

## Chapter 1

# Creativity and Entrepreneurship in Latin America: The Time has Come

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### Abstract

Through the metaphor of navigation, we offer the reader a journey that goes from the literature review about the main theories of creativity throughout the last century to the present, to later address it for Latin America, outlining some reflections on its current context, as well as what the future holds. The literature review shows that, unlike the Western Hemisphere, creativity as a line of research in our region has been somewhat neglected, without being given its rightful place, generally very little addressed. Therefore, it is proposed to get back on track, rescuing what has been done and through an exercise of reflection, proposing new lines of research linked to creativity itself, to innovation, and also toward entrepreneurship.

*Keywords:* Creativity; innovation; entrepreneurship; Latin America; ecosystem; national system

We ended up being a laboratory of failed illusions. Our greatest virtue is creativity, and yet we haven't done much more than to live on overheated doctrines and wars of others, heirs of a Christopher Columbus hapless who found us by chance when he was looking for the Indies.<sup>1</sup>

### The Port (About Creativity)

In ancient times, creation was only the power of the divine. Man, at the foot of the Platonic conception, could only imitate the shadows of things and, therefore, creating, as such, was not his competence or concern.

What we did not understand due to its originality, beauty, and inexplicable origins, such as poetry or music, was the consequence of the inspiration of the muses who seized man, possessing him and deceiving him with their songs, like sirens, toward madness and creative delusion. In addition, very contrary to what we assume today, the rest of artists – such as painters – were artificial men destined only to serve, due to their skills, to manufacture and build beautiful things, that is, aesthetically pleasing objects due to their ability to mimic Nature.

From this perspective, it is important to understand that the faculty to create – anthropocentrically speaking – did not even make sense since, only Nature or the Gods were worthy of engendering such unintelligible enterprises, and therefore, creativity per se was inaccessible to us, mortals.

The idea of creating, from which we will start to understand what creativity is today, is a much more current and complicated construct. Although in its origins, as we said, it was linked to the theocratic vision and therefore, to the Christian concept of *creatio ex nihilo*, that is, the creation of the universe by a divine entity from nothing, it was from the twentieth century when we can talk about creativity.

The first intellectuals to promote the concept of creativity between 1930 and 1950 were Robert Crawford, Karl Duncker, Alex Osborn, and William Gordon. However, it is the American psychologist Joy Paul Guilford to whom we owe the popularization of the term and the impetus of its study. His lecture “Creativity” delivered in 1950 in front of the *American Psychological Association (APA)*, marked a decisive watershed in the history of creativity. In it, the theoretical bases of the future studies were established based on the axiom that creativity was not an exclusive characteristic of gifted geniuses or with a high intellectual capacity, but a systemic set of aptitudes immanent to all human beings that, each one, at different levels, we use to express ourselves culturally or solve any activity or problem.

In addition, Guilford was who identification some of the characteristics of creative subjects such as the capacity for synthesis and analysis from divergent thinking, originality, fluency, argumentative capacity, and decisive. In this way, divergent intellectual traits are potentially observable, measurable, and educable to which we should add more contemporary meanings such as those of [Pawlak \(2000\)](#) and [Vecina \(2006\)](#) regarding the possession of a strong personal judgment and the capacity to accept criticism, and on the other hand, the tendency to risk, nonconformity, and independence of judgment, respectively.

Since then, creativity has become an object of study for many areas of knowledge, reaching popularity status decades later, currently being of interest to neuroscience, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, art, and related areas, and later, to those interested in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship.<sup>2</sup> All of them, striving to unravel mysteries regarding the ontology of being and the complexity of the creative subject concerning the mind, thought, intelligence, personality, characterology, in addition to other dimensions of the construct of creativity such as the process of creating a creative environment design. Without leaving aside

the area of education and companies – sometimes in partnership – to deepen the Creativity and improve the instruments for its evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

Making a recount of the contributions of the past and present century, today we could infer that creating implies perpetrating an activity conceived from the free subject who make original results (Arieti, 1976; Frondizi, 1977), new (Romo, 2006) and useful (Sternberg & Lubart, 1997) Creators of products or ideas that allow us to think a new way of restructuring stereotyped situations (Getzels & Jackson, 1962) and generate new variants of available knowledge (Koestler, 1964; Stein, 1953).<sup>4</sup> What we usually consider creative usually responds to ideas or products derived from associative processes in which the subject processes the available knowledge in different ways. Either, generating unusual relationships between distant and previously disconnected semantic nuclei (Mednick, 1962; Mednick et al., 1964; Osborn, 1953; Parnes, 1962; Thurstone, 1952), reasoning fluently in an analogical way, solving problems through divergent or lateral thinking (De Bono, 1967, 1999), or simply giving unusual uses to common objects.

