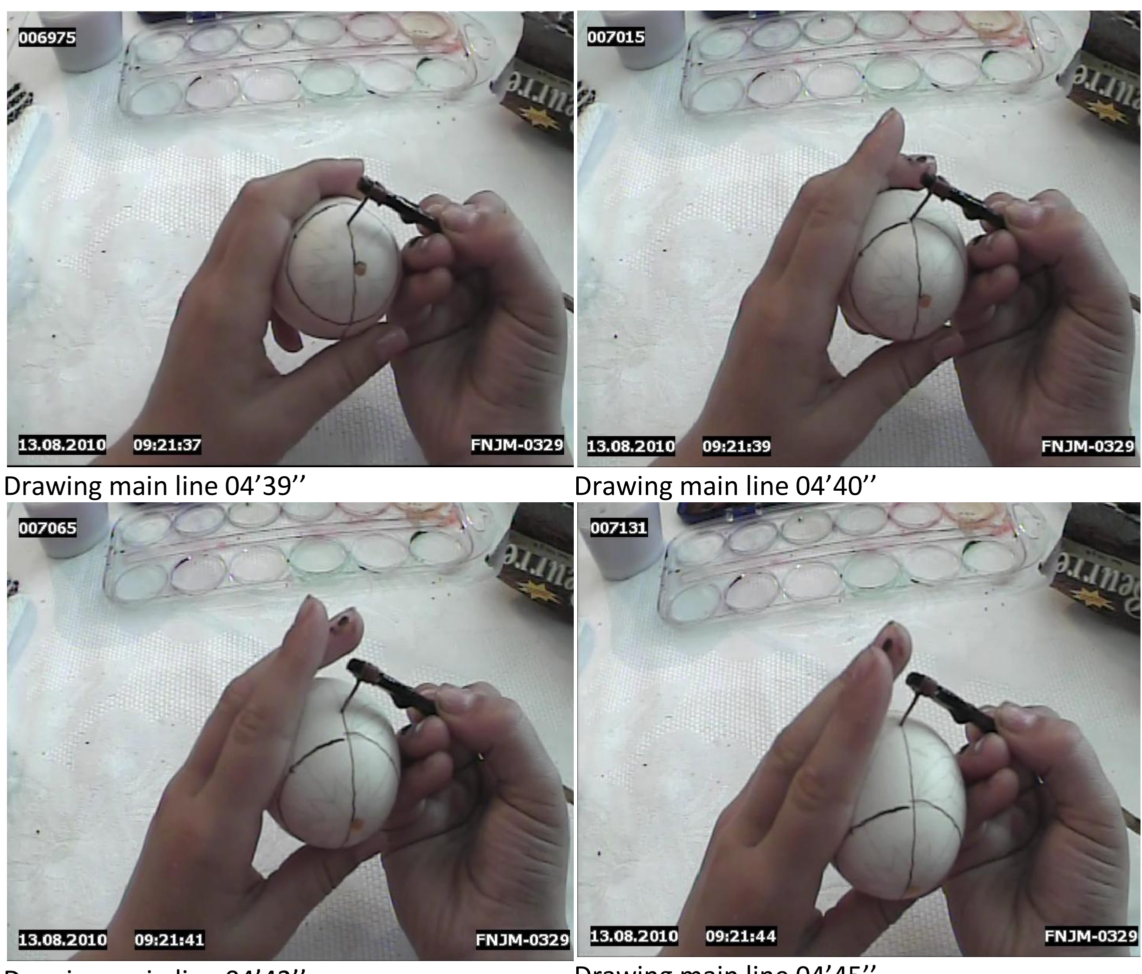
5.4.3. Expert – novice differences: Building expertise

A major source of variation within recorded material can be attributed to differences between experts and novices. Several of these have been alluded to from above and, even in study one, respondents made comments related to this distinction (e.g. when saying that beginners don't start with double lines but use the single line more often, etc.). It has to be mentioned in any case that being an expert or a novice depends on the comparison term and there is more of a *continuum* between the two rather than a strict delineation. For the purposes of our discussion here the three child participants (Ancuța, Laura and Luminița, aged 12, 12 and 8 respectively) can be considered novices due to their age and years of experience. Differences from (but also similarities with) more experienced decorators will be highlighted with regard to a number of criteria: timing of work, drawing technique, stages of decoration, forms of undergoing, knowledge base and outcomes. As a final note, the complete coding of subfilms by Luminița Niculiță (a child decorator) and Niculina Nigă (an expert decorator) is included in Appendix VIII of the thesis.

Arguably the most immediate dissimilarity between the two "groups" noticed from video recordings had to do with the *time of working continuously* on the surface of the egg. This was observably higher for experts (20-30 second on average) than for beginners (10-15 seconds). Certainly, timing varied according to circumstance (or the chişiță used) and more experienced craftswomen didn't always work for longer intervals; nonetheless, it can be assumed based on observation that they *could* decorate faster and in a more continuous manner. Niculina for instance was recorded working for half a minute to a minute at times without inserting the chişiță in wax. Novice decorators also appeared to take a small pause before actually applying the chişiță on the egg, perhaps evaluating very quickly where to start from and get to with the line. On the whole they talked more during decoration and were more easily distracted (Laura). There were exceptions to this however, and the youngest participant, Luminița, seemed to be quite focused on the task at hand.

Beside the timing aspect, the *work technique* was not fully mastered by novices, something to be expected considering their young age. In fact, beginners in decoration of all ages continuously learn the craft and perfect their drawing abilities. Experts learn as well but their learning has to do less with the "motor" aspects and more with new motifs and procedures of decoration. Returning to child novices, they tended to have their models made first in pencil and often by someone else. This was the case of Luminița who, at eight

years of age, is among the youngest students of the craft. One of the most problematic aspects for her (and many other beginners for this matter) was how to draw straight lines on the round surface of the egg (it requires supporting the egg and holding the chişiță in a particular way). This aspect demonstrates the importance of *sensorimotor coordination* for the act of egg decoration, something which is not only developed in time, as children grow, but also requires long hours of practice to be perfected and turned into skill. Figure 17 illustrates this effort and the way in which Luminița proceeded by slightly rotating the egg and gradually lifting up her fingers, one by one, to make room for the advancing line. By moving her fingers while working she stopped having a good grip of the egg which resulted in a rather shaky or discontinuous aspect of the line. This is certainly not an economical way of drawing motifs and, what more experienced artisans advise others, is to rotate the egg more without lifting the chişiță or their fingers. For them drawing lines is an effortless job considering the "*years and years of doing this*" (Mihaela).



Drawing main line 04'39''

Drawing main line 04'40''

Drawing main line 04'42''

Drawing main line 04'45''

Figure 17. Drawing a main straight line on the egg (Luminița Niculiță)

Moreover, novices were also less *organised* / *systematic* in their work and often didn't finish one set of elements completely before passing to the next (e.g. Ancuța and Laura compared to Cristina and Mihaela). They more frequently departed from the "typical" activity flow described in Figure 16 and this manages to increase the time of decoration (having to go back to certain portions) as well as the probability that some segments are forgotten. But even more seasoned decorators like Mihaela, who on the whole seemed to progress rather systematically, didn't repeat the same succession of moves for all models (and said that "*it is not necessary, it is no rule*"). Niculina is here the best example of an expert with a less "regular" work process, oftentimes drawing in pencil, then in wax, and pencil again, or revisiting what she has done before to complete the motif. As such, the personal style element can come to blur novice - expert distinctions. On the whole however, these differences can also be attributed to age and the years of experience that separate novices and experts and make them relate to the "rule" of decoration differently. If apprentices seem to be less organised it is because they are making an effort to internalise the rule, adopt it as well as they can considering their level of sensorimotor coordination; we often notice a disorderly type of moment *in search of skill*. Expert folk artists, on the other hand, can follow a less regular process at times because they know the rule and can adapt it to their purpose and different circumstances of work; changes are made deliberately *in search of perfection* rather than skill.

In terms of *undergoing* beginners tended to look more at the result of their work and they did so to see if "*anything was missed*" or if symmetry was respected. Ancuța in particular had the habit of turning around the egg at very short intervals, a routine gesture that allowed her to regularly perceive the work in its entirety. Quite the opposite, decorators like Mihaela didn't look much at the result (except towards the end) since they "*know how it should be*" and are "*sure*" of it. Furthermore, although no major corrections were made on the egg by any participant overall, novices did use the rubber or razor slightly more often (Luminița also used her fingernail to remove wax). This happened in the case of Niculina when she tried to learn a new motif, which raises an interesting observation that experts turn into "beginners" when faced with a novel situation. The difference might be though, in these cases, that professional decorators do not necessarily require help from others. In contrast, beginners regularly ask others (including peers) for help and advice. Their knowledge of meanings and techniques is developing and when they are young they don't usually know the name or meaning of the motifs they are making (not completely uncommon among experts either). In terms of procedures it was also less clear for some of

the youngest participants like Luminița what exactly needs to remain on yellow and red for a particular motif. In all these instances elders were asked and a "*socially* distributed reservoir of meanings" (Luckmann, 1982, p. 256) accessed in constant processes of internalisation and learning of the craft (see Chapter 6).

Last but not least, another easily observed distinction relates to the *final outcome*, both the quantity and quality of it. In our researched group, on the whole, beginners did not finish the whole egg on white during a work session (and when they did some little elements were forgotten; this is not reserved only for novices though and can be due to previous moments of interruption). On the other hand, experts were more productive in a roughly equivalent period of time, Mihaela and Niculina finishing two eggs on white each and Cristina making one egg on white and yellow and two other eggs on yellow and red respectively. As for evaluations, younger decorators were certainly more self-critical of their work (Luminița and Laura) and even wondered if they could "*give it another try*". This "struggle for perfection" represents an important motivation to learn and develop one's work, a strong premise supporting the continuous accumulation of expertise (Ericsson, 2006).

In summary, a study of the micro-genesis of decoration in the case of child participants comes to show the importance of *repeated action* in the construction of skill and tradition. Each decorated egg adds something to the internalisation process, to the consolidation of skill and this effort is not only a personal one but a joint effort shared with those who explain and demonstrate decoration procedures or with peers who learn from each other. Creative egg decoration requires a form of *mastery* and this theme will be developed further in the final discussion of the thesis (Chapter 7).

5.5. Integrating findings: What makes egg decoration creative?

Up until this point two studies that look at decoration activities were presented. Both used a combination of interview and observation to capture action, its organisation and situated nature in urban and rural settings. However, the overarching aim of this chapter is to uncover the microgenesis of creativity in craftwork. For this to be possible it was necessary to understand, in detail, what craftwork involves and how it takes place. On a few occasions the results highlighted explicitly the creative dimension of Easter egg decoration but it is now the moment to integrate findings in this regard. The main question to be addressed here is: *What makes Easter egg decoration a creative type of activity?*

To answer this question we need to go back to the pragmatist model of action outlined at the beginning of this chapter (Figure 10). Its main elements were the self and the world or environment, linked by a continuous cycle of doing and undergoing (action and perception). The action of the self was also informed by previous experiences (undergoing before doing) and different motivations (impulsion). Action itself was impacted by a series of obstacles and resulted in certain emotional states (leading to "fulfilment", characteristic for any experience). In light of our findings presented above we can now abstract several features of these elements that *foster creative expression*. For instance, each creator embodies a personal style of decoration, alimented by the desire to create, curiosity, and based on the existence of certain skills. This style is usually informed by the general "rules" of the craft and defined, at the level of action, by the exploration and/or combination of existing rules, colours and motifs. Obstacles may intervene during activity, sometimes due also to the changing nature of the work environment, and what the artisan is undergoing is not an exact replica of a motif but the experience of motifs being "translated", changed as part of the very process of depiction. Finally, this dynamic usually results in feelings of joy and pride in one's work and, in the case of rural decorators, in the emergence of a creative identity. A summary of these characteristics is offered in Figure 18 below and, as follows, several elements of this diagram will be analysed in detail – motivations, processes of exploration and combination, copying and translation, personal style and creativity as identity.

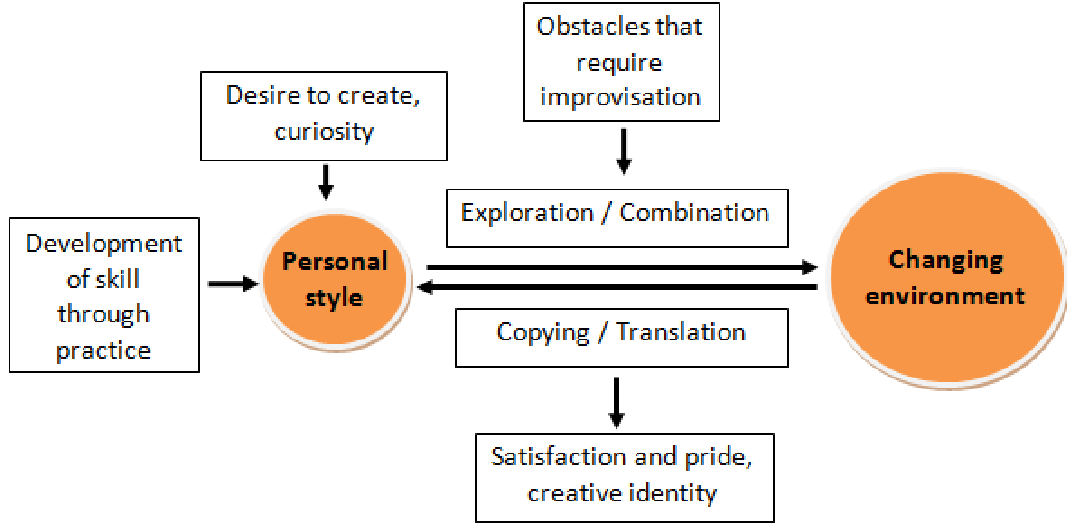


Figure 18. The characteristics of creative action in Easter egg decoration

To begin with, in both urban and rural settings one of the main *impulsions* for engaging in this type of work relates directly to a desire to generate novelty and curiosity for the final

outcome. There is a certain intentionality of creation, within of course the framework of a traditional practice. Craftswomen such as Maria Ciocan acknowledged this when saying that she is constantly thinking "*what to make new*" and, in the city, several respondents took pride in "*wanting to change things all the time*", being able to make the best with what they had, to adapt and "*improvise*" (U1). Adding a personal note is often a preoccupation in both contexts, perhaps more pronounced in Ciocăneşti where several transformations can be noticed between how things were made and how they are now. "Old" decoration, still very much appreciated and required at festivals, involved simpler motifs, no varnish, and working on chicken eggs. Today most eggs are heavily ornated and this is because people felt the need to "*add something*" (anonymous), to create eggs that are "*more beautiful, embellished, catchy [ochioase], for others to have what to see on them*" (Maria Istrate; also Ionela). A general drive to perfect tradition leads in this case to creative expression through "conscious attempts at improving habitual action" (Dalton, 2004, p. 610; see also Chapter 7).

Image 14. Exploring the possibility of using leaves when colouring (U2)

How does this creativity come about? It has been argued in study one that perhaps slightly different mechanisms function in the two settings, catalogued as processes of *exploration and combination*. The wish to explore marks both stages of preparation and work for respondents from Bucharest. For the former stage we can take the example of U4 who, being keen on creating natural colour pigments, had "*experimented*" with a variety of plants for this purpose: spinach or nettle to obtain green, red beet for red and onion leaves for

yellow/brown. During actual decoration new ideas are constantly tried out, with more or less successful outcomes. U2 for instance, while colouring eggs by hand (with colours that don't require boiling), tried at some point to apply a leaf on the egg and roll it in colour afterwards (see Image 14). This was an attempt to use an existing technique in a new context and, although it didn't fully succeed (since the leaf was not properly fixed on the egg), it was something the person just "*had to try*".

The combinatorial dynamic of rural decoration is not itself void of exploration. It is a common misconception about craft that everything is known by the artisan in advance. This is well reflected in the work of Collingwood who, in a classic separation of art and crafts, claimed the latter to be, among other things, the result of "preconceived" ideas; in his words, "the craftsman knows what he wants to make before he makes it" (Collingwood, 1938, pp. 15-16). In contrast, the two studies above have shown that, while decoration work starts indeed from a general idea, the path from idea to realisation is never linear. Dewey's (1934) notion of the cycle between doing and undergoing points to this and its utility for understanding craftwork has been repeatedly emphasised. The eggs "*come out [when] working*" (Elena) and "*when you work all sorts of ideas come to your mind*" (Maria Timu). There is no routine or preset schema that could "determine" how an egg should be decorated from beginning to end. Consequently, one of the most frequent questions folk artists ask themselves while working is "*what could I make here?*" (Marilena). The nature of craft is not one of mechanical repetition but conscious engagement with the changing conditions of work in the here and now (see also the final discussion, Chapter 7). This is why every egg is not progressively made, but "*discovered*" (Maria Timu). And there is little surprise for why this is the case since "no schema can provide all the details of every situation, and no habit can anticipate the contours of each moment in which it may be invoked" (Dalton, 2004, p. 615; similar idea in Ingold & Hallam, 2007). In the end we can safely talk about the unpredictability of craftwork, given that "*I start a model but when I finish it is completely different, it is something else*" (Elena).

In rural egg decoration creativity is thus defined principally by *combination and change*. These two processes shape the outcomes of work since, with no exception, participants do not normally even attempt to make the same model on more eggs (except perhaps when there is a special order), nor would they like to; on the contrary. "*I put one more line, I take a motif from there, one from there, I combine them*" (Marcela). "*Mixing, always mixing*" (anonymous) motifs is associated with changing them in several ways. For example colours

can be changed (Maria Istrate) or the position on the egg, obtaining a different effect (Maria Ciocan). Accidents have their value in this context. Making a mistake can "*change the whole model*" (Maria Ciocan) and very often for the better. This is also acknowledged in the literature about decoration, where authors like Zahacinschi and Zahacinschi (1992, p. 32) for instance consider how "errors" in decoration can be taken as starting points for new artistic developments. At times these changes, intentional or unintentional, stand out, other times they can hardly be perceived, and yet they are present: "*you can think it is identical [to other eggs], but it is not*" (Larisa). Image 15 below illustrates such "family resemblances" between three different versions of the same basic motif: the lost way or labyrinth.

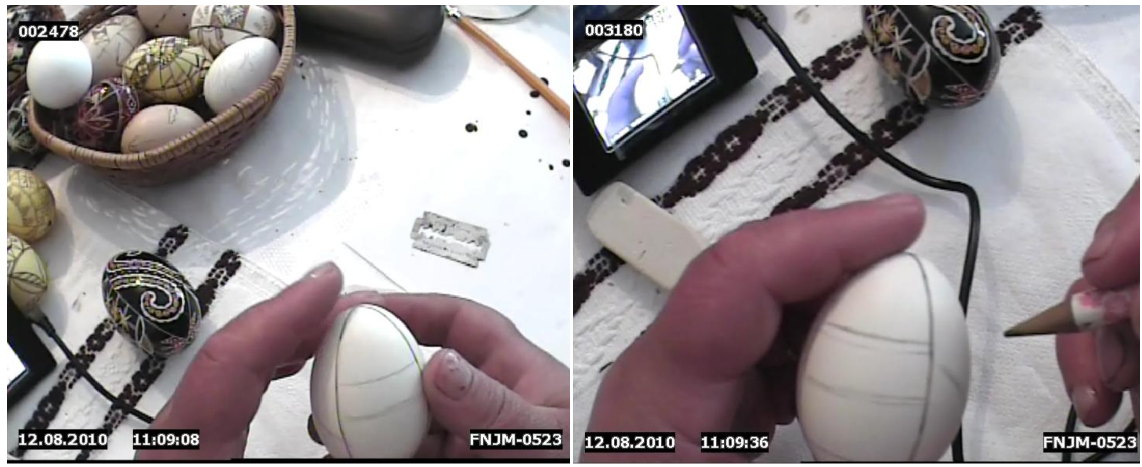
Image 15. Versions of the "lost way" motif (Cristina Timu)

However, even when these persistent variations are accepted, a common belief remains that craft involves in the end a lot of *copying* (of perfect and unchanged duplication). Urban decoration is marked by the use of very basic procedures but at least, in this regard, the results can have a high degree of divergence (U6 describes for example the "*freedom*" she gives her children in deciding what to make on the egg and how). Traditional decoration, on the other hand, is much more often suspected of the sin of plagiarism (Cincura, 1970), of endlessly reproducing the same forms. Folk artists challenge such assumptions. First of all each and every egg is said to have "*something special, set aside*" (Marilena) and many are ready to bet that no two identical outcomes can be found in their work of hundreds of eggs (Valerica). They couldn't be in any case as no two eggs have the exact same size, shape and colour! Interestingly, even if artisans would like to make identical eggs that would be very

hard and copying requires an *effort* not considered worth making; boredom comes in after the second (similar) egg and a change is required (Maria Ciocan). There are perhaps two instances in which closer reproduction is sought: when learning the craft (based on exercising the same motifs, see also Chapter 6) and when aiming to make "old" eggs with very traditional models (since they need to be "*respected*", "*you can't add anything to a carpet on the wall, it is as your grandmother made it*"; Valerica).

Figure 19 below reflects a situation caught on camera in which an expert decorator (Niculina) found a new motif that she liked and wanted to copy and keep. Fitting the model on a new egg is not an easy task and the use of the rubber becomes necessary. What is more important though is the declared intention of the participant: not to make the whole motif as it is but to capture "*the main idea*", to schematise it because she will be able to change or add to it later ("*from a single [model] I make several*"). The above example raises the issue of *translation* as a process through which new models are adopted and transformed instead of simply "copied". Decorators from the village of Ciocăneşti live in a world of symbolic resources useful for their craft. These come from decorations on houses, on clothes, on carpets and tablecloths, etc. Motifs from all of these sources and more are "*taken*" and immediately tailored to suit current needs: "*I saw a carpet, it seemed to me that it could be made on the egg, I instantly made a sketch, and after that I add from myself if I can, if not I take some things out*" (Valerica Juşcă). In any case, models never remain the same, they are "*adapted*" and it all depends on how they are "*visualised*" (Maria Ciocan).

One clear source of inspiration is the work of others, typically encountered at festivals. Rivalries can then be born between decorators from different regions based on how some might have replicated the models of others. This idea is refuted by people like Elena who claim that, even when "*taken*", motifs are translated into what is traditional in her own region and this involves changes in both shape and colour (see also a similar argument about the transformation of cultural forms in Bartlett, 1932). Even in the case of former models collected in notebooks by virtually all decorators, they only serve as points of departure for current work (Ionela). Motifs are sometimes altered to such an extent that they are later kept as self-creations (Elena). Of course not all decorators are equally open to change and they all reject radical change. "*I like to create, to come with something new, but not modify much, eggs need to still be traditional for Ciocăneşti*" (Cristina). One "*interprets*" tradition but does not depart from it and for many aspects there might not be any correction to be made or improvement added, "*you took them as good and you have to keep them*" (Dănuț).



Starts pencil drawing after model 01’39’’ Checks what she made on one side 02’07’’

Positions the model better 02’12’’ Finishes the motif on one side 02’58’’

Erases what she did on other side 03’00’’ Finishes the motif on other side 03’09’’

Figure 19. Trying to copy a motif, drawing in pencil (Niculina Nigă)

What changes amount to, for as “minor” as they may be, is a *personal style*. In the words of folk artists, “*I have personalised my work*” (Maria Ciocan), “*brought a personal note*” (Larisa). More than this, due to the fact that decorators know how things are usually done or motifs

look like, they can and do distinguish the "new" in their work and the work of others. And they remember it, as Ionela does, being able to single out moments of innovation and models she has "*created*" (see Image 16). The sources of such creations are acknowledged but yet don't seize to be a reason of pride and individuality. Indeed there is much room for identity in craftwork and creative identities are forged, recognised, and respected. "*Each decorator has something specific, something distinguishable, each decorator from the village has her work and we know it*" (Marilena). This work is identifiable and participants demonstrated they could tell which egg was made by whom. Personal work especially is recognised, even after many years, "*even from a thousand other eggs*" (Cristina). This is also why sharing motifs is not considered giving them away; it is because every artisan has her style that the same motif will look different in each case (Larisa). Seeing a beautiful model at a neighbour and deliberately wanting to make it the same – "*it will still be different*" (Maria Ciocan). No one can thus say "*you've stolen this egg from me!*" (Valerica).

Image 16. A novel motif, created by Ionela Țăran

Finally we can ask how egg decorators relate to their activity and how they *evaluate* it, including in terms of creativity. Is the creativity discovered in practice matched at the level of representation? This is a difficult question and the answer to it depends on how respondents understand creativity (see also Chapter 4). In the urban setting most participants did not appreciate their activity as necessarily creative or at least highly creative (this also reminds of self-reflections by priests, ethnographers and art teachers from the previous chapter). It was seen more as a form of "*play*" resulting in outcomes that are "*too*

simple" (U7) and "*anybody can make*" (U8). This is especially the case when the comparison term is traditional decoration, generally thought to involve real "*work*" (U3) and to generate true "*beauty*" (U8). However, when considered in their own right, urban "creations" got a more positive review and some tended to think that "*if it came out of your own hands*" (U1) it "*represents something and expresses something*" (U9). In the rural setting there is no doubt about this last point and yet not everyone was ready to acknowledge displaying a lot of creativity. There is humbleness in self appreciation since folk artists don't think they can take credit for their art: "*I can't say it belongs to me. There are eggs that I 'turned' from one side to the other, that I modified, that I can say 'yes, this is from me' but no... everything came from somewhere else*" (Maria Istrate).

A particular reading of creativity as absolute novelty emerging out of thin air seems to be at work here as well (see Chapter 1, the He-paradigm, for details). And yet there is also pride. Pride in belonging to a tradition and advancing it (Dănuț Zimbru). In the end, "*if we wouldn't create the tradition would be lost. If we wouldn't take tradition forward what would happen to it?*" (Larisa Ujică). The *identity* of an egg decorator from the village of Ciocăneşti is thus shaped simultaneously by tradition and innovation; it is an identity of a creator that is at work, an almost "collective creator" that cannot exist outside of a social and historical context, having the double task of maintaining and generating, conserving and advancing what is passed down from generation to generation.

5.6. Conclusion: Final reflections on the process of externalisation

The present chapter focused on processes of creative externalisation in two socio-cultural milieus in Romania. These processes were conceptualised with the help of the psychology of action and in particular its pragmatist sources. Dewey's (1934) model of human experience, taken here as a starting point for the analysis of decoration activities, is compatible with our tetradic model presented in Chapter 1. In fact what is called in the latter externalisation is never a unitary process but one that requires micro-cycles of doing and undergoing, of "externalising" through action and "internalising" through perception. This is an interesting aspect to consider as we move, in the next chapter, to a study of internalisation and how it constitutes the basis for further creative expression. The focus there will be on different ontogenetic stages and practices of socialisation in the same environments studied above (Bucharest and Ciocăneşti) while here we considered the microgenesis of craft in the moment-to-moment connection between creator and his/her social and material world.

Our findings regarding what constitutes creativity in craftwork resonate with the writings of other authors who studied this particular domain. Richard Sennett (2008) for example, another pragmatist thinker, described the work of craftsmen in very similar terms when he referred to the "intimate connection between hand and eye" (p. 9), the "rhythm" these two establish in the case of every artisan. This dynamic perspective connects with Dewey's view of artistic action and, more broadly, with contemporary "extended mind" theories (Clark & Chalmers, 1998) and a vision of *cognition as distributed, external and situated* (see Lave, 1988; Shore, 1996; Dennett, 2002). Such a rich theoretical soil is much more fertile for the study of creative externalisations than classic cognitive models looking exclusively "inside" the mind of the creator. Trying to advance these comprehensive frameworks to the study of creativity is one of the main aims of a cultural psychological approach to this phenomenon.

6. Creativity as cultural participation: A developmental perspective

Chapter summary

This chapter explores the internalisation of egg decoration practices in urban and rural Romania as an essential part of the development of creativity in these two different socio-cultural milieus. It starts by critically reviewing the literature on children's creativity and elaborating a cultural psychological account of the phenomenon, focused on the vital role of cultural participation for human development. Inspiration is drawn from Vytogky's (1978) work concerning the importance of symbolic, mediated activity for the emergence of creativity and imagination in children. Through processes of socialisation and enculturation children internalise norms and representations while at the same time transforming them in innovative ways. The research presented here aims to investigate the developing creative engagement of children with the cultural practice of Easter egg decoration, and for this purpose a total of 70 respondents were selected, students in first, fourth and seventh grade in Bucharest and Ciocăneşti. First and fourth graders were given a drawing task, to decorate a typical Easter egg "from home" and an Easter egg they "want", followed by interview, and a smaller number of seventh graders were observed working directly on the egg. Results indicate that more colours are generally employed in decoration by children from the rural context, especially fourth graders. In addition, while most home eggs were depicted monochrome, particularly in the urban setting, wanted eggs were on the whole polychrome, in all cases for children from the village. In terms of the model / motifs on wanted eggs, there was a tendency for children of lower ages (especially in the urban setting) to use more figurative elements in decoration and for children of higher ages to depict mostly geometric or geometric and figurative elements. In the end two broad patterns of engagement with the craft are abstracted, one that involves "making the unfamiliar familiar" and characterises the efforts of younger children to appropriate a unique cultural practice, and the other "making the familiar unfamiliar", specific for fourth and seventh graders who, acutely aware of certain norms of decoration, decide to incorporate them selectively.

> "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: First, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people *(interpsychological),* and then *inside* the child *(intrapsychological)*" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

The previous chapter opened a discussion concerning "novices" and Easter egg decoration, their involvement with the craft and its particular features. The present research expands this question of development and does so from the particular standpoint of cultural psychology whose essence is well captured by the above quote, considering *development a social and cultural phenomenon*. Indeed, for Vygotsky "the path through another person is the central track of development of practical intellect" (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 532) and, more broadly, of higher mental functions. Creativity makes no exception in this regard. The cultural framework proposed in Chapter 1 is based on the assumption that creative expression is necessarily preceded by processes of internalisation and enculturation taking place over ontogenetic time (at the level of microgenesis, discussed in the previous chapter, a similar assumption was formulated by stressing forms of "undergoing before doing"). How exactly internalisation of the craft, its norms and symbols, differs in urban and rural settings and how this difference, in turn, is reflected by children's developing creative engagement with the craft constitutes the topic of the research presented next.

At a more general level, we are concerned here with the relationships between *creativity and development*, both "processes of emergence in complex systems" (Sawyer, 2003, p. 5), in the context of community life. If creative accomplishments can and need to be understood also as developmental shifts (Feldman, 1999, p. 170), then it is true that "the basic problem of developmental psychology is how to explain the persistent construction of novelty" (Oliveira & Valsiner, 1997, p. 119). For too long development has been conceptualised as "predetermined" and "linear" at the expense of theories that emphasise its variations, intrinsic creativity and social dimensions. Our view of this phenomenon is very much in line with that of Barbara Rogoff who argued that "human development is a process in which people transform through their ongoing participation in cultural activities, which in turn contribute to changes in their cultural communities across generations" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 37). This conception *grounds developmental processes in community practices and cultural activities*, recognising the simultaneously stable and dynamic nature of the latter. Easter egg decoration is an instance of "cultural activity" (see Chapter 2) and, as such, it depends on human creativity while at the same time offering a perfect context for its

development. Considering this premise, the presentation will start with a brief overview of "mainstream" research on creativity development and then outline the key elements of a socio-cultural approach and relate it to processes of internalisation, socialisation and enculturation. Findings are discussed in light of this approach and the creative appropriation and transformation of decoration practices during childhood years.

6.1. Creativity and development

The empirical field of research into creativity development has been expanding steadily over the past decades (see Glăveanu, 2011d). Two *problems* tend to occupy the attention of researchers: one has to do with the "cross-sectional" question of whether creativity in children is manifested equally across different domains of activity or not (the issue of domain specificity or generality) and the second connects to a more "longitudinal" concern with the evolution of creative activity during childhood. For the first it seems there is strong ground for assuming that the creativity of children is predominantly domain-specific (see Han & Marvin, 2002). The *developmental trajectory of creativity* however is still disputed (Baer, 1996). A commonly held view is that of a U-shaped curve in artistic expression where:

> "The first part of the U refers to the apparently high level of creativity found among preschoolers; the trough of the U designates the period of literalness, when the child's artistic creations are less striking in the eyes of many observers; the triumphant resurgence of the U marks the attainment (on the part of at least some adolescents) of a new, higher level of artistic accomplishment" (Gardner, 1982, pp. 87-89).

How can this *creativity slump* (see Torrance, 1967; Lubart, 2003) be explained? Furthermore, what makes the "literal" stage necessarily uncreative? Gardner (1982) tackled such questions when he rightfully pointed to our relativity of standards: the gain in realism starting with the ages of seven and eight might be lamented nowadays but would have been considered "aesthetic progress" a hundred years ago. We can thus conclude along with Dudek (1973) that what we see at this stage is not necessarily a loss in creativity but a change in the *quality of expressiveness*. The development of thought and its increasingly analytic capacity "indicates actually more, not less, imagination" and prepares the ground for further achievements (Dudek, 1973, pp. 10-11).

The fact that we often fail to realise this reveals several *shortcomings* of our standard definition and measurement of children's creativity. To begin with, it is inherently hard to capture the "resourcefulness, ingenuity, and imagination used by adults and children in daily life" through paper-and-pencil tests (Arasteh, 1968, p. 100). Moreover, what we discover about cognitive development in the lab doesn't easily generalise beyond it (Gauvain, 2001) and creativity measures taken at early ages are notoriously incapable of predicting future performance (Dudek, 1973; Han & Marvin, 2002). Plus, what is found in Western industrialised countries cannot automatically be the "norm" for all children around the world (Valsiner, 1989). Outside of these methodological observations, deeper problems seem to plague our understanding of creativity and development. For instance a basic underlying assumption of much research in the field is that creativity (and psychological functions in general for this matter, see Rogoff, 2003) follows a *linear trajectory* from childhood to adulthood, despite some slumps and peaks. This is too broad to cover the different dimensions of creativity (Charles & Runco, 2001) and, for instance, "the story of artistic development is replete with declines, zigs, and zags, rather than following an automatic upward progression" (Gardner, 1982, p. 84). Second, we should not forget that studying "stages" like preschool, school years etc. doesn't say much about development per se which is concerned with dynamic aspects and transitions between stages (Valsiner, 1997). Finally, theories of children and behaviour often "fail to see the human being in active, interactionist terms" (Denzin, 1977, p. 20) and therefore abstract the child from her social and cultural context. This is how rules, norms and conventions that are part and parcel of this cultural background are cut off from creativity and become a marker of absence and loss (see the notion of "literal" stage) rather than an indispensable constituent and resource.

6.2. Creativity and development in a cultural context

In light of these critiques, the perspective adopted here starts from the premise that human development, together with the development of creativity, is *culture-inclusive* (see also Josephs & Valsiner, 2007, for a discussion of this notion). Usually cultural aspects, when acknowledged, have been considered in psychology to shape the "content" of development rather than its structure and course (Burman, 1994). This vision informs on the whole cross-cultural efforts but not cultural psychological ones. Cultural psychology considers biological, psychological and social systems to be open and therefore interdependent with their environment (Valsiner, 1997) in both form and substance. In this context, the following branch can be defined:

> "Culture-inclusive developmental psychology is a research paradigm that is primarily directed towards explaining how culture organizes the conditions for children's development, and how children assimilate these conditions, and simultaneously accommodate to them" (Valsiner, 1989, p. 5).

