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## Against the reductionism of creativity



Within the naturalistic paradigm, the Sociology of Culture sees creativity as a phenomenon with different definitions structured by factors such as gender, social class, and the national framework. Sociologically, creativity is an activity that takes place in the social world, far from psychological processes, however, its social legitimation is uneven, especially in the professional sphere. A study by the Department of Sociology of the UAB has reviewed the social conceptions of creativity, demolishing the myths that surround it.

We need space to think, debate, read, and create. Creative cognition is not just a local psychological product but part of a social context. The naturalistic studies on cognition in social and cognitive sciences show this empirically (Bourdieu, 1979; Becker, 2002; Sennett, 2012; Muntanyola-Saura, 2014). We use the term 'naturalist' in the sense found in the philosophical tradition that considers knowledge as a given reality of human and social activity. There are several examples of best-selling neuro-scientists who have addressed the topic, for example Dennett, 1995; Damasio, 1999; Gallese, Keysers and Rizzolatti, 2004. We won't dwell into the studies on psychological abilities, such as attention or perception either facilitating or hindering that 'Eureka Moment'. Instead, we shall deconstruct the following three myths of creativity: (1) the universality of what is considered creativity; (2) the romantic ideal of the creative individual; (3) the reification of creative practice.

Within the naturalistic paradigm, the Sociology of Culture sees creativity as a phenomenon structured by factors such as gender, social class, and the national framework. Sociologically, creativity is an activity that takes place in the social world, far removed from notions such as instinct, motivation, and inspiration, all of which are psychological processes. This is the basis of the sociological perspective and, more specifically, of Social

Constructionism. This discipline has a lot to say on the subject. Hence, the Sociology of Culture plays a major role in the ever-shifting consensus on what constitutes legitimate culture and definitions of creativity. From our standpoint, the term 'legitimacy' refers to those social activities accepted and conveyed by the dominant social institutions, and labelled as normal and desirable (Berger and Luckmann, 1995).

Creativity is not a scarce commodity but rather an inherent feature of social practice in any institutional setting. However, some professional practices are socially legitimized as creative while others not. Creative practice is the legacy of professionals from both the artistic and scientific worlds. We could also talk about associated terms such as innovation and entrepreneurship, which link creativity with technology in the first case and with making money in the second. From a sociological standpoint, this gives scope for exploring the conventions for deciding what constitutes art and culture. Not every creative practice is likely to be considered cultural capital. The body of this paper therefore consists of a bibliographic review that covers pragmatic and integrated models of creativity as a social practice.

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