In turn, creativity has been defined as the result of applied imagination (Ribot & González Serrano, 1901), a specific nonstatic capacity of the human mind (Gardner, 1983, 1995, 2001) capable of handling different types of intelligence (Guilford, 1950, 1967), and solve problems. In short, a concept that great authors have been defining as an aptitude for knowing how to give operational form to certain problems (De Bono, 1999; Torrance, 1998) or as knowing how to decide and invest (Sternberg, 1990); while in parallel, others point out that we must also understand creativity as a vital attitudinal potential for the man (Maslow, 1994; Rogers, 1972) since creating, supposes, reaching the highest degree of self-realization (which can be linked to that outcome of entrepreneurship) or self-update and therefore a peak experience (Maslow, 1943):<sup>5</sup>

For them to bear their best results, all peak experiences must be understood as culminations of acts [...] or as the recollection of Gestalt psychologists, or according to Reich's paradigm of the complete orgasm, or as a total discharge, a catharsis, a culmination, a climax, a consummation, an emptying or a conclusion (Maslow, 1968, p. 111). Two years later, he would add that a peak experience is similar to "the perception of infinite horizons opening to vision, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and weaker than one has ever been before, a feeling of ecstasy, magic and reverence, the loss of location in the temporal and spatial dimensions.

(Maslow, 1970, p. 164)

Now, beyond the creativity centered on the individual in the hands of Humanist Psychology with Maslow or Rogers at the head front, another compendium of authors inferred how determining is, for our creative psyche, the environment, the environments, and other socio-historical factors.<sup>6</sup> Cuban-born Albertina Mitjans (1991) reminds us that "creativity cannot be explained solely in

terms of cognitive operations” (p. 120). As bodies located in a time and space that we are, since the mid-eighties and especially since the 1990s, creativity has been studied with a much more integrative approach where not only are the personality, cognitive, affective, and motivational factors of the subjects considered relevant but also the social and contextual ones.

Thus, in addition to [Mitjás \(1991\)](#), it should be added other authors who, such as Mihály [Csíkszentmihályi \(1988, 1998\)](#), [Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart \(1997, 1999\)](#) or [Amabile \(1996\)](#), conceive creativity as a phenomenon that integrates both individuality and socialization of creative processes in a specific context. A current, although not emerging, perspective that helps us better understand the complexity of the scope of creativity as a systemic model.

On the edge of these ideas, Csíkszentmihályi published his systems model for creativity in 1988. A theory that would close with a flourish with his famous work *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention* (1998) in which we can see how the author articulates that creativity is a motor system of cultural evolution in which the interaction of the creative individual, the cultural domain or context, and the field of professionals, experts or competent personalities that will give viability and recognition to what is produced by the subject. [Csíkszentmihályi \(1998, ed. 2015\)](#) said:

There is no way to know if a thought is new if it is not by reference to some criteria, and there is no way to tell if it is valuable until it passes the social evaluation. Therefore, creativity does not occur within people’s heads, but in the interaction between a person’s thoughts and a sociocultural context. It is a systemic phenomenon, rather than an individual one (p. 41). Later he adds: (...) Creativity can only be observed in the interactions of a system made up of three main parts. The first of these is the *field*, which consists of a series of symbolic rules and procedures. Mathematics is a field (...) In turn, the fields are located in what we usually call culture, or symbolic knowledge shared by a particular society, or by humanity as a whole. The second component of creativity is the *domain*, which includes all individuals who act as guardians of the gates that give access to the field. Your job is to decide whether a new idea or product should be included in the field. (...) Finally, the third component of the creative system is the *person*. Creativity takes place when a person, using the symbols of a given domain, such as music, engineering, business, or mathematics, has a new idea or sees a new layout, and when this novelty is selected by the corresponding domain to be included in the appropriate field. (...) Thus, the definition that follows from this perspective is: creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing field, or that transforms an existing field into a new one. And the definition of a creative person is someone whose thoughts and actions change a field or establish a new field.

(pp. 46–47)

To this end, Csíkszentmihályi incurred the need to rethink what we consider characteristic of creative subjects, to include – from this more kaleidoscopic systemic view – the importance of being able to preview the permanent mutability and changing the speed of those domains and areas at the same time, the effect that these have directly on our creative processes.

