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A Matter of Taste:
A Deep Dive into Assessing Creativity

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A MATTER OF TASTE: A DEEP DIVE INTO ASSESSING CREATIVITY

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Résumé du mémoire

En 2004, Heston Blumenthal, l'un des plus célèbres chefs britanniques, créa son plat signature « la crème glacée œuf & bacon ». Pour la première fois, une crème glacée avait un parfum salé. Le prestigieux guide Michelin jugea ce plat comme le « plat le plus innovant de l'année ». D'autres critiques du monde de la haute cuisine accusèrent le guide Michelin de « faire beaucoup de tort à l'industrie », argumentant que l'originalité seule ne saurait être qualifiée de créativité.

Cet exemple illustre la difficulté pour un groupe d'experts de parvenir à un consensus sur leur évaluation de la créativité. Cela est dû à la difficulté d'évaluer la créativité (Amabile, 1983; Silva & Oldham, 2012; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003) étant donné que "l'essence même de la créativité est sa nouveauté, et que, par conséquent, il n'existe aucun critère pour la juger" (Rogers, 1995:351). Cependant, dans notre économie de la connaissance où les organisations tirent leur avantage concurrentiel des idées créatives de leurs employés (Alvesson, 1995; Amabile, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Zhou & Shalley, 2008), la bonne évaluation du potentiel créatif de ces idées est une condition nécessaire à leur performance et compétitivité (Amabile, 1996; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; George, 2007; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010). Ainsi, une meilleure compréhension de la phase d'évaluation du processus créatif est de première importance pour les organisations.

Toutefois, en dépit des travaux de référence montrant que la créativité n'est pas la propriété objective d'une idée ou d'un produit, mais plutôt la conséquence d'un jugement social (Csikszentmihályi, 1996, 1999; Kasof, 1995b; Weisberg, 1986), la recherche sur la phase d'évaluation de la créativité est rare (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Rietzschel et al., 2010). Cela tient probablement à la prédominance d'une approche Darwinienne dans la littérature sur la créativité, selon laquelle les idées les plus créatives sont naturellement sélectionnées au fil du

temps (par ex., Simonton, 1999). Cette approche a conduit les chercheurs à se focaliser sur les différents déterminants de phases du processus créatif prétendument plus intéressantes, principalement ceux de la phase de génération d'idées — tel que le modèle interactionniste (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993) — et de la phase d'implémentation des idées — telle que la théorie des quatre facteurs d'un climat d'équipe favorable à l'innovation (West, 1990). Cette approche darwinienne a cependant été récemment remise en cause par des chercheurs qui trouvèrent que les individus ont un biais à l'encontre de la créativité et tendent à rejeter les idées les plus créatives (Mueller, Goncalo, & Kamdar, 2011; Mueller, Melwani, Goncalo, 2011; Silva, Oldham, 2012; Staw, 1995), plutôt que de les sélectionner en vue de leur mise en œuvre. Cette tension a généré un regain d'intérêt dans la phase d'évaluation du processus créatif. Toutefois, ce courant de recherche s'est concentré sur les critères utilisés pour évaluer la créativité (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010) et n'a fourni de résultats concluants ni sur la nature de ces critères d'évaluation (e.g., De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008; Zhou, Wang, Song & Wu, 2016) ni sur leur effet sur la créativité de l'idée sélectionnée en vue de sa mise en pratique (Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010).

Je soutiens que l'étude de l'évaluation de la créativité par le seul examen des critères est insuffisante : il faut prendre en compte le rôle du *processus* d'évaluation. De plus, considérer le rôle du processus d'évaluation peut expliquer les résultats empiriques contradictoires concernant la nature des critères d'évaluation ainsi que leur effet sur la créativité de l'idée sélectionnée. Je m'appuie sur la littérature sur la prise de décision pour expliquer la nécessité de considérer conjointement processus et critères d'évaluation. Cette dernière a, en effet, démontré que processus et critères sont étroitement liés : le processus de décision affecte les critères utilisés qui, à leur tour, influent sur le jugement final (Hsee et al., 1999 ; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Enfin, l'intégration des approches liées au processus et aux critères

d'évaluation permet de répondre à de nombreuses questions sur l'évaluation de la créativité restées sans réponse à ce jour. *Comment* les évaluateurs évaluent-ils la créativité ? *Quels* sont les signaux sur lesquels les évaluateurs se fondent pour évaluer la créativité ? *Comment* le processus d'évaluation impacte-t-il la créativité en équipe ? Cette dissertation cherche à répondre à ces questions en étudiant les caractéristiques, antécédents et effets du processus d'évaluation de la créativité.

Cette thèse est divisée en trois grandes parties, qui sont logiquement et théoriquement interconnectées, comme l'illustre la Figure 1. Dans la première section de cette dissertation, j'étudie l'impact de la culture sur le processus d'évaluation de la créativité, posant la question de la manière dont la créativité est évaluée dans différentes cultures. Alors que les différences culturelles dans la conceptualisation de la créativité (Niu & Kaufman, 2013; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Rudowicz, 2003) ont amené de nombreux chercheurs à considérer que l'évaluation de la créativité ne saurait être comprise sans tenir compte du contexte culturel (Leung & Morris, 2011; Lubart, 2010; Niu & Sternberg, 2006); les chercheurs étudiant la façon dont la culture impacte l'évaluation de la créativité se sont exclusivement concentrés sur les critères d'évaluation (Chiu & Kwan, 2010; Chua et al., 2015; Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016) sans parvenir à un accord définitif sur le rôle de la culture dans le choix de ces critères (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016; Nouri et al., 2008; Paletz & Peng, 2008). En m'appuyant sur la recherche sur les différences interculturelles dans la prise de décision, j'avance qu'une explication possible à cette absence de consensus tient dans le fait que les chercheurs ont omis de considérer la manière dont la culture impacte le déroulement du processus d'évaluation, bien que processus et critères soient aussi déterminants l'un que l'autre dans la formation du jugement de la créativité d'une idée (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003) et bien que le processus de prise de décision soit profondément influencé par le contexte culturel (par ex., Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto, & Park, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Weber & Hsee, 1998, 2000;

Weber & Morris, 2010). L'étude inductive des versions française et américaine de *Top Chef*, un concours destiné aux cuisiniers professionnels, révèle des différences culturelles frappantes à la fois dans les processus d'évaluation et dans la fréquence et la valence des critères. En ce qui concerne le processus d'évaluation, une exigence culturelle de lisibilité du processus créatif est ressortie des données. En termes de critères, j'ai observé des différences culturelles dans la fréquence et la valence des deux dimensions traditionnelles de la créativité que sont la nouveauté et l'utilité. De plus, j'ai été surprise de constater que nouveauté et utilité n'étaient pas les seuls critères utilisés pour évaluer la créativité : la créativité des candidats était également jugée en termes de persistance et de cohérence.

Bien que la recherche ait reconnu qu'en raison de la complexité d'évaluer la créativité, les évaluateurs fondent généralement leur jugement sur des signaux (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Rogers, 1995), les mécanismes par lesquels ces signaux affectent l'évaluation de la créativité restent largement inexplorés. Dans le deuxième chapitre de cette thèse, je tente d'expliquer le mécanisme derrière l'un des prismes par lequel les évaluateurs forment leur jugement concernant la créativité, à savoir le statut du créateur (c.-à-d., son occupation d'une position centrale dans la hiérarchie sociale qui résulte de l'accumulation d'actes de déférence) (Kasof, 1995). Je développe une approche contingente du statut afin d'expliquer les résultats empiriques contradictoires concernant l'impact qu'a le statut du créateur sur l'évaluation de sa créativité par une audience externe (Bothner, Kim & Smith, 2012; Cattani, Ferriani et Allison, 2014; Kovácz & Sharkey, 2014; Philips & Zuckerman, 2001; Philips, Turco & Zuckerman, 2013; Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014; Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011). En particulier, je propose que l'effet du statut du créateur sur l'évaluation de sa créativité diffère en fonction de son identité de spécialiste ou de généraliste (c'est-à-dire l'association du créateur avec un nombre limité (versus multiple) de catégories). Il est pertinent de considérer le rôle de l'identité du créateur dans la relation entre le statut du créateur et l'évaluation de sa créativité, et ce pour deux raisons.

Une première raison est à trouver dans la littérature sur la créativité qui a démontré que les évaluateurs concentrent presque toute leur attention sur le créateur lorsqu'ils évaluent un produit créatif (Runco, 2007), suggérant le rôle essentiel de l'identité du créateur dans l'évaluation de la créativité. Une deuxième raison est fournie par littérature sur l'évaluation qui montre qu'une évaluation est toujours un processus de catégorisation (Lamont, 2012). Ces deux arguments combinés indiquent que la catégorisation de l'identité du créateur, qui renvoie précisément à la définition de l'identité de spécialiste d'un créateur, joue un rôle décisif dans l'évaluation de la créativité. De plus, je soutiens que statut et identité de spécialiste ont des effets complémentaires. En m'appuyant sur les recherches à propos du statut, je définis le statut comme résultant de l'affiliation à d'autres personnes influentes, étant donné qu'il est plus aisé de juger des contacts d'un individu que de ses succès passés (Sauder, Lynn & Podolny, 2012). Il s'ensuit qu'un créateur avec un haut statut bénéficie d'une réputation accrue sans être contraint cognitivement par ses succès passés, mais que le lien entre son statut et sa compétence n'est pas aussi direct que lorsque celui-ci résulte de ses succès passés. Une identité de spécialiste vient établir ce lien en renvoyant à l'audience une perception de compétence plus élevée pour le créateur. J'émets l'hypothèse et obtiens confirmation par une étude empirique longitudinale du contexte de la haute cuisine américaine que le statut du créateur n'est bénéfique à son évaluation de la créativité que lorsque le créateur a une identité de spécialiste.

Enfin, dans la troisième partie de cette thèse, je me focalise sur la créativité en équipe et développe un modèle théorique où le processus d'évaluation explique pourquoi les équipes ne sont pas toujours un terrain propice à la créativité. Alors que le recours des entreprises au travail d'équipe pour favoriser la créativité (Lovelace, Shapiro & Weingart, 2001) a incité les chercheurs à développer la recherche sur la créativité en équipe (par exemple, Gilson & Shalley, 2004), un désaccord persiste quant au fait que les équipes soient plus créatives que les individus (Amabile, 1996; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Drazin, Glynn et Kazanjian, 1999; Miliken &

Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998 Woodman et al., 1993). En particulier, il existe une tension entre la capacité accrue d'une équipe à générer des idées créatives (forte de son exposition à des perspectives diverses) et sa difficulté à les mettre en œuvre. Récemment, la recherche a pointé comme raison possible à cette tension la difficulté des équipes à sélectionner leurs idées les plus créatives en vue de leur implémentation (Rietzschel, Nijstad et Strobe, 2006, 2010; Putman & Paulus, 2009). De ce fait, l'idée implémentée échoue à refléter la richesse des idées générées. Forte de ce raisonnement et de la recherche sur la prise de décision en groupe (pour une synthèse, voir Kerr & Tindale, 2004), je propose de distinguer conceptuellement les différents processus d'évaluation et d'étudier leur impact respectif sur la capacité de l'équipe à sélectionner son idée la plus créative en vue de son application. En particulier, je présente un modèle dans lequel le caractère distinctif des idées générées et la diversité cognitive de l'équipe sont les principaux déterminants du processus d'évaluation utilisé par l'équipe. Je propose donc quatre archétypes de processus d'évaluation en équipe et décris leur impact respectif sur la créativité de l'équipe. Enfin, je soutiens que certaines conditions cognitives, sociales et environnementales amplifient ou réduisent la relation entre processus d'évaluation et créativité de l'équipe.

J'étudie ces problématiques dans deux terrains de recherche liés à l'industrie de la haute cuisine. Dans la première partie de cette thèse, j'étudie la question de la manière dont la créativité est évaluée dans différentes cultures dans un contexte particulièrement adapté à cette question de recherche : *Top Chef*, un concours télévisé destiné aux cuisiniers professionnels dans lequel des chefs relativement peu connus rivalisent les uns avec les autres dans des défis culinaires et sont jugés par un panel de chefs renommés. Répondre à ma question de recherche nécessitait un contexte où l'évaluation de la créativité était omniprésente, essentielle pour l'évalué et directement observable. De plus, les situations d'évaluation se devaient d'être similaires dans tous les pays afin de rendre possible la comparaison interculturelle. *Top Chef* répond à tous ces

critères dans la mesure où l'évaluation de la créativité des candidats est continue, déterminante pour ces candidats et directement observable car filmée.

Afin de tester l'hypothèse de la deuxième partie de cette thèse, j'utilise un terrain de recherche qui incarne les attributs clés de mon cadre théorique : la haute cuisine américaine. Contrairement à la haute cuisine française ou européenne sur lesquelles les recherches existantes se fondent, la cuisine américaine est caractérisée par une absence de codification qui permet la liberté d'action requise par la créativité. De plus, son pluralisme permet aux chefs américains d'explorer un grand nombre de styles de cuisine au cours de leur carrière, l'élément fondateur de l'identité généraliste d'un chef. En outre, la dimension hautement hiérarchique de la haute cuisine permet d'identifier les contributions individuelles (bien qu'exécuté en équipe, seul le chef est responsable de son menu), ce qui en fait un cadre idéal pour explorer la créativité individuelle. J'ai collecté des informations sur les chefs sélectionnés aux James Beard Foundation Awards (JBF Awards) entre 2008 et 2015. En particulier, j'ai recueilli des informations sur le statut et l'identité de chaque chef en termes de variété de styles de cuisine expérimentés au cours de sa carrière.

Cette dissertation contribue de plusieurs façons à la littérature sur la créativité. Tout d'abord, je contribue à une meilleure compréhension de la phase d'évaluation du processus créatif. Ce faisant, je réponds à la volonté d'aborder la créativité comme une séquence multidimensionnelle de comportements (Rietzschel et al., 2009) et de développer la recherche sur la séquence de sélection qui est le « point de départ dans le long processus de mise en pratique des nouvelles idées" (Zhou, Wang, Son & Wu, 2016: 1). Une meilleure compréhension de l'évaluation de la créativité répond donc également à un besoin pratique des organisations : peu importe leur efficacité à générer des idées créatives, si ces idées ne sont pas évaluées comme telles, elles ne pourront être mises en œuvre et ne pourront donc pas assurer l'avantage

concurrentiel de ces organisations dans une économie de la connaissance où la compétitivité repose sur la créativité (Schulz, 2001).

Deuxièmement, je contribue à la recherche existante sur l'évaluation de la créativité en élaborant les antécédents qui influent sur l'évaluation par un *évaluateur* de la créativité d'un créateur. Malgré les travaux de référence sur la créativité démontrant que seule peut être appelée créative une idée reconnue comme telle par un public d'experts (Amabile, 1983; Csikszentmihályi, 1996, 1999), le peu de recherche étudiant l'évaluation de la créativité s'est concentrée sur l'évaluation par les *créateurs* de leurs propres idées (Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2010). Pourtant, évaluer ses idées et celles des autres sont deux tâches très différentes : lorsqu'une audience externe évalue la créativité, elle n'a pas accès à l'information à disposition des créateurs (tel que le contexte dans lequel l'idée a été générée par exemple), elle s'appuie donc sur des signaux pour former son jugement concernant la créativité des idées du créateur en cours d'évaluation (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). En particulier, les résultats de la deuxième étude empirique montrent que le statut du créateur et son identité de spécialiste influencent conjointement le jugement du public quant à la créativité du créateur. Ce faisant, j'avance une explication aux résultats contradictoires concernant l'impact du statut du créateur sur l'évaluation de sa créativité : les avantages créatifs du statut dépendent de l'identité du créateur (spécialiste versus généraliste). De même, je présente une solution possible au rapport identité-créativité en développant le rôle du statut.

