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What can economic coordination do for creativity and well-being?

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The scope of this paper is contributing to unveiling how economic organizing can be more humanistic by delving into ideas of well-being and advancing them through the concepts of creativity. Accordingly, our contribution reflects on how designing and implementing organizations and processes inspired to creativity can ameliorate the life of participants. We therefore analyse issues of economic coordination through fundamental mechanisms elaborated by organizational economists (market exchange, organized hierarchies) and associate them with diverse consequences in terms of creative capacity. Illustrations are taken from the creative sectors. The creativity dimension (as an outcome) assumes especial relevance in our analysis, not only or primarily because of its potential link with competitiveness and economic prosperity (as in the current economic approach to creativity) but mostly because of the connections with the creation of a public good in the form of well-being and value for the public.

KEYWORDS

creativity, fulfilment, hierarchy, inclusive organizing, market exchange, Maslow, Ostrom, public goods

1 | INTRODUCTION

This paper conceptually explores the relationship between resource coordination modalities and creativity. In seminal institutionalist contributions, market exchange and administrative solutions are presented as the two main forms of resource coordination (Coase, 1937). These coordination modalities are combined by institutional choices within economies, territories and organizations and are typically associated with diverse consequences in terms of organizational governance, resource allocation and public good provision (Ostrom, 1990; Pais & Provasi, 2015) or policy (Hodgson, 2017). They have not been considered, however, in relation to people's creativity, which we see as a specific effect of modes of coordinating resources, with individual as well as public features. A focus on the consequences of economic organizing on creativity is desirable not only or primarily because of its potential connection with innovation and economic prosperity

(as in the current economic approach to creativity) but also because of the connection between creativity and people's well-being. Conner et al. (2016) associate everyday creativity with mental health and emotional well-being. Earlier, to Maslow (1963), creativity is conducive to self-actualization. With the work of Smith (1759), Sen (1999), Maslow (1963), Sandel (2005) and more recently happiness economists (Bruni, 2012; Zamagni, 2005) in mind, we use the idea of well-being referring to human flourishing, or that personal fulfilment that is not detached but in fact comprises Smithian sympathy, or sense and sensitivity for others and for motivational diversity. The use of one's own genuine creativity in pursuit of what the person has reason to value for the future (Dewey, 1917; Sen, 1999) requires to detach from mechanical routines and determines a movement towards fulfilment (Maslow, 1963; Neubauer & Martskvishvili, 2018; Sacchetti, 2019), while generating positive effects also collectively, not least because a happier person is a resource also for others but possibly also for the

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likely positive external effects of creative action. By addressing the collective aspects of creativity, this is a study on its political economy, that is on the possibility of creativity to generate positive external effects that have the features of a public good (they are not excludable by the price mechanism, nor rival). We ask what coordination modalities can enhance this public feature of creativity, thus contributing to the still scarce analysis in economics and, organizational economics in particular, of the whole spectrum of human needs beyond self-interest strictly speaking and economic outcomes. Even research in happiness economics is relatively recent (Tella & MacCulloch, 2006) and does not address aspects of creativeness in particular. We consider creativity from these premises, not only with the primary aim of maximizing profits, building competitive advantage and market power, which may lead to a series of market failures at collective level, but also for people's well-being.

While in business literature creativity is often associated with novelty and utility, that is, with processes that bring something new into existence as a solution to a problem that can represent an input to innovation (Amabile, 1988; George, 2007; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2014), *our take on creativity is on the person's positive freedom to act genuinely to create something that is valuable for the future, for any reason* (i.e. it does not have to be necessarily new for the world or for the business) *and detaches action from mechanical and repetitive modalities*.

In business and regional literature, the focus on creativity has been justified by the search for firm innovation and competitiveness (George, 2007), as well as on its potential, through the development of creative industries (Messeni Petruzzelli & Lerro, 2020), to build locational advantages through the presence of a diversified creative class (Florida, 2002), occupational rates (Boschma & Fritsch, 2009; Tiruneh et al., 2021) and regional economic prosperity. More broadly, creativity has been associated with the entrepreneurial function (Scott, 2006), teamwork (Amabile & Pratt, 2016) and their heterogeneity (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2014) and diversified knowledge (Asheim et al., 2011), complemented by supporting institutions and innovation system (Acs, 2000). However, these applications of creativity have raised criticism with respect to their distributional effects, such as the push to capture value in excess of value created (Mazzucato, 2018) or to attract talents and the risk of gentrification (Peck, 2005). With respect to this literature, which usefully talks of creativity within organizations, sectors and regions with respect to innovation and competitiveness, we associate creative action with people's well-being, under the assumption that a focus on competitiveness may not overlap with it.