The image of the child as a lone scientist, developing "inside", is gradually dismantled by this "quiet revolution" within developmental psychology (Bruner & Haste, 1987, p. 1) which takes children to be social beings engaged in sense making activities with others in the world "outside". This is how the paramount role of *cultural participation* for the maturation, growth and fruition of all psychological functions, especially creativity, comes to the fore. The research presented next is thus very much based on Barbara Rogoff's (2003, pp. 3-4) assertion that "people develop as participants in cultural communities" and that development itself "can be understood only in light of the cultural practices and circumstances of [these] communities". Consequently, creativity also develops as children participate in the cultural practices of their community (Fernández-Cárdenas, 2008) and Easter egg decoration is certainly one of the practices that favours greatly creative expression and supports its development. Important to keep in mind though, cultural practices are very diverse and they find different manifestations in different communities. This is how individual engagement with craftwork needs to be studied *locally and contextually*, in line with the ethos of a psychology preoccupied with the "cultural history of the person in context" (Valsiner, 1997, p. 16). In fact, the tetradic framework proposed in Chapter 1, relating self to other and new artefact to existing cultural practices, is built on this principle of cultural participation. Processes of internalisation and externalisation that link creator, community, culture, and explain microcosmic, ontogenetic and sociogenetic change (Lawrence & Valsiner, 2003), are necessarily both active and constructive (Valsiner, 1997). There is interpretation and transformation when things are internalised as much as it is when they are externalised (Kuczynski & Navara, 2006) and this contributes to the dynamic nature of cultural practices and, with them, of community life itself.

Much of this vision and the cultural psychology approach to development is indebted to the groundbreaking work of Lev Vygotsky and hence it is important to discuss, albeit briefly, his *theory of development* and his thoughts on creativity and imagination (see also Chapter 1, section 1.2.1). Most famously, Vygotsky is credited for challenging the linear view of development and replacing it with an image of "a complex dialectical process characterized by periodicity, unevenness, metamorphosis and qualitative transformation" (Vygotsky, 1978,

p. 73). He distinguished, in the general process of development, two qualitatively different and yet interweaving lines: a) elementary processes of biological origin, and b) higher psychological functions of sociocultural origin (p. 46; also Vygotsky, 1929). Importantly, elementary processes, the first to appear, are gradually integrated and transformed during the course of childhood and adolescence through *mediated activity*, on which higher mental functions are based. The use of tools and signs, forms of mediation between subject and world and subject and him/herself respectively, represents a momentous achievement in our existence as human beings. Indeed, "the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge" (p. 24). It is when language and symbolic systems begin to be used that an authentic revolution takes place in our relationship to the world and action within it. The child starts to master situations and to master him/herself, to regulate activity with the help of speech (first external and gradually internalised), to plan ahead and escape the constraints of the here and now (Vygotsky, 2004).

Two observations are crucial here. The first is that for Vygotsky the symbolic function and use of language are unconceivable outside a social environment and child-adult relations. Second, the origins of creativity can also be found in this process of passing from direct to mediated forms of behaviour. Vygotsky was particularly concerned with this phenomenon and considered that: "one of the most important areas of child and educational psychology is the issue of creativity in children, the development of this creativity and its significance to the child's general development and maturation" (p. 11). It is no surprise then that he considered we can identity creative processes from very early ages and dedicated some of his writings to creativity and imagination in children and adolescents, as well as giftedness (see Vygotsky, 2004, 1991, 1926). His theory basically proposes that creative imagination is developed in *symbolic play* and in interaction with caregivers (Smolucha, 1992; see also Vygotsky, 1933, on play). The connection between creativity and play, central also for Piaget (1951) and Winnicott (1971), is marked by this interactive, social element. Vygotsky's conception has many practical and theoretical implications. At a practical level we can see how imagination and its development depend on the richness of social interactions and cultural experiences ("the first and most important law", Vygotsky, 2004, p. 14) and thus broadening the "horizon" of children is an educational imperative. At a more general level, the role of imagination itself for "all human mental activity" (p. 17) becomes transparent and leads us back to the notion of symbolic representation.

To *represent* “is central to the ontogenetic development of the human child” (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 10) and also the development of creativity. At about one and a half years of age children become capable of representing something (the signified) with the means of something else (the signifier) – the origins of the symbolic or semiotic function (Piaget & Inhelder, 1966). Being capable of symbolic activity is an enormous achievement, “in a sense, the greatest imaginative leap of all” (Gardner, 1982, p. 170) and the basis for later creative expression, from free play to high art and science. The question is of course how does this achievement come about? This is an interrogation that is too generous to be satisfactorily addressed in this (much more modest) context but it is worth emphasising here the fact that symbolic activity emerges along a developmental path leading from subjectivity and egocentrism to “a state of objective relativism” (Piaget, 1928, p. 134) and always with support from intersubjective relations and guided interactions with cultural artefacts.

The birth of representation is thus associated with the effort of *decentration* and the differentiation between self and world. The child in the first two years of life, step by step, “discovers himself by placing himself as an active object among the other active objects in a universe external to himself” (Piaget, 1954, p. 352). Without exception, all great developmental theorists referred to this fundamental process – “the infant’s journey from absolute dependence, through relative dependence, to independence” (Winnicott, 1990, p. 42) – associated with the critical dilemma of existing as an autonomous being (Erikson, 1959). This is directly relevant for our discussion since, as postulated by Winnicott (1971), creativity and cultural experience are twin-born in the potential space generated by symbolic representation (see also Glăveanu, 2009). The first “symbols” develop precisely to deal with the anxiety caused by the separation between a me and a not-me world, between child and caregiver. They are symbols aimed at recovering the lost union, connected to the first possessions of the child. With “an infant’s employment of a transitional object, the first not-me possession, we are witnessing both the child’s first use of a symbol and the first experience of play” (Winnicott, 1971, p. 76). This creative play will constitute the basis for engaging with and contributing to cultural life and its myriad of other symbols and practices.

Symbolic representation in this view is “the quintessential activity of the potential space; indeed it creates potential spaces” (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 31) and creative action both requires and enriches symbolic systems of representation. The *theory of social representations* (SRT) offers a useful framework to integrate the insights above since it recognises the social and creative dimensions of our knowledge systems and their

developing nature from early childhood onwards (Moscovici, 1984). In fact, SRT's concern for developmental processes and the construction of social representations made Duveen and Lloyd (1990) consider it a "genetic social psychology". Against a vision of the child as a passive recipient of information and characterised by a deficit in knowledge (see Burman, 1994, p. 60), the SRT approach "provides a social psychological perspective of children as developing actors, with a complementary emphasis on the symbolic aspect of their developing knowledge" (Duveen, 1997, p. 69). It refocuses our attention on children's communication and interaction, the content and processes of knowing and their historical and social context (Emler & Ohana, 1993). It also gives us the means to understand the creative nature of knowledge construction from a developmental perspective. Initially all children are born into a world "which is already structured by the social representations of the communities into which they arrive" (Duveen, 2001, p. 259). As they grow, children acquire and internalise these symbolic systems of representation specific for their particular socio-cultural location. Of key importance here for SRT, they do so in an *active and constructive manner*, adopting but also transforming representations while acting in the world and communicating with others. The creativity of the child resides in this fundamental capacity to use symbolic means for the generation of new symbolic and material means. And this can be traced to an intrinsic quality of the symbolic function – that of allowing the self to free him/her-self from the immediacy of the world. The power of creativity and

> "the power of the symbolic function of representation rests in its ability to raise above the constraints of the object-world and in a relatively free manner express the intentions, the dreams, the fantasies and aspirations of the subjectivity that puts it in motion" (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p.29).

In summary, we have argued here that development is culture-inclusive and that the development of creativity depends on participation in cultural activities. This resonates with Vygotsky's (1994) legacy of thinking about the child as a social being that actively produces meaning in relation with others, in particular socio-cultural settings. This capacity is possible due to the symbolic function and emerges around 1.5-2 years of age, when the child begins to decentre and engage in imaginative forms of play which, argued by Winnicott (1971), relate and potentially contribute to a cultural life. The theory of social representations articulates both a concern for the genesis of symbolic mediation and for the developing knowledge of children and its potential for creativity. This however raises the question of how exactly culture can be both transmitted to and transformed by the child.

6.2.1. On socialisation, enculturation and creativity

Considering the above, what is of the essence when we think about development and creativity in relation to culture is to explain how cultural forms, types of knowledge and representations are "integrated" by the child and at the same time "re-created" by him/her. *Internalisation* is also one of the key processes outlined in our model of creativity (see Chapter 1). This necessarily leads us to a broader discussion concerning socialisation and enculturation practices. The thesis supported here is that "engagement with the traditions of previous generations permeates everyday life, often without people reflecting on their use but yet with active participation" (Rogoff et el., 2007, p. 490) and this is particularly obvious at early ages. The image proposed is therefore one in which both children and cultural practices evolve due to creative participation. At the same time, this creative participation achieves children's socialisation and enculturation within their communities.

The term *socialisation* usually designates a process of learning how to behave in a particular society, while *enculturation* refers to adopting its world view (Leis, 1972, p. 5). The socialisation of children implies the learning of skills, behavioural patterns, values and motivations needed for competent functioning in their groups of origin and, from this perspective, socialisation can be said to go on throughout the lifespan (Maccoby, 2007). This notion often carries with it though an inaccurate image of the child being initially "outside" of culture and society and gradually becoming "filled in" by both, shaped and determined by powerful external, socialising forces. A deterministic model is thus set in place, in which children start of as passive and asocial beings. This needs to be replaced by a *constructivist model*, portraying the child as an active agent and learner. In making this distinction Corsaro (1997) suggestively calls the deterministic model "society appropriates the child", and the constructivist one "the child appropriates society". The difference here is crucial for a study of creativity and its development. Literature on enculturation shows similar concerns when distinguishing between processes of "acquiring" and "inquiring" (Shimahara, 1970). It is the interplay in enculturation between cultural acquiring and creative inquiring that constitutes the hallmark of human development in a social and cultural world.

For a long time parents have been considered the initial agents of culture and the child a relatively receptive object (Bell, 1968). Developmental cultural psychology, outlined in the previous section, challenges this view and replaces it with one of the "informationally active, socially interactive infant mind" (Bruner, 1999, p. 230), leading to important changes in the

meaning of socialisation. Recent decades have seen this notion move from grand, all-encompassing theories to more specific and culture-inclusive models, from a top-down conception of the parent-child relation to a focus on equally important bottom-up processes, from direct to mediated educational practices (Maccoby, 1992, pp. 1006-1007). This *bidirectional perspective* on socialisation in the context of the family is currently explored in terms of both theoretical and practical implications (see Kuczynski, Marshall & Schell, 1997; Kuczynski, 2003; Kuczynski & Navara, 2006; Kuczynski & Parkin, 2007; Kuczynski, Pitman & Mitchell, 2009) and increased recognition given to the agency of *both* parent and child and the transformative nature of their relationship. What is at stake is a regained understanding of the Vygotskian notion of internalisation – the actual basis for enculturation and socialisation activities – as a series of transformations (Vygotsky, 1978) rather than a linear and unidirectional process. To internalise means much more than to copy or transmit, it means to engage with and act on what is being transmitted (Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993). The socio-cultural creativity theory developed here and in the previous chapters thus "retains a conception of internalization that is compatible with creative construction and novelty" (Sawyer, 2003, p. 46). In making these claims about the agency and creativity of children we should also be mindful of the *agency and role of adults* for developing precisely this creativity. The paramount function of social interaction and existing cultural practices for learning and socialisation was famously conceptualised using Vygotsky's celebrated "zone of proximal development". This theory is based on a distinction between the actual developmental level, determined through the child's independent problem solving, and the level of potential development when assisted by adults or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Metaphorically, it is the distance between the "fruits" of development, what the child can do already, and what Vygotski saw as the "buds" or "flowers" that will bloom under conditions of communication and interaction. We are therefore invited to think about issues of *mastery and apprenticeship* and their vital importance for processes of socialisation within a community and internalisation of its practices and symbolic world view.

Barbara Rogoff, drawing inspiration from Vygotky's early work, wrote extensively about guided participation or "participation in culturally guided activities through the use of particular tools and involvement with cultural institutions" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 284). Formal schooling is not the only way to achieve this type of participation and indeed many customs and traditions are learned in more informal and interactive contexts. Disentangling these various forms of apprenticeship, Rogoff and collaborators referred to:

> *"intent community participation*, in which children have access to observe and begin to contribute to ongoing endeavors of their community; *assembly-line instruction*, in which teaching is organized by experts around specialized exercises to introduce children to the skills and practices of their community without allowing or necessarily anticipating actual productive involvement; and *guided repetition*, in which novices learn by observing, imitating, and rehearsing models presented by experts" (Rogoff et al., 2007, p. 495).

Considering the practice of Easter egg decoration it would seem that its many forms of "socialisation" correspond to several of the above and principally bridge intent community participation and guided repetition. Children are keen observers of decoration practices in their family and their community from an early age and are frequently asked for assistance. For instance, in working with wax on the egg the mother often does the model "on white" and school-age children continue on other colours (Zahacincshi & Zahacinschi, 1992). Younger children are regularly taught decoration through modelling by experts and imitation of the model in successive sessions of guided repetition. As argued previously however, this is always *repetition with a difference* (see also Chapter 5) and while the explicit purpose of learning traditional Easter egg making is to be able to "reproduce" old motifs and master current practices, small differences in style become observable from the start and are cultivated later on. The development of craft and the development of creativity in craft go hand in hand and reject a simplistic vision of perfect transmission and reproduction. Easter egg decoration is a tradition constantly produced and re-created by all artisans, independent of age and social context. Nonetheless, the particular ways in which this re-creation takes place do vary and this variation during childhood, in urban and rural settings, constitutes the focus of the present study.

6.3. Analytical procedures: Coding drawings

The research included in this chapter considers the link between the development of creativity (expressed in egg decoration) and internalisation of the craft as part of socialisation processes in an urban and rural context. Bearing in mind the theoretical perspective on children, development and creativity discussed above, we can abstract a few methodological guidelines for the present study. The first one builds on the premise that creativity develops in the context of practices children engage with as emerging members of their families and communities. Easter egg decoration is an example of creative practice (see

Chapter 4), requiring active engagement on the part of the child as well as of the adults who initially show, teach and guide this activity, aiding the internalisation of the craft. The implication is that creativity, as reflected in a cultural artistic practice, cannot be abstracted from its context and should be researched in relation to the community life which makes it possible. This involves for instance urban and rural settings and their different traditions of decoration and customs for celebrating Easter. In addition, the actual task given to the child should be "ecological" and as close as possible to the real-life practice. This is in line with Bruner and Haste's (1987, p. 4) call for observing children less in controlled and atypical situations and focus more on how they cope with everyday, contextually rich tasks. In our case a *drawing activity* was chosen for first and fourth graders (around 7 and 10 years of age) since actual egg decoration is difficult to perform especially in group conditions and at school, the data collection site.

The study included a total number of 70 *participants*, children in 1st, 4th and 7th grade from Bucharest and Ciocăneşti, and the main method for data collection was drawing, first and fourth grade children being asked to decorate on paper an Easter egg "from home" and a second one "as they want and like it to be". This task was followed by individual interviews based on the drawings. Details about research design, participants, method and data collection can be found in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.3.). For the moment it is important to be reminded of the three key *questions* of the study: a) how is colour used by children of different ages when decorating a home compared to a wanted egg; b) what is depicted in the drawing of these two Easter eggs and c) how do seventh graders in the two settings approach the task of decoration. These open questions suggest already what constituted the basis for the analysis of drawings (coding for use of colour and motifs) and also the potential of this kind of analysis to unpack the role of different socialisation processes since, in the case of the craft, colours and motifs are part of a tradition that takes strikingly different shapes in urban and rural Romanian settings (see Chapters 2 and 5).

All interviews have been transcribed verbatim and drawings subjected to *content analysis*. The first stage of analysis focused on colours and each egg (home and wanted) classified as either monochrome or polychrome. The number of colours used was counted and a note about the dominant colour(s) made – the colour or colours covering most of the surface. Important to note, shades of the same colour were considered to be different colours and black was counted as a colour only when used to fill up surfaces and not simply for drawing contours. Then the model was coded and three main categories, largely *data-driven*

(generated after an initial survey of drawings), emerged: geometric (eggs with geometric motifs), figurative (eggs with symbols, objects, persons, etc.), geometric and figurative, and eggs with no model/motif (typically monochrome). Geometric decoration was evaluated as either simple or complex, again considering the surface covered and also the intricacy of the model. Notes were made about the kind of figurative elements displayed on the egg: usually stars, flowers, butterflies, hearts, etc. and also religious symbols (from crosses to biblical scenes). The results of this analysis can be found in Appendix IX, where a small depiction of each drawing is offered along with comments from interviews (which were not analysed thematically but summarised and used for illustration and clarification). The coding of each drawing was performed independently by two coders and agreement ranged between 89 and 100% (all disagreements were discussed and settled in light of coding criteria).

The study of drawings here followed *two stages*, one of quantitative analysis employed in order to have an overview of the elements depicted by children in their drawings (in this case both descriptive and, whenever possible, inferential statistical procedures were used), and a second one of qualitative, hermeneutic interpretation of these results facilitated by the interview material and leading to the identification of patterns in children's engagement with the craft. In terms of statistical analysis, t-tests and ANOVA were computed for colour (e.g. number of colours used by children in the four groups defined by age and social context); this type of analysis was not possible however in the case of decoration models because of low frequencies in several categories. In the end, two main patterns suggested by the data – "making the unfamiliar familiar" and the "familiar unfamiliar" – are discussed in terms of internalisation and transformation of what the craft has to offer.

6.4. Results: Children's developing engagement with a creative craft

As follows, findings will be presented starting with the drawings made by first and fourth graders in each of the two settings of the research. At first a necessary description of background information, collected from interviews, is given, followed by the results of coding for colour and for model. Results from seventh grade participants are included in the form of short "case studies" reflecting the stages of decoration and final outcomes (again considered in terms of colours and model). The presentation uses code names for respondents (given by order number within subgroup, setting, grade and gender; for instance 1.U.I.M. is the first respondent from urban, first grade, and is a male). Whenever possible, visual illustration and verbatim comments are offered.

6.4.1. Different family and community contexts of decoration

Before passing to results from the analysis of drawings it is important to have some general information about the participants from each of the four subgroups: urban and rural, first and fourth grade. Knowing how eggs are usually decorated in the family of the child, if he or she decorates at home and how, the meanings and practices associated with Easter eggs, etc. will help us *contextualise* findings and *interpret* group differences appropriately. This kind of background information was collected through interviews and, while it could be argued that direct observations would have been more reliable for some of the above, it was logistically impossible to perform them considering the number of respondents. Furthermore, the "reality" of home decoration as *perceived* by the child was more important in this context than actual practices. A summary of decoration activities at home for each of the four research subgroups is presented in Table 10.

In the families of *first grade urban participants* it was usually the mother or grandmother who took care of preparing Easter eggs. Fathers were normally less involved (except for 14.U.I.F.). The children in this subgroup tended to decorate eggs themselves, mostly with watercolours or the help of markers. The eggs they made (between five and ten) were typically put together with other coloured eggs and knocked during the three Easter days. However there were two cases in which parents did not allow or encourage the child to decorate fearing the breaking of the eggs. In these cases participants did take part in decoration by observing or assisting adults, bringing all that is necessary, including putting eggs in colour or even applying pigments with a glove. Easter eggs at home were generally monochrome, red but not only. When other family members decorated them it was either with crosses or whatever else the child wanted. Children didn't normally know why people colour eggs for Easter, some thought it was because Easter is "*beautiful*" so eggs need to be as well or that people just "*have to*" decorate. Nevertheless, several of the participants said that red eggs symbolise the blood of Christ and four of them told the legend of red eggs.

In the families of *fourth graders from Bucharest* it was again mothers or grandmothers who normally decorated and rarely were the fathers involved (except for 4.U.IV.M. whose father is a priest). Many more of them made Easter eggs at home compared to first graders, usually with watercolours, watercolours and markers, or just markers. Two said they helped prepare eggs with leaves or stickers. The number of eggs actually decorated by children varied widely, from one or two to 20. The eggs prepared by them were knocked with the others,

sometimes put aside and kept for a while after Easter. It was rare in this group for parents not to allow decoration (e.g. for fear of colours stains, 8.U.IV.F.). Fewer children didn't know why people make Easter eggs and most associated red eggs with the Resurrection, the blood of Christ and told the story of how eggs first got coloured red. Many of the respondents were familiar with traditional, geometric motifs and some displayed specialised knowledge related to the use of watercolours in decoration (e.g. 3.U.IV.F.).

First grade rural children generally said that traditional decoration with wax was practiced in their families (except 2.R.I.F.; 3.R.I.F.; 4.R.I.F.) and that they got involved in decoration activities as well. Very few didn't help with Easter egg making if only to bring parents what they needed for the work and quite a number of them decorated, including with wax (1.R.I.F.; 5.R.I.M.; 8.R.I.F.; 10.R.I.F.; 13.R.I.F.). They all took part in several rituals and ceremonies during Easter, well represented in their community. Almost with no exception children of this age "*went after eggs*" in the village on Easter day (visiting neighbours or family) and went to church for Easter service. Two washed their face on Easter morning with water in which a red egg was placed. The strong attachment to these customs was explained by the fact that "*Christ said to respect the tradition and people do this*" (10.R.I.F.). Three couldn't tell why people make eggs for Easter but most associated them with the Resurrection, said red reminds us of the blood of Christ or told the legend of Easter eggs.

Finally, *fourth graders from Ciocăneşti village* were normally involved in decoration similar to their first grader counterparts but not necessarily with wax: using coloured pencils, markers and/or watercolours. Only 13.R.IV.F. said she decorates eggs using the traditional technique and in many families nobody practiced this kind of decoration and they either bought or receive traditional eggs for Easter. This difference, when compared to first graders, might be explained by the fact that children are more engaged in school activities at this age and only a few dedicate time to perfecting traditional decoration (usually those who have examples in their families). Participants still "*go after eggs*" on Easter day although most considered they were "*too big*" for that now. Two washed their face with water in which a red egg was placed on Easter morning and all attended church service. While five didn't know why eggs are made, the majority associated them with the blood of Christ, and told the legend of red eggs. For children in this group Easter egg decoration was both a work of creation and preservation. People were considered to keep traditional motifs and to add new ones and only "*greedy*" decorators (8.R.IV.M.) copy the same models all the time, the ones truly passionate about the craft create them.

	URBAN CONTEXT		RURAL CONTEXT	
	1ST GRADE	*4TH GRADE*	*1ST GRADE*	*4TH GRADE*
Who prepares eggs at home and how	Mother or grand-mother prepare eggs, usually monochrome	Mother or grand-mother prepare eggs, usually monochrome	Parents, usually mother, prepare eggs, mostly in a traditional style	Parents, usually mother, prepare eggs, some use wax decoration
How children decorate eggs	Mostly with watercolours and markers	Mostly water-colours / markers, also applying leaves or stickers	Helping parents with decoration, even decorating eggs with wax themselves	Mostly with pencils, water-colours, markers, rarely with wax
Easter / Easter egg traditions at home	Egg decoration and the knocking of eggs	Egg decoration and the knocking of eggs	Knocking eggs, going 'after eggs', washing face with red egg, church	Knocking eggs, going less 'after eggs', washing face with red egg, church
Why are Easter eggs made	To be 'beautiful', some also knew the symbolism of the colour red	Most knew the symbolism of the colour red and its origin	Many knew the symbolism of the colour red / the legend of Easter eggs	Many knew the symbolism of the colour red / the legend of Easter eggs
General conception of egg decoration	A family ritual meant to bring colour and joy	A family and community ritual; elsewhere others make geometric eggs	A family and community ritual representing an old tradition	A family and community ritual involving creation and preservation

Table 10. Urban – rural differences in Easter practices described by children

6.4.2. Drawing colourful Easter eggs, from personal preference to cultural norms

The use of colour is central for Easter egg decoration not only because colour is a key component of the artistic medium but also because colours hold different *meanings* in terms of this particular folk art (see also Appendix IV). For instance the colour red is traditionally associated with Easter eggs since it reminds of the blood and sacrifice of Christ. Black is predominantly used in Ciocăneşti village for the background and this distinguishes "Ciocăneşti eggs" from others in the region and country. It becomes thus important to consider the use of colour in the case of children from both urban and rural settings in order to understand the ways in which they approach the craft and experience it.

A first look at descriptive data shows for instance that the use of colour is different depending on age and social context, as well as the type of eggs children refer to, in this case “home” versus “wanted” Easter eggs. While in the urban setting, on average, two colours were used for home eggs by first graders and one by forth graders, both subgroups applied about four colours on wanted eggs. In the village three colours were used by first graders and four by fourth graders, on average, for the home egg, and five for the wanted egg. Two observations can be formulated: one is that *more colours tend to be used for the wanted egg* compared to the home one, and second, *children from the rural setting employ more colours* on average than children from urban. This can be understood by going back to the background information presented before, where it was mentioned that home-made eggs in Bucharest are usually monochrome while in Ciocăneşti the typical kind of egg is the polychrome, decorated one. To further examine the first observation, paired sample t tests have been performed for the difference in mean number of colours between home and wanted eggs for each of the four groups, separately. The test revealed significant differences only for the urban setting, with $t(18) = -2.94$, $p < .05$ for first grade participants, and $t(15) = -5.13$, $p < .001$ for fourth grade participants. This means that children from Bucharest used significantly more colours for the wanted egg while their rural counterparts used *more colours generally* for both home and wanted.

To explore further this conclusion a one-way ANOVA was conducted for the total number of colours (added for home and wanted eggs), depicted by children from the four subgroups. Before running this analysis the normality of distributions was checked and one extreme value eliminated from first grade rural. Significant differences between the four groups were found in the number of colours employed, $F(3) = 9.91$, $p < .001$. Scheffe post-hoc analyses pointed to the fact that the number of colours used by *fourth grade children in the rural setting* ($m = 10.4$) was the one being significantly different compared to the other subgroups ($m = 6.68$, $p < 0.05$ for first grade urban; $m = 5.37$, $p < 0.001$ for fourth grade urban; $m = 8.46$ p. < 0.05 for first grade rural). This might be the combined effect of having a “higher” age and growing up in a socio-cultural milieu which favours polychrome egg decoration. It can be hypothesised that children from this subgroup are both frequently in contact with decorated eggs and inclined to embellish them more.

Another interesting conclusion can be drawn by simply looking at the distinction between *monochrome and polychrome eggs* made for home or wanted by children in the four subgroups. A graphic representation of the results is given in Figure 20:

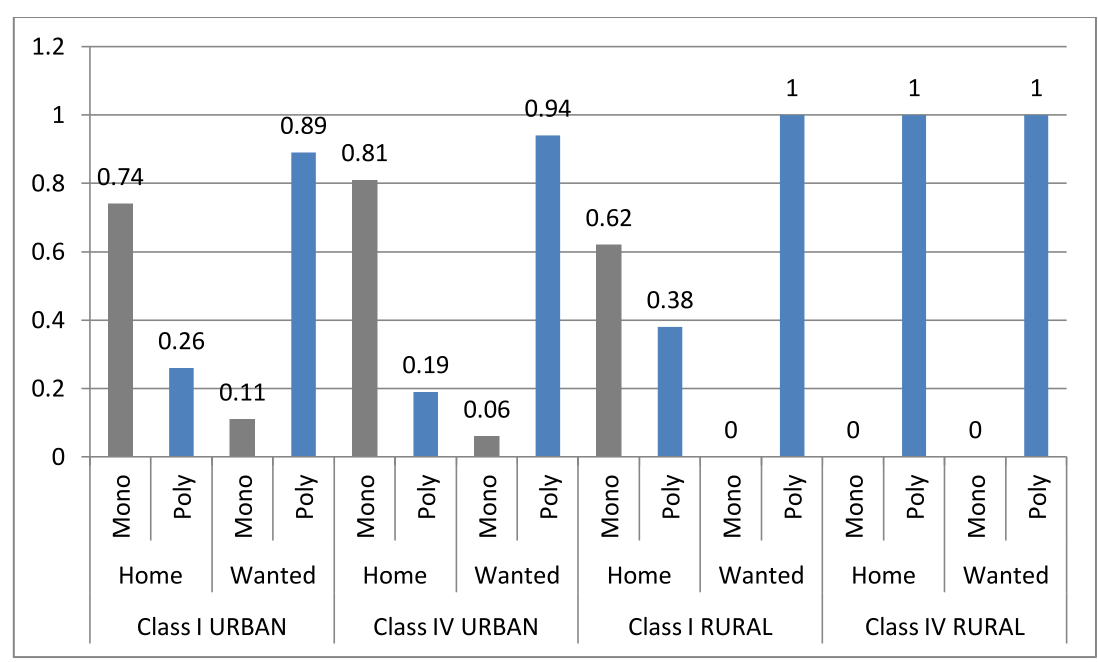


Figure 20. Proportion of monochrome and polychrome eggs across the sample

What can be immediately noticed is the fact that, overall, *wanted eggs tend to be polychrome*, especially in the rural context. The *urban home egg was typically monochrome*. This was just slightly less for first grade children whose parents are sometimes inclined, for them, to decorate eggs a bit more. Older children from Bucharest show the most discrepant profile with most monochrome eggs at home compared to the polychrome eggs they want and like. In the village, the home eggs children referred to were usually less monochrome (compared to urban). It is important to stress the fact that this doesn't mean that Easter eggs used at home were indeed all polychrome. As already seen (Chapter 5), and commented by children in interviews, the eggs they use for the celebration are normally simply coloured, similar to the urban setting. However, they all *knew and kept* at home more polychrome, traditionally decorate eggs, and they *chose* to depict these in their drawings. Fourth grade participants, for example, made no monochrome home eggs. This suggests a *"cultural norm" of the decorated egg* in this particular context where traditional eggs are a reference point and also contribute to the identity of the local community (see Chapter 3).

Finally, it is interesting also to observe the *use of red* in decoration of both home and wanted eggs since this is the most commonly associated colour with Easter eggs at a national level. Again a "cultural norm" of depicting red eggs (or mainly red) was present across the sample, predominantly at higher ages. As expected, fourth graders seemed to have internalised this element more and, for instance, while 16% of wanted eggs included

mostly/only the colour red for first grade urban, 88% did so for fourth grade urban. There was a difference in the rural setting as well, between 23% and 47% respectively. Qualitative comments from the interviews concerning colours suggest the fact that children tended to use the colours they "*liked*" both when making monochrome and polychrome eggs, eggs from home or wanted eggs. Colours can also be preferred based on gender differences, for instance 10.U.I.M. made his home egg predominantly blue because it is "*an egg for a boy*" while 4.R.I.F. coloured it purple and pink which are "*girl colours*" (see Image 17). She also used some black because she saw it on traditional eggs from Ciocăneşti. In both settings, but especially in the rural one, children were acutely aware, from early on, of the "rules" of egg decoration. They tended to know that red, yellow and black are traditionally used on the egg and often transgressed this "norm" and deliberately made more colourful eggs (see 8.R.I.F.). Children from Bucharest might have fewer norms to guide them but their own experience becomes an important reference, e.g. 1.U.IV.F. discussed her "*best*" colour combinations.

Image 17. An Easter egg for a boy (10.U.I.M.), left, and for a girl (4.R.I.F.), right

6.4.3. The content of decoration, from childhood symbols to traditional motifs

Besides colours, the models drawn on the egg are essential elements defining decoration work. The recent expansion of the craft in Romania in the past decade favoured not only innovations in terms of colour and technique but also considerably expanded the range of motifs, beyond traditional forms (see Chapter 2). The oldest style of decoration involved either schematic elements (depicting parts of plants, animals, tools, etc.) or geometric decoration, which is still widespread in Northern Romania and largely associated with its folk art on the whole. In analysing children's drawings, this main distinction was kept between *figurative elements* (religious symbols, animals, persons, etc.) and *geometric elements* (lines,

squares, triangles, rhombuses, etc.). Coding the data it was also observed that decorated eggs can combine the two types and some have no motif at all (usually monochrome). It is thus interesting to study how these differences play out in the drawings of home and wanted eggs for first and fourth graders in urban and rural settings, something summarised by Figure 21 below. Before discussing it, it is important to note that findings here are considered in terms of *general tendencies* since statistical analysis could not be performed due to low sample size and the fact that several categories held zero elements.

What Figure 21 shows mirrors, in general, results obtained for the use of colour. To begin with, it appears that children from the urban setting made mostly home eggs that were not decorated in any particular way (no model). In contrast, rural children, especially in the fourth grade, depicted home decorated eggs and, for both first and fourth graders, these usually displayed geometric patterns very common in the region. Furthermore, lower age children from Bucharest made primarily figurative elements on the wanted egg while lower age participants from Ciocăneşti represented geometric and/or figurative motifs. For the higher age in the urban setting most depicted wanted eggs with geometric models (followed by geometric and figurative) while in the rural area fourth graders preferred a combination of geometric and figurative elements. This is already an important piece of information, suggesting that *figurative elements tend to be slightly more common for lower ages* in both contexts while *geometric decoration* (alone or in combination with figurative) *gains ground as children grow older*. Considering the two different milieus, children from the urban setting managed to “transform” most their form of decoration for wanted eggs, from largely figurative to essentially geometric, while children from the village displayed a rather consistent combination of geometric and figurative for both age levels. To explain this further we would need to look at what exactly these figurative elements *represent* and how they are combined (or not) with geometric patterns for each of the four subgroups in turn.