The Piaget's legacy about how knowledge is generated and structured, the general theory of Bertalanffy systems, the paradigm of the complexity of Morin (1998) and the international spread of the transdisciplinary vision, are some of the architectural pillars of creativity studies today. Epistemological pillars supported by concepts such as: the multidimensionality of problems, the polycasuality of phenomena, the holographic paradigm (Mínguez, 2011), and other concepts related to chaos theory, chance, the dialectic of order/disorder, the properties of systems such as the resilience and self-organization (autopoiesis) (Garcia, 2006) and a long etcetera.

From this point of view, we could name the Spanish Saturnino de la Torre, with his idea of paradoxical creativity (2003) in which, for the first time, it is taken into consideration that some of the most valuable products or creative ideas for humanity were not born precisely from a conscious creative process and in favorable contexts if not by chance, or through the power of resilience to “transform adversity into creativity” (2006, p. 157). De la Torre (2006) explains it as follows:

Creativity has been understood throughout the 20th century as a good, a quality, emotional and cognitive. Creativity, as the exuberant face of the human being, increases in states of well-being, balance, of favorable conditions. (...) Now, if this were so, how then to explain the works, discoveries, inventions, and creative contributions that arose in conditions of loss of freedom, in emotionally regrettable states, in adverse conditions, or as a consequence of errors and failures? How to explain the creativity that sometimes arises after a disaster, a serious illness, a traumatic separation, unemployment, or retirement? (p. 158). (...) This type of event and all those that are rooted in mistakes, chance, adversity, and irreparable losses, is what I call paradoxical creativity or creative adversity. Paradoxical, because precisely that transforming energy that exists in each one of us does not arise from abundance, but from adversity. (...) Thus, Paradoxical creativity is the human potential to transform and transform in the face of adversity or deficiency states. It is accompanied by the awareness of the situation, emotional energy, and an overcoming attitude.

(pp. 160–161)

Currently, the contributions of the Cuban-Brazilian psychologist Albertina Mitjás Martínez and the Brazilian Maria Candida Moraes are also noteworthy. [Mitjás \(2006\)](#) argues that “Creativity, as one of how the human is expressed, maintains with other processes relationships of articulation, interpenetration, interdependence, and unity without which it cannot be understood, and for which, more general conceptions and theories are necessary” (p. 116) such as those of complexity. Therefore, the author defines it as:

(...) A complex process of human subjectivity in its simultaneous condition of individual and social subjectivity. (...) But beware, as the author puts it, considering creativity as a complex process of human subjectivity implies recognizing its singular, recursive, contradictory and inclusive nature that is unpredictable, which is in contradiction with still deeply rooted beliefs such as, for example, the fact that there is a profile of creative individuals or that there are quite universally barriers to creativity.

(pp. 118–119)

In short, a vision that is related to the idea of paradoxical creativity of which we spoke in earlier lines and that, come to blur the path traced by some of the researchers of the last century. Especially in the field of psychology and education; the latter, an area in which the author has also incurred, in the need to promote a transpersonal awareness ([De la Torre & Moraes, 2006](#)). A form of awareness that is aware of the problems that concern us today in tune with nature, highly involved with achieving the common good at the ecosystem level.

Finally, we will close this brief overview about creativity with [Moraes \(2006\)](#), who has joined the diatribe of opening the studies of creativity transgressing any anthropocentric conception to argue that nature should also be considered in itself, a creative entity by how it self-organizes, self-regulates, and evolves. [Moraes \(2006\)](#) asks:

Is nature creative or is creativity just a capacity intrinsic to human nature? Could it be that there is a creative intelligence responsible for the evolution of life? Is not creativity a capacity to give rise to new forms, to new wholes, a property present like both an amoeba and that of a human being? (...).

(p. 102)

Her questions give us a glimpse of some of her sources of inspiration openly declared by the same author, such as the theories of the physicists Ilya Prigogine, David Bohm, Gerd Ginning, and those of the biochemist Rupert Sheldrake. Especially when [Bohm \(2009\)](#) spins the concept of structure – which we could define as a hierarchical system based on a certain order – to any energy system in motion. Thus, from the micro to the macro, each atom, cell, multicellular organism, planet, star, or galaxy constitutes a particular way of ordering and articulating the elements that compose them. Hence, Moraes’ conception of

creativity, in conjunction with Bohm's thought, points out that nature "is a creative process, where not only new structures are always emerging, but new orders of the structure are always emerging" (Bohm, 2009, p. 42). Axiom from which we should ask ourselves, in analogy with natural processes, what can we learn from nature? Toward what new order should we head?