We ask what coordination mechanisms promote creativity in people and in so doing serve the multiple motives of each and every person, their fulfilment and overall generate positive external effects for society. To reply to this question, we focus on economic institutions, that is we identify the features of coordination mechanisms that may hinder or support creativity. There are also two more specific intents: (1) to identify the limits of markets and public or private hierarchies in promoting creativity; and (2) to explain why some of these limits can be overcome by inclusivity and cooperation. We first address the

specificities of market exchange for a profit in supporting or hindering creativity. Subsequently, we consider organizational solutions prevalently based on exclusive access to strategic control. We then identify what coordinating for creativity might imply and illustrate using the example of Creative Stirling, a community interest company (CIC) in Scotland (UK). Conclusions highlight that too much market or too much authority hinder creativity, and the challenge for organizations and communities is to support multiple interacting coordination solutions, giving space also to inclusive modes of coordination.

2 | MARKET EXCHANGE FOR GAIN AND ITS FAILURES

We focus on economic coordination as one specific context of interaction and ask what may support creativity, as defined above. Market exchange for gain is typically considered as the most efficient coordination solution in the presence of low transaction costs. The market, in principle, is a powerful economizing force because it allows exchange among anonymous actors using the price mechanism. The market—defined as a set of institutions that allow actors to exchange for gain and in the absence of power—is used by individual actors and business organizations with the main aim to profit from economic transacting. Hayek (1944), whose work has appealed to neo-liberal economists and political scientists, observed that within the market, it is possible to reach a 'spontaneous order' that is based on the role of prices as powerful economizing indicators of relevant knowledge in the exchange process and on the feedback provided by disregarded entrepreneurial expectations.¹ When not mediated by price, however, knowledge becomes a source of competitive advantage.

As a possible determinant and an outcome of creativity, knowledge can be exchanged using different modalities, depending on whether it is tacit or codified (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998 for an application to groups; cf. Manfredi Latilla et al., 2018 for an application in the creative industries). It was Michael Polanyi originally who reflected on the nature of knowledge, coming to the conclusion that all knowledge has a tacit component (i.e. subjective, based on experience and only partially codifiable). However, differently from knowledge, creativity cannot be exchanged or codified. What is exchanged or transferred on the market is not creativity, which is a process inherent to human beings but the eventual output of that specific process. Despite the view, which presents 'the creative spontaneity of the market process (Buchanan & Vanberg, 1991, p. 184), we argue that *the market is not creative, but it works as the context where actors use their judgement to exchange resources, including the outputs of creativity*. From a market perspective, such outputs include the skills, knowledge and services that support economic activities, including decision-making and the entrepreneurial function (Kirzner, 1985). They also include the ready-made innovative goods and services that are produced by entrepreneurs (in the early Schumpeter), by teams of salaried workers and managers within bureaucracies (in Schumpeter's later interpretations, see Schumpeter, 1942) or by creative professionals and artists (see Florida, 2002).

Following this perspective, one of the most diffused ideas in strategy and innovation studies is that creativity is functional to the development of a firm's resources, leading to competitive advantage and better financial performance (Bassett-Jones, 2005; Mazzucchelli et al., 2019). As a selection criterion, the market picks some creative processes and outcomes, principally according to the profitability criterion (i.e. Does it create a competitive advantage that can be exploited to the benefits of investors or to accrue market power? Does it sell?). If, on the one hand, the exchange-for-profit rationale may be a motivator to innovate; however, on the other hand, it may represent a constraint that limits the production and commercialization of creative outcomes to what serves investors' interests rather than multiple public interests. Moreover, because relations may be anonymously mediated by price, it may limit creativity when market exchange severely reduces relational intensity with negative implications for the stimuli that creativity can gain from genuine, time-demanding exchange of ideas based on trust and open communication (which was a specific feature of the so-called civil economy introduced by Antonio Genovesi in the 18th Century, cf. Genovesi, 2013).