The wanted Easter eggs for ***urban first graders*** were normally similar to what children tried to make at home in terms of decoration or what they wished they could make. The predominant types of models here are figurative and they depict: hearts, flowers, stars, animals, etc. These symbols were made because they are generally “*preferred*” (14.U.I.F.) and also because the child draws them often “*anyway*” (7.U.I.F.). Sometimes objects were represented on the egg such as a vase (see Image 18) or even entire scenes (10.U.I.M.), etc. At this age it happened for children to put themselves on the egg (16.U.I.M.) without really explaining why, or for girls to make girl-like rabbits (19.U.I.F.). Respondents also depicted

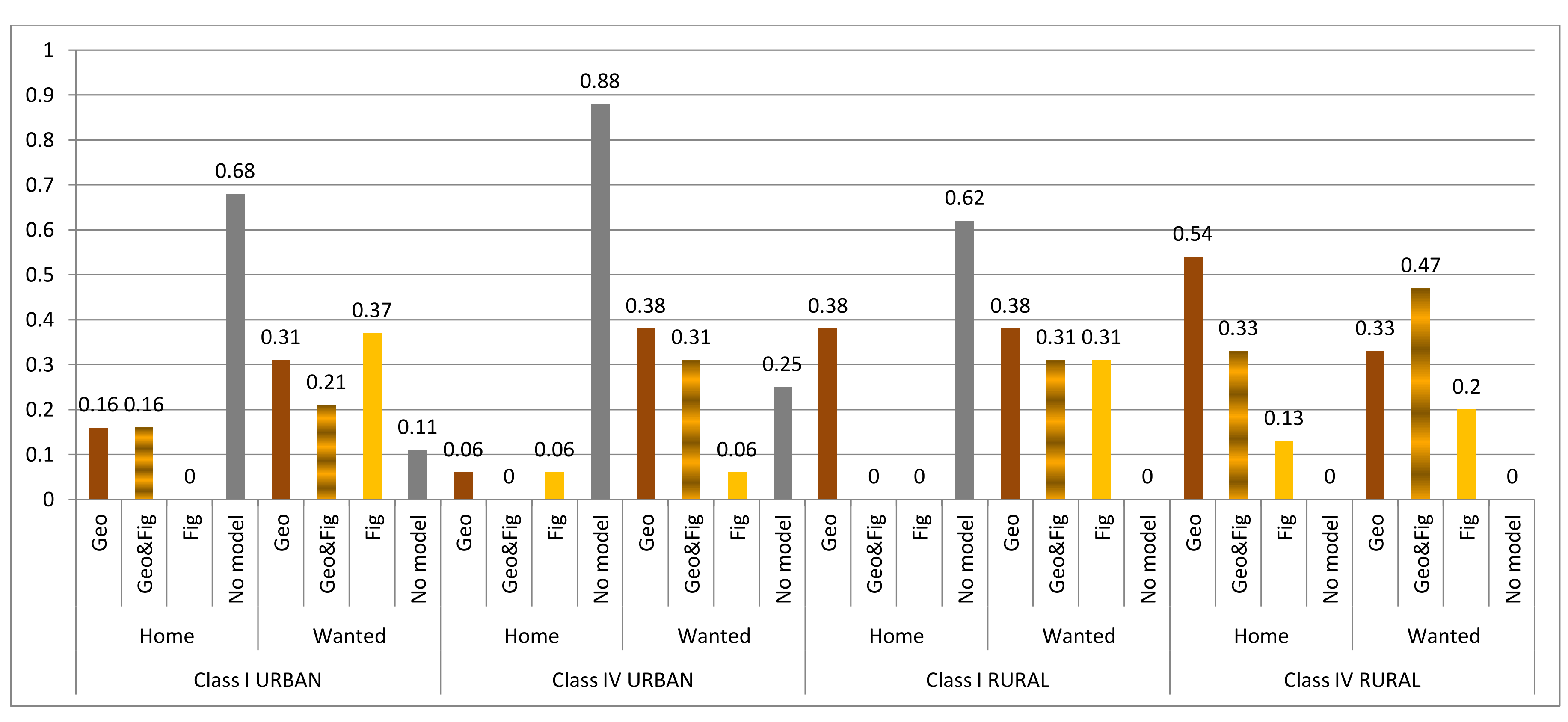


Figure 21. Proportion of different types of decoration content across the sample

religious symbols. These were usually crosses, present either on home or wanted eggs because "*crosses bring luck*" (3.U.I.F.; 19.U.I.F.), "*Easter is about the Resurrection of Christ*" (6.U.I.M.) and one of the participants said she made them because she "*believes in God*" (3.U.I.F.). Finally, another particular type of symbolic elements had to do with small shapes that resemble writing exercises from school (1.U.I.M.; 9.U.I.F.; 13.U.I.M.). On the whole eggs were decorated with different colours and motifs to make them "*more beautiful*" and "*to look good*" (2.U.I.M.). Many ***urban fourth graders*** shared this motivation and wanted their eggs to be "*beautiful*" (13.U.IV.M.) and "*attractive*" (15.U.IV.F.). There were still several figurative elements present, for instance flowers, stars, rabbits and even tiny red eggs placed inside the model. There is a kind of force of habit at play when using such symbols and 10.U.IV.F. made butterflies and a heart because "*I was used since I was a little girl to draw like this*". However, drawing only figurative motifs was atypical and geometric decoration present either on its own or in combination (see Image 18). At times this was because parents told the child that Easter eggs have "*this kind of shapes*" (6.U.IV.F.).

Image 18. Figurative (2.U.I.M.), left, and geometric (2.U.IV.M.), right, wanted eggs

The decorated eggs produced by ***first graders in the rural setting*** shared several similarities with those made by first graders in Bucharest. To begin with, they included figurative elements as well, from flowers or flowers and hearts to more elaborate pictures of the Easter bunny with its magic wand, trees, a basket and snowdrops, even represented the mother on the egg because she "*always helps*" (9.R.I.M.). Religious meanings were equally present and 12.R.I.M. for instance made the biblical scene of the Crucifixion, with flowers and a basket of eggs, trying to depict the legend of how red eggs started to be decorated by Christians. Finally, writing on the egg was noticed as well, letters but also own name (5.R.I.M.). Interesting to note, in this last case, the background was segmented in a way that

reminded of traditional decoration. Indeed, even from a lower age, the drawings of rural children include many references to traditional, geometric decoration. Wanted eggs either represented it as such or in combination with figurative elements, case in which the main structure of the design resembles traditional decoration while the content is more diverse (see 3.R.I.F.; 12.R.I.F.; 7.R.I.M.). This tendency was so strong that even home eggs, usually monochrome, were depicted with geometric elements (see Image 19). What further individualised the rural context was the fact that first graders could more easily explain the symbols they used in decoration, were aware of when they used or not "*traditional*" colours or motifs although they didn't normally name and discuss them. The presence of geometric decoration peaks in the case of ***forth graders from Ciocăneşti*** who employed traditional models as a standard for both home and wanted eggs. This is how most eggs in this subgroup strongly resemble real decorated eggs from the village and children actually knew, memorised and reproduced traditional models (Image 19). They respected conventional colours and started with segmenting the egg on paper. Whenever figurative elements appeared, they were often part of religious scenes, representing the cross, the Bible, the tomb of Christ, etc. Other symbols included flowers, reminiscent of spring, or the Easter bunny. It is to be noted that higher age children from the village generally knew the meaning of colours but not necessarily that of motifs which were better recognised for their shape.

Image 19. Geometric home egg (5.R.I.M.), left, and geometric wanted egg (3.R.IV.F.), right

In summary, there are some interesting *patterns* observed in the content of decoration, shaped both by age and socio-cultural setting. Internalisation processes take place in both contexts but exactly what is internalised and how, as reflected in children's drawings of Easter eggs, depends on the development level of the child and the nature of the tradition and practices of decoration specific for each community. The general tendency was for

lower age children to include more figurative elements in their drawings of Easter eggs, and more geometric (or geometric and figurative) at higher ages. However, there are some *nuances* here, for instance the figurative in the case of urban decoration is mostly related to elements of nature (stars, flowers, grass) while in the rural setting it has a more religious orientation, especially for fourth graders. Also, overall, the geometric type of decoration in the rural setting was very much inspired by actual decoration practices, specific for the village and local area. Cultural norms thus come to organise, as children grow, forms that are otherwise produced spontaneously (like lines, shapes, etc.) (Gardner, 1982, pp. 155-156). This is even more obvious in the case of seventh grade students, presented next.

6.4.4. Developing further: Case studies

In order to observe the practice of decoration at an even later developmental stage, seven participants have been asked to decorate eggs, four from the urban and three from the rural setting. The smaller number of seventh graders allowed for a more detailed observation of decoration processes while working *directly on the egg*. This part of the research aims also to put the general tendencies observed before in the case of first and fourth grade children into perspective and explore the *further development* of creativity in craft. The seven students in this study volunteered for the task and decorated emptied eggs with watercolours (Bucharest) or wax (Ciocăneşti). The four respondents from Bucharest were not normally engaged in egg decoration activities at home and sometimes got to make Easter eggs at school for the art class. The three respondents from the village came from families with decorators and had two to four years of experience working with wax. In the urban setting the eggs given to students already had a background colour (green, blue, orange or purple) while in the rural they were all white, as required by traditional decoration. The work process was observed by the researcher and pictures taken every time new (sets of) elements were added. Following this, participants were interviewed about their outcome and involvement with the craft. A summary of observation and interview data for each of the respondents can be found in Appendix X.

For the purpose of this section some general conclusions will be drawn based mainly on the framework set for the analysis of drawings discussed earlier. From this perspective it can be noticed that all the eggs made by seventh graders had a more or less pronounced *geometric design*. In the case of 2.U.VII.F, lines and dots were combined with figurative elements such as little flowers. All students from the village used *traditional motifs* for decoration,

particularly different types of crosses (1.R.VII.F.; 2.R.VII.F.). Interestingly, 3.U.VII.F. also made a cross and other geometric motifs resembling rural, traditional decoration. This points to how widespread these models are and how they came to be associated with "prototypical" Romanian Easter eggs at a national level. As follows, more detailed observations will be offered for each of the two settings.

Image 20. Decorating eggs in the urban context

Urban participants used several colours in their designs and each made a personal, unique model, as depicted in Image 20. The compositions were largely based on the use of lines, either straight or zigzag and very often curvilinear. 1.U.VII.F. worked on green and made red, white and blue stripes alongside yellow dots. Her intention was to produce a model based on lines because she "*likes drawing this way*" and thought this kind of design looks "*beautiful*" on the egg. Similarly, 2.U.VII.F., starting from purple, began with a green zigzag line segmenting the egg, continued with red dots, white curvy lines and finished by making small yellow flowers. She said she had seen similar models and found these elements "*quite common*" for Easter egg decoration. Her work process was guided by aesthetic considerations such as colour contrast and the equilibrium of the whole design (e.g. flowers are meant to "*fill up*" empty spaces). 3.U.VII.F. made an elaborate model, starting from an orange background, and inspired by traditional wax decoration. She used the symbol of the cross (symmetrically on both sides) and also figurative elements such as a flower on top. She chose the cross because it "*symbolises Easter*". Finally, 4.U.VII.M. used only green, yellow and red curvy lines on blue. The lines had either a vertical or horizontal orientation. Notably,

he said he was probably inspired by cartoons depicting images with dragons and had the idea of the model "*on the spot*". This comes to show once more how decoration practices in the urban setting can draw from a variety of different sources, in contrast to the more unitary rural tradition. In the end, a specific difficulty encountered by this group of participants, and due to the use of watercolours, related to the fact that paint did not always dry perfectly and so colours tended to mix with each other, a problem 2.U.VII.F. was particularly confronted with (see also Chapter 5, study one).

Image 21. Decorated eggs from the rural context

Rural participants decorated their eggs with wax only on the first, "white stage", and therefore no colours were actually used. The outcomes of their work are depicted in Image 21. It can be noticed how the respondents employed different motifs from the vast repertoire of traditional decoration existing in the village of Ciocăneşti and the region of Bucovina more broadly. One interesting observation about the decoration process for this group was the fact that participants helped each other and, several times, 1.U.VII.F. and 2.U.VII.F. *exchanged eggs* and worked for one another since each had more experience with certain motifs. This is symptomatic of Easter egg making practices in the village, having a strong social and interactive component, where parents and children and also neighbours help one another with models, colours and even customers. Decoration starts from early on for some and, as the three seventh grade participants demonstrate, there is room for mastery and high aesthetic achievement at school age. All the models made during the

observed session contained motifs they internalised well, knew and practiced from before, but "*put together*" in new ways. For instance 1.U.VII.F. said she combined motifs for her egg from her mother and other decorators, and 2.U.VII.F. had previously seen a similar model at one of her neighbours. 3.U.VII.F. depicted a motif he "*took*" from home and "*adapted*" in his own way. He could also comment a bit more on the meaning of the shapes, unlike the other two respondents. In any case, all students were very familiar with the technique of decoration and its stages and explained what colours each shape should have in the end for their chosen motifs. The knowledge and skills necessary for this activity took some years to develop and participants remembered how the greatest difficulty in decoration was to draw straight lines, something they exercise and perfect with each and every new Easter egg.

In conclusion, we can agree with Feldhusen's (2002, p. 183) assertion that "the creative process depends mightily on a knowledge base reflecting past learning and fluency or retrieval skill". Young rural decorators continuously add to this "base" and they do so by repeating and at the same time changing and combining existing motifs. In the urban environment decoration follows more "open" rules and can draw inspiration from a multitude of different sources. Other differences relate to how elements are *appropriated* and *integrated* as children grow and learn the ways of their distinct communities. Abstracting patterns of engagement with the craft is the focus of our final discussion.

6.5. Discussion: Patterns in the development of creativity and craftwork

Towards the end it becomes necessary to bring together the tendencies outlined above and try to build a more unified image of the development of creativity and craftwork in the context of Easter egg decoration. The findings presented until now reveal several *similarities* but also *differences* between children *depending on age and social milieu*. Overall it seems that more idiosyncratic, figurative elements are present at lower ages while, as children grow, they internalise certain ways of decoration not by copying but creatively integrating them and making unique combinations of shapes and colours. The influence of the socio-cultural location of the child is certainly strong and beginning to be felt from early years especially when this location is a rural one and the cultural tradition of decoration has very distinctive features. The unitary nature of the craft at a national level leaves room for local diversity of expression where: "what is done one way in one community may be done another way in another community, with the same effect" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 12).

In terms of age, two broad patterns can be abstracted from the data and they relate to how children respond to the task of Easter egg decoration as a more or less “novel” versus “practiced” situation. In this regard we can draw from Moscovici’s (1984) insight concerning the purpose of representation and propose two processes of engaging with the craft. One, commonly found at lower ages, is based on *making the unfamiliar familiar*, the other, typical for older children, relies on *making the familiar unfamiliar*. This distinction is grounded in the fact that, for first graders in our sample, the activity of Easter egg decoration tends to be a more “novel” / less “practiced” type of situation (at least when compared to older children of 10 or 13 years of age). As such, when engaging with the task, children try to make sense of it on the basis of their ordinary experience, to appropriate it in ways that make it more familiar and bring it closer to their usual drawing practices. In contrast, fourth and seventh graders are generally aware of decoration techniques and their work reflects an effort to incorporate and at the same time transform the rules of the craft. In this context, traditional geometric decoration normally stands out as the most “culturally salient” option across all subgroups considering the fact that rural traditional eggs are often displayed during the Easter season including in urban settings.

Of course, the particular ways in which unfamiliarity is “tamed” and familiarity “transformed” are very much shaped by the distinctive characteristics of rural and urban communities. Figure 22 below illustrates commonalities and differences in making the unfamiliar familiar in the case of ***first graders*** from both settings. Three strategies for achieving this can be found in urban and rural subgroups and they relate to the use of childhood symbols, of writing, and of human figures. In the first category we can include the hearts, flowers, trees and stars represented by 14.U.I.F. and 13.R.I.F. In the second we have the examples of practicing writing on the egg, illustrated by 13.U.I.M. and 5.R.I.M. For the third we can refer to the rabbit-girl made by 19.U.I.F. and the figure of the mother, 9.R.I.M. All these instances indicate the diversity of available means for children of lower age to make the unfamiliarity of egg decoration more familiar, bringing it closer to their lived experience at school and at home, and usual drawing practices. It was not uncommon for participants from these groups to explain the figurative elements they used by saying “*this is how I usually draw*”. In these cases the “cultural” norms of decoration are not yet integrated and idiosyncratic, age-related elements appear much more often. At a lower age, the differences between urban and rural here have mostly to do with the organisation of elements (e.g. use of segmentation in rural, etc.) rather than actual content.

Figure 22. Making the unfamiliar familiar;
1st grade urban upper row, 1st grade rural lower row

In contrast, ***fourth graders*** show overall less figurative elements and employ many more geometric shapes. This type of decoration can be considered "familiar", being reinforced both at home (where parents and/or neighbours, especially in the village, use it extensively) and at the school (where decorated eggs are represented mainly with such motifs). In consequence, children themselves *adopt* these practices while at the same time *adapting* them to their own interests and understanding. They tend to make the familiar "unfamiliar" in ways that are both similar and different, depending on social context. Figure 23 below depicts these efforts in terms of colours, the integration and creation of motifs. It is not uncommon in drawings for children to transgress what they know about egg decoration from home (mostly monochrome eggs in urban, traditional colours in rural) and diversify the colour range, as exemplified by 7.U.IV.M. and 15.R.IV.F. They are able to integrate and combine existing motifs and strategies, for instance colours and lines in the case of 12.U.IV.M. and geometric and figurative-religious elements in that of 7.R.IV.F. Finally,

participants from these subgroups can also generate their own models, by simplifying common patterns (3.U.IV.F.) and schematising traditional motifs (12.R.IV.F.). Importantly, this is done in all cases to make decoration "*more beautiful*" and even a bit "*different*" compared to what already exists.

Figure 23. Making the familiar unfamiliar;
4th grade urban upper row, 4th grade rural lower row

These tendencies are further illustrated at higher ages (seventh grade), where children in Bucharest explore new ways of geometric decoration and draw inspiration from a multitude of sources, from media to traditional decoration itself, and children in Ciocăneşti actively combine and transform motifs learned from their parents. Parallels can be made to exploratory and combinatorial creative processes in urban and rural settings (see Chapter 5) and what the current research does is to shed some light into the *developmental history of these differences*. Furthermore, links can also be established with subcam observations of children decorators again from the previous chapter. It was noticed there how novices learn and exercise traditional decoration from very young ages and the case studies of seventh

graders here add more empirical material to that initial dataset. Developing knowledge and skill in the case of children who want to become expert decorators means paying close attention to traditional motifs and practicing them for years, initially with little variation, before being able to regularly combine and transform them. Apprenticeship is a stage of acquiring the craft, paving the way to future mastery (see also Chapter 7).

Connections can thus be made in the end with the dynamic between three *developmental zones* discussed by Jaan Valsiner (1997) – the Zone of Free Movement (ZFM), Zone of Promoted Action (ZPA) and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) – defined at a more "macro" level. Lower age children start in decoration from relatively large ZFMs and ZPAs and are gradually guided by adults in their expression. Most guidance is perhaps offered in the rural area where a ZPD is actively built for learning the craft, especially by those parents involved in professional decoration. In this process of course the child, from early on, is never a passive recipient but a motivated and resourceful agent. Children's creative appropriation of the craft by mechanisms of turning the unfamiliar familiar and the familiar unfamiliar are vivid illustrations of the *double nature of enculturation practices*: "transmission and transmutation of culture through human growth" (Shimahara, 1970, p. 148). This is also what Corsaro (1997) referred to as "interpretive reproduction", a vision of socialisation that integrates the stability of social and cultural systems with the innovative and transformative capacities of children (see also Baldwin's, 1906, concept of children's "copying" activities as "interpretations"). To conclude, the findings presented here lend full support to the cultural psychological definition of internalisation asserting that:

> "the internalizing process is not (...) an automatic copying or transmitting operation, but, instead, one involving coordination of the new with the old, and restructuring of both. (...) The person's intra-mental reconstruction of the world is a highly dynamic structure. It is never finished, but continues as a sufficient support for the person's new encounters with the world" (Lawrence & Valsiner, 1993, p. 152).

6.6. Concluding remarks: Studying creativity and development

The present research was dedicated to an exploration of how creativity develops in craftwork as children engage with egg decoration within the particular contexts of their communities and their own developmental trajectory. Our two main premises where that human development is best studied in terms of participation in cultural activities (Rogoff,

2003) and that children, despite having to integrate and "reproduce" cultural forms, are nevertheless selective and constructive in their participation to community life (Valsiner, 1997). The findings presented above support a view of *active and selective internalisation* as a key process in the dynamic of creativity, also reflected in the tetradic framework (Chapter 1). Children from the two socio-cultural settings adopt different notions about the craft, are introduced to different practices and sets of colours and patterns despite a common background of meanings associated with this folk art, both artistic and spiritual (see Chapter 2 for details). Creativity as cultural participation would not be possible outside of constant processes of creative internalisation, meaning *both adoption and transformation* of craft elements. Certainly the relationship between these two "sides" of internalisation depends on age (younger children transform cultural elements in order to appropriate them, older children tend to expand previously adopted material) and is shaped by cultural context (in the urban setting geometric decoration with wax is not a widespread practice, colouring is, while for children in Ciocăneşti creative expression involves adapting existing geometric patterns to their own preferences and drawing abilities).

There are also certain *limitations* to the present study that need to be acknowledged. To begin with, it used a cross-sectional rather than a more desirable longitudinal approach. As such, inferential leaps had to be made to connect different stages and capture the essence of developmental transitions. This drawback can be overcome by future research in which children are observed for longer periods of time in their community. Also the drawing task meant focusing on the end product and less on the processes leading to it. This is a critique mentioned and dealt with more extensively in the previous chapter. However, there are also several grains from conducting this study, both theoretical and practical. Unlike mainstream researches of creativity development that are often a-contextual and over-preoccupied with measurement, the focus here has been on real-life practices, deeply embedded in socio-cultural forms of activity. Shifting the inquiry from "how creative is it" to "how is it creative" in the case of children can open up extremely fertile avenues for theory and research. It can also help us foster and develop creativity from young ages by introducing children to a multitude of cultural domains while encouraging their reinterpretation and contribution to what culture and society have to offer.

7. Discussion: Easter egg decoration and habitual creativity

Chapter summary

The discussion chapter starts with a brief overview of findings from the three studies included in the thesis and focuses on how each of them considered the interdependence between creativity and habit/tradition. In contrast, current psychological scholarship in the field is based on a dichotomy between habit, associated with automatic reflex behaviour, and creativity, which involves deliberation, purpose and heuristic procedures. It is argued that such a vision misrepresents both habit and creativity especially when it comes to their expression in a craft like Easter egg decoration. A first step towards reconciling the two notions is made by revisiting a series of foundational strands of theory from psychology and sociology: Baldwin's conception of imitation and habit, the pragmatist approach of Dewey and a more recent elaboration by Joas, and finally Bourdieu's notion of habitus. These authors envision habit in terms of a social, situated and open system. It is based on this perspective that habitual creativity can be defined as the intrinsically creative nature of action, reflected in the way habits adjust to dynamic contexts, the way they are used, combined and ultimately perfected. Further distinctions are then made between habit, improvisation and innovation without polarising creative expression. Both improvisational and innovative creativity are embedded in habitual forms, again very well illustrated by craft activities where decoration is fundamentally a customary type of activity on the basis of which decorators improvise – whenever obstacles or difficulties are encountered – and even get to innovate – when their intention is to generate novel kinds of models or work techniques. In the end, creativity in Easter egg decoration is conceptualised in terms of mastery, one of the highest forms of performance achieved within a habitual practice. Masterful artisans are those who internalised the rules of the craft so well that they constantly create not by breaking these rules, but in the very process of applying them.

> “We may borrow words from a context less technical than that of biology, and convey the same idea by saying that habits are arts. They involve skill of sensory and motor organs, cunning or craft, and objective materials. They assimilate objective energies, and eventuate in command of environment. They require order, discipline, and manifest technique. They have a beginning, middle and end. Each stage marks progress in dealing with materials and tools, advance in converting material to active use. We should laugh at any one who said that he was master of stone working, but that the art was cooped up within himself and in no wise dependence upon support from objects and assistance from tools” (Dewey, 1922, p. 15)

The following discussion has a twofold aim. It will start with a summary of findings from the three studies included in this thesis. Most importantly however, it will bring the findings together and interpret them in light of the age-old dichotomy between creativity and habit, a recurrent theme, in more or less explicit ways, in each of the three pieces of research presented before. This dichotomy is located at the core of thinking not only about creativity but about human action in general and human society; it articulates greater philosophical concerns for understanding continuity and change, and the relationship between the “old” and the “new”. Most of the present chapter will be dedicated to the elaboration of an account that transcends such oppositional thinking and reveals the *co-constitutive* nature of creativity and habit, continuity and change, the new and the old, thus responding to the higher aim of this thesis as presented in the Introduction.

The notion of *habitual creativity*, developed in this context, argues simultaneously for the creativity of habitual action and the habitual nature of creativity. It is not only a concept that defines the essence of creative manifestation in Easter egg decoration and craft activities more generally, but one that can find applicability for theorising creativity as a whole, from everyday forms to “celebrated” achievements in art and science. As such, many of the examples in this discussion will come from the studies of folk art presented earlier but will not be limited to these. Fruitful parallels can be made with other forms of artistic expression, music and jazz performances in particular, and any other everyday activities that require practice and mastery in execution. These links, as well as the theoretical perspectives recovered in this chapter, make the current discussion (and consequently the entire thesis) relevant for our conceptualisation of creativity *in* craft and *beyond* craft, contributing to the development of a cultural psychological analysis that can be applied to a

very wide range of creative manifestations. To achieve this, the chapter starts and ends with references to the tradition of Easter egg decoration, and develops in the middle sections an understanding of habit that recuperates insights from foundational scholarship in psychology and related disciplines, thus allowing for the definition of habitual creativity and elaboration of its fundamental position among other forms of human creative action.

7.1. Summary of findings: Creativity *and* habit in craft

The three studies included in the thesis explored different facets of creativity in Easter egg decoration: as representation, activity, and cultural participation (see Figure 24 for an overview). They considered the interdependence between creativity beliefs / evaluations and creative practices and also how this interdependence is shaped by social contexts (different professional groups, urban and rural communities) and developmental stages, revealing more and more complex forms of participation in culture and community life. In all these researches both notions of *tradition and creativity* were present: from people's conceptions of them (whether or not they are involved in the craft) to how traditions shape and are being shaped by the creative action of children and adults in the capital city, Bucharest, and the Bucovinean village of Ciocăneşti. The allegedly "perpetual conflict" (Weiner, 2000, p. 12) between tradition and creativity was in these cases not only absent, but necessarily reversed. Winncott's (1971, p. 99) assertion that "*it is not possible to be original except on a basis of tradition*" is valid for Easter egg decoration equally at the level of representation and action. For the former, traditions give value and meaning to craftwork, for the latter, they generate habits or patterns of repeated action that are both sufficiently well-practiced to ensure continuity, and sufficiently flexible to generate novelty with each and every decorated egg. Let us elaborate briefly on this relation between creativity and habit in the three studies as follows.

The first research (Chapter 4) was concerned with the integration of Easter eggs as creative artefacts in existing systems of meaning and practice. Based on interviews with ethnographers, priests, art teachers and folk artists, the study focused on evaluations of creativity in the context of the respondents' own engagement with decoration. These interviews suggested *two broad patterns of evaluation* based on whether the respondent was or not directly involved in (elaborate forms of) decoration. More evaluative judgements about the creativity (and other qualities) of Easter eggs were specific mainly for those – ethnographers, priests, some of the art teachers – who did not participate in making eggs for

Study 1:
Evaluations of Easter eggs by members of different communities

The view from outside — **Ethnographers, Priests**

- Easter eggs are integrated in old, traditional systems of folklore and religion
- The making and use of eggs for Easter is regulated by these systems of meaning
- Creativity in craft becomes manifest only within boundaries imposed by tradition

The view from inside — **Art teachers, Folk artists**

- Easter eggs are integrated in traditional systems but also constitute a form of art open to personal expression
- The making and use of eggs for Easter is regulated by traditional styles and aesthetic preferences of the maker
- Creativity in craft becomes manifest when tradition is preserved but also advanced by the decorator

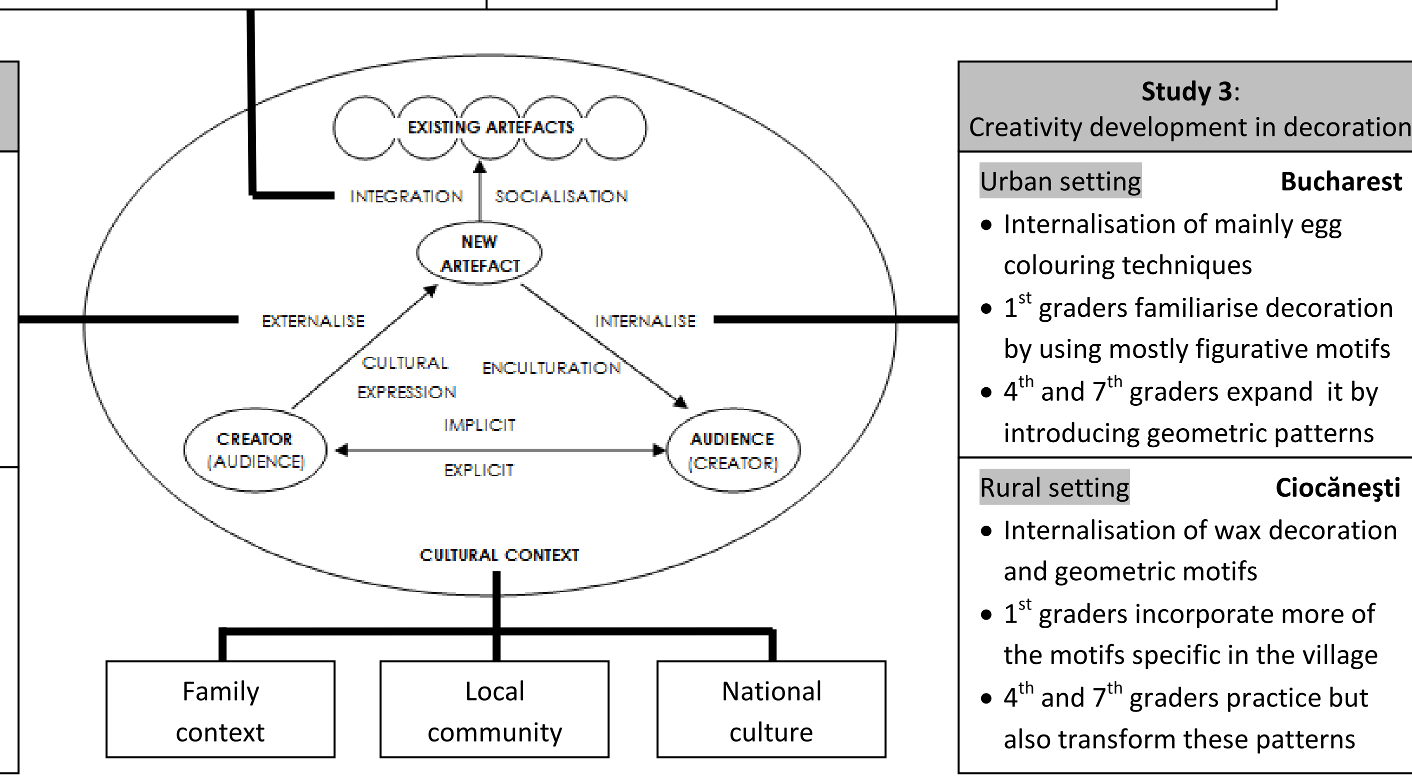
Study 2:
Creative action in egg decoration

Urban decoration — **Bucharest**

- Creative externalisation as a form of play
- Egg decoration re-enacts a Christian identity
- Creativity associated with discovery and exploration

Rural decoration — **Ciocăneşti**

- Creative externalisation as a form of work
- Egg decoration constitutes an identity, that of creator / artisan
- Creativity associated with combination and transformation



Study 3:
Creativity development in decoration

Urban setting — **Bucharest**

- Internalisation of mainly egg colouring techniques
- 1st graders familiarise decoration by using mostly figurative motifs
- 4th and 7th graders expand it by introducing geometric patterns

Rural setting — **Ciocăneşti**

- Internalisation of wax decoration and geometric motifs
- 1st graders incorporate more of the motifs specific in the village
- 4th and 7th graders practice but also transform these patterns

Figure 24. Overview of findings from the three research projects

Easter or did so only in terms of simple colouring. Folk artists and several of the art teachers, on the other hand, tended to appreciate each and every decorated egg for the effort and skill that "goes into" producing it. On the whole, traditionally decorated Easter eggs, typical for the rural parts of Romania, were considered by all respondents to represent a "peak" of creative expression and a superior form of art. In contrast, eggs with stickers were often seen as forms of kitsch, the result of very little work and something people would make to please their children. This research suggested that Easter eggs are first and foremost symbolic objects constituted as much by decoration work and its practicalities as they are by dialogue and negotiation of meaning between and within different communities.

Interestingly, it is precisely the merit and creativity of tradition itself that guides such distinctions. Easter egg decoration was understood by everyone as a primarily habitual form of activity, a custom with deep symbolic and artistic roots within Romanian Christian communities. For respondents, the most elaborate "*routines*" of decoration require concentration, perseverance and ultimately "*talent*". Tradition gives meaning and value to the practice and takes nothing from its creativity, on the contrary. For an Easter egg to be creative it needs to *reflect and continue tradition* in new and significant ways. There was no apparent contradiction between habit and creativity and the main reason for this is similar to what Hausman (1979, p. 246) noticed: "Artists who work according to formulas are regarded as creative because they do not blindly conform to these. They vary the formulas in subtle ways for the sake of approximating or perfecting the formula". Conversely, stepping outside of "traditional formulas" doesn't make the outcomes more creative but meaningless and this is an argument often expressed about eggs with stickers. In addition, the more complex these formulas are, the higher the level of potential creativity: Easter eggs prepared in urban settings are simpler and even those decorated with leaves, although aesthetically pleasant, miss the complexity of traditional meanings characteristic for working with wax. Decoration is, in its highest forms, a habit that not everyone can acquire, especially in Bucharest where life is lived "*at a faster pace*" and the celebration of Easter itself is experienced differently than in the rural parts.

The second research (Chapter 5) included two studies concerning creative externalisation in the case of the craft. In the first one interviews and observation were used to explore the stages of activity in urban and rural decoration with a particular focus on how creative action unfolds in constant interplay with a social and material environment. The second study took a closer look at processes of traditional (wax) decoration in the village of Ciocăneşti by using

the subjective camera technology as part of a Subjective Evidence-Based Ethnography (Lahlou, 2011). This facilitated the documentation of microgenetic creative expression in craft and furthered our understanding of how habitual action is never a simple and mindless repetition of previously learned models and techniques, but a *re-creation and unique enactment* of both. The fact that clearly distinguishable stages of the decoration activity could be abstracted and that their succession was relatively stable on the whole (for example the white, yellow and red phases of work for traditional eggs) did not exclude variations in how motifs were actually depicted on the egg, in what order and with what effect. The subcam in this context was perfectly equipped to seize such variations and to allow for an interpretation of their meaning together with the participants. The "habit of decoration", acquired generally after years and years of practice, specifies some but not all the conditions of work and it needs to be especially open to changes in circumstances, including to any "accidental" discoveries. The social and material grounding of the practice assures in this case not only its continuity over generations but also the idiosyncrasies that define a personal style for every single decorator, an important aspects leading in the rural context to the emergence of creative identities.

In fact, one important feature of craft – and a constant source of novelty – resides precisely in the artisan's immersion into a physical environment. The role of the object and of material support cannot be overemphasised and, within cultural psychology, authors such as Boesch (2007, p. 162) stressed the power objects have to determine where and how we can move, what we can do, and also to regulate social interactions. Easter egg decoration expresses all of these functions through the intricacies of working on a relatively small object with a shape that is generally difficult to draw on. The affordances of eggs, colours and work instruments, to use a term made popular by Gibson (1986), allow some forms of action and not others and, along the way, have shaped the course of the practice by generating various "habits" and "tricks of the trade". At the same time, the resistance of the material in relation to the decorator's imagination calls for permanent adjustment and innovation. There is a strong element of *bricolage* (see Lévi-Strauss, 1966) in the work of decoration, especially in the urban setting where respondents are often inclined to use whatever is "*at hand*" and to vary their procedures according to immediate results (see also the notion of exploratory creativity, Chapter 5). Folk artists from Ciocăneşti however are more constrained in their work and use a set of material and symbolic elements that is well known to them and directly relevant for the task. The unpredictability of bricolage (Louridas, 1999) nevertheless intervenes in the combinatorial processes of traditional craft as well and the decorator, as

any authentic bricoleur, "speaks not only *with* things (...) but also through the medium of things: giving an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities" (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 21).