Troisièmement, et cela est lié au point précèdent, je développe les antécédents *contextuels* qui influent sur l'évaluation par un évaluateur de la créativité d'un créateur. En particulier, j'attire l'attention sur le rôle du contexte culturel. En effet, dans notre environnement mondialisé, il est essentiel de comprendre comment la culture affecte l'évaluation de la créativité. Récemment, des chercheurs ont notamment démontré que la distance culturelle du créateur avec son évaluateur était préjudiciable à la reconnaissance de sa créativité (Chua, Roth et Lemoine,

2015), sans toutefois préciser le mécanisme derrière cet effet négatif. J'avance qu'une raison possible à cet effet négatif réside dans les différences culturelles dans la manière d'évaluer la créativité. En effet, les résultats de la première étude empirique montrent qu'évaluateurs français et américains diffèrent dans leurs processus d'évaluation et que les critères utilisés ont une fréquence et une valence différentes en France et aux États-Unis. Ce faisant, je souligne de fortes différences entre deux pays considérés comme culturellement proches. Ces résultats appellent donc à une plus grande prise de conscience du risque d'omettre les différences culturelles pour la créativité et pour son évaluation en particulier. De plus, ces résultats montrent que le contexte culturel affecte conjointement processus et critères d'évaluation. Plus précisément, le contexte culturel impacte le processus d'évaluation qui, à son tour, influe sur les critères utilisés. Par conséquent, je soutiens que l'influence de la culture sur l'évaluation de la créativité ne peut être comprise que par une analyse conjointe du processus et des critères d'évaluation. Ainsi, je développe une raison possible aux incohérences théoriques et empiriques sur le rôle de la culture dans l'élaboration des critères d'évaluation : l'omission de l'impact du contexte culturel sur le processus d'évaluation. Enfin, en révélant que cohérence et persistance sont utilisés comme critères complémentaires à la nouveauté et l'utilité pour évaluer la créativité, je remets en cause l'hypothèse tenue pour acquise que la créativité est le seul produit des dimensions de nouveauté et d'utilité.

Enfin, je contribue à la recherche sur la créativité en équipe. Le modèle théorique développé dans la troisième partie de cette thèse suggère que la difficulté des équipes à sélectionner leurs idées les plus créatives en vue de leur mise en pratique comme explication possible au paradoxe de la créativité en équipe. En effet, alors que le le travail en équipe permet l'exposition à des perspectives diverses et ainsi de stimuler le processus de recombinaison à l'origine de la créativité, les études empiriques existantes tendent à démontrer qu'en pratique les équipes ne sont pas plus créatives que les individus. Mon modèle théorique met l'accent sur les différents

processus d'évaluation et leur impact respectif sur la capacité de l'équipe à sélectionner son idée la plus créative en vue de son application et donc à capitaliser sur la richesse des idées qu'elle génère. Enfin, les managers peuvent aider les équipes à être créatives en adaptant la composition de l'équipe en fonction des conditions cognitives, sociales et environnementales de cette dernière.

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Chapter 1

General Introduction

In 2004, Heston Blumenthal, the most famous British Chef, created the "egg and bacon ice-cream" dish. It was the first time a salty savor was incorporated in an ice cream. The prestigious Michelin Guide judged the dish as the "most innovative dish of the year." Other members of the haute cuisine world argued that the Michelin system was doing "a great disservice to the industry" by hailing Blumenthal as a genius for this recipe, saying that originality alone could not be called creativity.

This example shows how difficult it is for a group of experts to reach a consensus on their creativity assessment. This is because assessing creativity is a daunting task (Amabile, 1983; Silva & Oldham, 2012; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003) given that "the very essence of the creative is its novelty, and hence we have no standard by which to judge it" (Rogers, 1995:351). Yet, the world being fast moving from a production-based economy to a knowledge-based one (Drucker, 1993; Powell & Snellman, 2004), organizations are becoming more knowledge intensive (Alvesson, 1995), suggesting that they depend on the creative ideas from their employees to survive and thrive (Amabile, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Zhou & Shalley, 2008). Therefore, the right assessment of the creative potential of their employees' ideas is critical for organizations' performance and competitiveness (Amabile, 1996; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; George, 2007; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010). Shedding light on the assessment phase of the creative process is thus warranted.

However, despite the presence of some seminal contributions showing that creativity is not an objective property but is rather socially constructed (Csikszentmihályi, 1996, 1999; Kasof, 1995b; Weisberg, 1986), research on the assessment phase of creativity is scarce (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Rietzschel et al., 2010). This is likely the result of the predominance of a Darwinian approach in the creativity literature, where the most creative ideas were thought to be naturally selected over time (e.g., Simonton, 1999). This approach led researchers to focus

on the different determinants of allegedly more interesting phases of the creative process, mainly on the idea generation phase — e.g., the interactionist model (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993) — and the idea implementation phase — e.g., the four-factor theory of team climate for innovation (West, 1990). This Darwinian approach has however recently been challenged by scholars who found that individuals have a bias against creativity and tend to reject the most creative ideas (Mueller, Goncalo, & Kamdar, 2011; Mueller, Melwani, Goncalo, 2011; Silva, Oldham, 2012; Staw, 1995), rather than select them for further implementation. This tension has generated a renewed interest in the assessment phase of the creative process. Yet, this stream of research mostly focused on the criteria used to assess creativity (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010) and has been largely inconclusive on the nature of those assessment criteria (e.g., De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008; Zhou, Wang, Song & Wu, 2016) and their impact on the creativity of the idea selected for further implementation (Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010).

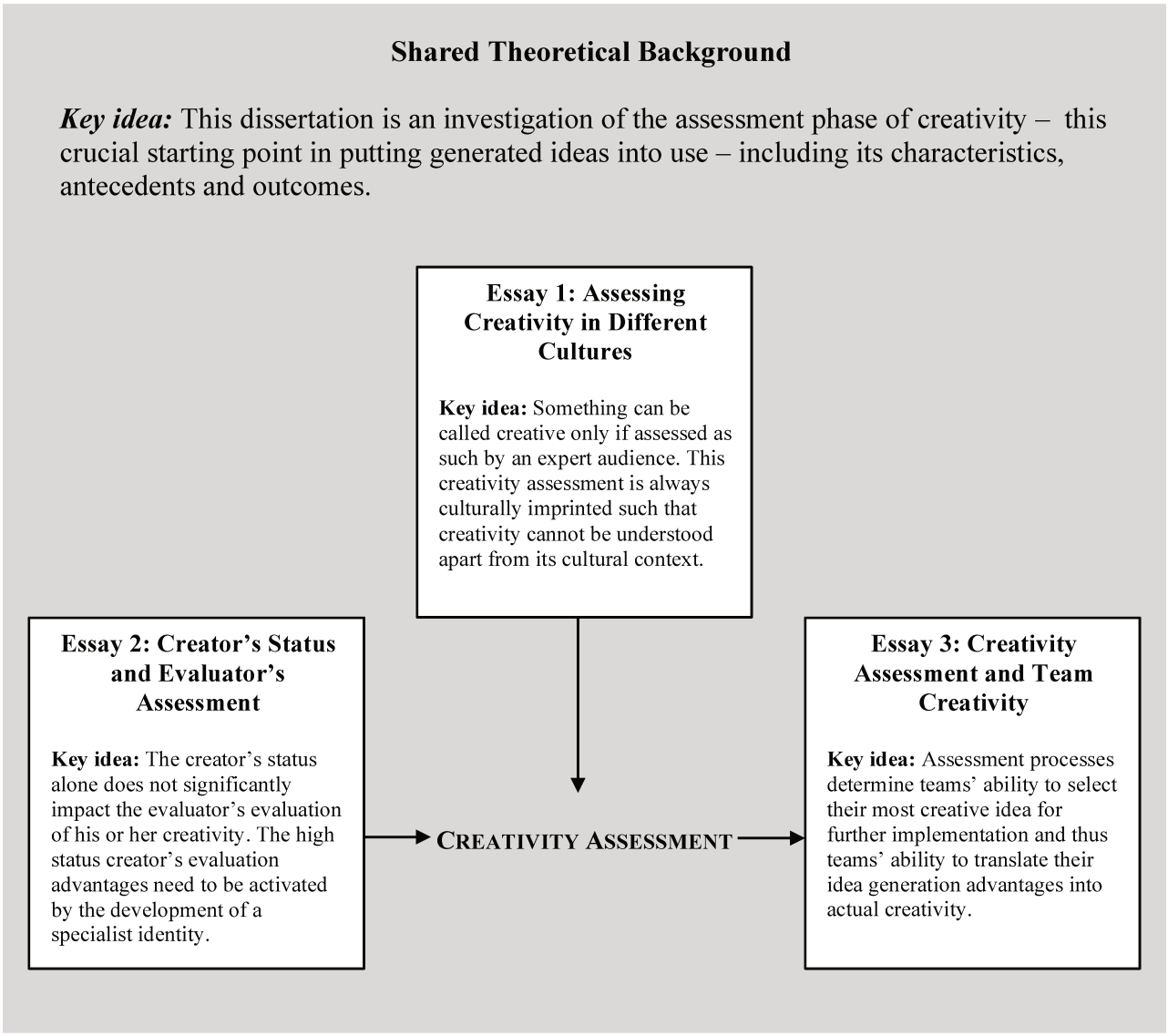
I argue that exploring the assessment phase through the examination of criteria only is not enough to shed light on the mechanism of the assessment phase: one must consider the role of the assessment *process* in determining creativity assessments. I further believe that considering the assessment process can also inform this mixed empirical evidence on the nature and impact of the assessment criteria on the creativity of the selected idea. Considering the process and criteria alike is rooted in the decision making literature which has shown that process and criteria are inextricably linked, with the process of decision-making affecting the criteria used and therefore the resulting judgments (Hsee et al., 1999; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). And by incorporating the process perspective into the assessment of creativity, we gain a better understanding of many unanswered questions on creativity assessment. *How* evaluators assess creativity? *What* are the cues that evaluators rely on to assess creativity? *How* does the

assessment process impact team creativity? The present dissertation seeks to answer these questions by investigating the characteristics, antecedents, and outcomes of the creativity assessment process.

This dissertation is divided into three main parts, which are logically and theoretically interconnected, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the first section of the dissertation, I explore the impact of culture on the creativity assessment process, addressing the question of *how* people in different cultures assess creativity. While the cultural differences in the conceptualization of creativity (Niu & Kaufman, 2013; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Rudowicz, 2003) prompted scholars to argue that creativity assessment cannot be understood without accounting for the cultural context (Leung & Morris, 2011; Lubart, 2010; Niu & Sternberg, 2006); scholars investigating how culture was affecting the assessment of creativity exclusively focused on the assessing criteria (Chiu & Kwan, 2010; Chua et al., 2015; Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016) and never reached a conclusive agreement on the role of culture in shaping assessment criteria (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016; Nouri et al., 2008; Paletz & Peng, 2008). Building on the cross-cultural decision-making literature, I argue that one possible reason is that researchers have neglected how culture can affect the unfolding of the assessment process, despite it being as important as criteria in determining creativity assessment (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003) and decision-making processes being deeply affected by their cultural context (e.g., Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto, & Park, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Weber & Hsee, 1998, 2000; Weber & Morris, 2010). An inductive study of the French and US versions of *Top Chef*, a professional chefs' competition, reveals striking cultural differences both in the moves used at each step of the assessment process and in the frequency and valence of the criteria. In terms of the assessment process, a culturally imprinted requirement of decipherability for the creative process emerged from the data. In terms of criteria, I observed cultural differences in the frequency and valence of the two traditional dimensions of creativity: novelty and

appropriateness. And, I was also surprised to observe that novelty and appropriateness were not the only criteria used to assess creativity: candidates' creativity was also assessed in terms of persistence and coherence.

FIGURE 1
Dissertation Summary



While research has recognized that because of its complexity, evaluators usually rely on cues to assess individual creativity (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Rogers, 1995), the mechanisms through which these cues affect creativity assessments remain largely unexplored. In the second chapter, I attempt to explain the mechanism behind one of the critical lenses through which

evaluators form their judgment concerning the creator's individual creativity, namely the creator's status (i.e., the creator's occupation of a central position in the social hierarchy that results from accumulated acts of deference) (Kasof, 1995). I develop a contingency perspective to inform the mixed empirical evidence regarding the effect of the creator's status on the evaluator's evaluation of his or her creativity (Bothner, Kim & Smith, 2012; Cattani, Ferriani et Allison, 2014; Kovácz & Sharkey, 2014; Philips & Zuckerman, 2001; Philips, Turco & Zuckerman, 2013; Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014; Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011). In particular, I propose the contingent role of a specialist identity (i.e., the creator's association with a limited number of categories). Its relevance comes from the notion that evaluators almost exclusively focus their attention on the creator while assessing creativity (Runco, 2007), suggesting the critical role of the creator's identity in creativity assessments, and from the notion that an evaluation is always a categorizing process (Lamont, 2012). These two arguments combined indicate that the categorization of the creator's identity, which is precisely the definition of a creator's specialist identity, plays a decisive role in creativity assessments. Moreover, I argue for a complementary effect between the creator's status and a special identity. Building on the status literature that suggests that people mostly assign status based on connections to high-status others (given the difficulty to assess past success) (Sauder, Lynn & Podolny, 2012), a high status creator benefits from an enhanced reputation without being constrained by past success but there is no direct link between the creator's status and his competency (in contrast with when status derives from past success). A specialist identity compensates by conveying to the audience a higher competency perception for the creator. I hypothesize and find evidence that the creator's status is only beneficial for his creativity evaluation when he has a specialist identity in a longitudinal study set in the context of the American haute cuisine.

Finally, in the third part of the dissertation, I focus on team creativity and develop a theoretical model where the assessment process provides an explanation as for why teams are

not always the breeding ground for creativity. While companies' growing reliance on teamwork to foster creativity (Lovelace, Shapiro & Weingart, 2001) prompted scholars to increasingly focus on team creativity (e.g., Gilson & Shalley, 2004), there is indeed still disagreement on whether teams are more creative than individuals (Amabile, 1996; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Drazin, Glynn, & Kazanjian, 1999; Miliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998 Woodman et al., 1993). In particular, there is a disparity between the team's increased ability to generate creative ideas (due to its access to diverse perspectives) and its difficulty to implement such ideas. Recently, research started to suggest that one possible reason is that teams poorly perform at idea selection and tend not to recognize their most creative ideas for further implementation (Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Strobe, 2006, 2010; Putman & Paulus, 2009) and therefore the implemented idea poorly reflects the richness of the idea generation. Building on this perspective and on research on group decision-making (for a review, see Kerr & Tindale, 2004), I propose to conceptually distinguish between different team assessment processes and to explore their respective impact on team's ability to select its most creative idea for further implementation. In particular, I present a model in which the distinctiveness of the generated ideas constituting the choice set and the team cognitive diversity are the key drivers of the team assessment process. I hence propose four archetypes of team assessment processes and delineate their respective impact on the creativity of the team outcome as well as the cognitive, social and environmental boundary conditions that enrich or deprive the relationship between the assessment process and the creativity of the team outcome.

I explore these issues in two research settings related to the gastronomy industry. In the first part of the dissertation, I explore the issue of how people assess creativity in different cultures in a setting particularly suited for this research question: *Top Chef,* a reality competition show in which relatively unknown professional chefs compete against each other in culinary challenges, judged by a panel of more renowned chefs. This context is particularly promising

because answering my research question required a context in which creativity assessment was pervasive and where being assessed as creative was critical for the appraisee. Moreover, assessment situations needed to be similar across countries and to ensure transparent observation. *Top Chef* appears to meet all expected requirements as creativity assessments are continuous, profoundly important for the candidates, and transparently observable.

I test the hypothesis from the second part of the dissertation in a setting that embodies key attributes of my theoretical framework: the American haute cuisine. This context is particularly suited because, unlike the French or European gastronomies that extant studies mostly focus on, the American cuisine is characterized by a lack of codification that allows the freedom of action that creativity requires. Its pluralism also allows US chefs to explore a large number of cuisine styles, the essential element of a chef's generalist identity. Moreover, the highly hierarchical structure of the gastronomic field provides the opportunity to isolate individual contributions, making it an ideal setting to explore individual creativity. I collected information on the chefs selected as semifinalists, nominees, and winners by the James Beard Foundation Awards (JBF Awards) between 2008 and 2015. In particular, I collected information on each creator's status and specialist identity in terms of the variety of cuisine styles tackled during their career.