A first type of failure, therefore, regards the inability of the exchange-for-gain mechanism to promote creative action when this does not overlap with the profit motive or more generally when it does not serve the exclusive interests of one specific group of stakeholders (i.e. the investors). This type of market failure is exemplified by the low-risk rationale of investment returns, which can lead to commercialize poorly creative outcomes. An illustration comes from the film industry, where the artistic component of production is key to define product quality. In parallel, the choice of what to produce has been, in recent years, defined by the maximization of profit through the production and distribution of sequels and films that in general meet commercial taste and that do not necessarily embed high levels of artistic contents. Moreover, differently from past strategies, the surplus generated by commercial production is reinvested in further blockbuster films. This strategy is aimed at maximizing the probability to have high profits for shareholders rather than to cross-fund new productions with high artistic qualities but smaller audiences and revenue streams (Pokorny et al., 2018). A similar logic applies to public broadcasting where market-based reforms influence creativity within the industry (Turner & Lourenço, 2012) as well as in other art-related sectors, such as music, gaming (cf. Dell'Era et al., 2015 for a focus on how the creative industry business is modelled for solving the trade-off between value creation on the one hand and value capture on the other) and to science-based sectors when the choice of what to produce is determined by value appropriation through profit maximization rather than by addressing multiple tastes or needs.²

Market failure may emerge also with respect to the distribution of the benefits derived from creativity. In the music industry, for example, the advent of digitalization has radically changed the industrial structure. Some, like Owsinski (2009), have argued that as a result of digitalization, intermediation has strongly reduced its role and that artists have been re-empowered by means of low production costs and easier access to distribution. In the same vein, Peukert (2019)

argues that digital technological change and automated licencing of outcomes have had the merit of reducing the costs of individual participation to cultural production. Others, on the contrary, stress that the value added—derived from musicians' creativity—can be appropriated by record companies and intermediary organizations that provide audio streaming services at a very low marginal cost (Rogers, 2013), making it difficult for musicians to have a fair financial return on their effort. The outcomes of contractual solutions that coordinate producers (artists) and distributors (streaming companies) do not promote, in this case, 'fair-trade' for musicians, who struggle 'to balance their passion for music with the need to be knowledgeable and vigilant about the financial rewards for their talents' (Rethink Music, 2015, p. 3). Moreover, the market requires quick production processes, thus constraining the production of creative outcomes within given time constraints (Caves, 2000). In this industrial context, property rights are not sufficient to protect artistic creative outcomes. The problem of property rights and contract incompleteness was addressed by Throsby (2001), who considers the output of creativity as a quasi-public good and not fully appropriable, and by Caves (2000), who identifies the conditions that weaken the artists' position in the industry making the combination of property rights, contracts and exchange ineffective to protect their interests.

In particular, this happens in the presence of specific demand and supply side features in creative endeavours: high uncertainty of demand, production of differentiated high-quality goods, artists' marked attitude towards the creativity of the work process and a long-term approach to creation, which also involves high (sunk) costs. The price mechanism failures are emphasized also in Purnomo and Kristiansen (2018). Prices may have little influence on supply if producers (artists) place high value on the artistic content and integrity of their creations. On the other hand, price may fail to capture the consumers' willingness to pay when they attach value to other immaterial elements (such as 'aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical, symbolic and authenticity values', Purnomo and Kristiansen, 2018, p. 3), as well as the time needed to consume a cultural product and experience it (Ateca-Amestoy & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2013), besides economic utility.

Similar considerations could be done in education, where Mass Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are changing the relationship between students and professors, and between professors and their institutions, to the point that the ratio professors/students can decrease massively (Kiryia, 2020). Higher education institutions then become platforms for the distribution of the creative activity of academics, separating course production (where professors play a central role) from their delivery (undertaken through a network of trained tutors), and using a modular approach to learning to sell separate courses and substituting a more holistic approach to education where the outcomes of the educational project are not equivalent to the sum of modular parts. Students' (clients') demand is made dependent on client satisfaction and rankings and so can be academics' salaries (Kiryia, 2020). Moreover, making university lessons reproducible to scale, with zero marginal costs, means that the willingness to pay education fees to access MOOCs will increase earnings for higher education institutions. For van Dijck and Poell (2015), the 'learnification'

approach is functional to market exchange but clearly places in jeopardy the idea of education as a public good, which can be produced only if the producer (the University) accepts the possibility of giving up value extraction and appropriation to inject positive external effects on society and community stakeholders (Sacchetti & Borzaga, 2021). Similar considerations can be applied to the standardization and wide scale distribution of theatre musicals with massive ticket sales and franchising (Kirya, 2020).