The existence of changing and challenging material conditions in craft is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for creative expression. What makes habitual action creative is the *continuous cycle of doing and undergoing* – a notion applied in Chapter 5 to make sense of and to code decoration activities – the "intimate connection" that turns "subsequent doing (...) cumulative and not a matter of caprice nor yet of routine" (Dewey, 1934, p. 51). If the artisan would only "do" without paying attention to the progress of work this would reflect the "aimlessness of a mere succession of excitations", while undergoing without doing would lack "variety and movement" (p. 58). The opposite of creativity is therefore not habit, but "monotony and useless repetitions". This, in any case, is the exception and not the rule of craftwork, as both explained by and observed from our respondents. In working, the decorator starts with a general mental image of the outcome and what is to be done to reach it, but this image can only be completed in action. In the words of Bourdieu (1990b, p. 55), an artistic style "is not contained, like a seed, in an original inspiration but is continuously defined and redefined in the dialectic between the objectifying intention and the already objectified intention". This resonates well with modern psychological theorising around *action-perception evolving loops* (see Gibson, 1986; Gibson, 1988; Braund, 2008) that characterise all moment-to-moment interactions within any environment. From this perspective, "an activity is a path in the lived world, a phenomenological tunnel or perception-action. It unfolds in time" (Lahlou, 2010, p. 318). The intrinsic unity of action and perception holds the key to understanding creativity in Easter egg decoration, in craft and habitual acts more generally, as further discussion in this chapter will show.

This *creative tension* between the existence of "established" motifs and rules and their fundamental openness to additions and combinations marks the practice of craft by adults and children alike. Our third study (Chapter 6) investigated how habits are internalised and (trans)formed in Easter egg decoration in urban and rural spaces with first, fourth and seventh grade children. Since these were not longitudinal observations it was not possible to follow the entire trajectory but compare three distinct moments and infer developmental changes. Nevertheless, the results pointed to some interesting *patterns* for lower and higher ages, suggesting the fact that children gradually get to know and appreciate the "rules" of decoration and, together with them, the possibilities for transgression and personal

interpretation (see also Corsaro's, 1997, notion of interpretative reproduction). The child is thus not an imitator *or* an inventor, but *both* (Baldwin, 1906), and the "combination" of the two tendencies varies according to age and social location. In the first grade, children tend not to have developed fully a habit of decoration and their work presented many idiosyncratic and figurative elements. This observation applies more to the urban context since in the village of Ciocăneşti children are "exposed" to this practice from a very young age and many encouraged to help their parents with decoration activities. In lack of a structured idea about what and how Easter eggs typically look like, first grade children made use of their routine drawing habits by depicting flowers, hearts, stars or butterflies on egg shapes. Making the unfamiliar familiar is a process that presupposes, in the end, the use of previous knowledge and skill to answer relatively novel demands. On the other hand, for fourth and seventh graders the norms of decoration were better known and more frequently employed. Making parallels with Denzin's (1977, p. 159) three *forms of play*, urban younger respondents' actions could be catalogued as "playing at play", a rather spontaneous type of interaction with the task, rural first and urban fourth graders as "playing at a game", using certain established elements of geometric decoration but in relatively unconstrained ways, while rural fourth and seventh graders in particular revealed a "playing a game" practice, describing actions that take place well within rule-constructed boundaries. The habit of traditional decoration for the latter was more fully formed and, in being exercised, it allowed and encouraged an increasingly refined form of creativity closer to mastery than free play.

7.2. Theoretical difficulties: Creativity *versus* habit in psychology

While creativity and habit are essentially depicted in conjunction in the studies above, the situation is much different for psychological research regarding creative work. Indeed, it is a common assumption that human behaviour has a "dual tendency", one leading towards innovation and creation, the other towards habituation (Crossley, 2001, p. 129). This *either/o*r type of relationship is widespread not only in scientific theory but also common sense and, on the whole, "any discussion of creativity or innovation necessarily introduces a general opposed concept of habit" (Dalton, 2004, p. 604). This dualistic view has of course important consequences since it fundamentally ends up segmenting human experience into "creative" and "uncreative" or "habitual". Such a distinction makes creativity a rare and unique moment in our existence – given the long formulated view that habits cover a very large part of life (James, 1890) – an exception rather than the rule of behaviour. The

mythologies of genius and the gap between creativity and everyday life described in Chapter 1 steam from a difference like this and contribute to isolating and disconnecting creative expression from lived experience. It is thus important to understand what are the bases for the presumed dichotomy and, in order to do this, we need to consider the psychological interpretation of habit.

The term habit largely derives from the Latin verb *habere* ("to have" or "hold") and its meaning in psychology has been relatively constant throughout the last century. William James (1890, p. 107) for example equated habit with "sequences of behaviors, usually simple (...) that have become virtually automatic". Automaticity, as a central characteristic of habit, makes it both a useful and desired process and a potential threat in our interactions with others. Indeed, it became common knowledge that "the things we have learned to do best, (...) require least thought, direction, feeling, consciousness" (Baldwin, 1900, p. 168). The "breaking" of habit tends to take place when the relation between organism and environment is "ill-defined and subject to frequent and profound alterations" (MacDougall, 1911, p. 327) since in these cases automatic responses become inadequate. Our present understanding of habit however is largely shaped by an even narrower reading of the phenomenon imposed by *behaviourism*. While this school made habit the centrepiece of psychological research, it also reduced it to reflexes and grounded it in biology, glossing over its psychological and cultural aspects. For John B. Watson (1914, 1919), the father figure of behaviourism, habit became a system of acquired reflexes related to muscular and glandular changes whenever the organism is exposed to a specific stimulus (a line of research developed further by Hull, 1943, 1951). Indebted to the behaviourist legacy, recent scholarship takes habit to be an automatic gesture (Lally, van Jaarsveld, Potts & Wardle, 2010) based on the association between a cue and a response (Orbell & Verplanken, 2010).

On the contrary, creativity "involves going beyond the habituated. It moves beyond the standard, repeated routines of everyday life" (Borofsky, 2001, p. 66). Consequently, its products are more valuable and expressive of self. Shattering "the rule of law and regularity of mind" is considered the core of creative processes (Barron, 1990, p. 249) and there are deep and meaningful associations being made between creativity and personal and societal *progress*. Indeed, in the Western world, it is not uncommon to consider tradition as "backward" and repetition as "uncreative" (Weiner, 2000, p. 153), and this pushes habit further away from creation and its forward-looking, progressive moments. Why is there a *gap* between creativity and habit? To answer this one only needs to look at basic definitions

of creativity which link creative action to situations where “a person has no learned or practiced solution to a problem” (Torrance, 1988, p. 57). The *reverse* of habit thus becomes the very definition of creativity. Adding to this, Amabile (1996, p. 35) included the heuristic nature of the task as an integral part of the creative process. Unlike algorithms, heuristic paths might not have a clearly defined goal and do not unfold in a straightforward manner. This contrasts sharply with the routine ways of doing things associated with habit. Finally, Gruber and Wallace (1999), as well as Weisberg (1993), insisted on making purposeful behaviour a condition for creativity. The postulate of intentionality not only safeguards creative expression from mere accidental discoveries but it also distinguishes it from habitual, automatic responses. Such distinctions are paralleled by common-sense thinking on the topic where, as noticed by Baldwin (1906, p. 100), phrases like “divine creation” and “slavish imitation” depict a very clear hierarchy of values.

However, the opposition between creativity and habit (or tradition for this matter) is not just misplaced but highly *problematic and detrimental* for our understanding of both phenomena. With reference to this, Negus and Pickering (2004, p. 68) discussed the “beguiling but misleading view” that equates creativity with “freedom, agency and the unshackling of constraints”. This assumption ignores the crucial role played by conventions and repeated practices in creative expression while at the same time supporting the claim that “tradition stultifies innovation and stupefies creativity” (Wilson, 1984, p. viii). Such oppositions cannot be sustained in the face of theoretical and practical arguments. To support the split between creativity and habit or tradition would be as illogical as arguing that fantasy is the opposite of memory (see Vygotsky, 2004). Moreover, this dichotomy generates *paradoxes* for many performance arts like music whenever a forceful distinction is imposed between creativity and technical mastery (Graham, 1998). It becomes thus important to acknowledge that all the above difficulties in conceptualisation derive from a particular understanding of habits as mindless and uncreative routines. However, this is not the only understanding available and there are vigorous strands of scholarship both in psychology and sociology that directly address this deep-seated dichotomy and aim to transcend it. It is to these critical approaches that we turn next.

7.3. Recovering the meaning of habitual behaviour

The concept of habit has a very long history (longer than the term creativity), being used by Greek and medieval thinkers, major figures of the Enlightenment, and finding a place also in

the philosophy of Kant, Mill and Hegel. Reviewing the historical trajectory of the term, Charles Camic (1986) noted that, despite centuries of moderately similar usage, the notion was radically transformed from the 19th century onwards by the physiological literature that reduced habits to acquired reflexes, and the psychological approach that cemented this meaning. Kilpinen (2009) more recently distinguished between two different definitions: a "Humean" variant considering habits routine-like behaviours outside of consciousness, rationality and intentionality, and a more "pragmatist" conception understanding habits as open to reflection during the course of action. It is this second meaning we are aiming to recuperate, a meaning that transpires clearly from the important contributions of James Mark Baldwin, John Dewey, Hans Joas and Pierre Bourdieu.

For Baldwin habit, referred to more broadly as the *principle of habit*, "expresses the tendency of the organism to secure and retain its vital stimulations" (Baldwin, 1900, p. 216). This principle is considered complementary to that of accommodation or the learning of new adjustments. Accommodation here leads to invention and it would be easy to fall prey to a dichotomy between habit and invention. However, Baldwin specifically rejects such a reductionist view when he states that "accommodation is in each case simply the result and fruit of the habit itself which is exercised" (p. 217) or, in other words, "accommodation is reached simply in the ordinary routine of habit, and is its outcome" (p. 218). Baldwin's writings also offer of a very good example of how the notion of imitation can be placed at the centre of a theory of human psychology and development. His thesis in this regard can be summarised as follows: "In the individual, invention is as natural as imitation. Indeed normal imitation is rarely free from invention!" (pp. 149-150). Baldwin's conception thus starts from the premise that imitation (especially what he calls "persistent imitation", an expression of will) requires invention and this allowed him to theorise imitation as the law of *progressive interaction* between the organism and environment (Baldwin, 1894, 1903). According to him:

> "In all the processes of social absorption and imitation, therefore, we find that the individual thinks and imagines in his own way. He cannot give back unaltered what he gets, as the parrot does. He is not a repeating machine. His mental creations are much more vital and transforming. Try as he will he cannot exactly reproduce; and when he comes near to it his self-love protests and claims its right to do its own thinking" (Baldwin, 1911, pp. 151-152).

The above vision can be related to the American philosophical tradition of *pragmatism*, a system of thinking that intended to challenge a number of deep-seated dichotomies ingrained in much of Western philosophy. John Dewey, as one of the leading figures of this orientation, based his psychological and philosophical writings on a "principle of continuity" in order to counteract dualistic paradigms (see Alexander, 2006, p. 189). And one of the many oppositions Dewey was eager to transcend was the one between habit, seen as necessarily conservative, and thought, understood as the origin of progress (and thus creativity). For Dewey, "thought which does not exist within ordinary habits of action lacks means of execution" and thus condemns our actions to becoming "clumsy, forced" (Dewey, 1922, p. 67). Sadly though, this insight has been largely overlooked in the decades that followed, especially during the age of behaviourism.

The starting point of Dewey's theoretical construction rests in the fact that habits, like all other psychological and behavioural functions, require the cooperation between *organism and environment* (Dewey, 1922, p. 14). They are not foreign elements of our psychological system but form an intimate part of ourselves, which comes to explain the power some habits can have over us (p. 24). As a working definition, we can think of them in terms of a human activity which is influenced by prior activity (acquired), contains an ordering of elements of action, is projective and dynamic in quality and remains operative even when not in explicit use. Most importantly, Dewey encouraged us to "protest against the tendency in psychological literature to limit [habit's] meaning to repetition" and clearly stated that "repetition is in no sense the essence of habit" (pp. 41-42) and neither is "mechanization" (p. 70); in contrast: "Habit means special sensitiveness or accessibility to certain classes of stimuli, standing predilections and aversions, rather than bare recurrence of specific acts. It means will" (p. 42). The assertions above are very much representative of the pragmatist position for which "intentionality (or rationality) without habituality is empty, whereas habituality without intentionality and rationality of course is blind" (Kilpinen, 2009, p. 105).

Moreover, this philosophical orientation has given us a clear description not only of the relationship between habit and thought, but also between habit, action and creativity. For instance, in a more recent elaboration, Hans Joas (1996) advocated for a vision of creativity as an analytical dimension of *all* human action. In this view creativity is not a different type of action in itself, alongside "rational", "normative" or "impulsive" behaviour, but permeates all of our manifestations and therefore needs to take centre stage in a discussion of human agency. We should also note here the two main tasks mind performs in relation to action, in

light of a pragmatist philosophy: "it *monitors* or *supervises* the ongoing action process, and it *reconstructs* that process if it fails" (Joas & Kilpinen, 2006, p. 325). The idea of action failure is in fact central for pragmatists and one of the most important ways in which creativity is manifested in the course of activity – reflecting on the outcome and on the possible means to overcome the difficulty. This association between obstacles and creativity needs to be remembered since, as we shall see, it was scrutinised by later scholarship (Dalton, 2004).

For the moment we can note as well the fact that Joas's critique of rational or normative action resonates with the tenets of Pierre Bourdieu's genetic sociology. In order to understand "how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 65), Bourdieu proposed the notion of *habitus*. Often referred to as a "feel for the game" or a "practical sense", the habitus is a system of dispositions in the sense that individuals are disposed, not determined, to act in a certain way based on previous experience (Bourdieu, 1990b; see also Swartz, 2002). These dispositions are said to be durable (once formed, they last throughout the lifetime) and transportable or able to generate similar practices in different domains. Importantly, they are structures of perception and appreciation simultaneously *structured* by objective social conditions and *structuring* these conditions through the generation of flexible practices. The habitus is therefore marked by its historicity: "a product of history, [it] produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 54). In contrast to the more psychological or physiological reflex-based definitions of habits, for Bourdieu habitus is a thoroughly social construction, "the social embodied" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 128). It is acquired through socialisation, especially in early childhood, and related to particular and long lasting experiences of a social position in society (Bourdieu, 1990a). It can be easily seen in consequence how habitus reflects the social hierarchy and is greatly shaped by the act of belonging to a certain social class (for details see Bourdieu, 1984).

From the above what clearly transpires is the sophisticated way in which Pierre Bourdieu managed to bridge the traditional gap between habit and creativity. Habitus is simultaneously firm and supple, "an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). Habitus may be durable, but it is also "endlessly transformed" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 116), an authentic "art of inventing" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 55). There is no one-to-one link between a habitus and a single type of

unchanging practice. Neither is habitus a form of social norm or a law people have to obey unwillingly. On the contrary, this "feel of the game (...) enables an infinite number of 'moves' to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations which no rule, however complex, can foresee" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 9). As such, "*the habitus goes hand in glove with vagueness and indeterminacy*" (p. 77), obeying a "practical logic" defined by every new interaction with the world. However, there are also limits to the creativity of habitus and these "limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 55). What the habitus produces in fact are "all the 'reasonable', 'common-sense' behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and which are likely to be positively sanctioned" by society (pp. 55-56). Concrete circumstances have the capacity to change habitus but even here Bourdieu reminds us that most experiences we have tend to confirm our usual conduct, since people tend to look for and encounter familiar situations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

In conclusion, Baldwin's acts of imitation, Dewey's and Joas's habitual action and Bourdieu's habitus all acknowledge the relative stability of repeated behaviour but couple it with a significant potential for *change*, *reflection* and even *will* (within personal, social and historical limits). Their perspectives are therefore ultimately in agreement about habits and their role for the individual and for society as a whole. It is this unitary vision that will be taken here as a starting point for a new elaboration of the notion of creativity.

7.4. Defining and locating habitual creativity

In the previous section foundational perspectives from psychology, philosophy and sociology were recovered in thinking about habit, habitual action and creativity. For Baldwin, Dewey, Joas and Bourdieu conceptualising habit was not possible outside of creativity and a comprehensive image of human action unattainable without both. In the remainder of this chapter a theory of creativity based on habit will be proposed, a theory that builds on all the accounts presented above. What brings together the four authors is precisely an understanding of habit as *a social, situated and open system*. For all of them, without exception, habits are social in nature. Mainstream psychological literature claims the acquired or learned nature of habit but it largely fails to do justice to the social interaction behind it, little less the societal dynamic intrinsic to the formation and expression of habits. Pierre Bourdieu's account is perhaps the most illuminating in this regard since for him every habitus embodies a history of social relations. Second, habits are very much situated in their

manifestation and require, as stated by Dewey, the relation between organism and environment. All three terms – the person, the environment, and their relationship – are equally dynamic and so habitual action can never be mechanical and deterministic. It needs to be open and generative in order to allow for processes of adaptation and growth. The acts of imitation mentioned by Baldwin, either suggestive or persistent, never duplicate a model of behaviour but re-construct it according to changing circumstances. At the same time, habits do predispose persons towards particular processes and outcomes; however they should not be mistook for simple reflexes that link a specific "stimulus" to a narrow "response". A reformulation of habit would not only place it back on the agenda of social theorists but it could also resolve long-standing psychological debates over the lack of consciousness, will and creativity from habitual action. The degree of automatisation of any one habit varies on the whole with its degree of specificity but it never reaches an absolute level of mindless, uncreative routine or it would *not qualify* as a habit. What remains to be theorised here is precisely the relationship between creativity and habit and its implications.

In essence there are two broad options when it comes to conceptualising this relation: either creativity and habit are considered *distinct* (inter-connected) *processes* or conceived of as a *single type of action*. If the first path is taken then moments of creativity can be distinguished from moments of habit and a theory of creativity built on how and when creative processes "intervene" in the course of habitual action. On the other hand, if creativity and habit concurrently describe action then their separation, even for analytical purposes, becomes questionable. This is, in short, the critique raised by Dalton (2004) and others (Kilpinen, 1998; Del Mar, 2010) in relation to Joas's formulation of creative action and its pragmatist sources: it maintains creativity and habit as complementary phases and thus *conserves the dualism* between the two. The issue with pragmatism is that, despite its willingness to transcend dichotomic thinking, it nevertheless hypothesised an unbreakable link between problems or obstacles and conscious or "creative" thought (see Dewey, 1903, 1910). For Mead (1964, p. 7) for instance, "analytical thought commences with the presence of problems and the conflict between different lines of activity" and Dewey, as we have already seen (Chapter 5, also Miettinen, 2006a), emphasised greatly the role of obstacles for human experience. Even Baldwin (1903), by referring to a "two-fold factor" of organic activity, kept the distinction between a principle of accommodation and a principle of habit. For Dalton this makes creativity "episodically" involved in habit, especially when difficulties occur that need creative solutions and adaptations. In his view, Bourdieu achieved with his notion of habitus a much better conceptual integration, although he gave creative

achievements a secondary role and restricted them greatly vis-à-vis social constraints. Aiming to reconcile and retain the best from both theories, Dalton (2004, p. 604) asserted the "simultaneous presence of habitual and creative elements in all moments of action" where actors, in the course of habitual acts, "implement contingent techniques suited to the moment" and where "the perfection of habit can lead to creative action" (p. 609).

Building on this preliminary insight, we can now introduce and define the notion of ***habitual creativity*** as a further attempt, from a psychological perspective, to overcome the dichotomy between habit on the one side and creativity on the other. In a tentative formulation, *habitual creativity defines the ways in which novelties form an intrinsic part of habitual action by constantly adjusting it to dynamic contexts, allowing for transitions between and combination of different "routines" and finally perfecting practices, thus resulting in mastery and the accumulation of expertise*. Habitual creativity is, in this regard, the conceptual pair of habitus, theorising the same phenomenon but from its "creative end"; the focus on novelties in behaviour does not override its socially conditioned character but addresses Dalton's critique of overemphasising structural elements.

Habitual creativity is a microgenetic phenomenon (with potential sociogenetic effects) and the definition above stresses, without exhausting, the many ways in which it can become manifest. By far the most agreed upon form of novelty emergence in habitual action has to do with the "adjustment to dynamic contexts" mentioned at the beginning, a feature that was equally acknowledged by Baldwin, Dewey, Joas and Bourdieu. At a macro level, Weiner (2000, p. 158) asserts that "the process of adapting tradition to changed circumstances will always involve some degrees of problem-solving, inventiveness, and/or imaginative expression". Considering the more concrete example of music performance, Caffin, Lemieux and Chen (2006, p. 200) state: "Performers adjust to the idiosyncratic demands and opportunities of each occasion. (...) The creativity involved in this kind of spontaneous micro-adjustment of a highly prepared interpretation makes each performance a creative activity". And the examples could continue. The other two possibilities of combining and perfecting habits are on the other hand most clearly illustrated by craft activities such as Easter egg decoration and the notion of *mastery* will be addressed in this context in the final section. Before that however, it is important to elaborate on the implications of postulating habitual creativity, principally the grand claim that "all creativity is habitual". Some distinctions will be made afterwards between habit, improvisation and innovation *without* introducing any further dichotomies and oppositions. An interesting appendix to this

discussion is represented by a brief overview of why psychology tended to neglect habit and improvisation for the benefit of innovative behaviour.

7.4.1. Creativity as habitual

Previously the argument was made that all habit is, by definition, creative. The notion of habitual creativity is concerned with the reciprocal statement that all creativity is, itself, habitual. What this means is that creativity, *in all instances*, relies on the existence of habits, of known and exercised ways of interacting in and with the world. Since proposing the creativity of habit idea implies the habitual nature of creativity, it is not surprising to find supporting statements in this regard in the writings of Baldwin and Dewey. Addressing the issue, Baldwin summarised his view as follows: "Let us say, once and for all, that every new thing is an adaptation, and every adaptation arises right out of the bosom of old processes and is filled with old matter" (Baldwin, 1903, p. 218). Dewey (1934), starting from the premise that each great cultural tradition is "an organized *habit* of vision and of methods of ordering and conveying material" (p. 276, emphasis added), concluded: "[Just like the artist] the scientific inquirer, the philosopher, the technologist, also derive their substance from the stream of culture. This dependence is an essential factor in original vision and creative expression" (pp. 276-277). For both authors then, habits formed by taking part in the culture and traditions of a society and its different communities are a *sine qua non* of creative achievement, and this is equally valid for all creative domains. Creativity is never free from tradition and habit and its central characteristic is not to contradict them, but to work from within and continue them in new and significant ways (see Chapters 1 and 2). In the words of Feldman (1974, p. 68): "all creative thought springs from a base of cultural knowledge and is therefore, by definition, part of a cultural tradition – even when it breaks with tradition".

If these assertions are correct, two implications can be derived: first, creators need some time to incorporate the "habits of vision and action" of their cultures and master them, and second, as cultures and traditions are so diverse, creative expression will be channelled and manifest itself differently around the world. Both these ideas are supported by the psychological literature which has long established that "the human act of creation, basically, is a personal reshaping of given materials, whether physical or mental" (Barron, 1995, p. 313). There is not a hiatus but *continuation* between the "new" and the "old" and this makes the generation of novelty dependent on processes of socialisation and acculturation (see Chapter 6). Csikszentmihalyi's (1999, p. 332) systemic model of creativity

emphasised this by relating the creator and creation to an existing field and domain: "In order to function well within the creative system, one must internalize the rules of the domain and the opinions of the field". This premise is corroborated by research findings suggesting that, usually, big creative breakthroughs happen within a decade after mastering the rules of the domain (see Gardner, 1994). Furthermore, cultural traditions will shape not only the mechanisms of recognition in cases of such breakthroughs but also orient the creative energies of individuals and groups. Different talents may well be fostered in different cultural contexts (Runco, 2007, p. 273; also Westwood & Low, 2003), defining the Ortgesit and Zeitgeist of diverse cultural-historical positions in the world (see Simonton, 2003). As an example, the Indian culture has long favoured innovations in the field of spirituality compared to other domains (for a review of this see Bhawuk, 2003).

The claim that creativity is habitual however goes beyond illustrations of celebrated creations and reflects a much deeper, *existential* dimension. A "habit of being creative" can be hypothesised in relation to each and every individual, something akin to what Baldwin suggested when he considered "the very fact of accommodation itself the great deep-seated *habit* of organic life" (Baldwin, 1903, p. 220). Outside of these biological roots there are also strong cultural imperatives to create and Wilson (1984, p. 101) refers in this case to innovation becoming "a *tradition*" in contemporary societies. The premise that human life is inherently creative resonates also with the psychology of Winnicott (1971, p. 67) who was primarily interested in a universal type of creativity, one that "belongs to being alive". For him being creative means being able to use one's whole personality in acts of self expression and is associated with healthy living. Creativity reveals itself as the rule rather than the exception of human existence if we come to think about the continuous, moment to moment meaning and linguistic production of self and world. As Josephs and Valsiner (2007, p. 55) remind us, "semiotic construction is constant and overabundant: the creativity of human *psyche* is generating new meanings while living one's life is hyper-productive" (see also Barrett, 1999). It doesn't matter from this perspective if the constructions are ephemeral and do not leave a lasting mark on human society; in all their forms they are indispensable for everyday living and mediate our relationship to self, others and world.

For as appealing as this approach to creativity is, there are also several authors who voiced their concerns over equating creative action with all human (habitual) action. Negus and Pickering (2004, p. 45) for instance warn that "we cannot collapse creativity into everyday life, as if they are indistinguishable". In a similar vein, Hausman (1979, p. 240) worries that

universalising creativity makes the meaning of the concept “too broad” and leaves us incapable of discriminating between creations. However, the notion of habitual creativity does not aim to cover *all* forms of human action in the everyday, since not all action is in fact habitual, and it does allow for *differentiations* in creative expression. Let us take these in turn. Human action is habitual but it can also be normative, impulsive, etc. The habitual mode of action is certainly pervasive but it doesn’t exclude other forms. Bourdieu (1990a, p. 108) acknowledged this when he mentioned that “habitus is one principle of production of practices among others and although it is undoubtedly more frequent in play than any other (...) one cannot rule out that it may be superseded under certain circumstances (...) by other principles, such as rational and conscious computation”. It is for this reason that habitus can be “controlled” and, at times, consciously analysed and modified (p. 116). Equally, habitual creativity is persistent but also differentiated. To understand this we need to consider the creativity of habits in its relation to improvisation and innovation.

7.4.2. Habit, improvisation, innovation

The psychological theory of creativity has a long tradition of establishing types and making distinctions between different forms of creative work. Often these come in a hierarchy, for example the classic typology by Irvine Taylor (1959), ranging from expressive creativity displayed in spontaneous self-expression up to emergenative creativity, leading to the formation of new schools of thought. More recent approaches tend to speak about a *continuum* of creativity and Cohen and Ambrose (1999, pp. 18-21) for instance segmented this continuum into seven levels: learning something new (universal novelty) – making connections that are rare compared to peers – developing talents – developing heuristics – producing information – creating by extending a field – creating by transforming a field. The “upper” levels generally attracted more attention from researchers and nowadays there are several models available for thinking about creative contributions. Sternberg (2003) identified in this case eight types of contributions and grouped them in three main categories: those that accept current paradigms, those that reject them, and those that integrate multiple paradigms. What can be noted from the above is that usually classifications of creativity tend to be grounded in outcome criteria and especially consider the value and novelty of the final product. To simplify things, many authors employ a simple dichotomy between Big C, mature creativity or H-creativity (historical creativity) on the one hand, and little c, mundane creativity or P-creativity (personal creativity) on the other (see Craft, 2001; Cohen & Ambrose, 1999; Boden, 1994). The common view behind such

distinctions was metaphorically summarised by John Liep (2001, p. 12) when he said: "If 'conventional creativity' spreads like an ocean on the surface of the world, 'true creativity' rises like islands here and there". There are many assumptions packed into formulations such as these, the most obvious being the existence of a "true" creativity that is both very rare and noticeable. However, separating true or exceptional and conventional or everyday creativity soon runs into conceptual problems since "one confers on the term a rarefied and occasionally mystical air, the other can make the word seem commonplace and even banal. Rarely have the links between both these senses of the term creativity been retained and explored" (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 1).

It is precisely this exploration of *links* between different manifestations of creativity that will be attempted here. Moreover, in light of our previous discussion, the different types of creative expression mentioned next will not be considered separate, thus resulting in "distinct forms" of creativity, or hierarchical, thus reflecting an organisation based on value of outcome. The three types proposed are those of *habitual, improvisational and innovative creativity*. Of them, the habitual creative process has been analysed at length and the section before supported a strong claim that saw all creativity as ultimately based on the expression of habit. This raises the question of how is it possible to postulate other types of creativity without contradicting this premise.

To begin with, there surely are some differences between the emergence of novelty resulting out of the practice of habitual action and the emergence of novelty resulting from dealing with obstacles (sometimes) faced during this action. The latter is specifically what Joas (1996) and the pragmatists considered to be creativity in the strict sense of the word. This dilemma can be solved if we consider habit, improvisation and innovation not as separate "entities" ordered in any kind of continuum, but ***embedded within each other***. As a result, the difference between the three is not that improvisation and innovation break with habit, they are still grounded in forms of habitual action (see the section before), but the processes they denote show particularities equally due to external and internal circumstances of the creator. To be more explicit, it is argued that we can talk about improvisational creativity when there is an *obstacle or difficulty* in the course of habitual action that requires some form of interruption and deliberation. Furthermore, we can call innovative creativity the process of dealing with such obstacle or difficulty with the clear *intention* on the part of the actor to generate novel solutions (in the purest form, the intention to "create"). These features are summarised in Figure 25. Before analysing further

this classification it should be mentioned that the meaning of improvisation and especially innovation, as used here, differs to some extent from their "standard" definition. Second, and this is vastly important, the three forms of creative expression deal in a sense with *ideal types* and, in practice, they often glide into one another and can be analytically hard to distinguish for several reasons, many of them discussed below.

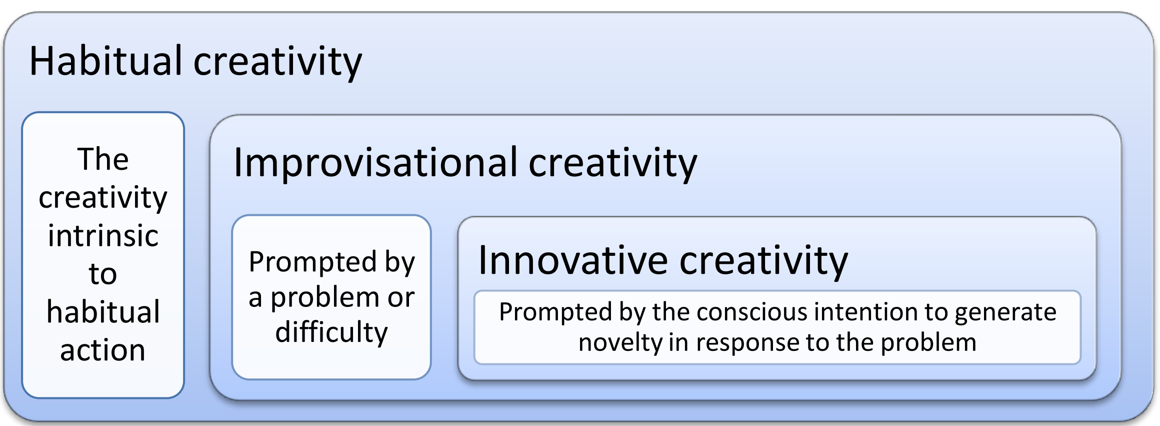


Figure 25. Three interpenetrated forms of creativity

The notion of ***improvisation*** commonly designates "something that was done to face some unforeseen circumstances" (Montuori, 2003, p. 245). It is this basic meaning that we employ here as well and, from this perspective, a person improvises when his or her (habitual) action is faced with an obstacle or difficulty. Problems disrupt the regular ways we have of doing things and thus call for creative forms of behaviour. This relationship between problems and creativity has deep historical roots (pragmatism) and is reflected in current cognitive approaches defining creativity as a problem-solving process. However, despite these associations, improvisational creativity has rarely constituted the focus of mainstream research. This is explained by authors like Sawyer (2000) as a consequence of the nature of improvisation which, unlike product-based forms of creativity, is usually manifested in "*performances*". For improvisational creativity, on many occasions, "the process is the product" (Sawyer, 2000, p. 150) and improvised performances are characterised by contingency, emergence and participatory learning (Sawyer, 1997, p. 4). For Ingold and Hallam (2007, p. 3) improvisation is generative, relational, temporal and expresses "the way we work". This last feature already raises an interesting point of connection between habitual and improvisational creativity and comes to argue for the continuity between the two. In the words of Liep (2001, p. 2), "improvisation indicates a more conventional exploration of possibilities within a certain framework of rules" (a framework of habits we

could say, using this chapter's terminology). This is very well illustrated by jazz improvised performances that, for as spontaneous as they are, are always "performed by someone with a history, with cultural, economic, political, and philosophical contexts, with perspectives, *habits*, and eccentricities, with the ability to make *choices* in context, which choices in turn affect the context" (Montuori, 2003, p. 246; emphasis added).

Improvisation thus draws from habit and succeeds in shaping it, "compelled" by the fact that "no system of codes, rules and norms can anticipate every possible circumstance" (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 2). And this is where the distinction between habitual and improvisational creativity can become blurred and expose their fundamental *intertwining*: habitual action generally presupposes micro-improvisational acts since, as Dalton (2004, p. 615) rightfully remarked, "the problem is a general difficulty in all moments of action". There is an important overlap between habit and improvisation and, based on our definition of "problem" (Dewey, 1910, p. 9), we can more easily or not observe the difference between the two terms. It is argued here however that improvisational forms of creativity, working from *within* habitual action, can be distinguished for both analytical and practical purposes and a valuable indicator in this regard is, for instance, when activity stops because of encountered difficulties; improvised solutions in these circumstances re-use, alter or combine habitual forms and, when successful, become constitutive of future habitual action.

Unlike habitual and improvisational creativity, ***innovative expressions*** of the phenomenon have constituted the central focus of creativity research in psychology for decades. Considered an "intentionally creative" type of action, innovative creativity normally leads to physical products which can be more easily observed and evaluated. Great works of art, inventions and scientific theories are to a large extent the outcome of this particular form of expression. While sometimes processes of innovation are defined as "the practical application of creative ideas" (Westwood & Law, 2003, p. 236), the term is not used here such applied connotations. Innovative or inventive creativity is defined in our context as the act of addressing a difficulty or problem with the intention not only of solving it, but solving it *in a creative or novel way*. From this perspective, traditional models of the creative process in psychology are meant to explain innovative behaviours in particular, for example Wallas's (1926) succession of preparation – incubation – illumination – verification applies very well to deliberate, medium or long-term creative work. Moreover, the mere presence of such intentionality positions the person in the category of potential "creators" and this dimension can become integrated at an identity level with important consequences: it

provides direction, determination, and can thus lead to further inventions (Engel, 1993). To be sure, innovative creativity is not by any means portrayed as a superior type of creativity (reproducing a common bias in both scientific theory and lay thinking on the topic) given that extremely valuable creations can come out of habitual and/or improvisational processes alone. The intention to create doesn't guarantee the quality of the work, and its absence doesn't make the outcome any less creative (especially since creativity itself largely relies on social agreement, see Chapter 4).