This dissertation contributes to the creativity literature in several ways. First, I develop the understanding of the assessment phase of the creative process. In doing so, it responds to the call to approach creativity as a multidimensional sequence of behaviors (Rietzschel et al., 2009) and to further examine the selection sequence that is the "crucial starting point in the long process of putting new ideas generated into good use" (Zhou, Wang, Son & Wu, 2016:1). A better understanding of creativity assessment is of primary importance for organizations: no matter how good their employees are at generating creative ideas if those ideas fail to be assessed as creative (Schulz, 2001).

Second, I contribute to prior work on creativity assessment by elaborating on the antecedents that affect an *evaluator's* assessment of a creator's creativity. Despite the seminal contributions on creativity showing that something can be called creative only if it is recognized as such by an expert audience (Amabile, 1983; Csikszentmihályi, 1996, 1999), the scant research on creativity assessment focused on the individuals' assessment of their own ideas (Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2010). Yet, assessing one's ideas and others' ideas are very different endeavors: when an external audience assesses creativity, information is scarcer, and the audience tends to rely on cues to assess creativity (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). In particular, findings from the second empirical study stress that the creator's status and his or her specialist identity jointly influence the audience's perception of the creator's creativity. In doing so, I also make sense of the contradictory findings on the impact of the creator's status on the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience: status creative advantages need to be activated by the creation of a specialist identity. Likewise, I also reconcile the existing inconsistencies about the effect of a specialist identity on creativity evaluation by stressing the role of status.

Third, related to the prior point, I elaborate on the *contextual* antecedents that affect an evaluator's assessment of a creator's creativity and in particular on the role of the cultural context. In today's globalized environment, it is of primary importance to understand how culture affects the assessment of creativity. Recently, scholars found the creator's cultural distance with his or her audience to be detrimental to be assessed as creative (Chua, Roth, & Lemoine, 2015), yet without specifying the mechanism underlying this detrimental effect. One possible reason lies in the cultural differences in assessing creativity: the findings from the first empirical study show that French and US evaluators engage in different moves at each step of the assessment process and that the assessment criteria have different frequency and valence across France and US. In doing so, I also highlight striking cultural differences in two countries deemed to be culturally close, showing that culture can generate deep differences in creativity

assessment even in two culturally close countries and calling for a greater awareness of the risk of overlooking cultural differences for creativity and its assessment in particular. Moreover, these findings show that the cultural context jointly impacts the assessment process and criteria, with the cultural context affecting the assessment process which in turn impacts the criteria used. Therefore, I argue that the influence of culture on the assessment of creativity can only be understood by a conjoint analysis of the assessment process and criteria. And doing so, I develop one possible reason to explain the theoretical and empirical inconsistencies about the role of culture in shaping assessment criteria: the overlooked impact of the cultural context on the assessment process. Finally, by revealing coherence and persistence as complementary criteria for assessing creativity, I also call into question a long-held assumption about creativity being the product of the novelty and usefulness dimensions alone.

Finally, I contribute to existing research on team creativity. The theoretical framework in the third part of the dissertation suggests the complexity of the selection phase as a potential explanation as for why teams are not the breeding ground for creativity despite that teamwork increases the access to diverse perspectives and so stimulates the recombination process at the origin of creativity. It introduces an important focus on the different team approaches to creativity assessment and their respective impact on the ability of a team to select their most creative ideas for further implementation and so doing to capitalize on the richness of the perspectives at their disposal. Managers can further help teams to be creative by manipulating the team composition depending on the cognitive, social and environmental conditions.

Chapter 2

Are You a *Top Chef*? Assessing Creativity in Different Cultures

2.1. Introduction

[The] aesthetic activity of the audience involves creation in that we fabricate the greater part of the experience (Nietzsche, 1886, quoted by Jones, 1997)

The word is never an object but is the consciousness of the subject conditioned by culture and history (Heidegger, quoted by Jones, 1997)

In today's globalized environment, employees' creativity has become a key source of competitive advantage across a variety of countries (Chua, Roth, & Lemoine, 2015). As underlined by both Heidegger and Nietzsche, creativity is not an objective property, but is culturally and socially constructed: if a creative idea starts with an individual generating it, its impact on the domain depends on the audience's recognition of its creativity (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihályi, 1988, 1999; George, 2007; Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010). The importance of audience recognition is such that some authors even argue that creativity exists only if an audience recognizes its existence (Kasof, 1995): "it is a mistake to look for genius either in an individual or in an individual's work; rather, genius is a characteristic that society bestows upon an individual in response to his or her work" (Weisberg, 1986: 88).

This audience, as underlined by the Heidegger's quote, is always embedded in a cultural context. As a result, its creativity assessment is likely to be influenced by the cultural context. Following Elsbach and Kramer's (2003) seminal contribution on creativity assessment, scholars have recently started to explore how different cultures might apply different criteria when assessing creativity (e.g., Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016). However, to date, evidence about the role of culture in shaping assessment criteria is mixed, displaying both theoretical and empirical inconsistencies (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016; Nouri et al., 2008; Paletz & Peng, 2008). One possible reason is that scholars have so far focused only on criteria, neglecting how culture can affect the unfolding of the assessment process, despite it being as important as criteria in

determining creativity assessment (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). This has led researchers to identify a need for more theory on how culture shapes creativity assessment (Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Niu & Sternberg, 2001) and challenging extant assumptions about the East-West dichotomy (Weber & Morris, 2010). Despite the relevance of this issue for both theory and practice, we still know little about *how* people in different cultures assess creativity.

To explore these issues, I conducted an inductive, cross-cultural study in a context where creativity assessments are constant and pervasive: professional chefs' competitions. In particular, I focus on *Top Chef,* a reality competition show in which relatively unknown professional chefs compete against each other in culinary challenges, judged by a panel of more renowned chefs. I compared assessment methods and selection procedures of the US and French versions of the show. My study of over 100 evaluation episodes of the two versions of the show reveals striking cultural differences in the moves used at each step of the assessment process. In particular, a culturally imprinted requirement of decipherability for the creative process emerged from my data. Deciphering the creative process was paramount in both cultures, but the timing of decipherability differed significantly. An immediate decipherability based on the cues provided by the final product was required in France. In contrast, US judges did not need an immediate decipherability as long as a clear meaning emerged from the interaction with the candidates. While my focus was on unveiling cultural differences in how judges assess creativity in both cultures, cultural differences in terms of criteria emerged from my data. Consistently with the existing literature on the matter, I observed cultural differences in terms of frequency of the two traditional dimensions of creativity: novelty and appropriateness. However, I further found that these dimensions could even yield mixed effects on the assessment of creativity. Moreover, I was also surprised to observe that novelty and appropriateness were not the only criteria used to assess creativity. Candidates' creativity was also assessed in terms of persistence and coherence.

My emergent model of a culturally imprinted creativity assessment builds theory on culture and creativity. First, my findings reveal that creativity largely depends on the process and criteria used for its assessment, and as such, it cannot be understood apart from its cultural context. Although a limited literature exists on the role of culture in creativity assessment, it provides insights only on the criteria used across cultures while the assessment process is usually thought as culturally stable. My findings show, rather starkly, that the moves of the assessment process vary across cultures. My results further reveal cultural differences in the criteria used for the creativity assessment, therefore suggesting that the effect of culture on the assessment of creativity cannot be understood without analyzing the criteria and process in tandem. Second, by revealing cultural differences in criteria, my findings also call into question a long-held assumption about the dimensions of creativity and reveal coherence and persistence as complementary criteria for assessing creativity. Third, by underlining that both the creator's creative process and final product play a decisive role for assessing creativity, I reconcile the process and outcome perspectives by showing their complementarity for the assessment phase of creativity.

Another and perhaps more fundamental implication is that my theory highlights cultural differences in two countries deemed to be culturally close. France and the US are both Western and individualist countries, the Hofstede's dimension usually seen the most important for creativity. A close cultural distance might lead to easily overlook cultural differences, whereas my model shows that culture can generate deep differences in creativity assessment even in two culturally close countries. My model calls for a greater awareness of the risk of overlooking cultural differences for creativity and its assessment in particular.

2.2. Theoretical Background

Given the inductive and theory-building nature of the study, I iterated between theory and data. Consequently, much of the literature I review in the section that follows was not

derived from pre-existing theory but became apparent during data analysis (Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007). As in many inductive studies, this review thus serves as a set of "orienting points" that informed my research questions and directed my data analysis.

2.2.1. Creativity Assessment

The creativity literature has long argued for a Darwinian approach, where the most creative ideas were naturally selected over time (e.g., Simonton, 1999). However, research has shown that individuals have a bias against creativity and tend to reject creative ideas (Mueller, Goncalo, & Kamdar, 2011; Mueller, Melwani, Goncalo, 2011; Silva, Oldham, 2012; Staw, 1995). This tension has generated a growing interest in the assessment phase of the creative process. In their seminal contribution, Elsbach & Kramer (2003) found assessment criteria and process to play equally decisive roles in how creativity is assessed. They found that evaluators based their assessment on their categorization of the candidate as creative or uncreative (based on pre-constructed creative prototypes), and on their perception of the potential for a fruitful creative collaboration with the candidate. More recently, some researchers have investigated the issue of who is most likely to assess creativity accurately. Results show that those in charge of assessing creativity in organizations, namely the managers, are often inaccurate in their assessments (Randel, Jaussi & Wu, 2011), while peer creators displayed higher accuracy due to their divergent thinking advantage (Berg et al., 2016). Another stream of research has explored the question of what are the criteria that an audience uses to assess creativity. In particular, research has documented a trade-off between the two traditional dimensions of creativity, namely novelty and appropriateness (Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010) and has suggested that instructing evaluators to focus on the right assessment criteria fosters their ability to assess creativity (Rietzschel et al., 2010). In particular, the application of standards that complement the nature of the assessed idea (i.e., using novelty criteria for less original ideas, or applying usefulness criteria to more original ideas) has been found to guarantee the balance

between the two dimensions (Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004).

2.2.2. Creativity Assessment across Cultures

The creativity literature has found evidence of cultural differences in the conceptualization of creativity (Niu & Kaufman, 2013; Niu & Sternberg, 2002; Rudowicz, 2003). These differences prompted researchers to argue that creativity assessment cannot be understood without accounting for the cultural context (Leung & Morris, 2011; Lubart, 2010; Niu & Sternberg, 2006). Consequently, researchers started to explore how culture was affecting the assessment of creativity (Chiu & Kwan, 2010; Chua et al., 2015; Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016), focusing on the assessing audience and criteria. From the audience perspective, the creator's cultural distance with his or her audience has been proved detrimental to be assessed as creative (Chua et al., 2015). Criteria-wise, literature has found cultural differences both in the type of criteria applied and in their number. Culture has been argued to influence which of the two traditional creativity dimensions – novelty versus appropriateness – is made more salient during the creativity assessment (Bechtoldt et al., 2010; Chiu & Kwan, 2010; De Dreu, 2010; Erez & Nouri, 2010; Leung et al., 2011; Zhou & Su, 2010). However, evidence about this is still tentative, as the only empirical study to date (Paletz & Peng, 2008) shows the opposite of what theory argues. Contrary to the widely theorized Western focus on novelty and Eastern focus on usefulness, Chinese were found to emphasize novelty, while Americans were found to focus on usefulness. Researchers have also investigated the effect of instructing participants to concentrate on the assessment criteria neglected in their cultures (e.g., novelty in collectivistic cultures), but no consensus has emerged. Scholars have found this practice to have a positive (Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004) and non-significant effect (Goncalo & Staw, 2006) on the accuracy of creativity assessment. Extant findings, however, seem to agree on the fact that Westerners use a lower number of criteria when assessing creativity than their Eastern counterparts (Niu & Sternberg,

2001; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016).

2.2.3. Culture and Decision-Making

In short, the extant literature on creativity assessment has been largely inconclusive and has exclusively focused on the criteria used by judges, overlooking the effect of culture on the assessment process (Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004). Yet, the cross-cultural decision-making research[1] has thoroughly demonstrated that culture affects decision-making processes (Choi, Dalal, Kim-Prieto, & Park, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Weber & Hsee, 1998, 2000; Weber & Morris, 2010). For instance, Weber, Ames, & Blais (2005) showed that decision-makers in a collectivistic culture adopt a role- and rule-based decision process because of the cultural emphasis on affiliation and conformity; on the contrary, decision-makers in an individualistic culture make affect-based and analysis-based decisions because of the cultural emphasis on autonomy and reasoning. This evidence supports the idea that the assessment process should be taken into account when investigating intercultural differences in creativity evaluation.

Overall, this review opens up opportunities for theorizing around how culture affects creativity assessment in general and the process of creativity assessment in particular. A joint analysis of the cross-cultural differences in the assessment process and criteria would enrich creativity literature and help to solve extant debates on the effect of culture on creativity assessment.

[1] Building on the decision-making literature to inform the assessment of creativity is based on the assumption that decision and evaluation share a similar ground. In the decision-making literature, a decision has been depicted as an evaluation that involves an action so that evaluation and decision share the same antecedents. Moreover, in their seminal contribution on creativity assessment, Elsbach & Kramer (2003) equals the assessment of creativity to making a decision.

2.3. Method

2.3.1. The Context: *Top Chef*

Germane to my interest in elaborating theory on creativity assessment across different cultures, I carried out an inductive qualitative study using a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research is appropriate when the research question focuses on developing theory, especially theory about processes and practices (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Consistent with this approach, I used theoretical sampling, which relies on finding a context in which the phenomenon of interest is intense and can be observed transparently (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994). Answering my research question required a context in which creativity assessment was pervasive and where being assessed as creative was critical for the appraisee. Moreover, the situations of assessment needed to be similar across countries to ensure transparent observation. I found *Top Chef* to be a context that meets my requirements, in that creativity assessment are continuous, profoundly important for the candidates, and transparently observable. *Top Chef* is a reality competition television series for professional chefs. It premiered in 2006 in the US, and since then it has generated eighteen international adaptations. Among these, the French one has been one of the most successful, with a running total of seven seasons. The show features relatively unknown professional chefs competing against each other in various culinary challenges. They are judged by a panel of renowned professional chefs and other notables from the culinary industry. The judges have to assess the contestants' creativity and, based on that, decide who has won the challenge and who gets eliminated. Nineteen chefs (16 in France) start the competition and are eliminated across the episodes. Each episode presents the chefs with two types of challenges, the Quickfire and an Elimination Challenge. In Quickfire Challenges (QC) there is usually no elimination, but the winner of the QC is generally granted immunity from elimination or some other advantage (i.e., first choice in picking ingredients) in the Elimination Challenge. The Elimination Challenge

(EC) is longer and more complex than the QC and ends with the elimination of one or more candidates. At the end of each challenge, judges deliberate on their choices for the most and least creative dish. The judges can ask questions to the chefs about their dishes or preparation techniques before making a collective decision. The decision process and the interactions between jury members are recorded and presented in their entirety to the audience. After they reach a decision, judges communicate it to the chefs. During the EC, judges choose one chef for elimination. This format continues across the episodes until two or three chefs remain. In the final episode, each chef is challenged to create a full course meal. The chef whose dish is deemed the most creative is declared the "top chef" of the season.

Top Chef provides a rich and compelling context to observe how the process and criteria of creativity assessment vary across different cultures. First, consistently with creativity being the most important criterion for critics' assessment in the current culinary world (Leschziner, 2015; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2009; Parkhurst-Ferguson, 1998; 2004), the creativity assessment is continuous and pervasive within the competition. *Top Chef* judges focus on the same criteria restaurant critics use to assess a restaurant's creativity, such as technique and the use and recombination of ingredients (Leschziner, 2015). The following instruction, provided at the beginning of a challenge, provides an illustration of this creativity focus: "There's a lot of opportunity for innovation. It doesn't necessarily mean technique. Try some things that you wouldn't normally do: maybe some flavor combinations, or ingredients that you're not familiar with."