In the light of these failures, from a political economy angle, we can conclude that *there is more to creativity than what can be exchanged through the market or justified by the willingness to pay or to produce by the profit motive*. Likewise, there are more needs and values (e.g. preferences for public good production) than what the market can satisfy. The willingness to exchange and to profit are possible drivers, but they are not necessary nor sufficient conditions for generating and acknowledging creativity. Instead, as self-actualizing psychology also underlines (Maslow, 1963), there can be multiple motives beneath creativity, including the individual's necessity to express 'the joy of creating, of getting things done, or simply of exercising one's energy and ingenuity' (Schumpeter, 1912/1934, p. 93, emphasis added). In this sense, the market can fail to reward and support multiple and diverse drivers, thus crowding out motivations and reducing the development of creativity when this is activated by motives other than profit, namely, non-monetary motives (Frey, 1997).

3 | THE EXCLUSIVE POWER TO CONTROL AND CREATIVE FAILURE

Market coordination does not eliminate the power of economic actors to influence other actors' aims and opportunities (Cowling & Sugden, 1998). Markets are populated by hierarchies, where control is exercised prevalently through administrative coordination (Coase, 1937). Hierarchies however extend the exercise of strategic control beyond their legal borders, so markets are, in part, governed by networks of hierarchical relations (Sacchetti & Sugden, 2003). In this sense, market exchange and contractual relations are conditioned by the power differentials of the interacting hierarchies, as studies on the structure of markets and global value chains have repeatedly emphasized, starting from the seminal work by Hymer (1972). According to the author, the issue of concentrated governance (or uneven access to strategic control in production decisions) is paralleled by the uneven distribution of benefits across world regions, which can be tied to income levels, as well as to the degree of status and authority held by the different actors that participate in the value chain. More specifically, this can be directly related to capability development and creative action opportunities (Morrison, 2011; Sacchetti, 2004; Sacchetti & Sugden, 2009).

Within hierarchies where access to strategic decision-making pertains a restricted elite of actors, incentives and performance monitoring are aimed at aligning individual behaviour with the exclusive organizational objectives decided upstream (Cowling & Sugden, 1998;

Sacchetti, 2015; Zeitlin, 1974). Involvement, active participation and therefore the possibility of contributing significantly to the decision-making process through one's own intentionality, intuition, competences and experience tend not to be seen as important factors, given the predominant aim to direct and control.

Between the 50s and 60s of the last century, when hierarchies were expanding in pursuit of standardization and administrative efficiency, scholars started to explore the relation between organizational hierarchy and creativity. Cummings (1965) suggested that several features that are common in exclusive hierarchies are antithetical to creativity: excess of bureaucracy, restrictions on the emergence of diverse opinions and ideas, secrecy of information between units, not allowing to discuss ideas and receive feedback from knowledgeable colleagues outside the organization thus reducing inter-organizational relations and knowledge exchange, routinization aimed at increasing certainty of outcomes, extrinsic reward systems, incentives for conformity. These features of typical hierarchies are functional to increase direction and control, enhancing predictability towards defined aims. They may reduce transaction costs but do not promote the intrinsically driven action that is fundamental for creative action. Moreover, it was clear to Thompson (1965) that exclusive control implies that the controlling elite can place a veto on emerging ideas. In parallel, the same idea of industry and scale calls for standardization and identifies 'one best way' given the technology available to minimize average production costs (as exemplified by musicals or online education). In this case, there is not much flexibility for creativity, as the same creative process is not consistent with one single way of doing things (Cummings, 1965, p. 224). More generally, we hypothesize that creativity may be stifled when private and public organizations adopt exclusive, top-down approaches to the definition of objectives and their implementation; when prevalently using command and control; when lacking recognition of multiple personal drivers to work; or when they impose standardized and uniform solutions to diversified problems by use of authority. In so doing, organizational rules identify an active decision-maker, with creative power, and a relatively passive receiver of decisions, with very limited or no creative power (cf. Sacchetti & Sugden, 2003; Sacchetti & Tortia, 2016).