At the same time, we should keep in mind that innovative creativity here is considered to be *embedded within* improvisational and habitual fields of action. Habit and invention are continuous since, as mentioned by Baldwin (1906, p. 180), "effective invention is always rooted in the knowledge already possessed by society" and "no effective invention ever makes an absolute break with the culture, tradition, fund of knowledge treasured up from the past". As for the link between improvisation and innovation, their important differences have been captured well by Lévi-Strauss's (1966) distinction between the *bricoleur* and the *engineer*. Improvisational processes are very often a form of bricolage, of making the best with what is at hand while generally remaining within a set of existing rules; in contrast, "the engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization" (Lévi-Strauss's, 1966, p. 19; see also Louridas, 1999). Having said that, the boundaries between the two are often blurred by the fact that creative intentions often exist *among other* motivating factors (e.g., doing a good job, enjoying an activity, etc.). This brings back the example of jazz performances in which "a commonly shared goal is *to create within a musical and social context*, requiring both control and spontaneity, constraints and possibilities, innovation and tradition, leading and supporting" (Montuori, 2003, p. 239; emphasis added). Furthermore, musicians who improvise can retain certain works in their repertoire and perfect them along many years (Dobbins, 1980), thus demonstrating how an act of improvisation can become, gradually, one of innovation.

In conclusion, habit, improvisation and innovation are not three separate forms of creative expression but refer to three instances of the same basic process. As such, they are sometimes hard to differentiate, especially at a micro-level of analysis, and there are many "grey zones" to be considered between them. However, this classification is necessary as it allows us to appreciate the *simultaneous* diversity and internal unity of creative manifestation. To exemplify it with the *case of craft*, in traditional Easter egg decoration one can identify all three types while looking at the work of different decorators or of one and

the same decorator across time. On the whole, this practice can be said to illustrate best the mechanisms of habitual creativity. This is because decoration activities rely on a strong knowledge base and require the exercise of technique through reproducing and combining a number of traditional motifs as well as perfecting them. The stages, properties of materials, work procedures, are all learned from early on and this considerably reduces the number of difficulties encountered. To be sure, obstacles are not absent (see Chapter 5 for examples) and therefore decorators become improvisers when confronted with accidents in drawing or colouring, due to failure of the material support or when they experience an inspiration block. Inventing (e.g., "coming up" with a new motif or work technique) is also constant in this folk art but mostly as part of habitual-improvisational forms of expression. Decorators want to express themselves through their work and to continue a tradition they value (see Chapter 4) and not necessarily to "create" or change things for the sake of change. Innovation in Easter egg decoration is mainly led by necessity rather than innovative creativity, in the sense offered here to the term. Still, there are cases of recognised innovators who deliberately search for novelties, mostly in order to respond to the changing needs of customers and expand the existing market. This is how Christmas eggs or the wax in relief procedure of decoration got "invented" and, as they rapidly spread to other decorators in the region and in the country, they became part of current habitual practices and thus subject to continuous re-interpretation and improvisation.

7.4.3. On the neglect of habit and improvisation

Last but not least, it is important to make a few observations about the relative neglect of habitual and improvisational creativity in psychology. On the whole we can consider these types of expression as representing the core of *everyday life creativity*, the creativity that permeates all dimensions of our existence (Montuori, 2011; see also Chapter 2). However, this is not to say that everyday life is opposed to innovative forms and associate the latter exclusively with high achievements in art and science; this would mean falling prey to the same dichotomy we aim to transcend. As the previous section strived to argue, ordinary creativity can lead to innovation and innovations themselves grow out of a habitual and improvisational base. And yet, it was often the case for scholars to focus "on eminent or unambiguous rather than everyday creativity" (Runco, 2007, p. x), which, although a clear sign of our "vibrant symbolic life", unfortunately is "sometimes invisible, looked down on or spurned" (Willis, 1990, p. 1). Reasons for this are both theoretical and methodological.

To begin with, our (Western or Westernised) societies are based on a glorification of Big C creativity, great creations and extraordinary creators. This steams to a large extent from a general *opposition* set in place between individuals on the one hand, society and culture on the other (see Chapter 1, the He and I paradigms). The consequences of this view are widespread, especially for aspiring creators who, in order to achieve social recognition, frequently feel the pressure of departing from what already exists in radical ways, of "fighting" against convention. Indeed, in art, "totally conventional pieces bore everyone and bring the artist few rewards. So artists, to be successful in producing art, must violate standards more or less deeply internalized" (Becker, 2008, p. 204). Habitual creativity is therefore completely *excluded* by this logic. Improvisation may be more appreciated in the arts but, for the most part, it can also carry some undesirable associations with "makeshift" and "the next best thing". In the words of Montuori (2003, p. 245), "improvisation is thought of as making the best of things, while awaiting a return to the way things should be done". The oftentimes "ephemeral" nature of its products (Sawyer, 1997) further decreases its value and makes it "resistant to operationalization and analysis" (Sawyer, 1995, p. 173). A series of methodological difficulties need to be confronted by those interested in habitual and improvisational creativity, principally the fact that they require a microgenetic and situated approach. To understand the nature of habit and improvisation one has to see them in the broader, social context of their emergence, as well as their moment-to-moment dynamics. The subjective camera technology (see Chapters 3 for methodology and Chapter 5 for application) can make a substantial contribution towards achieving these goals.

The neglect of everyday life forms of creativity not only "deprives us of a range of models for the creative process" (Bateson, 1999, p. 153) but, according to the perspective adopted here, it deprives us of *the most important and basic* models of creative processes, those for habitual expression. This is all the more surprising since it has been argued for some time in the psychology of creativity, especially by authors like Weisberg (1993), that "novelty is the norm of all behaviour" and "ordinary thinking processes" produce novel works of value and "must underlie even the most exalted examples of creative thinking" (p. 11). For Weisberg, "a cornerstone of the concept of ordinary thinking is that it is based on continuity with the past" (p. 21), a definition very much in line with our notion of habitual creativity. By reviewing laboratory studies and historical examples, he offered compelling evidence that the processes which lead to extraordinary creative achievements are *not qualitatively different* from the ones we use in our daily activities. In a formulation by Bink and Mash (2000, p. 60), "these processes do not functionally differ between the genius and those who

appear (prima facie) less gifted”. In actual fact, the dominant creative cognition approach (see Ward, Smith & Finke, 1999, p. 189) is founded on the assumption that “creative accomplishments, from the most mundane to the most extraordinary, are based on (...) ordinary mental processes that, at least in principle, are observable”. Despite this similarity of perspective, cognitive studies for the most part do not inquire into the nature of habit itself and employ a series of laboratory experiments remote from the nature and complexities of everyday life action. Connections are still to be made between “ordinary thinking processes” studied in the present-day literature and real-life habitual and improvisational manifestations taking place in ecological settings.

7.5. Conclusion: Creativity in Easter egg decoration as mastery

It was previously argued that creativity in folk art is, fundamentally, of a habitual type, without missing improvisational and even innovative elements. Easter egg decoration offers an excellent example. This craft can be considered *habitual at many levels*, from cataloguing the whole of it as a custom, a social or community habit, to looking at its inner organisation of action where different techniques of decoration require different habits (e.g. decoration with leaves, wax, etc.) and ending, at a more micro-level, with the exercised and habitual depiction of motifs. At all these levels one can see the expression of creativity.

Firstly, decorators do not only reproduce the custom, but “intelligently adapt customs to conditions, and thereby remake them” (Dewey, 1934, p. 75). Chapter 4 brought evidence of this by listing both continuities and innovations in craft and pointing to the existence of *pioneers of change*, decorators who played a great role in shaping what is today the neo-tradition of egg decoration. The “creation” of eggs with wax in relief, then coloured wax in relief, and finally the depiction of entire scenes on eggs (including Christmas images) all testify to the ways in which a traditional custom transformed under new conditions marked by new generations of artisans and the expansion of a market for the making and selling of their products. Second, the repetition of a pattern itself is not essentially a routine or mechanical process, but can “also be an opportunity for personal interpretation of that pattern” (Weiner, 2000, p. 153). Chapter 5 offered several examples of how motifs are interpreted both when “taken” from the work of others (through an effort of translation) and when repeated by the artisan (through addition and combination). Finally, just like in music where “spontaneity in performance is not an illusion” and “repeated performances generally differ in small but musically significant ways” (Chaffin, Lemieux & Chen, 2006, p.

200), each presentation of a motif is at the same time a *re-presentation* of it, a *re-creation*. This re-creation is most obvious in the case of children decorators (see Chapter 6) who, in an effort to integrate the "rules" of decoration, make changes, more or less deliberate, at the level of both colour and content, bringing further evidence for the role of ontogenesis in the transformation of culture.

Following the suggested definition of habitual creativity included in this chapter we can notice all its processes illustrated by Easter egg decoration. Action is "difficult", as Dalton (2004) acknowledged, and the action of ornamenting an egg is particularly challenging, especially for novice decorators and even experts (see section on novice and expert decorators in study two, Chapter 5). As such, there is a need for constant *adjustment* between action and its dynamic context, characterised by the physical properties of the materials used and the results of previous work. In this process, the transition from one habitual form to another and their combination is very frequent. This is how motifs originally done in the "traditional" wax technique pass on to be done with wax in relief and vice versa, and a particular main model from one egg gets to be depicted side by side with a girdle motif from another (something often discussed by decorators when presenting their work; see Chapter 5 and the notion of combinatorial creativity). Most importantly, higher levels of creativity in folk art (as appreciated by both decorators themselves and their customers) are associated with a continuous efforts made to perfect the craft, to achieve mastery over the technique. The "remarkable intuitive sensitivity" (Dobbins, 1980, p. 38) that describes folk artists in any domain is the outcome of years of practice – of working at least "*a first thousand eggs*", in the words of one of our participants. It is the nature and characteristics of this mastery that will be unpacked in this concluding section.

John Dewey offers us a first hint in this direction, when he writes:

> "How delicate, prompt, sure and varied are the movements of a violin player or an engraver! How unerringly they phrase every shade of emotion and every turn of idea! Mechanism is indispensable. If each act has to be consciously searched for at the moment and intentionally performed, execution is painful and the product is clumsy and halting. Nevertheless the difference between the artist and the mere technician is unmistakeable. The artist is a *masterful technician*. The technique or mechanism is fused with thought and feeling. The 'mechanical' performer permits the mechanism to dictate the performance" (Dewey, 1922, p. 71, emphasis added).

For Dewey, the difference between artist and technician is that between an exercise of intelligent habit versus the mindless repetition of a routine. In this case routines are "mindless" because technicians employ them without any personal interest and investment. For egg decoration this resonates with an observation made by respondents, especially folk artists, who distinguished between those working with "*soul*", being genuinely interested and involved in the craft, and someone who performs it for money in a semi-mechanical manner. If "master-level performance only comes after years of extensive deliberate practice" (Weisberg, 1999, p. 230; see also Ericsson, 2006), its superior expression depends on initial skill and the motivation of the learner. Dewey commented on this aspect and considered that the art of a skilled performer is not only perfected through training but is, in a sense, already there *while* the person is practicing. The artist doesn't make "mechanical exercises of repetition in which skill apart from thought is the aim, until suddenly, magically, this soulless mechanism is taken possession of by sentiment and imagination and it becomes a flexible instrument of mind" (Dewey, 1922, p. 71). Mastery is not a moment in the course of habitual practice but a continuous *process* for novices and experts alike.

Mastery therefore can be defined as *the uppermost level of habitual practice, at which action has been so well exercised and internalised that it becomes associated with advanced forms of creative expression*. The fundamental question to be asked in this context is similar to Caffin, Lemieux and Chen's (2006) interrogation concerning the activity of musicians: "how can performance be both creative and highly automatic at the same time?" or, in other words, how can mastery involve both "routinised" habit and creativity of the highest degree? This relationship can be visually represented as an almost perfect circle, like the one depicted in Figure 26. In this representation habit and creativity are positioned on a continuum that, at all points, involves an integrated manifestation of both (in line with the notion of habitual creativity). Often, when the habit is still not fully formed, outcomes appear to be more novel in relation to conventional ways of work (see Chapter 6 on the development of creativity in decoration). Conversely, a powerful habit might reduce variation at a surface level while encouraging micro-changes and adjustments of the technique. However, to assume that as habit grows stronger the (perceived) creative quality diminishes would be incorrect and this is reflected by the "extremities" of the continuum in Figure 26 not being opposed to one another but coming together in what is called mastery: the highest level of habitual action associated with the highest level of creative expression. In order to become more creative one needs *not* to "break" with habit, as commonly thought, but to *advance in mastering it*.

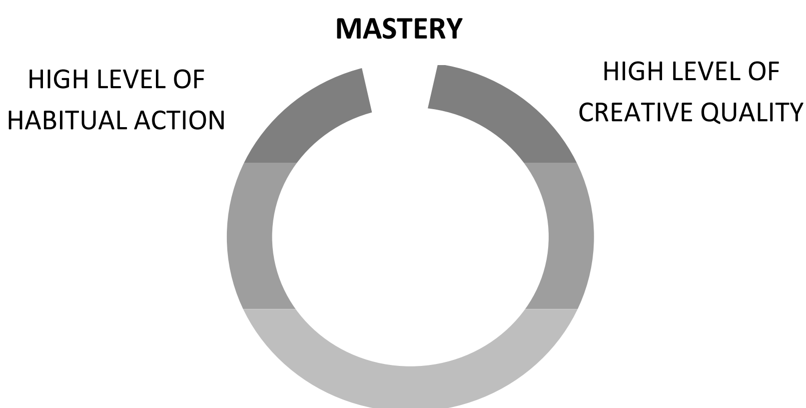


Figure 26. A schematic representation of mastery

Understanding this apparent paradox requires us to think about the dynamic between *attachment or immersion* into a domain of practice and *detachment*, the capacity to creatively transgress its current state and envision its future dimensions. The masterful technician, from Dewey's formulation, is at once perfectly immersed and connected to the "way of doing things" and capable of "doing things differently". The latter is to a great extent a *consequence* of the former. Bourdieu hinted at this when he asserted that the good player is "the game incarnate" and "nothing is simultaneously freer and more constrained than the action of the good player" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 63). Bruner (1962) theorised a similar phenomenon as "detachment of commitment", where the creators, animated by "a deep need to understand something, to master a technique, to render a meaning", are able "at one stroke" to be "disengaged from that which exists conventionally and (...) engaged deeply in what they construct to replace it" (p. 24). There is agency on the part of the author and the interplay between attachment and detachment is located in interactions with the outside world. As Bruner continues, creators often experience a "'freedom to be dominate' by the object being created" and "as the object takes over and demands to be completed 'in its own terms', there is a new opportunity to express a style and an individuality" (p. 26).

This experience, very close to Csikszentmihalyi's (1996, 1997) *flow*, is extremely common among Easter eggs decorators who frequently talk about being guided by the work itself. Immersion into a highly habitual activity and its materiality generates the space to create by way of detachment. As the study of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) on the phenomenology of expertise indicates, masterful practitioners reach such a great level of proficiency and knowledge of the rules that they don't need to "think" about them while working and are

free to *constantly improvise* around the rules *while applying* them. Instances of this process have been documented in the present thesis, particularly in Chapter 5 dedicated to creative forms of externalisation. Mihaela's action of drawing leaf-like shapes on the sides of a central curved line (illustrated in Glăveanu & Lahlou, 2012), captured by the subcamera, shows how the number of these elements varies and this variation is determined by concrete circumstances and represents an adaptation done almost automatically, an instance where the rules are flexibly applied to satisfy current constraints. There is certainly immersion in the work of artisans and this is obvious especially in the decoration process of expert folk artists. Cristina's depiction of the "lost way" motif exemplifies what Sennett (2008) calls *rhythm*. The rhythm of "hand and eye" in the case of craftsmen comes, according to him, from a constant balancing between "repetition and anticipation" (Sennett, 2008, p. 176). Artisans don't just act, they also perceive and, through perception, are able to anticipate, to look ahead and be led by the motif itself towards its completion. The greatest accomplishment of an artisan in this case rests in being able to constantly improvise while immersed in habitual forms of action, to create the "new" while engaging with the "old" and *because* of this engagement.

What is the mechanism behind this accomplishment? Perhaps one of the most interesting attempts to explain the process comes from Caffin, Lemieux and Chen (2006) who dealt specifically with musical performances. Their premise is simple: "if the musician is not paying attention to the music, then a performance can easily be automatic and lack the important qualities of vitality and spontaneity" (p. 201). On the other hand, focusing too much on pitfalls and mistakes can make the outcome equally uncreative. What increases creativity is in fact thinking about *interpretative and expressive goals* while playing and detecting the cues that are associated with these particular qualities. Rehearsals of the composition ensure that performance cues "come to mind automatically and effortlessly as the piece unfolds, eliciting the highly practiced movements" (p. 202). It is only through practice that such cues can become an integral part of the recital and only so can the musician free him/herself from monitoring each and every movement and perfect those particular elements which give the whole performance its creative value. "Use of performance cues is", in fact, "an attention strategy that maintains conscious control of a highly automated performance" (p. 215). The authors proposed a hierarchical classification of cues in the case of music: basic, interpretative and expressive. Mastery is achieved after considerable practice when basic and interpretative aspects of the performance have been fully integrated and the artist can focus entirely on expressive cues. This explanation of masterful

action, built upon the interplay between automatisation, thought and attention to the outcomes of the work, resonates widely with Drewey's emphasis on the importance of *undergoing*. In his formulation, "an incredible amount of observation and of the kind of intelligence that is exercised in perception of qualitative relations characterizes creative work in art" (Dewey, 1934, p. 52). And these relations, he continues, must be observed not only between details but also "in connection with the whole under construction".

Mastery in Easter egg decoration follows this exact model. In this craft the performance cues that most non-expert decorators attend to have to do with how straight the lines are, if the model is symmetric, if colours have the proper shade, etc. This tendency while working has been captured in detail with the help of subjective cameras (Chapter 5, second study) and interviews with young decorators (Chapter 6). On the contrary, experienced artisans who mastered the habit of drawing on the egg can "free" their attention from technical details, focus on aesthetic qualities and thus seize all *opportunities* for adding a personal element to the model being depicted. This heightened expression of habitual creativity is what allows a folk artist to generate constant novelties, many of them so minute that they escape our capacity to appreciate them (although they can be easily noticed by craftsmen), others extremely obvious for any observer. Ultimately, in conjunction, "smaller" and "greater" stylistic additions end up personalising each decorated egg and impregnating it with the special creative and artistic quality the craft is both known and practiced for.

Conclusion: Towards a cultural psychology of creativity in craft and beyond

Empirical contributions

The contributions of the present research can be distinguished at three levels: empirical, methodological and theoretical. These correspond also to the *generalisability or transferability* of findings, methods and constructs respectively (see Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Gaskell & Bauer, 2000). The first to be discussed in this concluding segment is the nature of the empirical contribution. The three studies of creativity in Easter egg decoration aimed to *explore* but not to exhaust the complex realities associated with this practice. There was no claim of generalisability for specific findings beyond the contexts of the groups taking part in the research. However, when abstracting at a more general level what the three studies revealed concerning the characteristics and dynamic of creativity as a phenomenon, there is greater scope for transferability and this is what we turn to first.

From the start it is important to reflect on the general finding that *evaluations of creativity* (Chapter 4) and *creative action* (Chapter 5) are *deeply inter-related* and their relation *varies depending on both developmental level* (Chapter 6) *and socio-cultural context* (professional groups in Chapter 4, rural and urban milieus in Chapter 5 and 6). This elementary result, in line with the theoretical assumptions of a cultural psychology of creativity (see Chapter 1), is visually depicted in Figure 27 below. Important to note, from a socio-cultural perspective practices and beliefs in creative action are *co-constitutive*; however their analytical division can prove useful for conceptualising the overall finding of our three studies. Figure 27 essentially represents creativity as a process that presupposes the interdependence between practices (what people do) and beliefs (what people believe about what they do). This "creativity dyad" can be observed at several levels of analysis. Taking the example of folk artists, we studied their artistic activity – the "doing" part – in relation to the set of beliefs about their work that ultimately shape "doings" and are organised by them (this particular dynamic was explored in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, study one). At a more micro-level, while the artisan is working her action is always coupled with perception so that the practice of decorating eggs advances through interconnected stages of acting and observing, acting and constructing beliefs about what is done (see study two, Chapter 5). From an ontogenetic perspective, this schema is reflected in the development of both beliefs and knowledge of the craft as well as decoration skills in a differentiated manner depending on the type of community life the child grows into and starts participating in (Chapter 6).

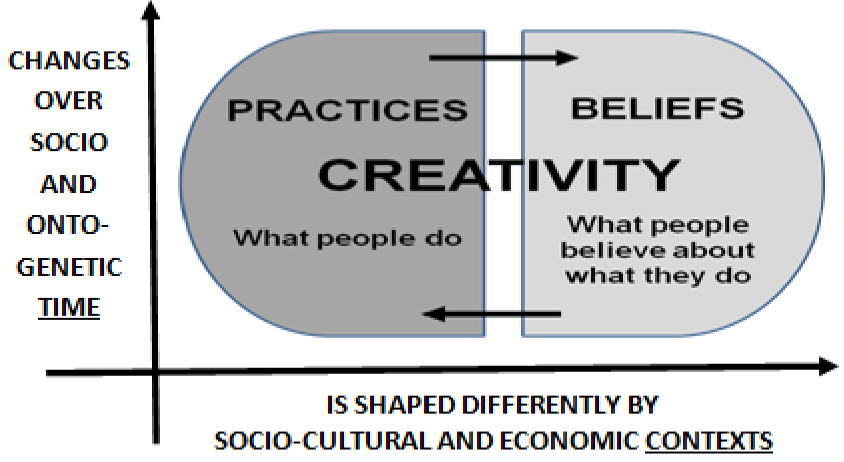


Figure 27. The practice-belief dyad of creativity

Outside these general observations it is also essential to consider, as a matter of hypothesis, how well our *specific* findings concerning Easter egg decoration describe this custom in the whole of Romania, egg decoration in general and, at the broadest level, are informative about the nature of craftwork. All these aspects will be considered in turn.

First and foremost it has to be noted that the three investigations of egg decoration practices included in this thesis represent, to the best of our knowledge, the first attempts to explore this craft from a *social psychological perspective*. Previous work done in a Romanian context has been primarily performed by folklorists and ethnographers such as Arthur Gorovei (2001) and Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi (1992), in both cases the works cited being reprinted editions of original studies from the first half of the last century. Overall, in light of the existing literature, we can safely conclude that Easter egg making in Romania has enjoyed limited attention and theoretical elaboration. This makes the findings of the present research all the more relevant, coming not only to enrich a field that received relatively little consideration in terms of scientific sources, but also to constitute a psychological approach to this fairly unique socio-cultural phenomenon.

The three studies described in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 each captured important *tendencies* regarding the representation, activity and development of creativity in Easter egg decoration. The research on creativity evaluations differentiated between a "view from outside" and a "view from inside", two patterns of practice and belief dependent on personal engagement with the craft. The next chapter, on creative activity, revealed different creative processes operating in urban and rural settings, the former organised

around exploratory forms, the latter reflecting combinatorial procedures. Finally, developmental research pointed to a tendency of "making the unfamiliar familiar" in the way younger children approach decoration tasks, and of "making the familiar unfamiliar" in the case of older children, especially those more experienced with decoration. The three researches included mainly participants living in Bucharest and the Bucovinean village of Ciocăneşti, in Northern Romania. Do the findings *apply* to these two locations as a whole, do they *generalise* to other urban and rural settings in the country? This in itself can be the topic of further research, aiming not to "replicate" the results (an impossibility equal to that of producing the exact same Easter egg twice), but to confirm, disconfirm and especially deepen this initial set of conclusions. What can be said until now is that, in light of existing ethnographic documentation of this folk art, our data seems to reliably point to a series of procedures and outcomes considered typical for Romanian Easter egg making (e.g. wax traditional techniques, use of different eggs and colour pigments, etc.). On the other hand, being one of the latest explorations of this craftworld, our research includes also references to the most recent "inventions" of motifs, work procedures and colour combinations. The tradition of decoration, as any tradition (see Negus & Pickering, 2004; Wilson, 1984), is constantly being re-created and, from this perspective, the concrete examples presented in this thesis may well be superseded by further developments, driven both by the artisans' impetus to advance in their work and the needs and wishes of future customers.

Whether the tendencies summarised above apply to Easter egg decoration alone or *craft more generally* is another empirical question to be explored. Are quilt makers, potters or wood carvers influenced by the same representational strategies, activity processes and developmental trajectories? The likelihood of this can be established only by a careful consideration of the "sender" and "receiver" contexts (see also Rogoff, 2003). While all craftwork shares some important characteristics such as a profound link with community life and a pronounced aesthetic dimension, it is also hugely diverse when it comes to types of communities and especially artistic mediums. Working on eggs is different from carving wood or weaving, and these differences need to be understood before generalising conclusions. As a "drawing" type of practice, it is possible that egg decoration shares key similarities with other visual or figurative-based customs, but this is again an assertion that can be properly established through research. The studies reviewed in Chapter 2 concerning Chinese ink painting (Yokochi & Okada, 2005) and South Indian *kōlam* (Mall, 2007), offer good starting points for discovering commonalities. On the whole though, translating findings from one practice to another needs to be done carefully, keeping in mind individual,

social and cultural circumstances. The psychology of creativity repeatedly suggested that domain-specificity often outweighs domain-generality (see Runco, 2004). This resonates very well with the cultural psychological approach advocated here and its increased sensitivity to cultural variation and local expression.

Methodological contributions

One of the implicit aims of the present thesis, in developing a socio-cultural perspective on creativity, is to elaborate and strengthen as well its methodological underpinnings. Unlike the discussion of findings, which requires considerable attention to issues of generalisability, the methods used in the three studies above can more easily be considered *transferable* to other studies of craft or even creativity in other domains for this matter. In this regard, it is the general purpose of the investigation that dictates applicability rather than the nature of particular fields of inquiry. Future studies of creativity evaluations, creative activity and creativity development could certainly implement some of the methodological "innovations" proposed and tested in the researches above.

In the case of beliefs and evaluations of creativity, Chapter 4 introduced and described a *multiple feedback technique* (see also Glăveanu, 2010c), useful for capturing the multiplicity of perspectives around a creative artefact and their social and cultural embedding. Comparable to the Consensual Assessment Technique (Amabile, 1996) in terms of increased consideration for the cultural construction of evaluations, the multiple feedback is individualised nevertheless by an emphasis on the heterogeneity rather than consensuality of opinions. This emerges through an assessment made by evaluators coming from different groups or communities, rather than just "experts" in the domain of the artefact. Such a design draws from Moscovici's initial study of psychoanalysis in France and its reception within different socio-cultural milieus (see Moscovici, 2008 edition). Multiple feedback has the important advantage of uncovering not simply "evaluations" but the *representational fields* that produce them and the links between representation and practice for each of the evaluators. Mainstream creativity research is all too accustomed to relying on expert judgement (often expressed in numerical form) for making hierarchies between products, a procedure that ends up reifying creativity instead of locating it culturally (see this argument developed in Glăveanu, 2011a). In contrast, the multiple feedback approach engages more seriously with the diversity of conceptions behind the validation of what is "creative" and its separation from the "uncreative". In this regard it can be immediately relevant for a

multitude of studies concerned with the evaluation of creations, from artistic products to scientific theories and inventions. However, it is to be noted that studies designed to consider creativity as a variable among others, in need of quantification, will not be able to benefit from this exercise of contextualising and triangulating evaluations.

The research dedicated to creative activity, presented in Chapter 5, made use for the very first time of the *subjective camera technology* in a creativity study (Glăveanu & Lahlou, 2012). Filming creative activity is of course not a novelty in itself, although it could certainly be employed more often for understanding the microgenetic aspects of this phenomenon. The subjective camera has many advantages over the regular use of "external" recordings. Conceptualised by Lahlou (2011) as part of a Subjective Evidence-Based Ethnography, subcams offer the unique possibility of documenting creative work in great detail and of formulating interpretations about the processes involved *together* with the participants themselves. From this perspective, the procedure manages to bridge the subjectivity of creative experience with the objective nature of an audio-video recording, through the intersubjective aspects of a dialogue between researcher and respondent. An immediate benefit of this is the capacity to study the cognitive dynamic of creativity *in relation* to its behavioural expression and formulate conclusions that bring together emic and ethic considerations. A long tradition of locating creativity in the mind, particularly the cognitive mechanisms of the creator, can thus be challenged and refocused on the mutual shaping taking place between mental representations and the outcomes of work through continuous perception–action loops. As such, this particular methodological contribution carries with it an important theoretical position where creativity is concerned: the *creative process as action or activity*. Subcameras can be successfully employed in many creative domains and, although they raise some practical issues related to participants' willingness to wear the device, researchers can certainly build on the genuine interest most respondents show towards watching situated recordings of their own work.

The study of creativity development (Chapter 6) also explored an interesting methodological avenue through the *novel use of drawings* compared to conventional practice in psychology. In this case drawings were not scored for creativity or other qualities and no inference made about the individual characteristics of the child-author. Reflecting a more socio-cultural viewpoint, drawings were considered here for "how they are creative" rather than "how creative they are". The difference between the drawing task of decorating two Easter eggs (home and wanted) and a drawing task specific for creativity research is that the first aimed

to capture an everyday expression and analyse its content while the second normally regards drawings as data for general purposes, disconnected from their real-life usage, and aims to measure their formal qualities. For this reason, the various methodological implications children's drawing activities have can constitute a source of inspiration for future research and the design of ecological, meaningful tasks, considered for their intrinsic, personal and cultural meaning, and not simply as "symptoms" of individual traits.

Theoretical contributions

The present thesis complemented empirical work with a strong theoretical orientation. Its greatest ambition, explained at lengths in Chapter 1, was to formulate a *cultural or socio-cultural psychology of creativity* and substantiate its claims with research in the area of folk art. The cultural psychology approach is not only suitable for the study of creativity but, it is argued here, could actually revolutionise the way we think about creative work. The considerable benefits of adopting this cultural view reside mostly in the fact that creativity as a phenomenon is fundamentally "cross-disciplinary in nature" (Magyari-Beck, 1999, p. 434) and, notwithstanding this unfortunately, the psychology of creativity has "not yet taken action to 'open the doors' to the other disciplines' approaches to creativity" (Sawyer, 1998, p. 17). Cultural psychology is in a position to foster such dialogues, being itself an interdisciplinary field within psychology, open to influences from sociology, anthropology, linguistics, biology, etc. (see Cole, 1996; Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). The current project testifies to this openness not only through the choice of topic (an interest in craft being traditionally associated with more anthropological or even sociological work), but mostly through the choice of theory (drawing from sources as diverse as Dewey, Moscovici, Bourdieu and Lévi-Strauss, to mention just a few). Cultural psychology is concerned with "the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche" (Shweder, 1990, p. 1), and the *cultural psychology of creativity*, in consequence, is dedicated to an exploration of how cultural traditions and social practices are an integral part of human creative expression, from its everyday manifestation to some of its highest and most celebrated achievements.

One of the main theoretical contributions towards establishing this research domain has been introduced in the first chapter, in the form of a *tetradic framework* conceptualising creativity as emerging out the interdependence between "creator", "creation", "audience", and a "socio-cultural background". This framework has been used to structure the research

design and considerable emphasis in this thesis was placed on exploring the main relations linking creators, creations and audiences (i.e., processes of integration, externalisation, internalisation, and social interaction). Each of the three research chapters unpacks one of these fundamental processes without losing sight of the *intrinsic unity* between the four elements. Social interaction between creators and a series of relevant audiences (family members, collaborators, critics, customers, etc.) was in this sense present and acknowledged in all the studies presented before.

Moreover, the tetradic framework's utility has been demonstrated also by subsequent application for data analysis purposes, for example in the study of creativity evaluations presented in Chapter 4. In that particular case the coding of interviews followed the basic structure of the tetradic framework which facilitated a comparison between groups in terms of creators' personal engagement with the craft, relations with other people and a basis of traditional conceptions and practices, as well as the types of outcomes produced. This model is certainly not unique in the psychology of creativity and what it does is reunite insights from the writings of many social or systemic thinkers such as Csikszentmihalyi (1988), Gruber (2005), Sawyer (2003), Montuori and Purser (1995), Barron (1995), Raina (1997) and others. The whole cultural psychology of creativity project is clearly indebted to the pioneering work of Lev Vygotsky on both art (1971) and creativity and imagination in children (2004) (for a discussion see also Moran & John-Steiner, 2003).

It is also necessary to note that the cultural approach, although critical of many of the premises commonly used by cognitive and personality perspectives, is not meant to replace them but to *integrate* their efforts into a broader, socio-cultural framework. After decades of marginalisation, the time has come for these systemic, more comprehensive accounts to overcome "person-centered", reductionist models (John-Steiner, 1992; Friedman & Rogers, 1998; Seitz, 2003). In this context it has to be asserted once more that socio-cultural theories are *not* anti-individual or anti-cognitive and, as the tetradic framework clearly depicts, there is certainly *place for the self* and his or her personal attributes (see also Jovchelovitch, 1996, for an argument about the ontological status of the human mind). However, the self is not alone in any creative act and creativity is never a solitary affair of the mind. Recognising this takes nothing from the role and value of the individual, on the contrary. In perfect agreement with Montuori and Purser (1995, p. 82), we can conclude in this regard that "viewing humans as existing within a context does not diminish the individual but adds richness to the picture and makes experience not less unique but human".

The action of the creator in relation to a social and material world is what defines creative activity and is reflected in another theoretical contribution of the study: *the pragmatist-inspired model of the creative process* presented in Chapter 5. This model postulates, drawing from Dewey's (1934) understanding of experience, a permanent cycle of doing and undergoing in creative work, driven by a series of impulsions, marked by the existence of obstacles or difficulties, and accompanied by various emotional states. This framework has been extensively applied to analyse interview and observation data, including subcam recordings of decoration practices by adults and children. Moreover, in a separate project, the framework was employed to code interviews from creators in five different domains: art, design, music, literature and science (see Glăveanu et al., under review). Future research can help specify better the "components" of the model and especially the relationships between them, for each type of creative activity and also across activities. For the cultural psychological approach to creativity this pragmatist model has the distinct advantage of looking at *processes* and so it complements the more general but rather static depiction offered by the tetradic framework. It also emphasises much more the role of the material, physical environment and thus responds to an earlier call by Boesch (2007, p. 164) for cultural psychology "to include an important chapter about the concrete as well as symbolic action value of objects". This "value of objects" is an integral part of our research interest here, marked by the materiality of eggs, colours, work instruments and settings (an aspect further developed in Glăveanu, forthcoming b).