Second, the show allows to transparently observe the processes and criteria used in creativity assessments, as well as the interactions between jury members and between jury members and candidates, whose importance for creativity assessment has been emphasized in extant research (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). Moreover, the standardized format of the show met my empirical requirement of the inter-country comparison of situations and decision-making

procedures in a professional context. Therefore, *Top Chef* episodes represented a setting that allowed me to transparently observe phenomena that are "uniquely or most easily observed in non-business or non-managerial settings but nonetheless have critical implications for management theory" (Bamberger & Pratt, 2010, p. 668).

Third, Top Chef episodes allowed me to distinguish creativity from commercial success: the dishes were created just for the purpose of the contest, without any aim of commercialization. This feature of my setting is important because extant research on creativity assessment has sometimes overlooked the risk of confusion between creativity and commercial success: for instance, Elsbach and Kramer (2003) identify the fact that Hollywood producers may evaluate not only the artistic merit of the pitch but also its commercial potential as one of the limitations of their paper. In addition, Top Chef allowed me to explore the process of creativity assessment with judges who are experts in the domain where the assessment takes place (in this case, the culinary domain). These judges have been show to be the most accurate in identifying and assessing creativity (Berg, 2016). The professional chefs who act as judges in Top Chef are always in charge of creating the menu for their restaurants and alone are held accountable for the menu (Leschziner, 2015). This is true also for those with a high status and at the head of several restaurants (e.g., 16 restaurants for Tom Colicchio, one of the judges of the US version of the show). Chefs embody the culinary creativity of their restaurants (Rao et al., 2003), and are thus familiar and in-touch with the process involved in generating creative dishes, something that puts them in a better position to identify the creativity of the candidates (Berg, 2016). Finally, choosing Top Chef as our empirical context allowed us to address the call for research on the impact of culture on creativity and on the process of creativity assessment using field data, rather than lab experiments (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Zhou & Su, 2010).

I chose the US and French versions of the show because they were the first and second longest running editions, and presented almost identical characteristics in terms of production demands (see Table 1). I found the panel of judges to be equivalent in terms of judges' personality

characteristics and status[2], allowing me to rule out these potential alternative explanations. Likewise, the demographics of the audience of the show are similar in both cultures[3]. Moreover, I specifically chose the 2014 season of the US and French versions because it allowed me to isolate the impact of the national culture from the effect of different culinary traditions (i.e., professional culture). In the US version of the show, each season takes place in a different city. The 2014 season took place in Boston. Northeastern US and French culinary traditions are very similar, and thus share a common professional culture. *Haute cuisine* in the Northeastern United States is in fact profoundly influenced by French cuisine (in contrast, that of the West Coast (and San Francisco in particular) has a stronger Italian influence) (Leschziner, 2015). French cuisine has developed a set of techniques that compensate for ingredients that are less flavorful than desired. Because of the climate conditions, local fresh ingredients are in fact not available year-round in France, and the shipping of ingredients results in a loss of flavor. Since similar climate conditions exist the Northeastern United States, this part of the US is characterized by a predominance of complex culinary techniques borrowed from French cuisine (Leschziner, 2015). Finally, I chose the French and US versions of the show since my proficiency in French ensured the direct observation and correct understanding of the evaluation episodes in both settings.

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[2] To assess the personal characteristics of the judges, I relied on the analysis of press contents (see Chatterjee & Hambrick 2007 for a similar approach), I found a similar pattern in terms of personality characteristics across the four judges in both cultures: Jean-François Piège (French version) and Tom Collichio (US version) are perfectionist; Thierry Marx and Richard Blais are forward-thinking; Gail Simmons and Christian Constant are empathic; and Padma Lakshmi and Ghislaine Arabian are critical. Likewise, in terms of status, I found a consistent pattern across the two cultures: two judges represent the high-status level (i.e., their work is consecrated either by two Michelin stars in France or by James Beard awards or nominations in the US context); while the two other judges have lower-status level (i.e., absence of such recognition).

[3] Both versions of the show are very popular (respectively 3.7 and 1.9 million total viewers for the French and US versions, representing 17% and 7% rating share) and attract a young audience (25% and 15% of viewers are within the 18-49 age range for France and the US).

TABLE 1
Top Chef France and US: Descriptions

	French Version	US Version
Candidates		
#	16	16
% of candidates working for critically acclaimed restaurants (executive chefs or sous-chefs)	31%	31%
% of candidates owning their own restaurants (including catering companies)	38%	43%
% of candidates being chefs in regular restaurants	19%	14%
% of lower statuses candidates (i.e., second cooks, line cook)	12%	12%
Jurys		
#	4	4
% of jury being chef or owning michelin starred/critically acclaimed restaurants	100%	50%
# of recurring Judges	1	1
Challenges		
# of quickfire challenges (i.e., selection the best dish) (%)	43(75%)	15 (52%)
# of elimination challenges (i.e., eliminating the worst dish) (%)	14(25%)	14(48%)
# of creativity focused challenges (%)	48(84%)	25 (86%)
# of technique-focused challenges (%)	9 (16%)	4 (14%)
# of money challenges (i.e., extrinsically motivated challenges) (%)	0 (0%)	4 (14%)

TABLE 2
Scores for the Hofstede IBM study (Hofstede, 2001)

	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long/Short term Orientation	Power Distance	Individualism (vs. Collectivism)	Mascullinty (vs. Feminity)
France	86	63	68	71	43
United States	46	26	40	91	62

While France and US are culturally close, they are not as close as usually perceived. A focus on Hofstede's dimensions alone (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004) highlights a gap of at least 20 points on all the Hofstede's dimensions (see Table 2).

In particular, France and the United States mostly differ along uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and power distance (Hofstede et al., 1991). I argue that the perceived similarity between France and US is due to the often-used dichotomization approach used in cross-cultural research. As an example, France and Japan (scores: 71 and 46, respectively) differ on the individualism dimension almost as much as France and the US (scores: 71 and 91). However, if we dichotomized the score of individualism in high and low (i.e., above and below 50), Japan would be considered a collectivistic culture while France and US would be both considered individualistic, therefore creating an artificial cultural similarity between the two.

Access and data collection. I used several data sources and modes of inquiry to ensure richness and depth of study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Yin, 1994). Data collection involved mainly the observation and transcription of the 2014 seasons of the US and French editions of *Top Chef*. I watched and transcribed episodes from the two editions. The video method presented the two key advantages of being non-reactive and stable (Bowen, 2009). I was thus not concerned with an event proceeding differently because of it being observed or the investigator's presence altering what was being studied. To ensure triangulation, I also collected and content-analyzed media interviews of judges, competitors, and writers of cooking reality shows, as texts are a highly pertinent source to analyze haute cuisine as a field (Bouty & Gomez, 2013; Parkhurst-Ferguson, 1998; Rao et al., 2003). Moreover, I interviewed the head writer of a cooking reality show. Given its nature of television show, there was the risk that the decision-making episodes displayed in *Top Chef* were scripted or edited to increase audience appeal. The interview with the head writer helped me to rule out this risk: he, in fact, explained that, while the different challenges are designed in advance,

neither the judges nor the candidates' responses are scripted. Moreover, he confirmed that the episodes reproduced the decision-making process in its entirety:

> "No part of the decision-making process is edited or cut. While we have to cut some parts of the cooking process for timing reasons, the decision making is never cut, because it is what… What the audience wants to see, we need authenticity and full disclosure. It is one of the principles of this kind of shows."

This interview also helped me to better understand the intervention of show's producers in the elimination decisions.

> "Producers might ask to give the final push *only* when two candidates are awarded equal positions."

Since I focus on the assessment process leading to higher creativity evaluations and do not elaborate on the differences between winners and runner-ups, I can say with confidence that the intervention of the show's producers does not interfere with my results.

2.3.2. Analytical procedure

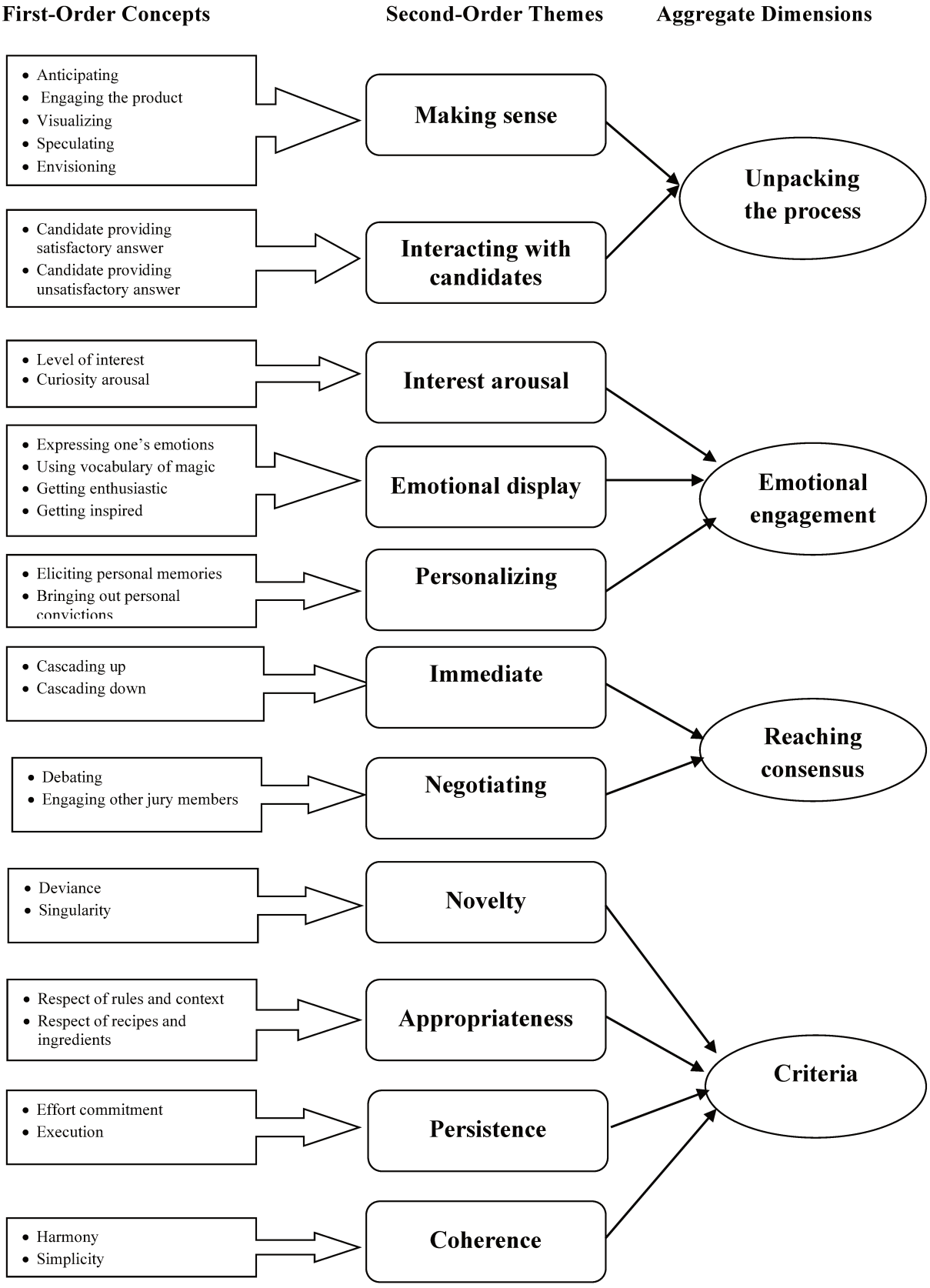
Episode transcription and rough contours of themes. I started from the analysis of the entire episodes and then gradually moved to the single evaluation episodes when it became apparent that judges were assessing the creativity of the dishes during this specific time period. While watching and transcribing the first evaluation episodes, the difference between assessment processes and criteria began to emerge. Processes involved the way judges tried to acquire information to inform their assessment of creativity, while criteria were the dimensions on which judges evaluated the creativity of each chef during the different challenges.

Preliminary analyses. The final transcriptions of the observation episodes amounted to about 320 pages (Times New Roman, 12 points, double spaced). During the preliminary phase, initial themes began to emerge. Concerning the process, I found that judges in the French

edition interacted less with the candidates, and tried more to make sense of how the dish was made than their US counterparts. Regarding the criteria, I observed that judges in the French edition were more concerned with appropriateness when assessing creativity, with novelty often resulting in mixed assessment, while being positively perceived by US judges.

Formal analyses. I did not have a priori categories to guide my data collection or to frame my initial analysis. While transcribing the evaluation episodes, the importance of judges' preferences for risk taking and structure started to emerge. Thus, I first used open coding, breaking down the data to understand the underlying dynamics; I then used axial coding (i.e. coding across concepts) to uncover existing relationships and contrasts between themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Specifically, during open coding, I closely evaluated the data to identify the different kinds of statements, questions, and criteria that emerged in a given evaluation episode to develop first-order concepts. I used axial coding to compare and contrast these first-order concepts, generating second-order themes and then aggregate dimensions. During this period of analysis, I went back to the entire episodes and watched and read interviews with the judges to deepen my conclusions from the analysis of my transcriptions. I found high consistency across episodes and challenges. I present my data structure in Figure 2. Moreover, once the general structure of the moves of the assessment process and the criteria well established, I coded the transcripts for evidence of each move and criterion across the French and US versions of the show. Evidence of cultural differences in the frequency and valence of the different moves of the assessment process and the different criteria used to assess creativity emerged.

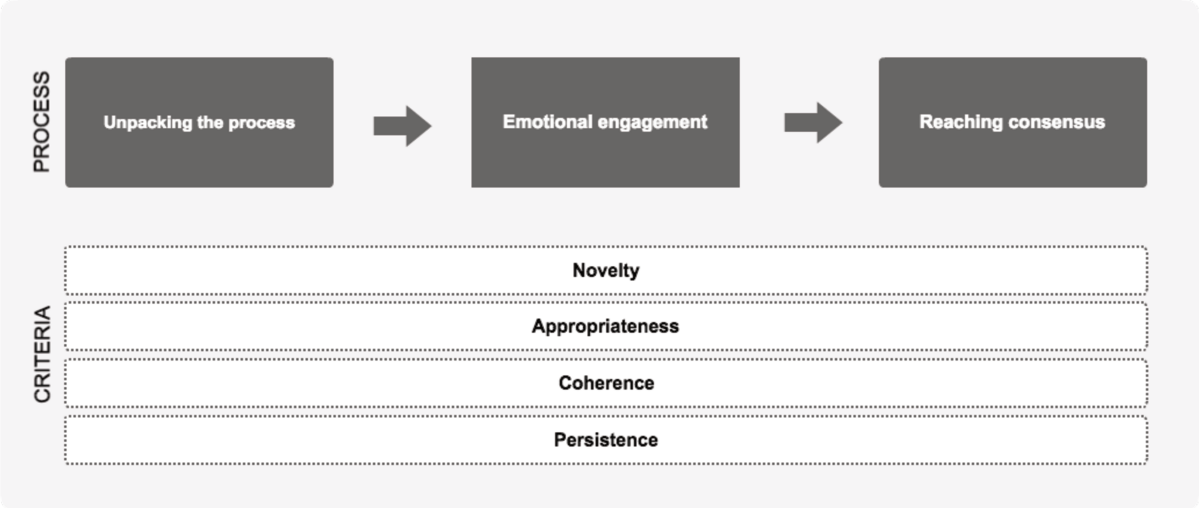
FIGURE 2
Data structure



2.4. Findings: Assessing Creativity Across Cultures

My emergent theory of culturally imprinted creativity assessment reveals that evaluation process characteristics and criteria vary significantly across cultures, with judges relying on different moves and reference points. Process and criteria vary not only in terms of frequency (high vs. low vs. no usage) but also in terms of content (the moves used in each step of the process) and valence (positive or negative impact on creative assessment). In general, I find that the evaluation process consisted of three main steps – (1) *unpacking the process*; (2) *emotional engagement*; and (3) *finding consensus* – and that the judges relied on four main criteria: (1) *novelty*, (2) *appropriateness*, (3) *coherence* and (4) *persistence*. In the next section, I first describe the three steps of the assessment process and all the criteria. Figure 3 illustrates the general process and criteria. I then discuss inter-cultural differences for each step of the process and for the criteria.