Moreover, when considering access to firm governance, literature emphasizes that exclusive access implies that non-controlling stakeholders, their interests, ideas and intuitions or spontaneous solutions do not have an influence in the decision-making process (Sacchetti, 2015). We can expect that exclusion from decisions of interest stifles creativity especially in sectors where relevant stakeholders act with different motives and have different needs and knowledge from those of decision-makers. This is likely to happen in sectors that especially feature high levels of experiential and tacit knowledge by users or suppliers (Ostrom, 1990), or again in sectors that require service personalization (as in health, education or social services but not limited to those; Hansmann, 1996; Borzaga & Galera, 2012), or where individuals are mainly driven by intrinsic motives as well as the social, educational or artistic quality of outcomes (Caves, 2000).

4 | COORDINATING FOR CREATIVE CAPACITY

The dilemma we face may now be clearer. On the one hand, organized activities coordinated via command-and-control hierarchies that exclude fail to empower and may generate passive acceptance rather than participation and engagement, thus potentially limiting the creativity and the well-being of individuals. Because exclusively controlled hierarchies are likely to be functional to the pursuit of the interests of the controlling stakeholder, they are also expected to maximize the power to direct and control for the extraction and appropriation of value from society in excess of the value produced (cf. Lazonick & Shin, 2019; Santos, 2012). Hence, we can hypothesize that such hierarchies will promote and use creativity to the extent that it can be conducive to such an outcome. This is expected to increase socio-economic failures at collective level and reduce individual well-being (Sacchetti, 2015).

On the other hand, the conventional alternative to organized hierarchies—market exchange for gain—acknowledges some outcomes of creativity and discourages others, thus potentially failing to activate creativity and its outcomes more widely and to meet diverse interests and tastes. The market, we conclude, is not the bottom-up alternative that best suits the aim of enhancing a fulfilling expression of creativity. Individuals have multiple motivational drivers, and coordination solutions reward them depending on the emphasis they place on each driver. Because the market, when used to maximize an exclusively defined aim (e.g. shareholders' interests), can only offer extrinsic rewards in the form of profit opportunities, we can expect that it will fail to value the outcomes of creativity that do not lead to expected

profits or, in other words, that do not meet what is perceived as the consumer preference—possibly excluding, not rewarding and devaluing genuine creativity.

We can hypothesize that every time specific values or interests prevail over others, the space of opportunities for creativity is reduced (whether the prevailing interest is profit or some other aim). Thus, by considering that market is populated by organized hierarchies, and combining administrative coordination together with market coordination, we can say that it is not market exchange per sé that stifles creativity, but it is its use aimed at the pursuit of exclusively defined goals by the organizations that drive the exchange. Table 1 summarizes our considerations so far and compares the consequences of different ways to use hierarchies and market solutions.

To clarify further, Figure 1 graphically represents the evolution of creativity as the use of market and hierarchical coordination increases, consistent with contributions that have theorized the relation between creativity and constraint (Rosso, 2014). It shows that creativity may benefit from some degree of market competition and hierarchy, but up to a point, which is until the combination of market and hierarchy becomes inconsistent with the expression of peoples' genuine creativity.

Problems arise when people are mainly asked to act in a highly standardized organizational context, to achieve externally defined aims, and when evaluation is attached to idea generation, especially if this evaluation happens within a short time span. The pinnacle of the parabola is the turning point, when hierarchy or market exchange is not the enabling coordination tools but turns into a constraining set of organizational processes and incentives that start to stifle creativity. Differently, an effective combination recognizes participants as active

TABLE 1 Creative failures versus creative capacity.

	Creative failures	Creative capacity
Values and behaviours	Individuals are passive isolated recipients, directed or driven by rent-seeking aims and behaviours.	Cooperation and deliberation, acknowledgement of multiple motives. Rent-seeking may be one possible driver, but it is not necessary nor sufficient condition for generating and acknowledging creativity.
Use of administrative solutions	Administrative solutions are based on command and control, use of authority, routinization, extrinsic rewards, certainty of outcomes, conformity. Exclusive use of decision-making.	Administrative solutions are grounded in cooperation and include relevant stakeholders in decision-making.
Use of the market	Market exchange occurs to maximize exclusively defined aims (e.g. profit).	Market exchange occurs in the context of long-term cooperative relations.
Contextual space	Exclusive and constraining spaces where ideas and solutions are driven by rent-seeking aims or exclusive interests.	Inclusive and creative spaces where multiple interests and motives are acknowledged and enabled by inclusive processes.
Decision-making	Monocentricity or oligocentricity: concentration of the creative function. Solutions are designed by one or few actors.	Polycentricity: cooperation among multiple creative actors drive new ideas and solutions.
Effects	Creative failures: Reliance on pre-defined aims and solutions, despite potential variety. Possible ways forward are left undiscovered and needs unanswered. Caps on creativity and self-actualization.	Creative capacity: Variety and novelty are welcome and supported. Development of ideas and satisfaction of needs across publics. Enhancement of creativity and self-actualization.