Finally, another theoretical contribution of this thesis is represented in the final discussion (Chapter 7) by the notion of *habitual creativity*. Recovering insights again from pragmatists accounts and combining them with broader scholarship in psychology and sociology on the definition of habit or habitus, the concept of habitual creativity addresses directly the long-lasting dichotomy between creativity on the one hand, and habit, imitation and routine on the other. This is particularly important in a context such as folk art where repetition and exercise are crucial for learning and practicing the craft. The three studies of Easter egg decoration revealed how, both at the level of activity and representation, there is no hiatus between habit and creativity, on the contrary, they *co-exist* within the same practical action. Repeating models is never a purely mechanical act; quite the opposite, it involves more or less noticeable changes in work procedure, colours, and pattern (see Image 22). Habitual creativity conceptualises the intrinsically creative nature of habit and, conversely, the habitual grounds of creative expression and, in doing so, offers new insights into the dynamic of everyday creativity as well as historical creative achievements.

Additional distinctions between habit, improvisation, and innovation expand this theoretical effort of explaining the creative quality of human action and human existence in the world. Grasping the fact that highly habitual and routinised activity is not fundamentally uncreative, but often vastly creative, opens the way for a theory of *mastery* that goes further than Easter egg decoration and craft itself and addresses a wide range of real-life practices. Individuality and uniqueness are not opposed to “traditional ways of doing things”, but fostered by them. In Easter egg decoration, in art, and in many other domains, Dewey’s observation is equally valid: “Immediacy and individuality, the traits that mark concrete experience, come from the present occasion; meaning, substance, content, from what is embedded in the self from the past” (Dewey, 1934, p. 74). A research of decoration in craft, such as the one included in this thesis, supports Dewey’s claim with empirical arguments. It thus becomes possible, as repeatedly argued here, to *reflect* a cultural psychological approach while *perfecting* its models and *inspiring* its future developments. It is to this future that we should now look, a time of consolidation for the We-paradigm of creativity both in psychology and beyond and a time of continued reflection on the multifaceted relationship between culture and creativity; towards this reflection, the present thesis hopes to have made a modest but “colourful” contribution.

Image 22. Three depictions of the half-star motif (Ionela Țăran)

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Appendices

Appendix I: Popular legends related to Easter egg decoration
(summarised from descriptions by Gorovei, 2001, pp. 30-38; Bodnarescul, 1920)

THEME	LEGEND	REGION
The blood of Christ (or proximity to Him) colours the eggs	When Christ was on the cross, Virgin Mary came with a basket of eggs to ask the soldiers not to torture Him anymore. She put the eggs under the cross and the blood of Christ coloured them. After the Resurrection, Mary made red eggs and Easter bread with cheese (*pască*) and gave them to the people saying "Christ has Resurrected!" (*Hristos a Înviat*!).	Bucovina, Basarabia
	After Christ died on the cross, Virgin Mary came with a basket of eggs for the soldiers to let her take His body. She went to the cross, put the basket down and started crying. When she picked up the basket, one drop of blood from the Saviour fell and coloured all the eggs. All the soldiers came and took one egg to have a sign of this last miracle.	Păuşeşti-Otărău (Vâlcea)
	A woman went to the cross of Christ with a basket full of eggs. She put the eggs by the cross, kissed the cross and left. Then she noticed all the eggs were red.	Vaşcău (Crişana)
	Pious women went in the morning to the tomb of Christ having with them baskets full of eggs. Half of the eggs turned red, half didn't and they saw the Lord. Then, taking the eggs to the people, they considered them as a sign of the Resurrection.	Ujfalău (Arad)
Thrown stones turn into red eggs (or eggs are thrown / left behind)	When Jesus was judged in front of the crowds, Pilat said to the people: "if you want to convict an innocent man, let the sin be yours". Then the people threw stones at Christ and all of them turned into red eggs.	Mehedinți District
	When Jesus was taken to be crucified, children were throwing stones at Him and all of them turned into red eggs.	Poşada-de-Sus (Ardeal), Răcăşdia (Banat), Vaşcău (Crişana)
	While on the cross, Christ has been asked to make a miracle for everyone to know He is the son of God. Then all the stones thrown by the people turned into red eggs.	Tulcea District
	People were throwing stones at the tomb of Christ and the stones turned into red eggs.	Bucovina

	The guardians of the tomb of Christ, being warned that Christians might try to steal the body, had stones with them. When the Angel of the Lord came, they were ready to throw them but all the stones turned into red eggs.	Capul-Codrului (Bucovina)
	When Christ ascended to the Heavens, some people were throwing stones at Him and all fell to the ground as red eggs.	Bucovina
	When Virgin May was looking for Christ some people were throwing stones at her, and these turned into red eggs.	Broşteni (on Bistrița)
	Christ and Virgin Mary were running to escape. The Lord blessed the grains and threw stones behind Him. These stones turned into coloured eggs (red, green, yellow, etc.). The chasers stopped to pick them up and so Jesus and Mary escaped.	Mihalcea (Bucovina)
	Before the crucifixion and Resurrection, Christ was teaching in a temple and some people wanted to catch and kill Him. So they started throwing stones at Him and these turned into red eggs.	Balaceana (Bucovina), Ardeal,Basarabia
	When Christ was born Virgin Mary had to run away with Him. She threw some red eggs behind and the chasers admired them so much that they forgot to follow them.	Frătăuțul-Nou (Bucovina), Basarabia
	There were once seven sisters. Six of them got married and the one who didn't marry was interested in their husbands. So the others decided to kill their sister with stones on Easter day but the stones turned into coloured eggs. The sisters liked them so much that they forgot their hate.	-
Eggs turn red as a reward	When Simon went to work the field, with bread and eggs in his bag, he saw Jesus carrying His cross. Simon helped Him carry it for a while and, later on, found that the eggs turned red.	-
Eggs turn red as a consequence of distrust / proof of Resurrection	When Christ was crucified the representatives of the people gathered at a table with rooster soup and boiled eggs. One of them said that Jesus announced His Resurrection. Another responded that it will be only when the rooster from the soup will rise and the eggs will become red. And so they did that instant.	Boian (Bucovina), similar in Basarabia
	One man sitting at the table said that Christ will rise from the dead when his cooked rooster will sing and fish will swim in the soup. And so it happened, and all children found themselves having a red egg in their hands.	Bucovina

	After Christ was buried, a young woman doubted that He will Resurrect and said she will only believe it only when the eggs in her basked turn red, and so they did.	Ardeal
	After His Resurrection, the Lord was walking in Jerusalem to find someone who would spread the good news. He found a woman and sent her to the Apostles but she wanted a sign from Him, for them to believe her. So Jesus turned all the eggs she had in a basket red.	Calieni (Putna)
	When Christ came back to life, Mary Magdalene went to the market and said "Christ has Resurrected!" (*Hristos a Înviat*!) to a woman selling eggs. She replied that she will believe it only when her eggs turn red and this is what happened. Mary Magdalene took some of these eggs to the Emperor Tiberius and cured his wife of blindness by touching her eyes with them.	Bucovina, Basarabia
	The second day after Resurrection, a Christian girl went to the market to sell eggs. There she met a pagan girl who wanted to buy but didn't have enough money with her. So they both went to her home and, on the way, the Christian girl told the story of Christ. The pagan girl said she will only believe it when the eggs will turn red and so they did. Both girls fainted seeing this miracle. Some boys close by brought water from the fountain to pour on them and, to reward this help, the Christian girl gave them some of the red eggs. So the custom remained for boys to "water" girls on the second day of Easter and receive red eggs.	Bucovina
	Pilat, celebrating with the people the crucifixion of Christ, held an egg in his hand. A Roman soldier shouted "Christ has Resurrected!" (*Hristos a Înviat*!). Pilat laughed saying he will only believe it when the egg in his hand will turn red, and so it did. Pilat, scared, dropped the egg and it broke, hence the custom of knocking red eggs.	-
	People were celebrating with bread, rooster and wine above the tomb of Christ. One said that the Lord will Resurrect when they will see grains growing from the bread, grapevine leaves from the wine and the rooster alive and whole. And so it happened. When the rooster spilled soup on them the people shouted: "May your eggs become red" and saw this miracle happen as well.	Muscel
Given eggs turn red / coloured eggs are given	A woman went to a Roman governor (some say Pilat himself) to ask for forgiveness and the body of Christ to bury, bringing as a gift a basket of eggs. When giving them, they all turned red and Pilat said "I am innocent of	Vaşcău (Crişana)

	His blood, you will see"	
	Iosif from Arimateea and Nicodim, asking for the body of Christ to be buried, had four children with them bringing red eggs to Pilat.	Agrişteu (Târnava Mică)
	Virgin Mary went to Pilat with golden eggs in a golden basket to ask for the salvation of her sun. Pilat then told her Jesus was already dead on the cross. She fell to the ground and the eggs rolled and travelled around the world.	Bucovina
	When Jesus was judged before Pilat, kind people offered red eggs to the judges' children to help save Christ.	-
Red eggs offered / appearing as a sign of the Resurrection	Mary Magdalene, after Christ was buried, went to the Emperor and complained that Pilat washed his hands of the sin committed. She took with her some red eggs as a gift. The emperor found Pilat guilty and punished him.	Movilița (Putna)
	When Christ Resurrected all children found themselves having a red egg in their hand.	Roşca (Bucovina)
	All the eggs in the world (even those from bird nests) turned red when Christ Resurrected.	Vâlcea District
	Virgin Mary was running to Jerusalem to spread the news about Christ's Resurrection when she met a woman carrying eggs, and the eggs turned red.	Tulcea District
	After Virgin Mary found Jesus Resurrected, walking with Him, they saw some chicken. The Lord blessed the chicken and their eggs saying that all the people, at Easter, will make red eggs.	Răchiți (Botoşani)
	Pious women set down, crying and kissing the cross Jesus was crucified on. Their tears turned into red eggs.	Vaşcău (Bucovina)
Dyeing eggs red to remember the pains of Christ	As Christ went through pains at the hand of His torturers, Christians thought of painting eggs to remember the suffering of the Lord, who emerged from the tomb dressed in red and holding a red flag.	Bucovina

Appendix II: Common uses of Easter eggs
(summarised from descriptions by Gorovei, 2001, pp. 40-46)

CATEGORY	TYPE OF ACTION	CUSTOM	REGION
At the church / cemetery	Giving red eggs	On Saturday young men go to the forest to collect wood. They make a big fire in the cemetery, by the church, one that will last for all three Easter days. After the service, people receive *paşti* (small pieces of holly bread from the church) and give a red egg in exchange.	Zărand (Apuseni)
		For Easter, two types of *pască* (Easter bread with cheese) are brought to church: one with a cross on it, to be taken back home afterwards, and one without, to be left at the church, along with a piece of ham and four red eggs.	-
		For the Resurrection service people bring food baskets at the church (with Easter bread, Easter eggs, ham, etc.) to be blessed by the priest.	Oaş
		On Easter day eggs are given, not near the graves but in the churchyard. Initially only decorated eggs were given for charity.	Păuşeşti-Otărău (Vâlcea)
		Women take red eggs at the church for the Resurrection service and Easter day.	Magorova, Bitolia
		All Christians give red eggs to the priest.	-
	Eggs for the dead	Those who died or are buried on Easter days have to hold in their hand a red egg as a sign of their death during Resurrection for the devil to let them pass freely to the side of the righteous.	-
		On Easter day people give charity (*moşi*) for the dead and receive red eggs.	Banat, Transilvania
		Women, at the church, give children red eggs as *pomană* (charity for the dead).	-
		Older people (especially mothers whose children or relatives died "without candle") can eat only after they gave red eggs and candles (with light taken from Easter service) for charity. On this occasion usually red eggs have the "lost	-

		way" motif (*calea rătăcită*) on them, a symbol meant for those who died "without candle" and wander around in the after world.	
		Throughout the year, whenever offering charity for the dead, it is advisable to give red eggs beside other food and drinks.	Cupca (Bucovina)
At home	Washing with red eggs	Before going to the Resurrection service at the church or on the first Easter day before going to the church, people wash their face with water in which they've placed at least a red egg and a few coins (silver or gold). Touching their cheeks with the egg they say "May I be healthy and my cheeks red as the egg, everyone to want me and wait for me as they wait for Easter eggs, to be loved like the Easter egg on Easter day". Taking the silver they say "May I be beautiful and clean as silver".	Bucovina, Moldova, Bihor
	Knocking and eating red eggs	Arriving home from the Resurrection service, after midnight, all family members sit at the table and knock red eggs. First the mother and father knock eggs, then parents and children, saying "Christ has Resurrected!" (*Hristos a Înviat*!). The strongest is the one whose egg doesn't break. They start their meal by eating an egg.	-
		The first egg is divided by the father or head of the family among all members. In case one gets lost in an unknown place (like a forest), remembering who ate this first Easter egg with him/her will help find the way back.	Transilvania
		As a general rule, men (especially elders) are the ones who knock with their egg while women and children hold their egg to be knocked.	Banat
		Eggs have a top, a bottom and lateral sides. On first Easter day you can only knock top with top. On the second day you may also knock top with bottom. On the third you may knock even bottom with bottom or side with side.	Bucovina

		People who knock eggs will see each other in the afterlife.	Mahala (Bucovina)
		People who knock eggs don’t get lost in the woods.	Bucovina
		If your egg doesn’t break when knocking, you will die before the one whose egg you broke.	Valea Bistriței, Banat
		If you break the eggs of the other you will be healthy all year; if not you may be sick and even die.	Vâlcea
		The one who has his/her egg broken must give the egg to the one who broke it (otherwise he/she will become ill and suffer in the afterlife).	Basarabia, Muscel
	Giving red eggs	All Christians give red eggs to family and friends saying “Christ has Resurrected!” (*Hristos a Înviat*!) and others reply “Indeed He has” (*Adevărat a Înviat*!).	-
		On the second day of Easter (Monday), friends and relatives visit each other and offer red eggs, sometimes Easter bread (*pască*) as well (children to their parents, godsons to their godfathers / godmothers, etc.).	-
		Children who go on the swing on Easter day should give the owner of the swing a red egg.	Bucovina
		Husband and wife, on Easter days, give each other red or decorated eggs. Eggs are also brought and knocked at village reunions (*hora*).	Stăvuceni (Basarabia)
		On the second Easter day boys water girls (*udatul*) for health and good luck and receive two Easter eggs or Easter bread with cheese (*pască*).	Hâjdău (Basarabia)
		Single boys visit the house of maids to receive red eggs from them and comment on the eggs to prolong the time spent with the girls.	Braşov
	Keeping eggs (or egg shells)	On Easter days all people have red eggs on their table at all times.	Banat
		On Easter day all adults and children should have an egg with them at all times (in their pocket, etc.). If the mother takes	Păuşeşti-Otărău (Vâlcea)

		this egg from her child and puts it in corn seeds all the seeds will grow and flourish.	
		The first egg dyed in red the Thursday before Easter needs to be kept all year long near the icon.	Bucovina
		After removing the insides through specially made holes, women keep the shells of red or decorated eggs on a string as ornaments. They protect the house since the devil hides inside them.	Bucovina
Interdictions	About red eggs (eating them)	On Easter day, after Eucharist or taking *paşti* (bread from the church), you first eat a red egg, before any other food.	-
		Eggs eaten on Easter must not be salted otherwise your hands will become red.	Muscel
		It's good to eat the first egg on Easter day with the shell as well, to be strong, healthy and brave throughout the year.	-
		Children after eating eggs on Easter day should eat fish (left from Palm Sunday or *Blagovestenii*).	Muscel
		Some say it is not good to eat red eggs in the three Easter days, or at least on the first day (or you might get swellings).	Jorăşti, Vrancea, Moldova, Banat
		One should not eat red eggs on Easter until giving charity for the dead (*pomană*), otherwise charity will not be "received".	Banat
	About decorated eggs	Not to eat first a decorated egg because you will see snakes over the year (similar to the lines made on the egg).	Mihalcea (Bucovina)
		Decorated eggs should not be given as charity for the dead (*pomană*).	Bucovina
		Only red eggs are knocked, never decorated ones.	-
	About egg shells	On Easter don't throw out red egg shells because you are throwing your luck away.	Vâlcea Distinct
		Never feed chicken with the shells of coloured eggs because they will stop making eggs.	Banat
Magical and medical use	Fortune telling	The red egg you had at the church on Easter you can keep over the year and, if it will break and rot you will be lucky, if not, you will not have luck that year.	-

		Keep an egg for forty days after Easter. If it doesn't rot you will be lucky.	-
	Bringing marriage	Easter eggs put under girls' pillows on Resurrection night will help them marry.	Sălăgeni, Fălciu
	Protection from malefic forces	Red eggs kept in the house offer protection from the devil, from bad luck, and witchcraft.	-
		On Easter day, in the stable, to protect cattle from evil forces, a piece of dung is placed on the wall, by the door, with red egg shells in it.	Banat
	Protection from bad weather	An egg dyed in red on the Wednesday before Easter and buried at the fence of the house will protect the house from hail storm.	-
	Medical use	Red egg shells are good over the year for: toothache, neck and earache, flu, snake bite, etc.	-
Mystical and world-keeping	The legend of the *Blajini*	*Blajinii* (or *Rahmanii*) are a mythical people who receive news about Easter by seeing red egg shells coming down the river ("*Apa Sâmbetei*"). They spend all year fasting and praying for our world and only on Easter day they eat (small pieces of egg from the shells). So, if people on Earth stop making eggs and sending them the shells (putting them on running water), they would perish.	
	World-keeping	The devil keeps on asking whether on Earth people still decorate eggs and sing carols. When they will stop, he will come out into the world.	Bucovina
		On Easter day red egg shells should be placed in a river for they will reach in the end "*Apa Sâmbetei*" (a legendary water) and from there go beneath the Earth's surface. Down there Judas (or the devil) is chewing the wax pitchforks (*furci*) that hold the Earth and only when he sees the shells he remembers that Christian Easter came and stops. That moment the wax grows back. The dead (not baptised, the ones who died "without candle", etc.) are also happy to see the shells.	Stefăneşti (Vâlcea)

Appendix III: Decorated eggs from different regions of Romania (Zahacinschi collection, Museum of the Romanian Peasant)

Easter eggs from Dolj (Oltenia)

Easter eggs from Oboga (Olt)

Easter eggs from Poiana Mărului (Transilvania)

Easter eggs from Prahova (Muntenia)

Easter eggs from Suceava (Moldova)

Easter eggs from Vrancea (Moldova)

Appendix IV: Meaning of ornaments in the village of Ciocăneşti

(collected through interviews and materials offered by folk artists; also Dranca, 2010)

Vertical line – represents life and everything related to the present
Horizontal line – represents death and the underworld, the past, ancestors
Straight line – used to separate or unite, represents the destiny
Double straight line – symbolises eternity
Zigzag line – the co-existence of good and evil; a masculine, solar symbol
Zigzag vertical line – associated with domination, possession
Curved line – represents water, purification; a feminine, lunar symbol
Meandering line – reminds of the snake and symbolises eternity
Spirals – represent time, eternity; a symbol of the calendar
Double spirals – represent the connection between life and death; more generally they stand for the connection between opposing principles
Rectangles – associated with thinking and knowledge
Square – associated with intelligence
Triangle – associated with control over feelings and with things that are about to happen
Rhombus – associated with wisdom and also a symbol of union (made up of two triangles)
Circle – represents the cyclical aspect of nature, the sun, perfection
Semi-circle – reminding also of rainbows, it symbolises safety, protection
Dots – represent wealth (resemble little coins) and happiness

The X pattern – symbolises friendship and union, brings luck
The net – symbolises the separation between good and evil, the will of God
The diagonal net – human feelings and the will of man
The cross – beside religious associations, it resembles the simplified shape of a star and reminds of the four cardinal points and the four seasons; a symbol of the Universe
The star – it is a symbol of the feminine principle, of purity, perfection, beauty (especially the very common 'star with eight points')
Star in a circle – the triumph of the sun over darkness, spirit over matter, God over evil
The lost way – a common motif using meandering lines, reminds of the labyrinth and it is a metaphor of human life
The ram's horns – a masculine symbol, associated with action and the planet Mars

Red – is the colour of magic, blood, life and purifying fire, a symbol of love and the joy of life
Yellow – represents light, youth and happiness. It is also associated with the crops, with intelligence and a friendly, welcoming nature
Blue – is the colour of faith and the skies, associated with good health, vitality and hope
Green – the colour of the forest, of freshness, of fertility and optimism
Orange – evokes strength, energy and ambition
Purple – is the colour of justice, patience, confidence, self-control
Brown – a symbol of fertile earth
White – represents innocence, purity, a symbol of birth and re-birth
Black – represents the beginning of things, eternity and stability, the absolute

Appendix V: Interview guides and materials

Free associations task: Please tell me the first three words or ideas that come to your mind when you think about an Easter egg.

A. Personal experience with Easter eggs [focused on in interviews about creative activity]

When do you usually make or see Easter eggs? Is it only during the Easter period?
Do you colour or decorate Easter eggs? Did you colour or decorate in the past?
Could you tell me any childhood memories related to Easter eggs?
How did you start colouring / decorating eggs? [if the respondent decorates]
When do you [or others in the family] colour or decorate eggs? What types of eggs?
How do you [or others] colour / decorate eggs? [techniques, instruments, colours, motifs, symbols, etc.] How do you [or others] choose the colours, motifs, etc.?
What is easy or hard about colouring / decorating eggs, if anything?
How do you 'use' Easter eggs? [family, church, etc.]
Who are the other people you interact with in making / using / showing Easter eggs?
Is Easter egg making involved in your professional activity and if so how?
What is the place and role of Easter eggs for the celebration of Easter in your family?

B. General considerations about Easter egg making in Romania

What do you think is the role of Easter eggs for Romanians more generally?
Are Romanians familiar with Easter egg making practices?
What kind of Easter eggs did you see others make?
Are there any differences between rural and urban in this regard?
Are there any differences between past and present?
If such differences exist, how would you explain them?

C. Creativity and Easter eggs [focused on in interviews about creativity evaluations]

How would you define creativity? What do you consider creative?
Are Easter eggs creative? Can you think of them as 'creative products'?
Are all Easter eggs creative or some are more creative than others?
What makes all / some Easter eggs creative (or uncreative)?

[SHOW FOUR IMAGES – for the creativity evaluations study; see next page]
What are the eggs you are more familiar with from these?
Which do you like more? Why?
How would you evaluate these eggs in terms of creativity? Why?

Demographic characteristics
Age, sex, occupation, studies, place of residence.

Images of Easter eggs used in creativity evaluations interviews

(coloured; decorated with leaves; traditional decoration; eggs with sticker)

Interview guide for creativity development study – first and fourth grade

(based on children's drawings – home and wanted egg)

Opening questions

Did you like to draw these eggs?

Why are eggs decorated, what do you think?

Did you ever decorate Easter eggs before?

If YES

How did you lean to decorate eggs?

When do you decorate eggs?

How do you decorate them (instruments, technique)?

If NO

Do you know anyone who colours or decorates eggs?

Do you know when and how they make Easter eggs?

About the egg from home:

Please describe how you decorated this egg.

Who makes this kind of eggs at home?

How are eggs decorated? (techniques, instruments, colours)

How do people get their ideas for decoration? Why do eggs look like this?

What do you usually do with these eggs at home?

How do you celebrate Easter at home?

Do you think many people have this kind of egg you made?

About the wanted egg:

Please describe how you decorated this egg.

Is it similar or different from the "home egg"? Why?

How did you get the idea of decorating the egg like this?

How exactly did you make it? What did you start with? etc.

Why did you use these ... (colours, shapes, figures, etc.) on the egg?

Why do you like this egg?

Note. Fourth graders were also asked if they thought Easter egg making requires 'creativity', adding something new, or is based more on 'repeating' or keeping the same models.

Appendix VI: Ethical forms

INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT
[translated into English from Romanian]

This document aims to offer information about the research project I am involved in as a doctoral student at the **Institute of Social Psychology**, **London School of Economics and Political Science**, **UK**, and record your agreement to participate.

[for the creativity evaluations research]
The project investigates **Easter egg making practices in Romania** and will collect information with the help of **interviews**. Interviews are audio recorded and explore a series of aspects about how Easter eggs are decorated, their role in the celebration of Easter, the meaning given to the colours and models used, evaluation of traditional and more recent styles of decoration, the importance of this custom for both the participant and the community.

[for the creative activity research: study one]
The project investigates **Easter egg making practices in Romania** and will collect information with the help of **interviews and observation**. The stages of egg decoration will be observed and photos of the work taken during the process. The interviews are audio recorded and explore a series of aspects about how Easter eggs are decorated, their role in the celebration of Easter, the meaning given to the colours and models used, evaluation of traditional and more recent styles of decoration, the importance of this custom for both the participant and the community.

[for the creative activity research: study two - subcam]
The project investigates **Easter egg making practices in Romania** and will collect information with the help of **filmed observation and interview based on the recordings**. Egg decoration will be filmed using a miniature camera, attached to a sun visor, thus providing what the participant sees and does during the activity. The camera records both video and audio. Supplementary information about decoration is obtained with the help of an interview, which will also be recorded audio and video.

Participation in the project is **voluntary** and can terminate in any moment at the request of the respondent. All data collected is **confidential** (unless the respondent agrees to be named in the research) and will be used **only for scientific and research purposes**. For any question concerning the study you can contact me at ……………………................ (address, telephone)
[A business card was also attached to the form]

By signing this form you are offering your written consent to take part in the research and acknowledge the fact that you have been informed about the conditions of participation.

Participant's signature Researcher's signature
Date

PARENTS' AGREEMENT FORM FOR CHILDREN PARTICIPATION

[a similar form was used for seventh graders, replacing "drawing" with "observation"]

I agree with the participation of my child ...., student in class .... at School .... in the doctoral research project of Mr. Vlad Petre Glăveanu, focused on the investigation of Easter egg decoration practices in Romania. I understand that the project collects data from children about egg decoration with the help of drawing (children are asked to decorate two eggs on paper) and interview based on the drawings.

I agree with the audio recording of the interview and with the fact that drawings will be collected as part of the research under conditions of confidentiality and used exclusively for scientific purposes.

Parent's signature Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix VII: Thematic network analysis: From codes to global themes (examples: ethnographers and art teachers)

Example of the 'view from outside': Ethnographers

CODES	BASIC THEMES	ORGANISING THEMES	GLOBAL THEMES
Colouring Easter eggs	*1.1.1. Making coloured eggs or helping to make them*	***1.1. Adult experience***	**1. SELF**
Decorating eggs when time allows			
Dividing the tasks of egg making with others			
Using 'normal' kitchen utensils to colour eggs			
In some years making them, in others letting others colour eggs			
Making eggs when time allows and less on a certain day			
Making eggs is another activity in the program	*1.1.2. Not difficult to make Easter eggs but need attention and time*		
The pressure and haste of today			
It's easy to colour eggs			
Is difficult to clean eggs before colouring			
Is difficult to boil them right			
Is difficult to find the best colour tone			
Need to be careful not to touch the colour			
Eggs used by family and friends	*1.1.3. Easter eggs mostly used by the family or given as charity*		
Having Easter eggs on the table at Easter			
Keeping Easter eggs after Easter			
Giving eggs for charity			
Going with eggs to the church			
Always having eggs on Easter	*1.2.1. Helping parents to decorate, especially Easter eggs with leaves*	***1.2. Childhood experience***	
Making eggs with leaves in childhood			
Making eggs with onion leaves in childhood			
Helping with egg decoration			
Wanting different ways of decoration			
Feeling captivated by egg decoration			

Wanting to participate in decoration	*1.2.2. Feeling joy, curiosity, and the need to participate*		
Easter eggs bring joy			
Knocking eggs as a joyful moment			
Sending egg shells on water	*1.2.3. Memories of Easter celebration*		
Women in the village share coloured water			
Washing with water in which a red egg was placed			
Mother makes Easter eggs for the family	*2.1.1. Mother usually makes Easter eggs*	***2.1. Family members ('immediate others')***	**2. OTHERS**
Competition to make the most beautiful eggs			
Mother passes on the tradition			
Mother gives eggs for charity			
Mother reminds respondent to make Easter eggs			
Children want to get involved in decoration	*2.1.2. Children want to see how Easter eggs are made and to experiment*		
Differences between children in terms of decoration			
The enthusiasm of children makes you more involved			
Children like eggs with leaves			
Children like colourful eggs			
Children like eggs with stickers			
A professional duty to stop the kitsch in egg decoration	*2.2.1. Censuring certain decorated eggs and resistance to censure*	***2.2. Folk artists***	
A professional duty to respect the 'truth'			
Artists make also a lot of kitsch eggs			
Artists no longer know the meaning of symbols			
Artists have to obey the wishes of the client			
Artists influence the taste of buyers			
Artists come with all types of eggs and hide the 'forbidden' ones			
All Romanians make Easter eggs	*2.3.1. All Romanians make Easter eggs, it is part of our identity*	***2.3. Larger community***	
Tourists buy Easter eggs			
Easter eggs as specific to our geographical area			
Our Easter eggs are similar but also different from those of neighbours			
Difference between eggs from the north and south of Romania	*2.3.2. Local specificity in egg decoration, Northern artists are most prominent*		
Easter eggs are made principally in Bucovina			

Many people live from Easter egg making in Bucovina			
In Bucovina, collaboration and competition in making eggs			
Easter eggs made in Bucovina are elegant			
Making mainly red eggs	*3.1.1. Mostly coloured, rarely decorated*	***3.1. Made Easter eggs***	**3. NEW ARTEFACT**
Eggs made with combined colours			
Trying to decorate eggs			
Using chicken eggs, especially with white shell	*3.1.2. Mainly chicken eggs, usually a small number is made depending on family*		
The number of eggs depends on family size			
Making between 20-40 eggs			
Easter eggs are ‘classic’	*3.2.1. Red eggs vs. other colours*	***3.2. Types of Easter eggs***	
Trying other colours out of curiosity			
Multiple colours bring joy			
Eggs to use are full, eggs to sell are emptied	*3.2.2. Eggs to use vs. eggs to sell*		
Using decorated eggs shows spiritual involvement			
Eggs to be sold show less involvement			
Eggs made to be sold become ‘touristy’ and ‘repetitive’			
‘Old’ eggs kept in the family	*3.2.3. ‘Old’ eggs vs. ‘new’ eggs*		
‘Old’ eggs are simple, have a message and ‘soul’			
‘Old’ eggs are more ‘sober’ and ‘refined’			
Eggs coloured with onion leaves are natural not chemical	*3.2.4. Natural vs. artificially coloured eggs*		
Eggs coloured with onion leaves have a beautiful colour			
Eggs coloured with onion leaves give the impression of ‘clean’			
Each artist has his/her own decoration style	*3.3.1. Creativity continuum: traditional eggs (most creative), eggs with leaves, simple eggs and eggs with stickers (anti-creative)*	***3.3. Easter egg creativity***	
Decorating traditional Easter eggs as artistic			
Traditional eggs use symbols in creative ways			
Traditional eggs are the product of hard work			
The wax decoration process as creative			
Eggs with leaves represent ‘little creativity’			
Simple eggs are not creative			
Combining colours and presenting eggs nicely as a form of creativity			
Eggs with stickers as kitsch, un-natural			
Eggs with stickers for children and the masses			

Codes	Sub-themes	Themes	Overarching theme
Preparing for the coming of Easter	*4.1.1. Easter as a family and spiritual celebration*	***4.1. Easter tradition***	**4. EXISTING ARTEFACTS**
Going to the church for Resurrection service			
The family meal on Easter			
Giving gifts to children			
Local specificity in celebration			
Easter for many is more about festivity than meaning			
Easter eggs symbolise the Easter celebration	*4.2.1. Easter eggs as essential for Easter*	***4.2. Easter egg traditions***	
Easter eggs prepare you for Easter			
Easter eggs as necessity on Easter			
Have to make eggs not buy them coloured			
Easter eggs legend	*4.2.2. Numerous rituals and beliefs about Easter eggs*		
Controversy about the proper day for colouring			
Some say you should make only red eggs			
Washing with water in which you placed an Easter egg			
Keeping Easter eggs or shells for protection			
The tradition of knocking eggs on Easter			
There are many distinguishable motifs			
Easter eggs transmit a story, serve a purpose			
To give Easter eggs for charity for the dead			
Girls giving decorated egg to boys			
Sending egg shells on water for the *Blajini*			
Changes in pigments used for colouring	*4.2.3. Pronounced past-present and rural-urban differences*		
The technique of decoration is kept			
Decorated eggs in the past were full, most today are empty			
Decorated eggs in the past only for Easter, now all year long			
Easter egg making expanded today			
This expansion today is beneficial for the craft			
Commerce corrupted Easter egg traditions nowadays			
Urban eggs are simple			
Urban eggs are more innovative, decorative			
Today we try to explain more since we lost many meanings			
Creativity as following the old to generate the new			

Creativity as re-discovery	*4.3.1. Creativity as bound-up with tradition*	***4.3. Representations of creativity***	
Kitsch is anti-creation, a break with tradition			
Tradition as 'alive' and 'growing'			
Creativity as an aesthetic interpretation of reality	*4.3.2. Creativity as the generation of beauty*		
Creativity must express yourself as a person	*4.3.3. Creativity as expression of self*		
Creativity as spontaneity and free thinking			

Example of the 'view from inside': Art teachers

CODES	BASIC THEMES	ORGANISING THEMES	GLOBAL THEMES
Colouring Easter eggs	*1.1.1. Making coloured eggs or decorating eggs*	***1.1. Adult experience***	**1. SELF**
Decorating eggs with leaves			
A bit difficult to hold the leaf on the egg			
Decorating eggs in a personal manner			
Making colour combinations			
Painting Easter eggs			
Making Easter eggs with wax			
Covering egg with plasticine			
Great pleasure to decorate eggs			
Not making Easter eggs	*1.1.2. Reasons for not decorating eggs*		
Would like to make Easter eggs			
Not knowing or mastering the technique			
Not being encouraged to decorate eggs			
Being a perfectionist nature			
Difficult to respect the symmetry			
The pressure and rapidity of today			
Keeping Easter eggs after Easter	*1.1.3. Easter eggs mostly used by the family or given as charity*		
Giving eggs for charity			
Decorated eggs used last or kept after Easter			

Helping with egg decoration	*1.2.1. Helping parents with Easter egg making*	***1.2. Childhood experience***	
Combining colours on eggs			
Not aware of the symbols			
Feeling captivated by egg decoration	*1.2.2. Memories of Easter and Easter eggs associated with joy and excitement*		
Feelings of joy for receiving gifts			
Feeling joy for cleaning the house			
Observing how Easter eggs are made			
Arranging Easter eggs for the table			
Excited about going to church with a red egg			
Knocking eggs as a joyful moment			
Mother makes Easter eggs for the family	*2.1.1. Mother usually makes Easter eggs and prepares the celebration*	***2.1. Family members ('immediate others')***	**2. OTHERS**
Mother organises the Easter celebration			
Mother prepares the fasting before the celebration			
Children want to decorate the eggs	*2.1.2. Children want to see how Easter eggs are made and to experiment*		
Children like colourful eggs			
Children help with Easter egg making			
Children are attracted by eggs with stickers			
Using elements of the artistic language	*2.2.1. Working Easter eggs at school*	***2.2. School children***	
Working Easter eggs with the pupils			
Pupils are very happy to make Easter eggs			
Exhibiting and even selling the eggs in school			
Presenting traditional decoration			
Letting pupils work as they like			
Children usually make geometric forms on the eggs			
Children should be encouraged			
Recommending harmony and simplicity			
Children are disobedient and mean to others	*2.2.2. Not working Easter eggs at school or difficulties to do so*		
Some children are lazy			

Some children are impatient			
Only drawing Easter eggs on paper			
Not able to work so well with older children			
Missing an art classroom to work in			
Easter eggs are a national tradition	*2.3.1. Romanians make Easter eggs*	***2.3. Larger community***	
Our Easter eggs are similar but different from those of neighbours			
Difference between eggs made in the north and in the south of Romania	*2.3.2. Local specificity in egg decoration*		
Traditions are better kept in the north			
Living in a region where eggs are not usually decorated			
Easter eggs are made principally in Bucovina			
Many people live from Easter egg making in Bucovina			
Making only red eggs	*3.1.1. Coloured or decorated eggs*	***3.1. Made Easter eggs***	**3. NEW ARTEFACT**
Making mainly red eggs			
Eggs made with combined colours			
Easter eggs with leaves			
Painted Easter eggs			
Easter eggs with wax			
Decoration of a coconut shell			
Egg covered in plastilina clay			
Using chicken eggs	*3.1.2. Mainly chicken eggs, usually a small number is made depending on family*		
Ostrich eggs painted for others			
Painting smaller eggs, like pigeon eggs			
Making between 20-40 eggs			
Red eggs as symbolic	*3.2.1. Red eggs vs. other colours*	***3.2. Types of Easter eggs***	
Red eggs as traditional			
Easter eggs can easily become kitsch	*3.2.2. Artful eggs vs. kitsch eggs*		
Artful eggs require a lot of careful work			
Artful eggs reveal chromatic harmony			
Artful eggs use chromatic contrast properly			
Kitsch eggs are heavily decorated			

Traditional Easter eggs as (decorative) art	*3.3.1. The art value of Easter eggs*	***3.3. Easter egg creativity***	
Traditional Easter eggs as folk art			
Easter egg making is not high art			
Easter eggs as high art			
The egg is open to many ways of being creative	*3.3.2. All eggs are potentially creative but traditional eggs most creative and eggs with stickers kitsch*		
Traditional eggs are creative because they communicate deep meaning			
Traditional eggs are creative because artists follow a tradition but also innovate			
Traditional eggs are creative because they stylise reality			
Traditional eggs are creative because of the beauty of the motifs			
Traditional eggs are the product of hard work			
Each artist has his/her own decoration style			
Eggs with leaves as an attempt to make eggs more beautiful			
Eggs with leaves can be creative depending on how you choose/place the leaf			
Eggs with leaves can be painted further			
Simple eggs are not creative			
Simple eggs could be creative by diversifying the colours used			
Eggs with just one sticker not necessarily kitsch			
Eggs with stickers as non-creative, kitsch, un-natural			
Eggs with stickers for children and the people of today			
Easter has very deep meanings	*4.1.1. Easter as celebration of joy and spiritual celebration*	***4.1. Easter tradition***	**4. EXISTING ARTEFACTS**
Easter as a celebration of joy			
Easter as a sacred moment			
Going to the church for Resurrection service			
The family meal on Easter			
Giving gifts to children			
Easter eggs symbolise the Easter celebration	*4.2.1. Easter eggs as essential for Easter*		
Easter eggs as the start of the celebration			
Easter eggs as necessity on Easter			
Have to make eggs, not buy them coloured			

Easter eggs legend	*4.2.2. Rituals and beliefs about Easter eggs*	***4.2. Easter egg traditions***	
Traditional day for making Easter eggs			
Washing with water in which you place an Easter egg			
The tradition of knocking eggs on Easter			
There are many distinguishable motifs			
Giving Easter eggs for charity for the dead			
Changes in pigments used for colouring	*4.2.3. Pronounced past-present and rural-urban differences*		
Traditional motifs are kept			
Easter egg making expanded today			
Commerce corrupted Easter traditions nowadays			
Many things are lost in the urban environment because we live life in a hurry			
Easter eggs today lost their sacred, symbolic meaning			
We copy many things from others, from the West			
Many artisans don’t even use red in decorating			
Changes take place in the rural as well			
Both good and bad changes			
In the rural setting children are taught to keep the tradition			
Creativity requires to pay attention at the beauty around	*4.3.1. Creativity as natural*	***4.3. Representations of creativity***	
Creativity as associated with spontaneity and sincerity			
Creativity exists in nature			
Being creative comes naturally			
Creativity associated with originality	*4.3.2. Creativity as new, original*		
Creativity as being inventive			
Taking inspiration from the real world	*4.3.3. Creativity as transforming reality*		
Transforming what you see in a personal manner			
Simplicity and beauty important in decorative art	*4.3.4. Art as beauty and harmony*		
Art is based on chromatic harmony			

Appendix VIII: Analysis of subjective camera recordings (example: Niculina Nigă and Luminița Niculiță)

Niculina Niga

12.08.2010; total of 58' 41'': first part 34' 59'' & second part 23' 52''

Short bio: 41 years old, and has been decorating for about 15 years. She learned how to decorate in Vatra Moldoviței, not in Ciocăneşti, and adopted the style from Ciocăneşti after moving here. Her daughter is decorating eggs as well.