FIGURE 3
General Process



2.4.1. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process consisted of three main steps, namely *unpacking the process*, *emotional engagement*, and *finding consensus*. Although of course not every evaluation episode followed the same steps, the vast majority of the episodes in each country presented the

structure and characteristics reported below. When I first started analyzing the episodes, I was struck by what seemed to be a continuous attempt from the judges to discern what the candidate has been doing in the kitchen. They were not interested only in the final result, but also in deciphering the creative process behind the final product. During this step of the process, judges engaged in information gathering to build their own image of what was done and what could have been done differently. This image was built either through a sensemaking process (Weick, 1993; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) based on cues provided by the creative product itself or through the interactive questioning of the candidates. This activity involved the frequent use of questioning, either rhetorical or directed to the candidates, with the use of phrases such as "What is this?", "Why opting for …?", or "Where is the product? Why was it not presented?".

As I deepened my observation of the evaluation episodes, I found that creativity evaluation did not only consist in rationalizing and reverse-engineering the creative process but was also inherently emotional. Judges get carried away by their spontaneous emotional reactions, as reflected in their extensive use of rhetoric figures such as metaphors and hyperboles. For example, in the US edition, a judge expressed his enthusiasm with these words: "Gregory, that oyster dish was, like, a really great first kiss. I mean, I got tingly inside, that's *how* tasty this thing was." The emotional reaction was sometimes more reflective, with judges taking the time to think about their emotions and relate them to personal memories or convictions.

After the rational and/or emotional assessment of the dish, judges' individual decisions translate to collective ones through a convergent process. Judges never formally vote. Instead, they discuss until they reach a consensus. And even when the minority voices its dissent, the majority still prevails at the end of the discussion. The question is therefore no longer how judges reach a consensus but when. Finding consensus can be immediate, in a reinforcing, confirmatory, effect where judges "cascade down" to reach a negative verdict or "cascade up"

towards a positive evaluation. The following vignette illustrates one instance in which US judges cascaded up in response to the haute cuisine version of a simple dish:

> JUDGE SIMMONS: Congee is usually very, very simple, but she added so much to it.
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: It was really flavorful. It was, at times, surprising.
> JUDGE BLAIS: Beautiful dish. I mean, that's a restaurant showing up to do an event. Even her *mise en place*, everything was in deli containers.
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: I just really enjoyed the dish.

Finding consensus, however, can take more time, with judges debating the relative merits of each candidate and encouraging other judges to share their own judgment. The discussion usually touched upon many arguments, with judges trying to build a complete picture before making a decision. For instance, during an elimination challenge in the French edition, judges entered in the following debate, tackling issues as diverse as the visual, the lack of modernity or the execution of the dish:

> JUDGE CONSTANT: I'm not seduced by the visual; I see this risotto with its old-fashioned presentation, and I find it a bit crude. It's more a cuisine of my time, the eighties.
> JUDGE ARABIAN: I'm not seduced
> JUDGE CONSTANT: This dish isn't worth top chef, sorry but the prawn is not cooked at all.
> JUDGE PIEGE: To me, prawns become rather tasteless when overcooked. He [the candidate] was smart enough to cook them lightly. It's the proper cooking for my taste. But well the presentation is a bit old fashioned.
> JUDGE CONSTANT: To me, when you cook a risotto, it must be perfect. He added too much cheese. It's way too fat.

Notwithstanding some similarities in structure, the steps of the process varied between the two countries in terms of the type of moves used, their frequency, and their valence. In the following paragraphs, I describe in detail each step for French and US editions of *Top Chef*. In doing so, I will focus on the most frequent moves for each country, as well as on their difference in

valence[4].

Unpacking the process: France. In France, the "unpacking the process" step happened mainly at the individual level, with each judge trying to make sense of the way the dish was conceived and realized by using cues provided by the meal itself, rather than directly questioning the candidates. Based on these cues, they built their own reasoning and interpretation of events.

In particular, judges actively engaged with the product, tasting it and trying to use their sensory experience to uncover what the contestant did in the kitchen, in a sort of "reverse-engineering" process. This engagement with the product happened mainly in two ways. First, French judges frequently engaged in puzzling (i.e., speculating and expressing doubts triggered by a lack of full understanding) through the use of rhetorical questions (e.g., "Where is the product? Even if it was overcooked, why was it not presented?"), or the explicit admission of the incapability to understand the rationale behind the dish (e.g., "We can't say what's inside, I don't like that."). Most times, puzzling resulted in negative evaluations, suggesting that French judges were less likely to evaluate a product as creative if they did not understand the process through which the product was realized. French judges also frequently engaged in drawing parallels to make sense of the dish. They attempted to establish a link between what they already knew and the dish under evaluation. For example, a judge described how the dish under evaluation reminded him of a typical culinary tradition of the Lyon region in France: "In Lyon, there is a word for describing a particular time of day, the *mâchon*. The *mâchon* is a snack accompanied by Beaujolais that people share with some friends. I got the feeling that the candidate tried to express this moment in his dish." Judges reacted highly positively to the ease

[4] It is worth noting that all the moves I identified were used in both countries at least once. However, their frequency and valence were strikingly different. For the sake of clarity and length, I focused only on the main ones for each country.

of relating the dish to their previous experiences and existing knowledge.

French judges also made active attempts to *visualize the strategy* of the candidate, trying to identify meaningful patterns in the candidates' actions. Interestingly, they almost never questioned the candidate about this. Visualizing was thus not about determining the actual strategy of the candidate's, but more about how interpretable and decodable this strategy was in the judges' subjective perception. For example, judges perceived that one candidate had deliberately adopted a strategy to avoid some problems engendered by the challenge rules: "She bypassed the problem, she didn't know what to do, she said that the meat wasn't inspiring for her, she thought of a samosa, good!"

The visualized strategy impacted judges' creativity assessment in several ways. First, judges valued as more creative those dishes that, in their opinion, showed a clear strategy and decision on the candidate's side. As a judge explained: "Making the comparison with the swimmers, when they are in the water, they have 100ms to be the best, here it's the same, you need to think, channel your energy and make clear decisions quickly." Second, French judges paid careful attention to the fit between the visualized strategy and the outcome. Under the perilous challenge of the creation of a meat-based dessert, a judge pointed out the obligation for the candidate to see his proposal through to the bitter end: "The pairing of *fois gras* and blood sausage is pleasant but he [the candidate] should have put the blood sausage with the mashed *fois gras* or mixed it, one needs to keep going to the end." Finally, at times the visualized strategy was rewarded for its consistency with the challenge's rules and context. For instance, in a challenge, the candidates were asked to come up with a surprising dish hidden under an edible shell. After tasting one of the dishes, a judge exclaimed: "Taste-wise, it's a vegetable soup but *in this particular context*, it's smart, congrats."

Unpacking the process: US. In the US, judges relied both on sensemaking based on the creative product and on interactive questioning of the candidate to decode the creative process

underlying the dish. The unpacking of the creative process thus happened both at the individual level, with judges engaged in sensemaking, and at the dyadic level, with judges forming their opinion based on their interaction with the candidate.

The sensemaking process involved an active engagement with the product that entailed puzzling, with judges trying to understand what the candidates did and, at times, being unable to do so immediately: "George, we were a little confused at first if you made a sausage or a burger, but it was very delicious when we tried it." The inability to decode what happened in the kitchen had a positive impact on subsequent evaluations of creativity, with judges reacting positively to the fact that the dish escaped easy classification. This vignette illustrates an instance in which the judges were puzzled, and framed their being puzzled as a consequence of the creativity of the dish:

> JUDGE COLICCHIO: This is--it's a tough one. Um...I like it, but I don't know how to describe this.
> GUEST JUDGE: I think that's a good thing that you don't know what to say.
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: No, it is. It is. It absolutely is, yeah.

US judges' sensemaking process was not linear, but subject to change of interpretations. While tasting the dish, judges often found themselves changing their opinion. It could happen because the flavors of the dish changed during the tasting, taking the judges by surprise. This is how a judge reacted to a dish that was very spicy at the beginning, but then revealed a softer flavor as the tasting progressed: "I got the chili first, and I was like, 'whoa! This is going to- that's it, my palate's gone.' And then I looked in the bowl, and there was the plantain. And then it balances it out." Sometimes, judges found themselves having to change their first impression of the dish, and even long-held convictions on how much they like a particular recipe, or how a dish should be made. As in this occurrence: "There's potential for the charred onion soil and the tom kha snow to be a lot of technique and not a lot of flavor, but I'm actually tasting both in a really subtle, gentle way."

Finally, US judges engaged with the product by trying to understand whether the candidate had achieved what he or she had in mind at the beginning. By looking and tasting the final product, they tried to figure out what was the initial intention of the candidate, what went right, what went wrong, and how the candidate coped with problems that might have arisen during preparation: "Katsuji, I love the idea of it, you know, but it felt like it was pulling in a lot of ways and that you're conflicted about it." If the judges came to the conclusion that the candidate did not pursue his or her idea to the end, nor was able to solve problems that arose during preparation, this often resulted in a negative assessment of creativity, as in Katsuji's case. It suggests that, while US judges liked being surprised, they also appreciated to see consistency in behavior, and valued the ability to solve problems and effectively implement an idea as an important part of a creator's skill set.

US judges also actively included the candidates in their deciphering of the creative process. The outcome of the evaluation process was then determined by the extent to which a candidate provided a satisfactory explanation and acknowledged his or her mistakes. In a challenge tribute to Julia Child, Jacques Pépin, the eternal co-star of the "Julia and Jacques cooking at home" TV show and internationally renowned French chef, questioned the candidate about a discrepancy between his dish and the traditional French recipe. The following exchange ensued:

> JACQUES PEPIN: Did your mother in Burgundy put a carrot in her *Coq au vin*?
> GREGORY: No, chef.
> JACQUES PEPIN: No? Okay.
> GREGORY: It's on the side, chef.
> JACQUES PEPIN: Yes.
> GREGORY: Traditionally, I think it was the chicken, the mushrooms, and the pearl onions. And the carrots and peas are extra.
> JACQUES PEPIN: I would have separated them to show that they are not really part of the dish, but I mean, that's a small detail.

The correct answer tilted the balance in the candidate's favor. Conversely, in the very first

episode, the unsatisfactory explanation of a candidate resulted in a negative evaluation of his creativity:

> JUDGE COLICCHIO: So you tasted the dish? You put everything together--
> MICHAEL: I just tasted the roe, and I felt it was a little fishy, but I didn't think it was too bad.
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: "I didn't think it was too bad," meaning you thought it was bad but not bad enough?
> MICHAEL: No, I liked it. For my personal taste, I liked it, but...
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: Oh, okay. So now you liked it. Was it too fishy or did you like it?
> MICHAEL: I liked it. I didn't think it was too fishy.

This interacting process reflects the judges' preference for creating a productive judge-creator relationship, where judge and candidate cooperate to understand what happened and what could have been done better, instead of having the judge lecturing the candidate.

Emotional engagement: France. Emotion also played a significant role in French judges' decision. In particular, French judges paid careful attention to their spontaneous emotional reaction and formulated their decisions by focusing on explicitly subjective criteria. For example, in the aforementioned challenge of the surprising dish hidden under an edible shell, the judge indicated how decisive his emotion was in assessing the most creative dish: "Emotion will drive my decision, and the dish that deeply moved me was Naoelle's dish." While French judges penalize candidates if they cannot make sense of their creative process, they also reward as creative those candidates that illicit spontaneous emotional reactions.

Emotional engagement: US. In the US, judges took a more reflective stance on their emotional engagement, linking the emotions generated by the dish to their memories, tasting experiences, and culinary beliefs. For instance, while consecrating a dish as the most creative, a judge related the intensity of his emotion with a childhood memory: "The stew that you did for the second course, it took me back to my childhood years. The amount of intensity and flavors was just outstanding, something that I will never forget."

Finding consensus: France. In France, consensus primarily came from negotiation, while immediate consensus was unusual. French judges engaged in panel discussions, touching upon many arguments in an attempt to build a complete picture before making a decision. This vignette from a challenge that entailed the creation of a pop-up restaurant provides an example:

> JUDGE MARX: The smoked taste is very present. Visually, that's beautiful. And that's very good, really good. Nothing is there by chance.
>
> JUDGE CONSTANT: Visually, it's very nice, you feel like eating it right away. It's colorful, autumnal.
>
> JUDGE PIEGE: It's merely graphical, the cooking is not too bad, but there is nothing to transform the taste, it is just a diet chicken. We are not babies, I got a puree for the starter, I have puree for the main dish, the mastery of the puree is an essential basis when you are a chef, but you don't need to put it in every dish, I expect something else.

Despite this preference for discussion and debate, I observed that negotiated consensus had mixed effects on creativity evaluations with judges trying to avoid making decisions that could dissatisfy one of the judges, therefore using the lack of agreement as a signal of low creativity of the dish.

Finding consensus: US. In the US, judges found consensus immediately or through debate. As part of a positive creativity assessment, chefs "cascaded up" in an immediate consensus finding:

> JUDGE BLAIS: It smells good.
>
> JUDGE LAKSHMI: That sweet onion is just melting in my mouth.
>
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: You know what's great is that the acid level is so high in this dish, too. This is a really good dish.

Conversely, in the course of a negative assessment, US judges "cascaded down" to immediately reach an adverse verdict. In the following example, judges collectively built on the lack of coherence of the dish:

> JUDGE SIMMONS: I thought when Katie's beets came to the table they were really pretty, and I was really excited to taste them because the combination of the Sri Lankan curry and the coconut was really intriguing to me.
>
> JUDGE COLICCHIO: It's not a bad dish. I think the curry is actually really flavorful. But it

has no bearing and no relationship at all to the beets.
JUDGE SIMMONS: Right.
GUEST JUDGE: It just didn't come together.

The immediate consensus finding had a clear and direct effect on the evaluation outcome with "cascading up" resulted in positive creativity assessments and "cascading down" in negative ones.

When finding consensus took more time and negotiation, it resulted in negative creativity evaluations. For example, in the following discussion US judges engaged in a debate on the relative merits and flaws of a candidate and his dish:

GUEST JUDGE: I think Katsuji had craziness and anger and blood and the stuff on there: okay, cool, but then you got to eat it. His mess was a mess.
JUDGE COLLICHIO: He did what he's been doing all season long: big, bold, crazy flavors.
GUEST JUDGE: I personally like Katsuji's dish. Katsuji's hot sauce was kind of crazy and awesome. At first, I was like, "Whoa, what is going on?" And then I just kept going back for it.
JUDGE SIMMONS: Katsuji is a chef who really cooks with his heart on his sleeve at all times. He really believes in the food that he cooks, and I adore that about him.

This debate resulted in the elimination of the candidate, showing that, while US judges accept and even react positively to the ambiguity of a dish, they do not tolerate the same ambiguity when they need to reach consensus.

2.4.2. Evaluation Criteria

The cultural differences in creativity assessment are not limited to the process, but also concern the criteria applied to assess the creativity of the dish. This is in line with existing findings in creativity literature. Creativity is usually defined as the generation of novel and appropriate/useful outcomes (Amabile, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). However, the very notions of novelty and appropriateness and the emphasis on one or the other are likely to be shaped by the social context (e.g., Csikszentmihályi, 1988, 1999; George, 2007), especially when different countries are considered (Hempel & Sue-Chan,

2010, Morris & Leung, 2010). The fact that novelty and appropriateness should be the criteria guiding creativity assessment in every context, with different emphasis on one or the other, is usually taken for granted. However, my results suggest something else. Not only the criteria vary in their frequency and importance, but also in their valence: novelty and appropriateness are not always positively associated with creativity. Moreover, I was surprised to observe that, in my context, *novelty* and *appropriateness* were not the only criteria used to assess creativity. Candidates' creativity was also evaluated according to their *persistence* and *coherence*. In the following paragraphs, we first detail the occurrence of these four criteria in our setting before specifying their meaning, frequency, and valence in the two cultures.