Source: The author.

Creativity

our take on creativity is on the person's positive freedom to act genuinely to create something that is valuable for the future, for any reason, and detaches action from mechanical and repetitive modalities.

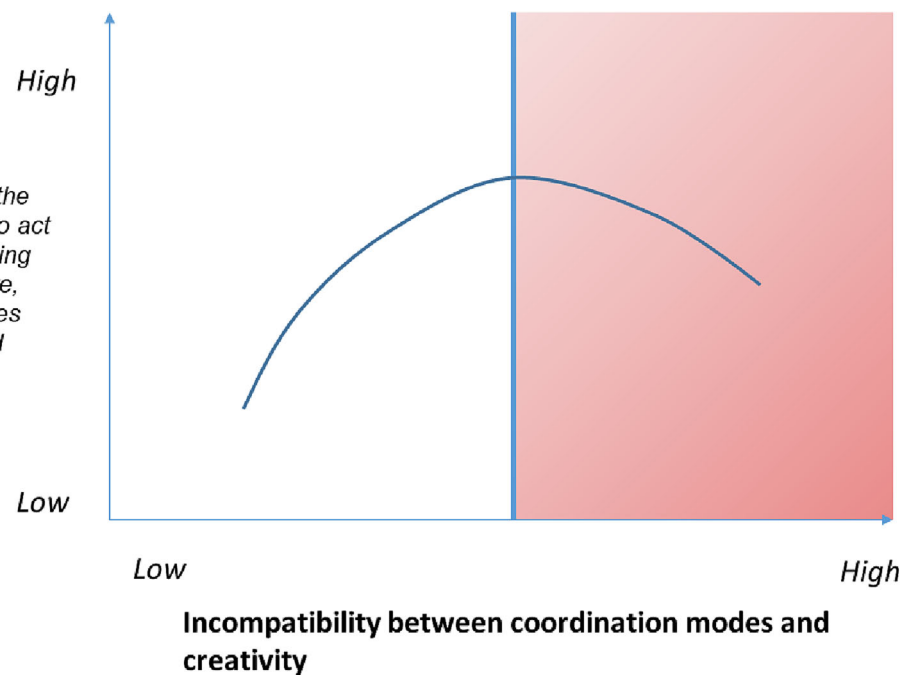


FIGURE 1 The creativity parabola. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

and interconnected actors who can cooperate on the definition and implementation of shared aims, using their creativity. This approach requires essentially a Deweyan attitude, by which—as Barrett (1998), Docherty (2013) and Sacchetti and Sugden (2009) notice—what is fundamental is the creation of *inclusive and creative spaces*. This requires a deep idea of inclusive organizing, where coordination solutions are shaped and shared by participants (Ostrom, 1990). Coordinating for creativity associates intrinsic value to governance rules that enable access to relevant deliberative bodies at strategic and operational levels (Sacchetti & Borzaga, 2021). The inclusion of some does not imply the restriction of opportunities for others or to disregard possible negative effects on other actors (ibid.), rather it implies providing sources of inspiration and full consideration of the ideas proposed by peers and management (Zhang et al., 2019).

A good illustration comes from ‘Creative Stirling’, a CIC based in Scotland working in arts education, which was founded in 2012. In the United Kingdom, the CIC is a specific type of enterprise that conducts activities for the benefit of the community (CIC Regulator, 2016). The organization originated from the founders’ awareness and willingness to mitigate inequality of access to artistic education especially for those living in more economically and socially deprived areas of the town and from local artists’ difficulties in turning their passion into a profession. The basic purpose of Creative Stirling was stated as to ‘connect people and make things happen’, which was implemented by creating a hub that could give space to local artists and their work, while using those spaces to organize arts courses for young people. The hub involved a series of private spaces accessible to the public (such as pubs, cafés, shops and dismissed places not used or underused by the community) that would host ‘pop-up events’. This, in turn, provided the wider community in Stirling with greater access to cultural activities and opportunities. Other events, such as