General observations: She likes from the start several of the eggs at the workshop and has not seen the motifs before so it was a good chance to try them on the egg (and this way 'keep' them as well). Every encounter with other decorators and their work is an occasion for learning. She always seems to touch first her fingernail with the chişiță to take off extra wax (a reflex gesture). The drawing of lines is very quick and continuous, sign of a long time of practice. While working she sometimes looks up at what other people are doing (especially the participant who is painting) for a second before continuing, or takes a sip of coffee. In general the way the work advances seems a bit less 'regular', oftentimes working with pencil and then in wax and then pencil again etc. (without finishing one segment, getting to the next one), and there is some revisiting of what has been done before, as well as working on one part / model / quadrant of the egg, then passing to another, and then back again. Overall, she uses the pencil much more, basically making almost all details in pencil before wax. The way in which she wanted to reproduce several of the motifs she saw demonstrates on the one hand the small changes made to each design (it cannot be easily captured in its entirety) and also the intrinsic link between doing and undergoing in any act of 'reproduction' of a certain model (having to look at the model and work simultaneously).

Interview: She wanted to make some of the new models she has seen at the workshop. She found these models to be simpler, and closer to older, traditional eggs (*batrâneşti*). She had made before eggs similar to the first one (or parts of it), less similar to the second egg (with the shepherd's hooks). The eggs worked now she has never made before and they are not (and were not) intended to be perfect copies of the model eggs either (just to capture 'the main idea'). Complained that people have models but don't want to 'give' (share) so you need to 'steal' them whenever you can (this was also the case with knowing how to make the colours).

INTERVAL (MIN)	DOING	UNDERGOING	OBSERVATION
WORKING ON A WHITE EGG, FROM THE START			
00:04 – 00:39		Material: Looks at other eggs	Takes several eggs from the basket, says they are beautiful and asks Laura where she got the models from.
00:43 – 02:12	Drawing with pencil (all the main lines for the girdle)		Makes several vertical lines going round the egg, and then segments them to create the squares for the girdle. Interview: Made the double line in pencil in order to draw it better, to be more 'precise'.
02:18 – 02:20		Material: Looks at other eggs (model)	Tries to find a model.
02:24 – 03:16	Drawing with pencil (all the main lines for the main motif)		Makes the vertical and horizontal division on the main two sides of the egg, and two 'sectors' for each (semi-circles). Interview: The segmentation can be in six or eight, depending on the model.

			On this occasion she wanted to make a girdle similar to the one she has seen.
02:56 – 03:00		Material: Looks at other eggs (model)	Looks at the chosen egg, then positions it better to see the main motif.
03:30 – 03:55	Chooses materials (chişiță)		Takes her box with chişițe and chooses one of them.
04:04 – 05:17		Material: Looks at other eggs	Takes one goose egg she thinks is beautiful, with the 'shepherd's hook' (walking stick) depicted on it. Then she looks at a second one with geometric motifs and a third with geometric and floral motifs. Finally, she looks at a fourth egg from up close. Interview: She realised that she didn't have bigger eggs with her for the occasion and she could not make several of the models there.
05:37 – 07:15	Chooses materials (chişiță)		Starts working with a chişiță then tells her daughter 'this is yours I think, it doesn't write' and takes another one but she is not happy with it either, tries a third and then goes back to a previous one (she tries them very quickly). Finally she takes another chişiță out of her box saying that she had a better one but 'God knows where that is now'. Interview: She has a special chişiță she can work with best but in the box there are plenty, because some are for thicker lines or filling. Only when you start writing with a chişiță you can see if it works properly.
06:06 – 06:36		Social: Asks from others (chişiță)	Asks her daughter to take a chişiță from the floor, under the table.
07:39 – 08:03		Material: Looks at other eggs (model)	She looks at one of the eggs, the one with the hooks, and takes it saying she will make that model. Her daughter helps her by explaining how to hold the egg for the camera. Interview: She wanted to see more motifs because she can change them as well: 'from a single one I make several'.
08:28 -10:41	Drawing the girdle (the main vertical lines)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 08:28-08:35; 08:44-08:54; 09:46-10:41. First she puts the pin of the chişiță on her fingernail to take off extra wax, sometimes even when she passes from one big line or motif to the other without inserting in wax. She often spends more than half a minute (even a minute) drawing continuously on the egg which is a relatively long interval. She tends to leave the chişiță in the tin can for a few seconds then picks it up again (this might also be because she is a bit further away from the tin can). Interview: She thinks her hands were 'shaking' too much while drawing.
09:01 – 09:09		Social: Asks from others (razor blade)	Asks her daughter for a razor blade and she passes one on.

09:12 – 09:27	Correction / Completion (cleaning the egg better)		She uses the razor to clear something from the white surface of the egg (not wax though).
10:23 – 10:28		Material: Looks at other eggs (quickly)	Looks at other eggs and what others are doing.
10:57 – 16:49	Drawing the girdle (the motifs inside the girdle)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 10:57-11:54; 12:09-12:35; 12:47-13:08; 13:51-14:49; 15:16-15:23; 15:36-16:32; 16:41-16:49. Is sometimes looking at the participant who is painting. Also, often she takes a second to distance her work from her and see what she has done (micro-moments of undergoing). Again, she touches her fingernail with the chişiță even when it is not freshly immersed in wax. After making three shapes on the girdle she goes back and adds a point inside them, then continues with making shapes with a dot inside. Interview: These motifs are similar to those on houses. She has struggled a lot at first with this type of girdle because she didn't know how to start it.
16:58 – 18:18	Drawing the main motif (main lines)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 16:58-17:28; 17:47-18:18. Interview: She left the chişiță in the wax tin can because wax 'catches on better this way'.
18:06 – 18:08		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	To remind herself what she has done, to do the same on the other side. Interview: When she was working she looked at the symmetrical portions to see if anything was forgotten.
19:03 – 19:35	Drawing with pencil (details of the main motif)		Draws small triangles on the side of the semi-circles. Interview: This drawing in pencil is used for orientation and it doesn't matter if you write with wax on it or above it.
19:46 – 22:15	Drawing the main motif (details)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 19:46-20:46; 21:14-22:15. Making small triangles and filling them with nets. She spends about a minute drawing with the chişiță on the egg, although she often takes a couple of seconds to look around and then continues.
21:04 – 21:06		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Very quick look.
22:17 – 22:32		Social: Looks at others (their work)	Listens to the explanations given by the participant who was painting.
22:44 – 22:53	Drawing with pencil (details of the main motif)		Makes the other part of the main motif, in pencil (just the main lines)
23:03 – 23:15	Drawing the main motif (details of the main motif)		Works continuously without inserting the chişiță in wax. Makes just the main lines depicted before in pencil.
23:24 – 23:43	Drawing with pencil (details of the main motif)		Continues the details of the main motif in pencil.

23:54 – 24:17	Drawing the main motif (details of the main motif)		Works continuously without inserting the chişiță in wax. Makes only the shapes depicted before in pencil.
24:30 – 24:32		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Very quick look.
24:33 – 24:42		Material: Looks at other eggs (model)	Picks up the egg she chose as a model and looks at it in more detail before proceeding. She also positions the model egg in front of her so she could see it better.
24:43 – 25:30	Drawing with pencil (details of the main motif)		These details are made while following closely the observed model egg.
25:40 – 25:52		Material: Looks at other eggs	She leaves the egg she is working on and starts looking at other eggs. She also says 'I wanted to do something (a model), don't know which one'. Interview: At the end she said that she forgot to make some things on this first egg, for example 'there were three elements, I made only two', etc.
STARTS WORKING ON ANOTHER EGG, FROM THE WHITE STAGE (INITIALLY MAKES THE MODEL FOR ANOTHER PARTICIPANT) (26:00)			
26:03 – 26:14		Social: Asks from others (egg)	Is looking for the egg with the 'shepherd's hook' and asks one of the other participants where it is. The child gives her the egg but asks before to make her the same model in pencil on her egg. She agrees.
26:19 – 26:58		Social: Looks at others (their work)	Looks at the work of the researcher and listens to his explanations, also tries to help him by searching for a chişiță that would draw thicker lines.
27:02 – 33:07	Drawing with pencil (main motif)		She makes this model for the participant. While working, she often looks at the model, and also uses the rubber three times to correct the drawing. Also gives the participant the model egg back, since she now knows the main lines of it ('take it... and then I will draw what I...'). The child wants more help with drawing also the other side of the motif and Niculina helps with that too. Interview: She had made the first model (in pencil) for that participant before. But this time the model didn't fit perfectly because it was too big so it needed to be 'crowded' a little (made smaller).
28:03 – 28:20		Social: Loos at others (their work)	Looks at the painting made by one of the participants.
31:23 – 31:25			Takes an egg that breaks accidentally. Interview: The person who emptied the egg made a mistake because she made a hole on top instead of making it at the bottom.
33:10 – 33:33	Choosing materials (egg)		Finishes by saying 'I also want to make this model if Marilena gives it to me' (the person owning the egg). She is looking for an egg to make it on and regrets not having a bigger (duck) egg, because it would fit better.

33:35 – 34:59 End of 1st part	Drawing with pencil (main motif)		Starts making the motif in pencil, for herself. While working she looks a bit at other eggs as well (the participants who are painting for example), talks to Marilena, has a sip of tea, etc.
00:01 – 00:06	Correction / Completion (clean the egg)		Uses the razor blade to erase some lines made in pencil. Interview: It was something from inside the egg left on the shell, it wasn't washed properly.
00:19 – 00:51	Drawing the girdle (main lines)		Draws in wax the lines (previously made in pencil) continuously for the whole interval.
01:10 – 03:17	Drawing with pencil (details for two of the quadrants)		Continues in pencil to make the details of the motif. Uses the rubber three times. Looks at the model egg and positions it so that she can see it well. Interview: When she started (in Vatra Moldoviței) she did not use the pencil at all but in Ciocăneşti the other decorators asked her why not and since then she cannot make an egg without using the pencil first. But even now she makes some smaller elements sometimes without having them in pencil.
01:37 – 01:39		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Very quick look.
03:27 – 10:17	Drawing the main motif (details for two of the quadrants)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 03:27-04:13; 04:56-05:36; 05:46-05:55; 06:12-06:27; 06:36-07:04; 07:12-07:18; 08:24-09:28; 10:01-10:17. In the first interval she manages to draw all the main lines for a 4 X 4 grid on one side. Also when finishing one side and starting the other one, she very briefly looks back at what she has done (generally, looking back is frequent). At one moment she tries another chişiță on the egg, to see if and how it works (worked better than expected).
04:18 – 04:49		Material: Looks at other eggs (model)	Looks again at the model from up close. Then takes another egg and looks at it, then another. She is probably looking for parts of a model that she could use now or in the future.
05:56 – 06:03		Social: Looks at others (their work)	Wants to see the work of one of the children but the egg was already immersed in colour.
07:22 – 07:33		Social: Looks at others	Looks at a mobile phone picture taken by one of the children.
07:34 – 07:53	Drawing with pencil (details of main motif)		Briefly takes the pencil and makes some detailed shapes of the main motif.
08:08 – 08:12		Material: Looks at other eggs	Picks up one egg and looks at it.
09:38 – 09:43	Drawing with pencil (details of main motif)		Briefly takes the pencil and makes some detailed shapes of the main motif.

10:31 – 11:58	Drawing with pencil (details for the other two quadrants)		Starts drawing with the pencil elements for the other two quadrants (the 'shepherd's hook'). Uses the rubber once. Interview: She plans to make this model with the two hooks again.
11:39 – 11:52		Social: Helping others (material)	Helps others by giving a plastic bag for handling coloured eggs.
12:05 – 14:16	Drawing the main motif (details for the other two quadrants)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 12:05-12:41; 12:52-13:30; 13:58-14:16. Says that she will ask Marilena for a piece of paper and will draw some of the motifs she saw on the eggs.
12:19 – 12:46		Social: Helping others (chişiță)	Asks one participant if the chişiță is working, because she tried it and it did work. The child confirms. She also tells her more about how to make a chişiță work better.
13:19 – 13:46		Social: Asks from others (chişiță)	She seems to have lost her chişiță among the others in the tin can and her daughter spots it and gives it back to her.
13:35 – 13:38		Material: Looks at result (quick)	Very quickly, and says 'look, this model came out well' to her daughter.
14:16 – 14:19		Material: Looks at result (quick)	Very quick look at the intermediary outcome.
14:31 – 16:40	Drawing with pencil (continues drawing of the motif)		Draws the second hook of the shepherd on one of the quadrants. And then makes the two hooks on the final quadrant. Uses the rubber once.
14:37 – 15:27		Social: Helps others (plastic bags)	She notices that more plastic bags are needed to take out eggs from colour and finally sends her daughter to get some from the shop nearby.
16:48 – 18:06	Drawing the main motif (details for the other two quadrants continued)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 16:48-17:44; 17:54-18:06.
18:06 – 18:13		Material: Looks at result (long)	Looks at how the hooks came out in one of the quadrants, compares with the original model.
18:27 – 19:44	Drawing the main motif (completing the first two quadrants)		Periods of work without inserting chişiță in wax: 18:27-18:53; 19:25-19:44. Completes the upper and lower parts of the quadrants. Interview: She remembered not making something she should have in the other quadrants.
18:58 – 19:14		Social: Help others (advice)	Helps one of the children with advice on what is to be left red on the egg.
19:53 – 23:24	Drawing the main motif (details for the other two quadrants)		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 19:53-20:50; 21:29-21:51; 21:57-22:25; 22:31-22:49; 23:18-23:24. At times she looks quickly at how she made the other quadrant (similar to the one she is working to finish).

			Interview: Moving constantly the egg in your hand is better than holding it fixed, it helps to make the motifs more continuously.
20:50 – 21:20		Social: Help others (advice)	She is asked again by one of the participants what to work on red.
23:25 – 23:44		Material: Looks at result (long)	Looks at how she finished one egg on white and then takes her first made egg and places them together.
OUTCOME: WORKED TWO EGGS ON WHITE (THE FIRST NOT COMPLETELY FINISHED)			

Luminița Niculiță
13.08.2010; total 22' 55''

Short bio: She is eight years old and started decoration at four. She was taught in the family, her sister and mother also decorate. She works more with her sister at home, rarely alone, since their mother is generally too busy to join them. It takes her two to four hours to finish one egg from beginning to end. One day she managed to make three eggs, but she made them in a rush. After about 20 minutes 'you can become tired and your hand can hurt if you keep on decorating without a break'.

General observations: She tries to draw straight lines, although this is difficult to do, and works quite continuously on the egg. Sometimes her lines are very straight but overall she has some difficulties with holding the egg properly (she does not move it very often and therefore needs to raise her fingers when they get in the way of the lines she is drawing; also she doesn't have one single way of holding the egg but changes it when working new segments). She starts showing the same kind of work reflexes expert decorators have, for example putting extra-wax on her fingernail first, etc. She takes wax off the egg with the fingernail whenever it is dropped by mistake. She works quietly and does not participate in dialogue with others, unless she feels she needs advice on decoration. Very often looks quickly at what she has done on the egg and at times touches the applied wax with her finger. Made the same star motif on both the bottom and top of the egg. In the end she did not look at what she did but just called the researcher and gave the egg to him whispering 'I don't like it, it's ugly'.

Interview: Didn't find it hard to work with the subcamera on. Thought that drawing straight lines on the egg is not that hard, neither is to reunite lines at the end. She had several chişițe, of different dimensions, to choose from. Mihaela made her the drawing in pencil for the egg she was working on; she does not make her own drawing in pencil on the egg yet. She thinks that she made some mistakes on this egg, for example some 'bended' lines. Didn't know exactly how motifs are called. She also didn't think yet about what should be done on the egg in the next stages (yellow and red), she needs first to see what comes out from the first stage. Also her sister and mother let her use the colours she wants, and she likes yellow and white on the egg. She will continue working on this egg until finishing it, and will make the other two quadrants symmetrical with the first two. She wants to make on eggs what she 'knows' and to keep the 'tradition' as all other people who decorate.

INTERVAL (MIN)	DOING	UNDERGOING	OBSERVATION
WORKING ON A WHITE EGG WITH A MODEL MADE IN PENCIL			
00:15 – 00:28	Chooses material (chişiță)		Chooses a chişiță to work with, by taking several out of the tin can and looking at them. Interview: At first she was thinking which of the lines to begin with. She chose her chişiță carefully because if the pin moves, it will not 'write' well.

00:34 – 03:21	Drawing the girdle (main horizontal lines)		Periods of work without inserting chișița in wax: 00:34-00:46; 01:28-01:36; 01:46-02:22; 02:27-02:58; 03:08-03:21. The first moment she uses the chișiță it doesn't 'write'. She changes the hand she is working with after drawing the first segment. She puts extra-wax on her finger before touching the egg with the chișiță.
01:13 – 01:24		Asks from others (chișiță)	Her sister takes her chișiță and then gives it back, but since it is not shown on the video it is hard to say why. Interview: Her sister considered the pin of the chișiță to be 'bended' and wanted to help with that.
01:16 – 01:17	Correction / completion		Takes wax off the egg with her fingernail.
02:13 – 02:17	Correction / completion		Takes wax off with her fingernail, from where it was placed outside the line.
03:22 – 03:24		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the two lines she has made on the egg.
03:33 – 06:07	Drawing the girdle (main vertical lines)		Periods of work without inserting chișița in wax: 03:33-04:01; 04:10-04:23; 04:36-04:50; 04:58-05:07; 05:16-05:39; 05:46-06:07. She tries first to start from the top but because the hole in the egg is there she doesn't seem to know how to start so she chooses the bottom part. In the 04:36-04:50 interval it can be seen how she tries to make a continuous line and, in order to do that, she does not want to move the egg and has to raise her fingers gradually to make room for the advancing line. Interview: She wanted to cover the hole from now but saw that the wax 'was going somewhere else' and couldn't.
03:46 – 03:50	Correction / completion		Takes wax off the egg with her fingernail.
05:07 – 05:10		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the vertical lines she has made on the egg so far.
06:07 – 06:13		Material: Looks at result (long look)	Looks at the lines she has made on the egg.
06:22 – 08:19	Drawing the main motif (first quadrant)		Periods of work without inserting chișița in wax: 06:22-06:30; 06:40-06:48; 07:03-07:17; 07:36-07:58; 08:06-08:19.
06:48 – 06:52		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far.
07:17 – 07:26		Material: Looks at result (long look)	Looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far and also touches the wax she applied with her finger. Interview: It was not so much to see if the wax has cooled but because she made some little points with wax she didn't want in that particular place.
08:19 – 08:24		Material: Looks at result (long look)	Takes a longer look at the quadrant and also turns the egg around.
08:39 – 12:02	Drawing the main motif (second quadrant)		Periods of work without inserting chișița in wax: 08:39-08:51; 08:58-09:08; 09:18-09:38; 10:00-10:03; 10:08-10:28; 10:43-10:50; 11:15-11:26; 11:32-

			11:43; 11:55-12:02. At 10:36 she seems to have blown air towards the top of the chişiță, perhaps to cool the wax; her fingers are very much covered with wax. Interview: She was indeed blowing air because the chişiță was hot. The main model wanted to resemble a clover (four leaves). It looks also like a flower.
08:51 – 08:55		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far.
09:38 – 09:40		Material: Looks at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far and also touches the wax she applied with her finger.
10:03 – 10:06		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far.
10:56 – 11:04	Clean wax off fingers		She cleans her fingers and puts the wax back into the tin can.
11:26 – 11:31		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far.
11:44 – 11:47		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the quadrant so far.
12:03 – 12:15		Material: Looks at result (long look)	Takes a longer look at the quadrant and also turns the egg around, probably thinking what to work on next. Looks last at the bottom side of the egg.
12:26 – 16:33	Drawing on the bottom part of the egg		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 12:26-12:41; 12:49-12:53; 12:57-13:08; 13:20-13:57; 14:06-14:14; 14:35-15:05; 15:13-15:30; 15:41-16:01; 16:09-16:33. In the first interval the wax finishes before she can make the last line. She first makes the main lines, then asks another decorator if she should draw tassels (they were not depicted in pencil) and continues with them. Interview: She knew that this is the 'star in eight points' motif but couldn't say what it means. She said she made this motif 'eight times' until now. She is not very happy with how her tassels come out, because the lines were not very straight. She made tassels to have an 'ornament, [something] beautiful'.
12:54 – 12:55		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the bottom so far.
13:08 – 13:09		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the bottom so far.
14:14 – 14:17		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Looks at what she has done on the bottom side and then turns the egg around to see the top part, what she will work next.
14:20 – 14:27		Social: Asks from others (information)	She asks a more experienced decorator in the room something about what to do on one of the sides. Interview: She asked Mihaela is she should make tassels on the other side as well, because in pencil only a few were made.
15:31 – 15:32		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the bottom so far.
16:01 – 16:02		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the bottom so far.

16:33 – 16:37		Material: Look at result (long look)	Looks at how the bottom part was made, and then looks at the top one, to be made next.
16:43 – 20:57	Drawing on the top part of the egg		Periods of work without inserting chişița in wax: 16:43-17:02; 17:16-17:46; 17:54-18:03; 18:22-18:41; 18:48-19:06; 19:13-19:16; 19:27-20:03; 20:15-20:26; 20:34-20:46; 20:51-20:57. Sometimes she needs to see that there is no wax on the chişiță to draw with before inserting it again in the wax tin can. At times, when getting the chişiță out of the tin can, she uses her fingers to get something off it (maybe extra-wax). She changes the position of holding the egg quite often, depending on what she is drawing, to get a better grip. Leaves the top part not completely finished. Interview: She turned the egg in her hand when decorating 'to make [the drawing process] easier'.
17:02 – 17:03		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the top so far.
17:04 – 17:11	Cleans wax off hands		Cleans the fingers and puts wax back in the tin can. Interview: It's good to save the wax and put it back in the tin can where it is melting.
17:23 – 17:25		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Quickly looks at the lines made on the top so far and also to see what else is to be done there outside of lines.
19:16 – 19:17		Material: Look at result (quick look)	After finishing the lines and before starting the tassels.
20:46 – 20:48		Material: Look at result (quick look)	Looks and touches slightly with her finger the wax she applied.
21:04 – 21:12	Covers the hole with wax		Tries to cover the hole with wax by using the other side of the chişiță (not the pin, the back side).
21:15 – 21:25	Correction / Completion		She does not manage to cover the hole and tries to take all the wax around it off with her fingers. Interview: Because there was too much wax she wanted to erase it. You need to cover the hole otherwise colour gets inside the egg.
21:32 – 21:48	Covers the hole with wax		Tries again to cover the hole with wax, with the back of the chişiță and then using the pin.
22:09 – 22:24	Correction / Completion		Finishes the tassels for the top part of the egg.
22:28 – 22:40	Cleans wax off hands		Cleans wax off her hands.
22:43 – 22:55		Social: Asks from others (evaluate)	Shows the researcher her work and says she is done. Interview: Didn't look at the egg in the end, but constantly throughout.
OUTCOME: MADE THE BOTTOM AND TOP PARTS AND ALSO TWO OF THE FOUR QUADRANTS IN THE MIDDLE PART (MAIN MOTIFS) ON ONE EGG			

Appendix IX: Coding of drawings

CODE (order, place, grade, gender)	HOME EASTER EGG DRAWING	CODING HOME EASTER EGG	WANTED EASTER EGG DRAWING	CODING WANTED EASTER EGG	OBSERVATIONS (from interview)
1.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: blue **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: blue **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: stars Complex	General: Mother colours eggs, he buys the colours; he also decorates about three eggs with the paintbrush and watercolours (see 'home' egg). Doesn't know why people colour/decorate eggs. Home egg: This is how the eggs he decorates at home look like. Works with paintbrush/colours on the already coloured egg. Wanted egg: Draws circles and stars to make it 'more beautiful'. This more complex model is easier to make on a piece of paper than the egg.
2.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Green **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: blue **MODEL** Figurative: Object A vase	General: Grandmother and mother colour eggs, he helps with other chores for Easter but not with egg preparation (parents don't allow him). Doesn't know why people colour/decorate eggs. Home egg: At home eggs are dyed in different colours. He chose green because he likes this colour. Wanted egg: Made a vase to be more beautiful and because the colours are 'lighter'.
3.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 8 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: Religious (a cross) Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Figurative: Religious A cross	General: Older sister and brother make eggs, father sometimes helps. She helps but she has never coloured/decorated an egg by herself. Believes that people make eggs for Easter because Easter is 'beautiful' so eggs are made to be more 'beautiful'. Home egg: More colours on the same egg but at home eggs have only one colour each (many colours are used overall). Also has a cross on because 'crosses bring luck'. Wanted egg: Made with an even bigger cross on it. It is normal to do that because she 'believes in God'. In the upper part two dots are made (resemble Easter eggs but she didn't say so).

4.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Blue **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: pink **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother and father colour eggs at home; she decorates five or six coloured eggs with geometric models (lines, dots, etc.) She knows Easter eggs are made to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ and knocked on Easter day (saying 'Christ has Risen' and answering 'He has indeed'). Home egg: Coloured in blue because she likes this colour (usually at home eggs are red, yellow, orange, green and blue). Wanted egg: Made in a way more similar to the eggs she tries to decorate at home.
5.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: all colours equal **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Grandmother colours eggs; she helps the grandmother by bringing her everything that is necessary. She doesn't decorate eggs herself. She doesn't know exactly why people colour eggs (or why they colour then red) but thinks 'they have to'. Home egg: Made red, although eggs home also have other colours (for example green). Wanted egg: Made it colourful because she likes colours; also depicted a pink square close to the top to 'look good' and be more 'beautiful'.
6.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Figurative: Religious Crosses	General: Mother and father colour eggs for Easter; he does not help because parents are afraid he might break the eggs. He doesn't know why people colour eggs for Easter. Home egg: Red since all the Easter eggs made at home are red. Wanted egg: With a cross because 'Easter is about the Resurrection of Christ'.
7.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 8 colours Dominant: all colours equal **MODEL** Figurative: Heart	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; she decorates about ten eggs using watercolours. Then the eggs made by her are knocked and eaten. She doesn't know why people colour eggs for Easter. Home egg: Is red like most eggs made by her mother (she uses other colours as well though, e.g. green, blue, etc.). Wanted egg: Is colourful just like the ones she makes at home. It has a heart on, she usually makes that (or other shapes, for example stars).

8.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: green **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; she helps her mother by bringing the colour or drying the eggs but does not decorate. She knows red eggs symbolise the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is red like some of the eggs home, which may also be yellow, blue, green, orange, etc. Wanted egg: Has different kinds of geometric models, e.g. lines, 'stars', etc. She likes it better than the 'simple' eggs, made usually at home.
9.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 11 colours Dominant: equal **MODEL** Figurative: Hearts, flowers, suns, etc. Complex	General: She helps her mother a lot with egg colouring, including putting eggs in colour and taking them out. She knows the legend of the red colour. Home egg: It is red since eggs at home are only red. She also thinks red is 'the most beautiful of all'. Wanted egg: She has put plenty of colours because she likes it like that. The shapes are also diverse: from hearts and flowers to star shapes and even shapes that resemble the 'writing' they learn at school in first grade.
10.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 8 colours Dominant: blue **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: persons Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: all colours equal **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: flowers and persons Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter and he helps her as much as he can/is allowed. He also decorates some eggs, in many colours, using mostly markers. He believes people make Easter eggs to be more 'beautiful'. He also knows red represents the blood of Christ. Home egg: This is a kind of egg he tries to make at home. Usually eggs made by his mother are in one colour only (red, blue, green, yellow, etc.). On the egg there are people dancing a 'hora' (traditional dance). Said he used blue more to be an egg 'for a boy' (gender reference). Wanted egg: This resembles the 'egg from home'. The same kind of general colours are used and there is a small flower (bottom-right) and two children near it (one watering the flower). The children 'want to play with each other'.
11.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother makes Easter eggs; she doesn't help her mother with this task nor does she decorate eggs. She doesn't know why people colour eggs for Easter. Home egg: Eggs at home are in a single colour, usually red. She wanted though to make this egg with a model because she 'likes it better'. Wanted egg: Likes the model on the wanted egg she made.

12.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; he helps by getting the colours and taking care of his little sister while mother is working. He also decorates about ten eggs with watercolours. He knows that Easter eggs are made to commemorate Christ and also tells the legend of red eggs. Home egg: It is read like most home eggs (usually red but also yellow). Wanted egg: Made with geometric motifs, it has the 'colours of Easter'. He also said that at home he decorates eggs with religious motifs (the crucifixion). It is easier, he said, to draw on paper than draw on the egg.
13.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 10 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: stars, resembles writing Complex	General: Grandmother makes Easter eggs and he helps. He and his grandmother split the eggs and they both work, either with pigments or watercolours. Grandmother usually makes crosses when painting. He knows that eggs were first coloured red by the blood of Christ. Home egg: Most eggs at home are read; this year he will use stickers. Wanted egg: It has lines and dots on it (and some 'stars') because this is what he likes and mostly paints on the egg. The lines remind of what he is making at school in first grade. This egg is more 'beautiful' he said, with more models on it.
14.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 8 colours Dominant: pink **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: hearts, flowers, grass, etc Complex	General: Father colours eggs and she helps him. She puts on a pair of gloves, takes colour pigment in her hand and colours the egg. She doesn't decorate eggs otherwise. She knows about the legend of red eggs as symbolic of the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is red, like many eggs are home (other colours are used too). She likes red eggs. Wanted egg: Has many colours because this is how she likes it most and also many symbols (hearts, flowers, stars, etc.), her 'favourite symbols'.
15.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Monochrome Blue **MODEL** No model	General: Mother and grandmother colour eggs for Easter. He doesn't help and is not allowed to help with this task. He therefore does not decorate eggs. He knows that red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is red like most eggs at home. They are also blue, green or orange. Wanted egg: Blue, because he 'likes the colour'.