When assessing novelty, judges looked both at whether the candidate's dish was different and original, and whether the contestant's cuisine was unique. Judges positively responded to candidates who surprised them with dishes that broke the existing codes and pushed the limits of the domain. This is illustrated by the following examples, where judges warmly welcomed dishes with surprising combinations and new applications of techniques or ingredients:

> "I love the fact that you repurposed the fried dough as the bread pudding. I thought that was pretty brilliant."
>
> "I really liked Gregory's. I thought the sweet potatoes were a nice twist, wonderful version of chowder."

When assessing the usefulness/appropriateness of the product, judges focused not so much on whether the creative product was of some use, but rather on it being appropriate for the context. That is the reason why I decided to opt for the term *appropriateness* rather than *usefulness*, as already done in extant literature (e.g., De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). Judges specifically referred to the respect of different types of rules: first, they focused on the rules of the challenge itself. This was reflected in the frequent occurrence of sentences such as "what you were asked for," "as we wanted." Second, they

focused on self-imposed rules, i.e. the rules that candidates themselves created by, for instance, choosing a particular label for their dish. In the latter case, judges carefully considered whether the content of the dish was consistent with its name, and would severely sanction the inconsistency, often punishing it with the lowest creativity rating and elimination. Here is a typical sentence when the judged perceived a low level of appropriateness: "This dish is more a vegetable bouillon rather than a *pot au feu*." Third, judges made use of the rules of the domain, considering the cuisine established standards and procedures on one side, and the respect of the product on the other.

In addition to the traditional novelty and appropriateness criteria, judges focused on the coherence criterion, namely on how the dish was composed and how well the different parts were integrated together. Judges paid attention both to the *organization* of the elements that compose the dish – its coherence – and to the *number* of elements – its simplicity. These three comments made on three different dishes reveal the primary importance judges gave to the dish coherence:

> "You know what? Gregory has a way of balancing a lot of different things. All these aromatics that just go perfectly well together."
>
> "I just think that it's well-balanced. Everything's right to the peak of where it should be. This is Moneyball. This is a smart dish, right here."
>
> "It's the details, making sure the balance is just there. Nothing is screaming for attention on the plate. It all just kind of work together. And that's what we got from your dish."

Conversely, dishes lacking coherence were penalized by an uncreativity verdict, which usually resulted in elimination.

Judges finally focused on persistence, carefully considering the achievement of the candidate's creative goal as well the efforts made in the pursuit of that goal. The following comments perfectly illustrate how judges reacted very (negatively) positively to candidates' (in) ability to make their idea work through thorough execution and effort:

> "You talked about having this really light, spring flavors, and then finishing with something

dark and fall-like, and you really nailed it."

"You had an idea, you couldn't sort of get back on track from that, and the result was a dish that sort of didn't work out very well."

"We all agree on the winner of the challenge, we awarded hard work, hard work is essential."

The above quotes show that judges consider the ability to implement one's ideas as an integral part of the creative process. Moreover, the distinction between the *candidate*'s creative process and the *judge*'s evaluation criteria must be emphasized. Indeed, in the literature, persistence is traditionally described as one of the creative processes in which creators should engage to achieve creativity (De Dreu et al., 2008), here, persistence is a criterion used by judges to assess creativity. Then, of course, the persistence criterion is about the creative process of the creator.

While judges in both countries make use of all the four criteria, their frequency, meaning and impact on the evaluation outcome considerably varied. In the following paragraphs, I describe in detail the distinct uses of the four criteria for French and US editions of *Top Chef*.

Criteria: France. In France, appropriateness received considerable attention. French judges paid careful attention to the respect of the traditional French cuisine as well as of the challenge rules – used both for rewarding creativity and for sanctioning uncreativity in case of non-respect:

"You forgot the essential, the cuisine française! When you cook a duck in the French cuisine, you make a meat juice, a condiment."

"For me, the candidate that I eliminate is a candidate off topic; it's the cereals. I wanted you to sublimate the everyday products; the candidate has just dispersed some on the plate, it doesn't deprive the candidate of his chef quality, but it's off topic."

French judges also framed appropriateness as the respect of the product, something that to them should take priority over the novelty the dish. As reflected in these two comments:

"A graphic design matters but neither should we be too confused. We should recognize the flavor of the "moule frite."

"Duck is a rather technical product, it allows a touch of creativity, but duck is a product to be respected."

Overall, the emphasis on the respect of the rules and product in France indicates that French judges not only show a preference for candidates' strategies they can quickly decipher, but they also require that the final products comply with these strategies and the rules of the social domain.

French judges also widely relied on coherence to assess the creativity of a dish and were especially responsive to its harmony. This was reflected in phrases such as "it's neat," "it's pure." When judges evaluated a dish as coherent, it often resulted in its evaluation as the most creative, as in the following examples:

> "Naoelle correctly incorporated the tips from Paul Bocuse; she made us an incredibly simple and harmonious dish."
>
> "Your dish is outstanding because it's a perfect equilibrium, it's like a music sheet, a bit baroque but a music sheet."

This last comment suggests that French judges value originality if and only if it does not break the general harmony of the product. The baroque nature of the music sheet corresponds to the judges' openness towards originality and novelty, while the metaphor of the music sheet itself emphasizes harmony and rigor. A music sheet shows the responsibilities of each party in such a way that a singer or an instrumentalist can grasp the big picture, placing harmony at the center of everything.

French judges focused not only on the organization of the elements but also their number. In particular, they reacted positively to dishes that were simple, with a limited number of elements: "*De la grande cuisine* but very simple is what we [French judges] love." Simplicity was also portrayed as the absolute criterion to identify creative talent: "With this challenge, we wanted to detect the little flame that each chef has when it's a very simple cuisine." French judges appreciated simplicity over complexity, as is shown from those two examples:

> "One may reproach the candidate on a lack of complexity. But the challenge was about fruits and they may be best in their pure form."
>
> "The scallop seems promising; it's simple but wasn't it the key for today's challenge, being

simple without being simplistic."

French judges also made an extensive use of the persistence criterion, paying considerable attention to the achievement of the candidate's creative goal as well to the efforts undertaken in the pursuit of that goal. Good execution resulted in positive creativity evaluations. For instance, a judge emphasized the remarkable execution of complicated recipe to justify his choice for assessing the dish as the most creative of the challenge:

> "The dressing is perfectly done with a brown butter sauce enhanced by a touch of iodine which is exquisite, with ratte potatoes which are difficult to cook and which are at the perfect temperature and a salad *coulis* which is just a pure delight."

Conversely, a bad execution was usually synonym of elimination. In the following quote, a judge emphasized the particular importance the jury attached to the execution criterion during the evaluation process and how it overpowered the emotional one: "We got to choose between a technical candidate and a passionate candidate who was lacking technique, that's a pity."

Finally, French judges rarely relied on novelty as a criterion to assess creativity. When it happened, judges focused on whether the dish challenged the codes and blends usually considered as harmonious in the culinary domain. Such a deviance was usually positively evaluated but under certain conditions. In particular, a novel dish also had to reflect the candidate's depth of knowledge or technique to be assessed as creative. For instance, in the pop-up restaurant challenge, a judge acclaimed the use of mozzarella for dessert:

> GUEST JUDGE: Visually, this is the first time that I'm presented with a dessert in a ball and that I have mozzarella for dessert. I congratulate the candidate on the boldness of her dish: the lemon explodes in the mouth, the mozzarella, the pear, the lychee. I find the recipe very original.
> JUDGE LIGNAC: I was a bit skeptical as for the use of mozzarella for dessert.
> JUDGE PIEGE: Yes, but *with the technique* of the candidate, it gives a spectacular result and provides pleasure.

Criteria: US. Coherence was the primary criterion used by US judges to assess creativity. As illustrated in the following example where judges asked the candidate a rhetorical

question about the main strength of her dish: “Mei, you know what's really great about this? It's the balance. There's a little sweetness from the coconut and the acid from the seaweed's really nice.” As a result, judges selected the dish amongst the most creative but not as the most creative. This instance is also representative of the average valence of the coherence criterion: positive, but not decisive for being assessed as the most creative.

The second most frequently used criterion in the US was novelty. US judges highly valued whether a dish deviated from and challenged the existing codes of the culinary domain. For example, during a Quickfire challenge around cranberries, a judge was positively impressed by how the dish was breaking the rules of the traditional *Borscht* – a soup made with beetroot and usually served with sour cream: “*Borscht* is hard. I think using the cranberries instead of vinegar as you would traditionally do in *borscht*, was really smart.” Deviance was always synonym of positive creativity evaluations in the US context. US judges liked to be surprised and were keen on changing their opinion even if it meant revising their most fundamental beliefs. This sentence illustrates this occurrence: “Sometimes, innovation comes from an idea that you look at and think, ‘I can't believe I haven't tasted that already, but I know I haven’t, and that's what makes it so great.”

US judges used persistence as much as novelty as a criterion to orientate their creativity assessment. In particular, they paid attention to whether the candidate possessed the technique to ensure the good execution of the dish. For instance, while evaluating a challenge revolving around the creation of a dish inspired by a famous New England literary work, the judges praised how the candidate had the technical means to support her ambition: “You tell a story, and you had the technique to pull it off.” In another occurrence, a perfect execution was described as the necessary complement to innovation: “I mean, I think that when you can combine a little bit of innovation with the fact that the dish was cooked so well – it ate very clean. It highlights the innovation a little bit more”. The very frequent use of words like

"under/well/over-cooked" also indicated the importance of the execution. While a proper execution was positively valued, in most cases, it only led the contestant to be assessed among the most creative, but not as the most creative, suggesting that persistence was a necessary but not sufficient condition for being evaluated as the most creative. This finding, coupled with the finding on the coherence criterion, seems to suggest that in the US context novelty was the most important criterion to be met to receive the highest creativity rating.

Finally, results showed that US judges only infrequently paid attention to a dish appropriateness. When they did so, they focused on the respect of the general culinary domain rules, which in most cases resulted in negative creativity evaluations, with judges urging the candidate to "do something modern, that's from a different era." For instance, in the challenge tribute to Julia Child, judges hesitated between a candidate whose *Coq au vin* was "textbook" and a candidate who offered her revisited version of the *duck à l'orange*:

> GUEST JUDGE 1: I love the *Coq au vin*, I thought it was really well done, and it was kind of textbook.
> GUEST JUDGE 2: I think Mei's was a little bit more of a personal statement. Taking a traditional idea and adding her own touch to it.
> JUDGE ACHESON: It was modern and pretty, and I still think it had a real sense of the *duck a l'orange*.

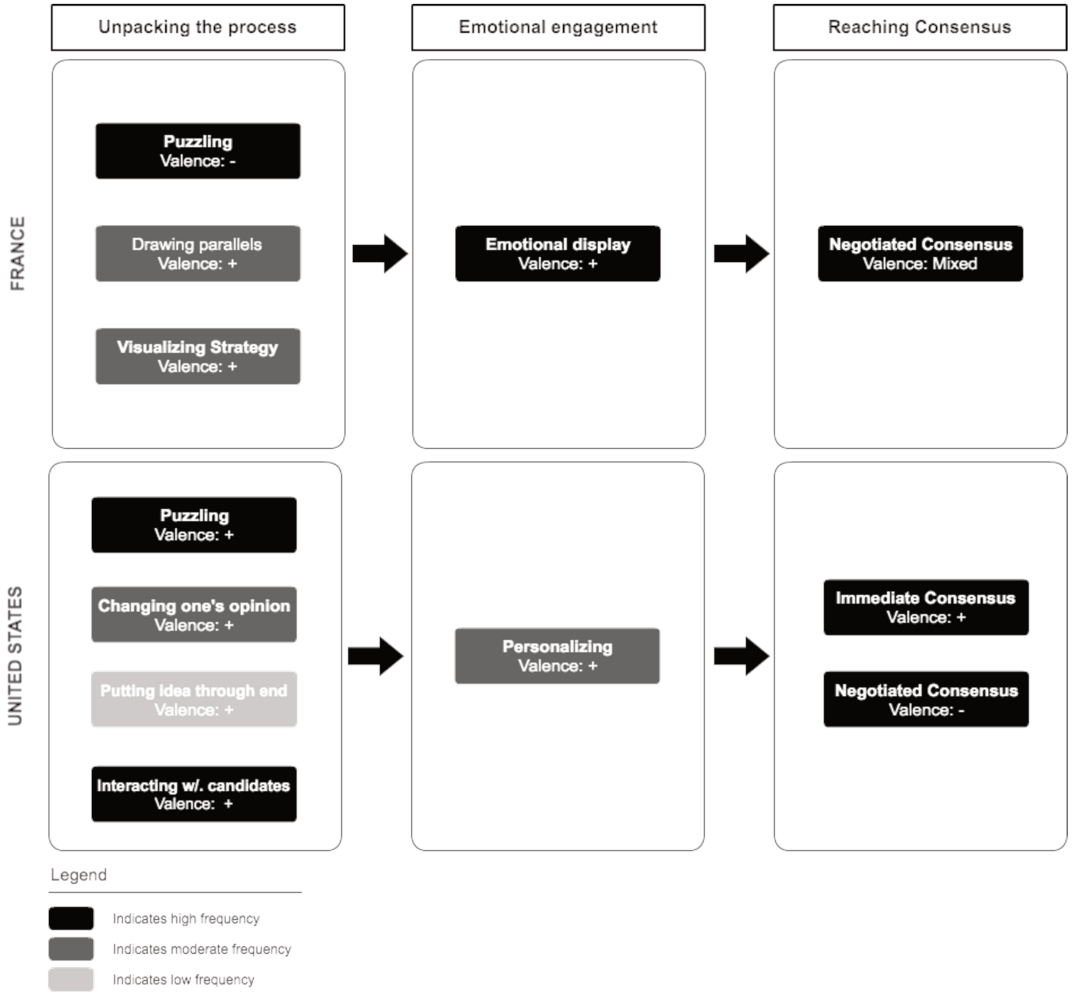
The final decision would favor the revisited dish, showing again how US judges favor novelty over classicism and appropriateness.

2.4.3. Process and Criteria in France and the US

Overall, my findings reveal that it is possible to identify a general structure of the creativity assessment process and criteria. Judges in the two cultures approached creativity assessment by first unpacking the creative process, then relying on emotional engagement, and finally finding consensus. Moreover, they all used four criteria to guide their choices, namely novelty, appropriateness, persistence, and coherence. However, I also observed striking cultural

differences in the moves used at each step of the process, and in the frequency and valence of the different criteria. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the creativity assessment process and criteria in France and in the US.

FIGURE 4
France Versus United States



The Process. French and US assessments of creativity varied in terms of the characteristics, valence, and frequency of the three steps of the assessment process. First, I found that *unpacking the process* (i.e., when judges attempt at deciphering the creative process behind the creative outcome) plays a critical and positive role in creativity assessment in the French culture, while its effect is more nuanced in the US culture. Moreover, judges in the two cultures "unpacked the process" in different ways: French judges emphasized the importance of a decipherable, understandable product that can immediately be made sense of; US judges,

on the other side, focused more on interacting with the candidates to understand how the dish was created. Decipherability is therefore not required in US culture as long as a clear meaning emerges from the interactions with the candidate. This finding corroborates extant research on creativity assessment in the US, which underlines the importance of the judge-creator relationship (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). However, my findings also pinpoint that this finding is not generalizable across different cultures, as these judge-creator interactions were virtually non-existent in the French edition of *Top Chef*.

French and US judges also differed in their way of using puzzling to gather information and subsequently build their own image of what was done. In France, puzzling meant pointing out the existence of a problem that could hamper the perceived creativity of the product. In contrast, US judges engaged in puzzling by raising potential questions that positively underline the diversity of the dish. This difference in meaning, in turn, affected the valence of puzzling in the two countries. In other words, puzzling had a negative connotation in the French context, resulting in negative creativity evaluations, and a positive one in the US.