inaugurations, were invite-only events and worked as network builders for establishing new partnerships and relations. Starting from a close network of ties, mostly related to the founders’ personal connections, Creative Stirling progressively extended their scope, including more actors and variety of skills to produce works of art and to improve art activity and access to culture. The idea of a supporting network was functional also to the economic sustainability of the project, which is—as in most CIC—a critical point. The network served the activation of material and immaterial resources, through participation in public bids and beyond what the local public administration or the largest national schemes could provide. Essentially, the very goal of this organization was to be an active producer of relations and accessible spaces in support of people’s creativity, and it did so by (a) producing creative projects and events for all, (b) regenerating unused town buildings, (c) creating partnerships that stimulate and nurture creative opportunities for their network or for their communities and (d) driving and energizing creative industry support throughout the city and beyond (adapted from Creative Stirling, 2016). The aim of events organized around the town, the courses organized for people and children in deprived areas or the space given to artists to produce and sell their products were meant as potentially significant ways to stimulate creativity as well as opportunities for people to build relations based on free communication and shared values, to improve confidence, to learn skills and imagine possibilities for themselves and their community. In this experience, individuals are supported by an inclusive context, in pursuit of novel ideas that are eventually transformed into works of art, crafts or collective performances and where single initiatives stimulate and feed one another, offering a variety of projects and leadership opportunities. One of the ambitions of Creative Stirling, at that time, was to reach a critical mass of events and partners involved in the city and over time across

neighbouring towns, so as to enlarge the relational space by creating what we could call the city's 'creative atmosphere' (Sacchetti & Sugden, 2009) and to activate interactions and a virtuous and self-reinforcing cycle of creativity in the locality.

5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Differently from contributions that emphasize creativity in terms of its capacity to generate competitiveness and profitability despite problems of value extraction from people and communities, we have understood creativity as a self-fulfilling force that is consistent with well-being, in line with Maslow (1963). A central insight of this contribution is that these outcomes are related to the design of appropriate institutions (Dewey, 1927) and focused in particular on the institutional dimension of economic coordination. Administrative solutions and market exchange can support low or high creativity, generating creative failures or creative capacity, respectively, depending on how they are used by organizations and for what aims. As for Ostrom's commons, creativity can be eroded when an inadequate combination of coordination mechanisms is applied. Different combinations of market exchange for gain and administrative solutions activate multiple outcomes or levels of creativity. They affect the creativity that people infuse in their activities and their desirability. Seen from the perspective of capabilities initiated by Sen (1992), we could say that organizational choices on coordination mechanisms define the freedom that people have to use their creativeness, where they can put in place actions that they have reason to value and are, hence, self-actualizing (Maslow, 1998). This reading of creativity links back to Dewey's teachings, for whom people are active agents who can use their creative intelligence, if enabling institutions and processes are designed with this end in view (Dewey, 1917, 1998). Building on both Dewey's and Sen's work, people are not given the same chance to use their creativity and creative intelligence if:

- a. access to the debate that defines the relevant «spaces» of capabilities is precluded;
- b. once the relevant spaces are defined, people are not treated with fairness or given the same attention.

Standard ways of looking at «spaces» as availability of resources (monetary, infrastructural) do not consider people's actual ability to discover and undertake desired activities (Sen, 1992), which instead for Dewey (1998) depends on people's actual engagement in the deliberative process and in the capacity of the process to reflect the experiential knowledge of people. Hence, when making coordination decisions, a concern with creativity and well-being suggests that organizations support individual freedoms by designing inclusive and creative spaces. It implies:

- a. to acknowledge individuals as active creators and cooperators rather than self-interested competitors. Coordinating for creativity from a self-actualizing perspective considers each participant as an

active centre of creativity who can openly cooperate with others to reconstruct experience and imagine possibilities (Dewey, 1971; Maslow, 1998; Ostrom, 2010; Sacchetti, 2015; Sacchetti et al., 2009; Sen, 1992);