16.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: orange **MODEL** Figurative: person (self)	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; he helps by putting them in colour. He also decorates some of the eggs with watercolours. The eggs he makes are knocked at Easter. Doesn't know why people make eggs. Home egg: It is red and has a simple geometric motif. He sometimes makes eggs like this at home. Wanted egg: There is a person made on the egg and he said it is him. He said he makes eggs at home with different models: persons, but also flowers, sun, etc. He couldn't explain why he put himself on the egg.
17.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: pink **MODEL** No model	General: Mother colours eggs at home; she doesn't help with this task, does not colour or decorate eggs. She knows that red is used on the egg because it symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is red since all the eggs made at home are red. Wanted egg: It is mostly pink because she likes pink. The margins are red, blue and purple.
18.U.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: pink **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: The grandmother colours eggs for Easter; he helps her with the colouring. He also decorates about seven eggs with markers. The eggs made by him are also knocked at Easter. He doesn't know exactly why people colour eggs for Easter. Home egg: It is red, like many eggs from home. They are also green, yellow, etc. Wanted egg: It is made with lines and pink, to be 'beautifully coloured'.
19.U.I.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: hearts, stars Simple		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** Figurative: animal (rabbit-girl)	General: Mother usually makes eggs for Easter; she helps her mother with the colour pigments or tells her what models to make (mother usually makes rabbits, grass, etc.). She also decorates eggs with paintbrush and watercolours. She knows the legend of red eggs. Home egg: It is red and at home eggs are red but also of other colours (green and yellow). It has hearts and stars on it. She makes this kind of models on the eggs at home, and also crosses because 'they bring luck'. Wanted egg: It has a rabbit on the grass. The rabbit looks like a girl (it is a 'rabbit-girl'). She makes this kind of models on the eggs at home.

1.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: flowers		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: flowers	General: Grandmother colours the Easter eggs; she helps her grandmother and afterwards takes each and every egg and paints it with watercolours. She spends Easter in the city. She thinks red is used in decoration to remind us of Christ. Home egg: Red with blue flowers. Eggs at home are red but also blue, green, yellow, etc. Similar to what she makes at home. Wanted egg: Several colours used and a flower model. Similar to what she makes at home just that more colourful (background). She tries in decoration to achieve a harmony of colours, uses blue on red, red on blue and green on yellow when painting. Other models she makes on eggs beside flowers are hearts, stars, etc.
2.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; he helps her by bringing the colours. He also decorates three or four eggs using watercolours and/or markers. The eggs he makes are sometimes kept a bit longer, after Easter, if they are beautiful. He spends Easter usually in the city but has seen eggs with geometrical shapes at his grandfather's place in Buzau. He knows the legend of the red colour. Home egg: All red, like many eggs home, which can also be blue or yellow. Wanted egg: Made with geometric shapes. This is how he generally decorates eggs, with circles and squares as well. He likes them more colourful. Wanted to make other drawings on the egg, like animals (rabbit), but couldn't.
3.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: orange **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: stars Simple	General: Mother colours eggs; she helps her mother and also decorates five to ten eggs with watercolours. These eggs are usually kept until later. She spends the Easter in the city and has seen 'traditional' eggs; she considers them to be 'more beautiful'. She knows that red eggs symbolise the blood of Christ. Home egg: Red, like the eggs made at home which are mostly red but can also be green, orange, red or even dark pink. Wanted egg: Made it with two main colours and stars on it (saying that pink stars come out well on an orange background). She works at home on coloured eggs and can cover the original colour as long as she doesn't use too much water when painting. Other models she makes beside stars are hearts and butterflies.
4.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** No model	General: Father colours eggs for Easter (the father is a priest) and he helps by decorating two or three of them with watercolours. The eggs he makes are placed with the others. Spends Easter in the city. He knows that red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: All red, like most eggs made at home. Wanted egg: Made it with two colours because this is how he 'liked' to make it. At home he sometimes draws flowers on eggs because they foretell the Resurrection of Christ.

5.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: equal proportions **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother makes coloured eggs at home; he helps by decorating about three with watercolours. The eggs he makes are knocked with the others on Easter day. He spends Easter in the city. He doesn't know exactly why eggs are coloured but he knows about the association between red and the blood of Christ. Home egg: All red like most eggs made at home. Wanted egg: Two colours, the ones he 'likes'. The eggs he paints at home are dyed in only one colour though (red or blue). Paints eggs from white as well.
6.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: pink **MODEL** No model	General: Mother and grandmother colour eggs for Easter; she is there to help them if they need anything. She also decorates one egg for Easter, with markers. This egg is kept for a week. She spends Easter in the city or at the country. She doesn't know exactly why people colour eggs for Easter. Home egg: Red egg, like most eggs made at home. Wanted egg: Two colours, green and a lot of pink, since pink is her favourite colour. At home she usually paints her egg red and sometimes puts geometric shapes on it (because mother told her this is how it's done).
7.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Green **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: all of them equal **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; he helps her by bringing the colours. He also decorates about four eggs, paints them with watercolours, at times his mother joins him. The eggs they make are kept, sometimes even for a month. He spends Easter in the city, rarely in the country. He thinks eggs are decorated for Christ's Resurrection. Home egg: Green, eggs at home can be green but also red. Wanted egg: Made in orange, blue and green. Similar to what he tries to make at home. Sometimes he makes lines on the egg.
8.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: flowers Simple	General: Mother and also grandparents make eggs for Easter; she helps by decorating four or five of them, with watercolours. Sometimes not encouraged to decorate because she might get stains from the colours. The eggs she makes are put together with the others. She usually spends Easter at the countryside. She knows red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: Red. Many of them are red at home, but also yellow, green, blue, etc. Grandparents make only red eggs. Wanted egg: Has yellow and green lines on a red background. She likes it more because it has many colours. She occasionally tries to make this at home, with flowers, lines, but also dots, hearts, etc. Sometimes the models don't show as she would want, sometimes they do.

9.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Monochrome Blue **MODEL** No model	General: Mother colours the eggs for Easter; he helps her by being there and giving her what she needs. He also decorates two or three eggs with watercolour and/or markers. The eggs he makes are put together with all the others. He spends Easter either in the city or the countryside. He knows that red is associated with the blood of Christ. Home egg: Red like most eggs home (can be also blue, yellow). Wanted egg: Blue because he likes the colour. At home he tries to paint different things on the egg, especially religious scenes (with Jesus for example), but also geometric motifs or flowers.
10.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: heart and butterflies Simple	General: Mother prepares eggs for Easter, colouring them but also using the leaves technique; she helps the mother especially with the leaves, for about five or six eggs. She rarely decorates but when she does it is with watercolours. She spends the Easter in the city or at the mountains. She doesn't know why people decorate eggs for Easter. Home egg: Red, like most eggs made at home (can have other colours as well). Wanted egg: At first she wanted just to make it yellow but then she made the butterflies and heart because she is 'used since being a little girl to draw like this'. It's harder to make this on the egg though because the heart shape is seldom symmetrical and the wings of the butterfly are hard to make.
11.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: blue **MODEL** No model	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter and the boy and his sister help her. They mainly watch over the eggs while they are being coloured. His sister and him are not involved in any other decoration. He spends Easter in the city. He knows that red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: Red because all the eggs made at home are red. Wanted egg: In three colours. He likes how it turned out but still says that he likes to have home only red eggs.
12.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: all of them equal **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; he helps her by giving her the eggs and colours when she needs them. He also decorates five or six eggs, usually with watercolours. He starts from white. He spends Easter in the city. He knows that red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: Red like many of them at home but can be also blue, yellow or purple. Wanted egg: Made with many colours and geometric models because this is how he would like eggs to be. He tries to make them like this when he decorates, also makes crosses on eggs at home. He tried once to make a rabbit on an egg but didn't succeed.

13.U.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: green **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother and grandmother colour eggs for Easter; he helps them by painting about six eggs from white, with watercolours. The eggs he makes are usually kept for a while after the holiday. He spends Easter usually in the city. He doesn't know why people decorate eggs for Easter. Home egg: Made with several colours, similar to at least some eggs from home. Wanted egg: Made with these colours and shapes to be more beautiful. When he paints on the egg at home he also makes flowers, hearts, etc. He says it is not hard to paint on the egg.
14.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: pink **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: equal proportions **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; she helps by decorating 15-20 of those eggs, with watercolours. The eggs she makes are put together with the others. Sometimes they use stickers on the egg as well. She spends Easter in the city. She doesn't know why people colour eggs. Home egg: Pink with some yellow dots. At home she has pink (light red) eggs, and also yellow, blue, red, etc. Wanted egg: With stripes of red and yellow. At home when she paints on the egg she also makes different shapes: flowers, lines, hearts, dots, squares, stars, etc. She even tried to make a rabbit with some help from her mother. She finds decoration on the egg hard.
15.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: butterflies, star Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; she helps by decorating with watercolour two or three of them, sometimes assisted by the mother. The eggs they make are kept for longer afterwards. She spends Easter in the city or at the countryside. She doesn't know why people colour eggs for Easter. Home egg: Red like many from home; they can also be coloured in blue or yellow. Wanted egg: Made with more colours, with butterflies and a star in order to be more attractive than simple coloured ones. It is harder for her to make such models on the egg as well although she tries.
16.U.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: rabbit and grass	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; she helps by decorating a couple of eggs from white, with watercolours. The eggs she makes are kept for the whole holiday. She spends her Easter in the city. She knows the connection between red and the blood of Christ said to have coloured the eggs on the day of the crucifixion. Home egg: Red since all the eggs made at home are red. Wanted egg: Made with a rabbit model because of the Easter bunny. She also tries to make other motifs on the egg at home, like crosses, flowers, etc. It is sometimes hard to paint on the egg because you can use too much water.

1.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Figurative: flowers	General: Mother, herself and brother prepare eggs for Easter; father helps them with all they need. She also decorates some eggs, including traditional wax decoration (parents, especially father, know how to decorate but don't do this regularly). She knocks eggs for Easter and goes 'after eggs' on Easter day. She knows that red is the colour of the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is red like many of the eggs made at home (also orange, yellow, etc.) Wanted egg: It has flowers on (representing spring) and it is colourful, the way she likes most. At home she sometimes works eggs with wax, making geometric shapes but also flowers (which she knows are made in other regions, not specifically Ciocăneşti). She says she manages to draw straight lines on the egg.
2.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 10 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: rabbit (magic wand and flower)	General: Mother and grandmother colour eggs for Easter; she doesn't help much or decorate. Nobody in the family knows how to decorate with wax. On Easter day she washes her face with water in which a red egg was placed and goes to church. She knows the legend of Easter eggs. Home egg: It is red since all the eggs made at home are red. Wanted egg: It has a rabbit on (dressed like a girl), a magic wand and a flower. She made the rabbit because she thought of the Easter bunny bringing her presents but also because her aunt once gave her an egg decorated with a rabbit. The rabbit has a wand in order to transform things and 'make' presents. The flower represents spring.
3.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: white **MODEL** Geometric and fig: religious - crosses, flowers, egg basket Simple	General: Mother and father colour eggs for Easter at home; she doesn't help with this task and doesn't decorate them further. Nobody in the family knows how to work eggs with wax. For Easter, she goes to visit the monasteries nearby. She doesn't know why people colour eggs red. Home egg: Red since all the eggs at home are made red. Wanted egg: She wanted to make a 'traditional' design so she first segmented the egg. She knows how traditional eggs look like because she has some at home but she 'imagined' this model. In certain segments she has put crosses, flowers, and in the middle a basket full of red eggs.
4.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours: Dominant: purple **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother, sometimes helped by the grandmother, colours eggs for Easter; she doesn't help much apart from bringing them what they need. She doesn't decorate eggs (except on paper) and in her family nobody makes eggs with wax. For Easter she knocks eggs and goes to church with eggs, to be blessed by the priest. Goes 'for eggs' on Easter day. She doesn't know why people colour eggs. Home egg: It is yellow with blue stripes. At home mother can make such eggs, in two colours, and she also colours monochrome eggs. Wanted egg: She coloured it with purple and pink because these are 'girl colours'. She also used black because she saw it on traditional eggs.

5.R.I.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: left white background **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: letters Complex	General: Mother prepares eggs for Easter, she colours eggs but also decorates with wax; he helps his mother but does not work on eggs. He knocks eggs on Easter day, goes 'after eggs' and takes eggs at the church to be blessed. He knows eggs are made red to represent the blood of Christ. Home egg: This egg 'combines' the two kinds of eggs mother makes at home: decorated eggs with geometric motifs and coloured red eggs. Wanted egg: This egg 'combines' geometric motifs with writing on the egg. He started by segmenting the egg and then made letters (learned at school) in each box since that is what 'fits in them'. He also wrote his name down the egg because he likes it but also because he saw it done on one decorated egg before.
6.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: left white background **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: brown **MODEL** Figurative: tree, flowers, basket, sun	General: Mother and father decorate eggs for Easter, colouring them or working with wax; she doesn't know how to and doesn't help with this task. She goes 'after eggs' on Easter day with her sister. She knows people make eggs for Christ and His Resurrection. Home egg: Made with lines and different colours, just like eggs are decorated at home. Colours at home include black, red, blue, orange, purple, etc. Wanted egg: It is a drawing of a tree, a basket (not on the tree), sun and flowers (including snowdrops). This is how she usually draws and, although her parents don't make these models on eggs, she would draw this on an egg if she could.
7.R.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Blue **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: white **MODEL** Geometric and fig: religious – crosses, also Easter eggs Complex	General: Mother prepares eggs for Easter both coloured and decorated with wax; he doesn't know how to decorate eggs and helps his mother with the colouring. On Easter day he goes 'after eggs' with his mother at family and neighbours and also goes with eggs to the church. Knows red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: Blue because he likes the colour. At home eggs are also red, yellow. Wanted egg: Looks like a type of eggs his mother makes, with traditional motifs. He couldn't explain very well the motifs but knew them from home (even said the red dots look like Easter eggs). Usually decorated eggs at home are blue, black and red but he also used purple here because he wanted to.
8.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: equal proportions **MODEL** Geometric Simple	General: Mother colours and decorates eggs for Easter, using the traditional technique with wax; she has also been working on the egg with wax for three years now. At Easter she knocks eggs with others, goes with eggs to the church and also goes 'after eggs' at her neighbours. She knows the legend of Easter eggs. Home egg: It was made red but monochrome eggs at home, prepared for Easter, can also be blue, yellow or green. Wanted egg: She made a colourful egg, different from what she makes at home with wax. At home she depicts the models mother taught her (the net, the star, etc.) and uses only yellow, red and black. But she also likes eggs with different colours on them, like this one.

9.R.I.M.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: person (mother) red eggs Simple	General: Mother and grandmother colour eggs for Easter; he helps them with the colouring, brings them what they need. He also decorates a few eggs, with markers. At Easter he sometimes goes to the church, knocks eggs, etc. He knows the legend of Easter eggs. Home egg: Red, just like the ones mother makes at home. Wanted egg: He made a red egg with (eleven) other smaller red eggs on it, and in the middle placed his mother. She is there because she 'always helps' him with everything. When he decorates eggs at home he usually draws trees, little eggs and also other family members (mother, father, grandmother, self, etc.).
10.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: flowers and hearts	General: Mother prepares eggs for Easter, both coloured and decorated with wax; she helps with the colouring and also decorates eggs with wax. On Easter she goes to the church and goes 'after eggs' because 'Christ said to respect the tradition and people do this'. She knows that red eggs symbolise the blood of Christ that coloured a basket of eggs brought by Mary to the cross. Home egg: It is red because many at home are, but also blue or green. Wanted egg: It is made with flowers and hearts. When making eggs with wax she doesn't draw like this but depicts traditional motifs, e.g. net or star. But when drawing she likes to make flowers and hearts and this is why she made them.
11.R.I.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 18 colours Dominant: equal proportions **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 11 colours Dominant: equal proportions **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours and decorates eggs for Easter, using the wax technique; she also paints them with a special brush. He doesn't help except for giving her whatever she needs. On Easter day he knocks eggs, goes to the church with eggs and also goes 'after eggs' in the village. The Easter bunny brings him presents. He knows that red has to do with the Resurrection. Home egg: It is very colourful; he started with red on top because this is traditional. Mother sometimes makes such colourful eggs; they are knocked on Easter. The sun is also present here because he 'goes after eggs' during the day. Wanted egg: Similar to the egg from home, it also has many colours.
12.R.I.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: blue **MODEL** Figurative: religious – sun, cross, flowers, eggs basket	General: Mother colours eggs and also decorates them with wax for Easter; he doesn't help much, just with the colouring. On Easter day he goes to church, washes his face with water in which an Easter egg was put and goes 'for eggs' in the village. He knows the legend of the basket of eggs left by Mary beneath the cross and coloured by the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is red because this is how most eggs are but also has some lines and dots (in yellow and blue). His mother makes this kind of eggs at home, also with other background colours but he wanted it to be red just like the blood of Christ. Wanted egg: He wanted to represent the biblical scene of the colouring of eggs so he made a cross, flowers around it and a basket with eggs at the base. He doesn't know if he can make such a drawing on a real egg.

13.R.I.F.		**COLOUR** Monochrome Red **MODEL** No model		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: left white background **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: hearts, flowers, trees	General: Mother and father colour and decorate eggs for Easter, with wax; she also decorates eggs, painting them with watercolour or making them in wax (or both). On Easter day eggs are knocked, she goes to the church and 'after eggs' in the village, also giving eggs to others. She doesn't know why people decorate. Home egg: She made a red egg because monochrome eggs at home are always red or pink. Parents also prepare decorated eggs with wax. Wanted egg: This resembles the decorated eggs she tries to make. After segmenting it, she placed hearts and plants in each sector; similar to eggs she decorates for her parents for Easter day. Usually on eggs she also paints churches.
1.R.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: equal proportions almost **MODEL** Geometric and fig: religious (cross) Simple	General: Mother makes coloured and decorated eggs. He helps his mother with colouring but is not very good at decorating, although he tries with pencils. He sometimes draws eggs on paper and asks his mother to make them for him. For Easter he goes occasionally to the church, still goes 'after eggs' and washes his face 'with' a red egg in the morning. Knows the legend of Easter eggs. Home egg: This resembles the eggs made by his mother (black is less used). Mother also makes monochrome eggs, red mostly, and he helps her. Wanted egg: This looks like the egg he is able to decorate, with less shapes and yet something 'special'. The main colours of traditional decoration are kept.
2.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: Religious The cross		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: Relig. Cross, Bible, candles, flowers	General: Mother colours and decorates eggs, but not with wax. She tries to help her mother but is not very good at decoration, just drawing with the pencil on the egg. Although she doesn't decorate she knows the traditional colours and their meaning. On Easter day she used to go 'after eggs' in the village as a young child and she also goes to church. Knows that red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: Red, with a cross. Mother usually makes this kind of eggs. Wanted egg: It is full of religious symbols she knows and has 'put together' on the egg: the cross, the Bible, candles, flowers. She is proud of her blue cross because it symbolises the 'sky we end up going to'.
3.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric: religious (cross) Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Grandmother colours eggs for Easter; she helps her with colouring but neither of them decorate eggs with wax. She tried but didn't succeed. They buy decorated eggs for Easter. On the day they have the family meal, knock eggs, go to church. She knows that red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: Has many traditional motifs and colour from Ciocăneşti (less black though). She remembers these motifs and has put them together on the egg but she doesn't know their names or meaning (didn't comment on the cross either). Wanted egg: Similar to the 'home egg', this one is also made out of different motifs she has seen. She cannot name or comment on them. First thing she did was to segment the egg in four segments.

4.R.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: flowers Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; he helps her with what is necessary, even puts colour on eggs as told. Nobody in his family decorates with wax; they buy eggs at the local festival. For Easter the family gets together, they eat and knock eggs. He doesn't know why people make red eggs. Home egg: This is a 'profile' view (with the girdle) of an egg he has at home (he has two decorated eggs from two years ago). Eggs made at home are usually red. Wanted egg: Again a traditional design and colours. He saw this kind of model at a decorator and tried to make it here. The flowers represent spring. He drew first the main segmentation lines.
5.R.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: Religious Crosses		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: green **MODEL** Geometric and fig (flowers) Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter but nobody in the family decorates. He doesn't help but tried to paint on the egg once with markers and watercolours. They receive decorated eggs from family or close friends. For Easter he knocks eggs and goes to church. He knows eggs are made to represent Christ's blood. Home egg: Usually eggs at home are monochrome, typically red. He tries at home to make crosses on the egg, like here, because he saw such eggs somewhere. Wanted egg: This egg is made with flowers and lines and is similar to what they make at school (from first grade). He made flowers to be more 'beautiful' and he also likes the colours very much.
6.R.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: black **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: black **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter and also decorates with wax (both techniques), also his sister. He doesn't decorate because it is 'difficult' and only tries to make models with markers. On Easter day he goes to church, on Easter morning he washes his face 'with' a red egg and goes 'for eggs' in the village. He knows red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: It represents a traditional motif. He knows parts of it from his mother because he 'memorised' it for a school contest. Doesn't know to explain the motifs but knows the meaning of colours. Eggs at home are only red. Wanted egg: It is also a traditional egg, with a 'cross' model and other shapes. Colours are traditional. He said he wishes people would make eggs like this one.
7.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: religious – cross	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter but nobody in the family decorates with wax. She tried to colour eggs with markers just once. They buy decorated eggs for the holiday. For Easter the family is reunited and they also go to church. She knows red eggs symbolise the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is similar to traditionally decorated eggs although she does not decorate. It has in the middle shapes that remind of traditional crosses. Wanted egg: It has some elements specific for traditionally decorated eggs, mainly the cross in the middle with flower coming out of it, in a rhombus. She also made stars on the margin, thinking of the 'stars on the night sky'. She wrote 'Christ has Risen' on the egg and she knows people write this sometimes.

8.R.IV.M.		Polychrome 2 colours Dominant: red Geometric Simple		Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: yellow Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter, she used to decorate some with wax but now puts mostly stickers on them. He does not decorate but tries to make models in pencil on the egg. For Easter he knocks eggs with his family, goes to church and goes 'after eggs' in the village. He doesn't know why people make red eggs. Home egg: This looks like an egg he once brought to school. Eggs at home are coloured mostly in red, but also yellow or green. Wanted egg: He likes the egg to have many colours and shapes. This is how he tries to decorate eggs himself. It is also something he learned from a computer game. He likes the model and the colours of this 'wanted egg'.
9.R.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: black **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: flowers Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter, nobody in the family decorates with wax. He tries to help with the colouring and sometimes paints the eggs with markers and watercolours. For Easter he knocks eggs with his family and goes to church. He knows red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: They don't have eggs like this one, only if they buy them. This egg has traditional colours; he knows their meaning but not the meaning of the shapes. Usually the eggs they have at home are red but could also be blue. Wanted egg: He 'reunited' on this egg models and colours he has seen on other eggs, on stickers, etc. and he thinks it looks good. It's an egg he 'imagined'.
10.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 10 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and fig.: religious – cross, also flowers, leaves Simple		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: rabbit and butterfly	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter; nobody in the family decorates with wax. She only tried once to decorate an egg with markers. They buy decorated eggs. On Easter she knocks eggs with others in the family, goes to church, and is now 'too big' to go 'after eggs' in the village. She knows the legend of the eggs. Home egg: It is made somehow similar to a traditional motif with a cross. But it also has other flowers, leaves, and more colours than a traditional egg. She can't 'explain' the motifs. Normally at home they make eggs red and of other colours. Wanted egg: It has a rabbit because of the Easter bunny and also a butterfly and green because of spring. She tried to make something similar on an egg once.
11.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: religious – cross Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 9 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Figurative: Relig. Cross, Bible, candle, flowers, stars	General: Mother colours and also decorates eggs for Easter, using wax. She can't decorate well because her hand is 'shaking too much' so she mostly makes eggs on paper or draws on them with markers. For Easter she goes to church and also goes 'after eggs' in the village. She knows red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: First she segmented the egg. It has a 'flower', a cross and 'Christ has Risen' written on it, like traditional eggs. She knows the motifs and colours made on traditional eggs but cannot explain them. At home eggs are coloured only red. Wanted egg: It is a combination of many things she has seen. It wants to depict the Biblical scene of the crucifixion but she couldn't draw Jesus. She has seen a similar egg but with a monastery and without the cross, candle and Bible.

12.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: flowers Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 8 colours Dominant: brown **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs and also decorates them with wax. She doesn't decorate eggs using wax but tries to make them with markers. For Easter she goes to church and goes 'after eggs' in the village. She doesn't know why red is used so much in decoration. Home egg: It resembles traditional eggs and it also has flowers. Mother usually makes eggs similar to this one. At home they have coloured eggs in different colours such as red, green, yellow, etc. Wanted egg: It again resembles a traditional egg just that this one was 'imagined' by her.
13.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 6 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric and figurative: red egg Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 5 colours Dominant: left white background **MODEL** Geometric and fig.: Easter eggs Complex	General: Mother and grandmother colour eggs at home; mother decorates eggs with wax as well. She also works with wax on the egg. For Easter she goes to church and 'after eggs' in the village. She likes to knock eggs with her family. She doesn't know exactly why people make red eggs. Home egg: It is a model that she tried to make on an egg before. It has many lines and a red egg in the middle because she loves getting red eggs for Easter. At home eggs are coloured in different colours: blue, green, pink, red, yellow, etc. Wanted egg: It is an egg that she would want someone to make for her or make it herself. It is 'beautiful' and it has tiny colourful Easter eggs on it.
14.R.IV.M.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 3 colours Dominant: left white background **MODEL** Geometric Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours Dominant: yellow **MODEL** Geometric and fig: religious Complex	General: Mother colours eggs and grandmother used to decorate eggs with wax. He doesn't help with the colouring nor does he work on the egg. Now they buy decorated eggs. For Easter he goes to church and 'after eggs' in the village. He doesn't know why people make red eggs. Home egg: Similar to an egg he likes (especially the yellow stripes) kept from a previous Easter. At home, eggs are made in different colours: red, blue, etc. Wanted egg: It resembles a traditional egg because of the motif and colours. He saw the cross depicted on eggs at the Easter egg museum. He thought about Christ and this is why he made a cross.
15.R.IV.F.		**COLOUR** Polychrome 4 colours **MODEL** Geometric and figurative (religious) Complex		**COLOUR** Polychrome 7 colours Dominant: red **MODEL** Geometric Complex	General: Mother colours eggs for Easter and an aunt used to decorate eggs. Now nobody decorates in the family and she has never worked on the egg, only paper. They buy decorated eggs for Easter. On Easter day she is happy to be with her family and go to church for the Resurrection service. She used to go in the village 'after eggs'. She knows red symbolises the blood of Christ. Home egg: It is a traditional model that suggests a cross and 'flowers' coming out. It resembles an egg they bought. At home eggs are dyed in different colours. Wanted egg: It resembles a traditional motif she has seen before, reminding of a flower. She likes colourful eggs and varied the colours more on this one. She knows the meaning of some of the motifs (looked them up on the Internet).

Appendix X: Case studies of children's Easter egg decoration

1.U.VII.F

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description: Slightly geometrical design, with lines and dots of different colours: green, red, blue, yellow, also black and white. The shapes were made on a green background.</td><td colspan="2">Intention: She wanted to make a design based on lines because she enjoys drawing like this. Did not think about the meaning of colours, just to be as 'beautiful' as possible.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Decoration stages:</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>1. First curve red lines were made on the green background;</td><td> </td><td>2. In the resulting segments white stripes were added;</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>3. The white stripes were crossed by blue ones, resulting in X or cross-like shapes;</td><td> </td><td>4. Yellow dots were placed in the four segments created by red and blue lines;</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>5. Smaller red lines were made on the white ones;</td><td> </td><td>6. Finally, smaller black lines were made over the blue ones.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Difficulties: She found it difficult to paint on previous colours, because you need to be patient and let them dry perfectly before working further.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Background: She doesn't normally work on eggs at home, not even when she was younger. She only paints eggs at school occasionally, before Easter. At home her grandmother prepares the eggs, usually the day before Easter. The eggs are monochrome and sometimes they put stickers on eggs as a form of decoration. Eggs are used by the family or given to friends and neighbours.</td></tr>
</table>

2.U.VII.F

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description: The egg has geometrical shapes and figurative elements: zigzag lines, curved lines, dots. Little flowers made on top and the bottom parts of the egg were coloured red. All shapes were made on a purple background.</td><td colspan="2">Intention: She likes the zigzag line segmenting the egg; has seen similar ornaments but this one was created by her. She chose to put green and white on purple rather than yellow to reduce the contrast. She made the little yellow flowers because something needed to 'fill up' the space and anything else would have been too much.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Decoration stages:</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>1. First a green zigzag line was made on the middle;</td><td> </td><td>2. Red dots were added on one side of the zigzag line;</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>3. From the top of the egg white curvy lines were depicted, going down towards the zigzag line;</td><td> </td><td>4. Little yellow stars were made in the spaces between white lines;</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>5. Too much water makes colours blend; a tissue was used to dry the segment;</td><td> </td><td>6. Finally, white lines were made from the bottom as well; the bottom part was coloured red.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Difficulties: The main difficulty was that she used too much water at some point and a yellow flower 'fused' with the green zigzag line. This problem was solved with the help of a tissue.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Background: Usually she doesn't decorate eggs at home; at most she puts stickers on them and likes this task. At school she decorates eggs before Easter in art classes. At home mother prepares eggs for Easter. Eggs are knocked with family members, friends and neighbours.</td></tr>
</table>

3.U.VII.F

<table>
<tr><td>Description: Egg with geometric motifs resembling traditional wax decoration. Several elements are depicted on the egg, most notably the symbol of the cross (made in a symmetrical way on both sides). A figurative element is the flower (made from the beginning). Colours: blue, green, yellow, purple, also white. All shapes were depicted on an orange background.</td><td>Intention: She wanted to draw a model with a cross because it symbolises Easter. Didn't think of a particular model while making the egg, just made more shapes as she went along. She wanted the egg to look 'beautiful'. The flower and the lines were made because they contribute to this general effect.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decoration stages:</td></tr>
<tr><td> 1. A flower was depicted first on the top part;</td><td> 2. From the green stem of the flower (upper part) a design with blue and purple lines and white shapes was created;</td></tr>
<tr><td> 3. A yellow cross was made, ornate with crisscross lines;</td><td> 4. Red dots were added on the cross and then red stripes coming out of the inner corners;</td></tr>
<tr><td> 5. The cross was continued with a design of blue and purple lines, green dots and yellow shapes (little stars);</td><td> 6. Finally, on the other side of the egg, a cross similar to the first one was made (yellow with red dots and lines).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Difficulties: The lines were not difficult to make but the red dots on the cross were harder to depict because she didn't want them to 'touch' the yellow colour of the cross.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Background: She used to paint on eggs at home when she was younger but now doesn't have time anymore. Mother prepares the eggs and she helps her (drying them, oiling them to make them shine more, etc.). Eggs are made for Easter and used by the family and also given for charity.</td></tr>
</table>

4.U.VII.M

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description: Slightly geometrical design, with curvy green, yellow and red lines. Lines cross the egg both vertically and horizontally. All shapes were made on a blue background.</td><td colspan="2">Intention: He thinks he was inspired by dragon images (from cartoons). He had the idea ‘on the spot’ but considers this to be ‘a very simple model’. He wanted to combine different colours in the best way possible.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Decoration stages:</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>1. First drawing a horizontal curvy green line;</td><td> </td><td>2. The green line (continued);</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>3. Second a horizontal curvy yellow line was made;</td><td> </td><td>4. The yellow line (continued);</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>5. Finally, a vertical curvy red line was made;</td><td> </td><td>6. The red line (continued).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Difficulties: The most difficult part was when colours ‘crossed’ each other. Putting yellow over blue risks becoming green in the end. As a solution, he used very little water and more yellow pigment.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Background: Mother and grandmother prepare eggs for Easter. He used to paint on them when he was younger, usually three or four eggs and normally with geometric shapes or with stickers. Easter eggs are used by the family or given for charity.</td></tr>
</table>

1.R.VII.F

<table>
<tr><td>Description: Egg worked with wax on white (first stage). Traditional decoration. The side was made with wheat spikelets and the cross depicted as a main motif on both central surfaces (different types of cross). She also worked for her friend (drawing the side model and a star motif).</td><td>Intention: It is the first time she made an egg like this and wanted to combine different models she knew from before (from her family, from summer schools, etc.). She knew the designs but not their exact meaning. She also knew the colours that should be used further on the egg for the chosen motifs.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decoration stages:</td></tr>
<tr><td> 1. First made the main lines with a pencil (she made the model as well in pencil at first);</td><td> 2. Then depicted the lines in wax (simple line). Made the side model with wheat spikelets (on a curvy line);</td></tr>
<tr><td> 3. Filled with wax the side model for her friend (while the friend, in turn, worked on her egg);</td><td> 4. Made a cross motif on one side (previously the cross was depicted in pencil);</td></tr>
<tr><td> 5. Filled with wax the main model for her friend (while the friend was working on her egg);</td><td> 6. Made another cross motif (different than the first one) on the other side of her egg.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Difficulties: What she finds to be most difficult in egg decoration with wax is to make straight lines on the egg, but you succeed if you ‘like’ what you are doing.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Background: She started egg decoration three or four years ago but more ‘seriously’ since last year. At first her mother was also decorating, now less so. She ‘inherited’ from her mother a notebook with traditional motifs and shapes. She would like to continue with egg decoration.</td></tr>
</table>

2.R.VII.F

Description: Egg worked with wax on white (first stage). Traditional decoration. The side model was very simple. The main motifs were a cross and a star (in eight points). She also worked for her friend (drawing the model of the crosses in pencil for her and one of the crosses she depicted on her own egg as well).	***Intention***: She saw the models on her egg at other neighbours who decorate and she remembered them (used as well her 'imagination'). She made these models before (the cross and the star). She also knew the colours she needs to 'put' further on the egg for the chosen motifs.
Decoration stages:	
1. First made the main side lines and the main model in pencil;	2. Started by drawing the main lines (side model) with wax;
3. Made the first model in wax (a traditional cross);	4. After this she drew the same model in pencil for her friend (while her friend, in turn, worked on her egg);
5. Depicted the star motif on her egg (first in pencil); after this she helped her friend by drawing a motif for her;	6. In the end she filled up with wax the side model and then certain segments of the star.
Difficulties: The main difficulty at the beginning was that she could not draw straight lines on the egg but, in time, and after a lot of practice she managed to.	
Background: She has been decorating eggs with wax since third grade (four years ago). Her mother also decorates eggs. Her mother taught her and also gave her copies of her notebooks with models. She would like to continue with egg decoration in the future as well.	

3.U.VII.M

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Description: Egg worked with wax on white (first stage). Traditional decoration. The side model resembles ornaments made on folk shirts. The main motif is traditional as well and was symmetrically made on both sides of the egg.</td><td colspan="2">Intention: He has seen the models he made on the egg depicted by his mother and 'adapted' them. He made these models before on other eggs (for some he knew the meaning as well). He also knew the colours he needs to 'put' further on the egg for the chosen motifs.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Decoration stages:</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>1. First made the main lines (of the side model) with a pencil;</td><td> </td><td>2. Depicted the side model in wax (first the main lines; then double line);</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>2. Made the most important lines of the main motif in pencil and then in wax;</td><td> </td><td>4. Finished the first part of the main motif by filling angles with wax;</td></tr>
<tr><td> </td><td>5. Finished the main motif by making a line with rhombus shapes;</td><td> </td><td>6. Made the same main motif on the other side of the egg (in a symmetrical way).</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Difficulties: It is difficult because you need to be careful not to drop wax on the egg; even if you erase it later on, the colours won't 'catch' properly on that segment. He tried to overcome this difficulty by letting extra wax drip inside the wax can or by placing the chişiță first on his fingernail.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Background: He started egg decoration two years ago 'out of curiosity' and seeing his mother's work. He learned how to decorate, likes it and even took part in the local festival. He would continue egg decoration in the future, depending also on how he organises his time. He combines the motifs he knows in ways that make the egg 'look good'.</td></tr>
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