### The Storm (Studies of Creativity in Latin America)

It has already been commented on the works of Mauro Rodríguez (1995), Albertina Mitjans (1991, 2006), Moraes (2006), and the little interest that creativity has generated until today in Latin America, especially from the administration and economy. Castillo-Vergara, Alvarez-Marin, and Placencio-Hidalgo (2018) carried out a bibliometric study based on the Web of Science's SCI-Expanded by Thomson Reuters, precisely to approach this issue. In it, *not a single one belonging or related to our region appears*. Thus, most of the literature on the subject has approached creativity from the arts, overlooking its castling toward entrepreneurship.

The anthology compiled by Bartra (2004), ten works on seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that address the study of visual popular art focused on indigenous and mestizo women, tried to understand how their feminine identity is interwoven and how their culture is built. It has also been approached from experiences in education, where Martínez-Llantada (2014) presents an account of the experiences in the application of problem teaching as a way to achieve creative learning in postgraduate education, its practical application in Cuba and Latin America, or Rodríguez (2016) when she proposed an instrument for measuring creativity in undergraduate students in Graphic Design, where divergent and convergent thinking (Cruz, 2005) is desirable to exist.

The efforts made by various institutions are notable, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, which has carried out various awareness-raising exercises in the region on the importance and impact of the creative economy or also called the "orange economy," financing project, an opportunity for development, that pointed out Latin America and the Caribbean cannot afford to lose (Rodríguez, 2018), and where they have also mentioned some key points of this exploration on the economic contribution of creativity.

But we must go further. To be able to potentiate creativity, it is necessary to find a link between it and innovation (like the work from Puente-Díaz, see Brem, Puente-Díaz, & Agogué, 2018) and, therefore, with entrepreneurship. It is a virtuous historical circle that we must recover. With this in mind, Montiel (2018) proposed that the link between knowledge-creativity-innovation-entrepreneurship is well established, but it is still having a gap related to national innovation systems (NIS) to support the flow of information and technology among people, organizations, and institutions since it is key to the process of the latter. Understanding the linkages among the actors involved in innovation is relevant to NIS. Creativity is supposed to fuel NIS, mainly focusing on a personal, group, or

organizational level, leaving aside a fourth one, the former, just as innovation is, as a national system.

It's suggested that NIS takes Creativity for granted, an ex-ante stage already solved through some mechanisms, like programs for nurturing it at elementary and secondary schools, universities, incubators, or public/organizational specific programs. Or worse, that the individual already has this competence, and that the elements of the NIS will communicate in a way that will lead to an impact on national systems/programs on entrepreneurship, clusters, and the economy. But creativity constantly appears at any time during NIS, being the key input. And until now, it is absent explicitly into these models.

So, under an initial, exploratory, focused, and refined literature review, a National Creativity System (NCS) theoretical model was proposed, a groundbreaking proposal from Latin America to the global creativity literature. It suggested that its implementation could become a significant factor helping to strengthen local, regional, and national economies.

The establishment of a NCS, something not previously addressed, as a strategic/vital companion for a NIS (and for National Entrepreneurship Systems), installing it not only as a national education strategy but as its foundation, managing it and measuring its impact on NIS, entrepreneurship and the rest of the ecosystem, could make more effective public policies. Likewise, should have a beneficial impact on the efforts of all the stakeholders involved, and should help prevent some of the possible failures that NIS presents.

## **The Lighthouse (and the road ahead of us)**

Adversity is an ontological indicator of indeterminacy and creativity, a trigger for higher consciousness.

(De la Torre, 2006, p. 158)

Should the lack of literature on creativity in our region published in English be seen as an obstacle or the result of structural failures? It is a huge opportunity, not only to validate the present global literature but to enrich it, with its theory according to our reality (economical, cultural, and social). It is the lighthouse that, as professionals, students, and academics, we must build.

Recently, a call was made (Montiel, 2021) to rethink our positions as researchers and be more creative, take risks, and conform to a new Latin American school of taught in areas related to economic management. Even more, under this post-COVID-19 momentum, we are living, which brings so many obstacles as well as opportunities. The pandemic has a political dimension. It is not about innovating to compete, it is about poeticizing life, generating a new order, prioritizing ecosystem harmony over our interests to achieve a real impact based on ethics, empathy, on the human, and on the biological.