- b. to value multiple relationships that foster the opportunity to experience and learn from different complementary contexts and cooperatively develop activities of interest and reciprocal fulfilment. This is consistent with findings from network studies (Burt, 2007; Sacchetti & Sugden, 2009; Uzzi & Spiro, 2005). Diversity and complementarity are evidenced as relevant for innovation also in team theory (Bilton, 2010; Kirton, 1984).
- c. to recognize diversity of what people value and wish to create and therefore diversify the spaces and opportunities that are available to people to contribute and create (Sen, 1992); this can be done through self-managed project-based teams, but the aim would be different from the current managerial interpretation of organizational teams, which uses project-based teams in order to maximize flexibility and market success according to exclusively defined ends. Rather, project-based teams can be defined by participants to mobilize resources on projects that they have reason to value, including multiple reasons.
- d. to support inclusive governance and processes that support voice and listening, rather than hierarchical control and power concentration in favour of exclusively defined aims and beneficiaries (Hirschman, 1980; Sacchetti & Sugden, 2021). For managers, this implies to allow aims and valued ideas emerge from debates and conversations, where participants are not permanently confined to a specific pre-defined role and repetitive tasks to exploit economies associated with fragmentation and a strictly functional division of labour (Bilton, 2010) but allowed to learn and evolve from experience and cooperative exchanges.
- e. To acknowledge that the development of creativity and well-being requires time (besides space), during which people alternate individual experience and interplay with others (Bouty & Gomez, 2015). The time passing during this process represents a continuous experiential flux and may be different from marketing time or from a public policy time-span. This is consistent with insights from process-oriented scholars such as Bergson (1998), Dewey (2005) and Elias (1978) (cf. Mowles, 2015).
- f. To design forms of monitoring that are not primarily functional to serve exclusively defined aims, but rather functional to appraise whether activities stem from people's creative contribution or if they are the sole result of mechanical repetition of functional roles, actions or exclusive decisions.

Organizing for creativeness means, once resources are available, to make space for people to engage, so that they can discover and refine what they value over time, by means of experience and learning, cooperation, relational variety and participation. In order to stay on the ascending part of the creativity parabola illustrated in Figure 1, a paradigm shift is needed. There is scope for a radical change in the way in which we organize, one that focuses on the inclusive method, or on the creation of space and time in which people and stakeholders

can express their multiple motives and their 'imaginative forecast' through their 'creative intelligence' (Dewey, 1917, pp. 13, 64). In this direction are going modes of organizing that to valorize the experience as well as the creative, motivational and innovative potential of participants. For example: organizations that adopt a dynamic and evolving approach to people's roles in teams, multi-stakeholder governance models (as European social economy organizations attempt to do for example), network approaches that build on informal relations (as Creative Stirling) or, more formally, network contracts (which are used especially to support collaborative innovation projects for reciprocal benefits). Through cooperation, multi-stakeholdership and networking, coordination by means of inclusion is not meant to be limited to the single organization but extends, with a system logic, to the governance of localities (Parrilli & Sacchetti, 2008). In the latter case, the analysis of coordination solutions takes on a systemic standing, by which multiple actors and community constituencies can converge, exchanging experience and creative insights, in the definition of community development objectives involving cultural, social and environmental aspects. This implies that the principles of inclusion are reproduced at different institutional levels, on multiple centres of creativeness, private and public, formally independent but capable of giving voice to the experience and creativeness of participants and acknowledging their interdependencies on the basis of shared freedoms and cooperative values. Examples of this are provided by co-planning and co-production initiatives between public administrations and private non-profit organizations for the production of meritorious services such as cultural and social services (Osborne et al., 2016; Sacchetti & Salvatori, 2023).

Finally, this work presents a conceptual, deductive perspective on the effects of coordination solutions on creative capacity. It is currently supported by cases and field knowledge. In fact, more research is needed to explore, also empirically, the validity of our arguments and the effects of the use of hierarchies and the market on creativity. This is also a topic that calls for interdisciplinary research, because it overlaps with psychology, education and humanistic disciplines, which could be usefully integrated in future research.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The idea of a spontaneous order, which builds on the Scottish Enlightenment, including the works of Ferguson and Smith, considers that knowledge is fragmented and dispersed among actors and that the market provides the most effective way to coordinate such dispersed knowledge. It alludes to the possibility to reduce to the minimum the role of central government direction or to democratize knowledge access and use (Whyte, 2019), as if there are no market failures. This view fails to consider that market exchange is also mediated and orchestrated by private hierarchies, that is by firms (and organizations more generally) that,

in an industrial capitalism setting, can be assumed to be interested in economic power to gain competitive advantage (Sacchetti, 2004).

² Market failure, of course, also applies to sectors that are not considered creative, that is for general low-value, added products that may experience quantity shortages as they are produced only when profit opportunities emerge (i.e. when scale economies are possible and labour costs are low).

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