While puzzling represented the most frequent move for unpacking the process in both France and US, the two countries differed in the second most prevalent move they used. In France, judges frequently attempted to draw parallels between what they already knew and the dish under evaluation. Their ability to do so resulted in positive creativity assessments, and often in the selection of the dish as the most creative. In contrast, US judges paid considerable attention and reacted extremely positively to the extent to which the plate being evaluated changed their opinion. This shows that French and American judges react very differently to an unknown scenario: French judges need to cling the unknown to something familiar, whereas US judges were positively impressed when they were facing something unexpected that required them to modify their schemas. Second, the *emotional engagement* step played a critical role in the French and US versions and had a positive valence in both contexts. However, France

and the US differed in how often judges relied on emotional engagement to assess creativity. While French judges often relied on their spontaneous emotions during the evaluation process, US judges were less emotionally expressive, and let their immediate emotional reactions guide their creativity assessment only when they were truly enthusiastic about the dish under evaluation. US judges were more likely to reflect on their emotions to connect them to memories, past experiences or personal convictions. In contrast, French judges less commonly took a reflective stance to their emotional reaction.

Third, when the time came to find *consensus*, French judges primarily entered into a debate, showing their need for a structured consensus, where US judges resorted equally to negotiated and immediate consensus. This indicates that if US judges are open to new ideas and willing to embrace change, they also appreciate assessing their effects rapidly, be them positive or negative.

The Criteria. As discussed earlier, I find that US and French judges differ on the frequency and valence of the two classic dimensions of creativity (novelty vs. appropriateness), and in their valorization of the coherence criteria, more precisely its simplicity dimension. First, the importance and valence of the two traditional creativity dimensions, novelty and appropriateness (Amabile, 1983), vary significantly across the two cultures. On one side, French judges put more emphasis and value on the appropriateness of the idea. On the other side, US judges emphasize and reward novelty. Interestingly, both French and US judges rarely used the criterion they emphasized less (novelty in France, appropriateness in the US), and, when they did so, it yielded mixed effects on their evaluation. This, however, does not mean that US judges are entirely against appropriateness, but just that the valence of appropriateness depends on which of its facets judges consider. US judges attribute a positive valence to the respect of challenge-based rules, but their reaction to the respect of domain-wise rules is less positive: US judges penalizing classicism, that they conceive as limited originality, and

consider authenticity as a necessary but not sufficient condition to recognize someone as the most creative in a given competition.

Second, judges in both cultures strongly emphasize candidates' persistence and the coherence of the dish (i.e., internal logic). However, France and the US differ in the valence of one sub-criteria of coherence, simplicity. Simplicity has a positive effect in France, as reflected in this judge's conviction "a classical dish is an innovative dish that has turned successful." However, this positive effect does not apply to the US context, where the prevalent idea can be summarized as "if it's gonna be that simple, it better be really perfect."

2.5. Discussion

By examining the assessment process and criteria used by French and US judges within a similar context, I have described a model of culturally imprinted creativity assessment. My model shows how experts rely on different processes and criteria as a result of their cultural environment. In doing so, it builds theory on how creativity is assessed differently across cultures and why intercultural differences exist. Overall, my findings underline the need to overcome the traditional East vs. West dichotomy and to go beyond the individualism-collectivism dimension by showing how two individualistic Western countries sharply differ in their assessment of creativity. I also contribute to the creativity literature in general and bridge the outcome and process perspectives of creativity by demonstrating their complementarity in the assessment process**.**

2.5.1. Assessing Creativity in Different Cultures

How creativity assessment happens in different cultures. My paper extends the existing literature on cultural differences in the assessment of creativity (Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016; Niu & Sternberg, 2001). While extant literature focused only on intercultural differences in criteria and their valence, my grounded theory approach

allowed me to pinpoint cultural differences also in the assessment process. And while my primary focus was on developing a model of a culturally imprinted creativity assessment process, cultural differences in the criteria emerged from my data. This suggests that process and criteria are inextricably linked, with the process of decision-making affecting the criteria used and therefore the resulting judgments (Hsee et al., 1999; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Therefore, the influence of culture on the assessment of creativity can only be understood by a conjoint analysis of the assessment process and criteria (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Harvey & Kou, 2013). For example, the prominence of the appropriateness criterion in France could not be fully understood without considering the high tendency of French judges to draw parallels and their dislike for being puzzled by the outcome. In the same fashion, the positive valence of puzzling and changing one's opinion in the US seems one of the reasons underlying US judges' preference for novelty as a criterion, both in terms of frequency and valence. In addition, my findings provide a possible explanation of why there are some discrepancies in the literature concerning the effect of instructing participants to focus on the evaluation criteria neglected in their cultures (Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Niu & Sternberg, 2001). As people would still keep using their natural evaluation processes, the mere modification of the assessment criteria is insufficient to foster their ability to assess creativity as measured by the novelty and usefulness criteria.

My emergent theory also corroborates and extends research on assessment criteria. I support extant findings that show that cultures differ in the intensity of use and in the valence of the novelty and appropriateness criteria (Erez & Nouri, 2010; Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010; Paletz & Peng, 2008). Moreover, I show that novelty and appropriateness are not the only criteria used for assessing creativity: not only coherence and persistence were decisive for assessing creativity in both cultures, but they also played a larger role than one of the two "classic" criteria. This finding reinforces, the idea that creativity might be more than just the

product of flexibility (De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008). Moreover, while creativity literature has already suggested the importance of persistence (De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008) and coherence (Harvey, 2014; Holm-Hadulla, 2013; Lingo & O'Mahony, 2010; Seidel & O'Mahony 2010) as pathways to achieve creativity, their importance as assessment criteria has been neglected, particularly in intercultural studies of creativity. In addition, these criteria are clearly focusing on what happened during the creative process (rather than on the creative outcome in itself): specifically, persistence and coherence respectively relate to the effort and ingredients put into the creative process. Therefore, coherence and persistence are nicely reflecting the unpacking the creative process step of the assessment process: if judges did not engage in the unpacking the process step, the persistence and coherence criteria could not appear. Last, the emergence of these new criteria has important implications for both theory and practice, as judges are usually instructed to rate creativity based on novelty and usefulness only (Amabile, 1996). However, in some cultures these two criteria might not reflect what judges perceive as "creative", thus generating a disconnect between what is measured and what creativity means within that culture. My findings suggest that researchers and practitioners alike should adopt a more fine-grained perspective in defining what creativity is and how it is assessed, especially when multiple cultures are involved. In doing so, I answer the growing call for considering criteria beyond novelty and appropriateness in creativity assessment (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016).

Why cultural differences occur. Studies of how culture affects the assessment of creativity often overlook why these differences occur (Niu & Sternberg, 2001; Hempel & Sue-Chan, 2010). I believe that many of the intercultural differences that I observe in my study can be attributed to differences in cultural values between France and the US. In particular, the difference in uncertainty avoidance (high for France, low for the US) seems to explain many of the observed dissimilarities. Uncertainty avoidant countries have a preference for clearly

interpretable events and structured decisions, whereas risk-taking countries are comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty (Hofstede, 1980). This can explain the visceral need of French to be able to immediately unpack the creative process, while US judges accept that the creative process can be a "black box" and that it can take time and interaction to understand what happened during product creation. Uncertainty avoidant countries also tend to be expressive cultures, where emotions should be shown according to situations; on the other side, emotions are not supposed to be shown in low uncertainty avoidant cultures (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 1991). This might explain why emotional display is more prevalent in France than in the US. Finally, differences in uncertainty avoidance can explain why the two cultures used different criteria. The higher emphasis given to appropriateness and simplicity in France reflects the preference for clear and defined outcomes of France while the US judges' greater reliance on the novelty criterion reflects the openness to risk-taking that characterize the US.

The long-term orientation dimension (high in France, low in the US) can also explain intercultural differences in creativity assessment. Cultures high in this dimension are pragmatic and believe that truth depends very much on the situation, context and time. In contrast, cultures low in this dimension are normative, meaning that results must be quickly checked against norms (Hofstede et al., 1991). In terms of process, this explains the importance for French judges to visualize and contextualize the strategy of the candidate, while US judges tended to move to evaluation quickly. Moreover, the difference in long-term orientation can explain why US judges strived for quickly reaching a decision, while French judges engaged more often in debates to identify the most creative and least creative dishes. The pragmatism of the long-term oriented French culture can explain why French judges pay careful attention that the dish being evaluated is consistent with the context. Similarly, the preference for persistence reflects the orientation towards the future (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010) that characterizes long-term oriented cultures.

Finally, differences in the power distance dimension (high for France, low for the US) can explain differences in the unpacking the process step. Power distant cultures accept unequal distribution of power and value steep hierarchies with no need for further justification (Hofstede, 1980). The high value of power distance in France can explain the absence of interaction between the judges and the candidates, with the judges wanting to maintain distance from the candidates because of their difference in hierarchy. On the other side, interactions were very frequent in the US, where hierarchical differences are not so relevant.

2.5.2. Ahead of the East-West divide

Most studies on culture and creativity focused on the differences between the East and the West, with a particular focus on China versus the US (e.g., Jaquish & Ripple, 1984; Rudowicz et al., 1995; Zha et al., 2006). This is based on the assumption that individualism dimension drives cross-cultural differences in creativity (Rinne, Steel, & Fairweather, 2013) since it influences the conception of the self as independent versus interdependent and, consequently, individuals' cognition and emotion (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). I show that judges in France and the US, two cultures regarded as close in general (even if they are less close than what people usually think), and under the individualism dimension in particular, strikingly differ in how they evaluate creativity. In so doing, I make two main contributions. First, my findings strongly suggest that culture can generate profound differences in creativity assessment, even when two countries are deemed to be culturally close. Understanding differences between culturally close countries is even more pivotal, as the general tendency to overlook cultural differences is likely to be even stronger in these countries. This would result in fewer adjustments efforts and thus in potential problems, as the awareness of cultural differences is essential to generate outcomes perceived as creative by audiences from other cultures (Chua, Morris, & Mor, 2012). Second, my results point out that dimensions other than individualism have a substantial effect on creativity assessment. In

doing so, I answer the call for research to focus on dimensions other than individualism (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010). In particular, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation are likely to play a relevant role. While individualism has been shown to have a significant effect on idea generation (e.g., Yao et al., 2012), my results suggest that other dimensions might affect different phases of the creative process. This may be explained by the respective needs of the different phases. The generation phase mostly requires cognitive flexibility (e.g., Amabile, 1983; Campbell, 1960; Guilford, 1968; Perry-Smith & Mannucci, *forthcoming*), which is stimulated and encouraged in individualistic cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, the reduction of uncertainty feelings is a critical need in the evaluation phase (Mueller, Melwani, & Goncalo, 2011), hence the importance of the uncertainty avoidance dimension in this phase.

Broader Implications And Directions For Future Research

My emergent findings also advance the creativity literature in general and inform a long-standing debate between the process and outcome perspectives on creativity, which have been conceptualized as opposite and incompatible in extant literature (Drazin et al. 1999). While the process perspective has been interested in individuals' engagement in creative acts, regardless of the creativity of the resulting outcomes (Drazin et al., 1999; Ford, 1996), the outcome perspective has focused on individual and contextual elements that affect the ability to generate creative outcomes, paying little or no attention to how these outcomes are achieved (Drazin, 1990; Zhou & Shalley, 2008). By showing that, in both cultures, judges assessed creativity by both trying to unpack the creative process and focusing on the characteristics of the outcome, I demonstrate that expert judges consider both process and product to assess creativity. This suggests the need to consider both in creativity theorizing, in order to fully understand what creativity is and how it is defined. A process that is more understandable and transparent, for example, can prompt an external observer to judge the resulting outcome as more creative,

independent of the characteristics of the outcome. This is consistent with extant findings that suggest that interpretability plays a great role in how a creative outcome is received (Boudreau et al. 2012; Uzzi et al. 2013). Finally, by finding that both cultures emphasize the creative process, I challenge and advance the literature on *cultural* processes and outcomes. Traditionally, this stream of research has proposed culture as a contingency reconciling the process and outcome perspectives, with the West emphasizing the outcome, while the East was more process oriented (Srivastava & Misra, 2001). My findings dispute the assumption that the West overlooks the process, showing that process and outcome are analyzed conjointly to evaluate creativity both in France and in the US.

Looking at the characteristics of my setting suggests further potential contributions, as well as boundary conditions. I selected the context of professional chefs competitions, and the reality competition show *Top Chef* because it granted me a high degree of transparency and thus to isolate the effects of culture on creativity assessment. Another advantage was that expert judges rated individuals' outcomes on a continuum that ranged from uncreative to most creative. This allowed me to study the "two arms of culture," looking at both reward and punishment. In the words of Runco, "culture can reward behaviors that are valuable or punish behaviors that are taboo […] Cultural influences cannot be understood by simply examining what is valuable and what is encouraged. We must also take note of what is extinguished" (Runco, 2014: 255). My setting allowed me to consider both sides of cultural influences.

Despite these strengths, it is important to explore how my findings transfer to other work contexts, as well as potential limitations of my research design. Transference between two contexts is possible when the two are similar on those elements that emerged to be significant in the studied context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2002). In my setting, creativity assessment is conducted by a group of experts and focuses on individuals with limited status producing an outcome on which the assessment is based. My insights hence might be more useful in contexts

sharing the same characteristics. This includes all the professions where creative work is entrusted to young individuals, where evaluation is based on prototypes, and where a group of experts has the final say in the assessment process. This embraces settings such as advertising, product design, cultural industries (e.g., filmmaking, television), but also organizations that use a decision-making committee to assess the creativity of ideas produced internally, a practice that has become very common nowadays (Loewenstein & Mueller, 2016). Finally, it can also transfer to crowdsourcing communities composed of organizations' experts "that repeatedly collect ideas for new products and services from a large, dispersed "crowd" of non-experts (consumers) over time" (Bayus, 2013: 226). As a matter of fact, it has further been documented that those consumers frequently engage in reverse engineering the creative process to suggest creative ideas to the company they are affiliated with. This is exemplified in this quote from one founder of a software company in Sweden with one of the largest online communities of its field: "This kind of reverse engineering by users was cool with us [the management of the firm]. In fact, we encouraged it!" (Dahlander & Frederiksen, 2012: 992). The importance of reverse engineering the creative process in crowdsourcing communities mirrors my finding on the importance of the decipherability of the creative process to assess creativity in both cultures. This transferability of my findings to crowdsourcing communities is interesting, given organizations' increasing use of crowdsourcing (Mueller, Wakslak, & Krishnan, 2014). In sum, my culinary context has important similarities with creativity assessment in more traditional organizational settings, especially since chefs must satisfy both artistic and commercial logics: "there is no such thing as a starving chef" (Leschziner, 2015). Therefore, the way creativity is assessed in the culinary domain is closer to the organizational way: assessments are highly frequent and do not solely rely on the novelty dimension but also emphasize the appropriateness dimension.

While I believe that my findings have implications for the intercultural assessment of

creativity within organizations, particularly those with the characteristics defined above, exploring the unique aspects of my sample and context also opens up possibilities for future research. For example, regarding the level of analysis, my emerging findings did not entail the assessment of outcomes generated by teams. The latter might raise other issues than the described cultural influences on the assessment process and criteria. For instance, cultural differences in the assessment of team creativity might encompass the very conception of team creativity. Some cultures might assess the team outcome as collective and unitary (Gong et al., 2013; Taggar, 2002), while others might decompose it into individual creative contributions (Pirola-Merlo & Mann, 2004; Triandis et al., 1963). For example, it could be that in the US team creativity evaluation is assessed as the sum of the individual contributions, given the high level of individualism. Future research could explore how team creativity is assessed in different cultures to observe these cultural variations. The importance of the creators' status also deserves further exploration, as the literature has shown the critical importance of status in the evaluation process. High-status individuals receive more attention (Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011) and are given the benefit of the doubt (Phillips, Turco, & Zuckerman, 2013) so that their deviance is interpreted as creativity (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). There are reasons to believe that the impact of status on creativity assessment is culture-dependent. For example, it might be that high power distant cultures rely more heavily on status as a cue for creativity assessment. Power is expected to be distributed unequally, meaning that high power distant countries normalize the attribution of better evaluation to already high-status individuals.