Latin America has a lot to explore in this regard. It is no longer just about surviving a triggered situation but about coping and generating adaptive

implications that think about the future. It is not necessary to create more things that generate future problems (such as gasoline cars) but rather self-sustaining solutions. It is not a question of resisting but of acting and transforming the future, of being agents of substantial change.

With this in mind, emergent topics were what conform to the design of the Handbook, in this section 1, as well as in the others, 2 and 3. These topics reflect the latinoamerican historical context which is looking for the promotion of creativity into entrepreneurship processes, the institutional transformation of intellectual property, the search of the golden thread of the creative economy in Latin America and in addition, the develop in our organizational processes, including media labs to catalyze innovation within them.

Latin American economies, and especially those generating higher income, need to continuously promote actions for innovation and entrepreneurship. It is imperative to understand Latin American ecosystems, analyzing their scope from companies, economic agents, public and educational institutions to strengthen competencies, skills, and decision-making in favor of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs. It is urgent to understand the different forms of evolution of economies and the innovation processes, entrepreneurship, and business development. In addition to the cultural development, and the regulatory frameworks that encourage public policies. All of them are an opportunity to redirect growth paths in each country, sector, and region.

In different countries, there is interest in seeking a balance between companies, institutions, and educational centers. The regions and various intermediate bodies desperately seek contexts of virtuous relationships between the safeguarding of heritage, development projects, and the well-being of people. Creativity must lead to a balance between progress and development, as well as to the sustainability of both economic and business environments as well as natural and human resources. Imagining a circular and regenerative economy necessarily requires creativity. Culture and, therefore, creative entrepreneurship are intangible assets that can be encouraged through clear and systematic management processes.

Humans are *transforming beings* endowed with a particular way of creating other worlds possible, thanks to *Janic thought*. That type of thinking allows us to make decisions by making use of the specular wisdom that opposes, at the same time that it complements, the burden of our past and the designs of a possible future.

As we can see, creativity does not emerge without more as an “expressive behavior” or a desire for “self-duplication” or self-preservation as advertised in the 1970s (Oerter, 1971/1975, p. 397). Today, it is the day that we believe we can glimpse that the fundamental explanatory principle of creativity surpasses the will of the individual and their intrapersonal motivations to give way to a will for global change, a transpersonal awareness of which we must be aware and consistent for the good of the entire ecosystem of which we are part.

At the end of this text, it only remains for us to decide how to continue overcoming the circumstances that are imposed on us, whether to remain stagnant offering short-term solutions as we have been doing until now, or whether to move like water (Bauman, 2001), unstoppable, adapting, and moving forward to chart our trajectory.

This section, and the Handbook, seeks to contribute to highlighting such needs, without ignoring the path traveled. Our cultural heritage, from the Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas, all the way through this present moment in history, has shown that our region has enormous potential. Creativity has always been what has potentialized the human spirit. It has always been there. Let's recapture it. Let's reinvent our region.

## Notes

1. Gabriel García Márquez, "Illusions for the 21st century," Speech delivered on March 8, 1999 at the opening session of the Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean facing the new millennium, in Paris.
2. Let's make a reference that it would not be until September 1961 when the first formal definition of the term appears in *Webster's Third International Dictionary* (Kristeller, 1983), while in Spanish we would have to wait until in 1984, where the Real Academia de la Lengua (RAE) will delimit it to the double conjunction: "power to create" or "ability to create." Definitions that have not changed to this day.
3. In an interview with the Spanish Saturnino de la Torre, the author noted: "Creática understood as systematization and hierarchization of stimuli to creativity, such as models (explanatory and applicative), systems, procedures, processes, techniques and activities, or tasks" (De la Torre in Zwierewicz, 2018, p. 15). A field of work focused on applied creativity in which De la Torre and the Mexican Mauro Rodríguez (1995) have been some of the most influential personalities in recent times.
4. Let us not lose sight of the fact that there is a great difference between discovering or uncovering solutions that were still hidden from our logic, to creating new methods or ways of seeing, relating, mapping, living, understanding, and metaphorically interpreting the world.
5. Maslow (1970) defined self-actualization as "the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities, powers, and so forth" (p. 150).
6. This way of understanding creativity promoted the study of how to design environments as media or spaces that positively channel creativity. A premise that we can easily link with Vigotzkian ideas decades ago.

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