Regarding the characteristics of the judges, the composition of the two groups of judges in the French and US context was similar (personality, gender and status wise). While this allowed me to isolate the effect of culture on creativity assessment, I was not able to observe whether jury composition and diversity played a different role in various countries. This area of inquiry might be worth exploring, as group composition has been found to play a significant

role in assessment processes. For example, group gender composition has been found to have a significant effect on the decision process (Hawkins & Power, 1999) and accuracy (Apesteguia, Azmat, & Iriberri, 2012; LePine, Hollenbeck, Ilgen, Colquitt, & Ellis, 2002). Research, however, has neither delineated the effect of group composition on the assessment of creativity, nor the effect of culture on the relationship between group composition and decision-making. Future research could address these questions by looking at judges' groups characterized by greater heterogeneity under different dimensions (e.g., gender, status). Beyond the judges' characteristics, team dynamics might be worth further exploration. Due to the television timing, the decision process is shortened. Judges are then fully aware that they have a shorter time for debating. Therefore, even when they discuss, they know they have to come up to a consensus in a reasonable amount of time. The assessment process (and specifically the way individual decisions translate into a collective decision) can thus play out differently in settings where there is a more formal procedure (or more time) for the decision.

Last, the unique aspect of my culinary context suggests potential alternative explanations. For instance, the emphasis on appropriateness might relate to the culinary context. France and the US indeed sharply differ in terms of the codification of their culinary domain. In France, the importance of respecting the culinary tradition is engraved in a rich historical context. Cooking methods, code, and literature emerged in France since the 18th century. The statesman Prince and renowned connoisseur Talleyrand nicely expressed the French emphasis on *speaking of* food: "After one sampled wine with eye, ear, and nose, the next step was *not* to drink it but *to speak of it*" (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013). This resulted in the French cuisine being highly codified. In contrast, the American cuisine is a non-codified cuisine (Davis & McBride, 2008). This might thus explain why appropriateness is a decisive criterion in the selection process in the haute cuisine domain in France, but not in the US. However, some points are worth noting: first, appropriateness in France is about the respect not only of the

culinary domain rules but also of the product and the challenges' rules. Moreover, the American cuisine is varied, and some of its regional cuisines are pretty much aligned with the French culinary techniques (e.g., the New York cuisine) (Leschziner, 2015). Overall, these arguments suggest the codification of the French cuisine is not enough to explain the importance of appropriateness in the French context. Yet, future research could explore the cultural impact on the novelty-appropriateness tension in a different setting to definitely rule out potential alternative explanations.

2.6. Conclusion

Something can be called "creative" only after it is assessed as such by an appropriate audience that is always embedded in a cultural context. Therefore, creativity assessment cannot be understood apart from the culture in which it is embedded. In particular, my analysis reveals that the process and criteria of creativity assessment vary across cultures. I find that they vary not only in terms of valence but also in terms of frequency. I hope that this study fosters the recently increased interest in creativity assessment and evaluation, in order to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of this phase and its pivotal role in the creative process.

Chapter 3

A Matter of Taste: Status, Identity and Creativity

3.1. Introduction

In a global, dynamic and knowledge-based economy, organizations depend on the creative ideas from their employees to survive and thrive (Amabile, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993; Zhou & Shalley, 2008). The right assessment of the creative potential of their employees' ideas is, therefore, a key factor for organizations' performance and competitiveness (Amabile, 1996; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; George, 2007; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010). Yet assessing creativity is a daunting task (Amabile, 1983; Silva & Oldham, 2012; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003) given that "the very essence of the creative is its novelty, and hence we have no standard by which to judge it" (Rogers, 1995:351). Thus, because of its complexity, evaluators rely on cues to assess individual creativity (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Rogers, 1995). In particular, the creator's status – the occupation of a central position in the social hierarchy that results from accumulated acts of deference (Goode, 1978; Whyte, 1943) – is often a critical lens through which an audience forms its creativity judgment (Kasof, 1995a). Therefore, it is essential to understand how status impacts the creativity evaluation – conceptualized as the assessment of the novelty and usefulness of ideas, products and services by expert observers (Amabile, 1996).

To date, researchers have thoroughly explored the effect of the creator's status on the evaluation of his creativity by an expert audience, however without reaching a consensus. Some researchers advocate a positive impact of status on the evaluation of creativity, arguing that status acts as an informational cue about the quality of the generated ideas (Sauder, Lynn, & Podolny, 2012), which increases both the attention (Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011) and the benefit of the doubt (Philips, Turco, & Zuckerman, 2013) that an audience grants to high-status creators' ideas. Others, in contrast, report a negative relationship, arguing that the visibility advantage of high-status creators comes with an enlargement of the audience, meaning more diverse tastes to satisfy and the possibility of a snobbish effect with the audience assessing high-

status creators' endeavors less favorably to distinguish oneself from the mass (Cattani, Ferriani, & Allison, 2014; Kovácz & Sharkey, 2014). Management scholars have attempted to resolve these inconsistencies by suggesting that the creative benefits of status depend on contingencies (Cattani, Ferriani & Allison, 2014; Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). I build on this line of inquiry by focusing on the role of a specialist identity. An audience almost exclusively focuses its attention on the creator during the evaluation process (Runco, 2007), suggesting a pivotal role for the creator's identity in creativity assessment (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). In particular, a specialist identity has been shown to affect the evaluation process (Pontikes, 2012; Zuckerman et al., 2003).

However most of the studies investigating the joint effect of status and a specialist identity do not focus on creativity as an outcome, instead focusing on employability (Zuckerman et al., 2003) or performance (Pontikes, 2012). Moreover, to date, the only empirical study exploring the joint effect of a high status and a specialist identity on creativity evaluation suggests that high-status creators need to develop a generalist identity for an audience to judge them as more creative than their middle-status counterparts (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). This is because an audience expects more deviance from high-status creators to dispel any impression that they are resting on their laurels. Yet, this study has focused on status conceived and operationalized as past success and has focused on the creativity evaluation of long-established individuals. There is reason to believe that the relationship between the creator's status, specialist identity and the evaluation of his creativity will play out differently depending on the source of status and the timing of the evaluation. First, when an individual derives his status from his affiliation with high-status others (Podolny, 1993; Bothner, Godart & Lee, 2009) *and* not from past success, he benefits from an enhanced reputation without being cognitively constrained by past success (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2015), he is hence preserved from the complacency pitfall that an audience is prompt to penalize (Bothner, Kim & Smith, 2012).

However, when the creator derives his status from prestigious affiliations, an audience looks for cues to establish the link between his status and his quality: a specialist identity can act as such an informational cue about quality (Hsu, 2006; Zuckerman et al., 2003). Second, when the creativity evaluation concern long-established individuals, it is easy to interpret retrospectively deviance as creativity, i.e., when deviance is no more deviance since the product of the deviance has long been integrated into the norms of the social context. In contrast, when the evaluation of creativity is not temporally decoupled from the immediate creative effort, the evaluation is more complex (Rogers, 1995) and status and identity play the roles of critical lenses through which creativity judgments are formed (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Kasof, 1995a). When the creator derives his status from connections to high-status contacts, his status does not act as a direct signal of competency and a specialist identity can ease the assessment process (Hsu, 2006).

Building on this reasoning, I develop a model of identity as a contingency for the effect of status on creativity. The creation of a specialist identity enables high status creators to activate the creativity evaluation advantages associated with their status. I test and find support for this hypothesis in a setting that embodies key attributes of my theoretical framework: the American haute cuisine. First, like many cultural fields, uncertainty prevails. Status is hence a critical mechanism widely used to thwart this uncertainty. Second, status is usually the product of affiliation in the field of haute cuisine, which makes this context particularly relevant to study the relational view of status. Third, the emphasis on openness of the American haute cuisine makes it a unique setting to study creativity and the degree of experimentation, the essential element of a chef's generalist identity. Finally, the highly hierarchical structure of the gastronomic field provides the opportunity to isolate individual contribution, making it an ideal setting to explore individual creativity. I collected information on the chefs selected as semifinalists, nominees, and winners by the James Beard Foundation Awards (JBF Awards)

between 2008 and 2015.

This paper offers three main contributions. First, this study contributes to the creativity literature by developing our understanding of the relationship between the creator's status and the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience. I propose a theory of status activation: status creative advantages need to be activated by the creation of a specialist identity. Second, in doing so, this paper develops the role played by the source of status for the relationship between the creator's specialist identity and the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience. Depending on whether one conceives status as deriving from past success or relationships, status will have opposite effects on the relationship between the creator's specialism and the evaluation of his creativity. Third, this paper allows the isolation of the true effect of the creator's status on creativity evaluation by striving not to decouple the idea generation and evaluation times.

3.2. Theory

Creativity is the generation of ideas, products, or services that are judged to be novel and useful by external observers (Amabile, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman et al., 1993). As underlined by this definition, creativity is not an objective property but is rather socially constructed: if a creative idea starts with an individual generating it, its impact on the domain and usefulness depend on the audience's recognition of its creativity (Csikszentmihályi, 1996, 1999). Moreover, the assessing audience can divest itself of the conception that creators hold about their work: "the audience can hardly be compelled to contemplate some events as its "inventor"" (Nietzsche, 1886, quoted by Jones, 1997:209). This leads some authors to even argue that creativity is neither located in the creator nor in the idea but only in the attributions provided by some audience (Kasof, 1995b): "it is a mistake to look for genius either in an individual or in an individual's work; rather, genius is a characteristic that society bestows upon an individual in response to his or her work" (Weisberg, 1986:88).

Overall, this suggests that the assessment phase of the creative process is critical (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Rietzschel et al., 2010). Assessing creativity is also extremely complex because of the novel nature of creativity (Rogers, 1995): evaluators must navigate the narrow line between originality and weirdness (Amabile, 1983). Its critical and complex nature prompted scholars to pay a growing attention to the assessment phase, focusing on the assessing process (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003), criteria (Lonergan, Scott, & Mumford, 2004; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010), audience (Berg, 2016), and the antecedents influencing creative idea acceptance (Kijkuit & Van den Ende, 2007; Mueller, Melwani, Goncalo, 2011). Among these antecedents, scholars have pointed out the creator's status as a critical lens through which an audience forms its creativity judgments (Kasof, 1995a). Yet, to date, the empirical evidence on the effect of the creator's status on an audience's evaluation of her creativity is unclear.

On the positive side, status acts as an informal cue about quality (Podolny, 1993; Spence, 1973; Azoulay, Stuart & Wang, 2013), leading evaluators to pay higher attention to the ideas generated by high-status creators (Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011), give them the benefit of the doubt (Philips et al., 2013) and interpret their atypical ideas as creative (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). Moreover, there is an interplay between the benefits in terms of evaluation and the actual creativity of high-status individuals, thus fueling a virtuous circle. Evaluations are increasingly occurring throughout the creative process (Lubart, 2001; Harvey & Kou, 2013). The increased attention that high-status individuals gain during the evaluation process means more feedback, upon which high-status individuals can build to develop further their ideas. As a result, high-status individuals' actual creativity is enhanced which in turn make their ideas more likely to be selected and implemented by an expert audience (Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011). Similarly, knowing that they are granted benefit of the doubt, high-status individuals tend to experiment more (Philips & Zuckerman, 2001), therefore increasing their actual creativity, and thus also completing the virtuous circle of evaluation advantages converting

themselves in greater actual creativity that then transfers to higher evaluation. Altogether, those findings suggest that creators' status positively impacts the evaluation of their creativity, thus fueling a virtuous circle with the actual creativity.

On the negative side, status is thought to have different effects depending on the two stages of the evaluation process: a screening phase, during which evaluators select a pool of candidates who are worthy of a deeper consideration, and, secondarily, the designation of the most creative creator in the consideration set. High-status creators are advantaged in the screening phase because they are more likely to come to mind due to their visibility advantage (Goode, 1978; Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011). Low-status creators, however, are advantaged in the second stage of the evaluation process for two reasons. First, low-status creators exhibit a higher level of fit with evaluators' tastes. Low-status creators who made it to the screening phase usually managed to catch the evaluators' attention based on this fit. A second mechanism whereby low-status creators are advantaged in the selection of the most creative creator of the consideration set has to do with the effect of status on popularity. People perceive products as valuable not just for their functional characteristics but also as signals of social identity (Berger and Heath, 2007, 2009). Popular items are less valuable in the sense that they signal membership in a mass audience rather than in an exclusive elite (Cattani, Ferriani & Allisson, 2014; Bourdieu, 1984; Kovácz & Sharkey, 2014). In the literary world, for instance, a person might choose to give a popular book a more negative rating in order to distinguish herself from the mass (Kovácz & Sharkey, 2014). Consequently, scholars have presented contrasting viewpoints on the impact of status on the evaluation of creativity.

To resolve this conundrum, researchers have proposed that whether the creator's status positively or negatively affects creativity judgment depends on different boundary conditions. First, the type of audience influences the effect of the creator's status on the evaluation outcome (Cattani, Ferriani & Allison, 2014). In the Hollywood context, awards bestowed by peers (i.e.,

by other actors, as in the case of the Oscars) are more likely to favor high-status creators while critics (e.g., the National Society of Film Critics) are more likely to bestow their prizes to low-status creators (Cattani, Ferriani & Allison, 2014). In addition, at the creator level, a painter's stylistic inconsistency determines the effect of his status on an audience's evaluation of his creativity. In a laboratory experiment, participants only judged Picasso's paintings (a high-status painter) as more creative than Braque's artworks (a middle-status painter) when they were presented with a set of paintings executed in different artistic styles (i.e., Cubist, Realist, Pointillist and Abstract styles (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). While insightful, this study conceives status as past success and focuses on the creativity evaluation of long-established creators (i.e., judgment of artworks executed during the 1912-1918 period); it is therefore of limited help to identify the joint effect of status and a specialist identity on the evaluation of creativity when the creator's status does not derive from past success and when creativity is concomitantly assessed with the creative effort.

I argue that to understand the relationship between status, identity, and creativity evaluation; two critical elements should be considered. First, it is necessary to account for the source of status: overlooking the source of status results in an underspecification of the role of a specialist identity. Second, the evaluation should not be decoupled from the immediate creative effort: when decoupled, it is impossible to distinguish the evaluation of creativity from the mere evolution of the evaluation climate (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 1999). The more time is passing, the higher the risk to retrospectively interpret deviance as creativity when deviance is no more deviance and has been for long integrated into the norms of the social context.

3.2.1. Status sources

Status – the occupation of a central position in the social hierarchy that results from accumulated acts of deference (Goode, 1978; Whyte, 1943) – has two distinct sources (Sauder, Lynn, & Podolny, 2012). According to the sociological view, status is the result of judgments

pronounced by third parties that influence the perception of the broader community (Rao, 1994; Perretti, & Negro, 2006; White & White, 1993). According to the relational view, the affiliation of the focal individual can also influence his or her status: those with connections to high-status others are viewed more positively while those tied to low-status others, be it individuals or institutions, are penalized through a lowering of their status (Podolny, 1993; Bothner, Godart & Lee, 2009). In other words, a status can be "borrowed" (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2015; Podolny & Phillips, 1996). Exploring the effect of a borrowed status on the evaluation of creativity is warranted. First, existing research suggests that people tend to assign status based on connections (rather than on past success) because it is easier to identify than the real quality of the focal individual (Sauder et al., 2012). Second, scholars have argued and shown that a "borrowed" status harnesses the positives and eliminates the negatives of status. Individuals who borrow a status benefit from an enhanced reputation without being cognitively constrained by past success and by the pressure to maintain one's status (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2015). The social networks literature particularly has found empirical support for the superiority of borrowing a status compared to having a high status. For example, being connected to a broker is more beneficial for creativity than spanning structural holes oneself, providing high knowledge flow without the search cost (Brass, 2009). Likewise, research showing the positive relationship between centrality and creativity has widely used a centrality measure accounting for the centrality of the ego's contacts, hence referring to this very same idea of borrowing one's contacts' status (e.g., Gonzalez-Brambila, Veloso & Krackhardt, 2013).

In this context, investigating the relational view of status to shed some light on the relationship between status and creativity is required. All the more so as there are reasons to believe that activating the status advantages in terms of creativity evaluation requires different mechanisms whether status is derived from affiliations or past achievements. In this paper, I focus on the role of a specialist identity that scholars have identified as particularly important

for the assessment of creativity.

3.2.2 Specialist or Generalist?

Audience and creator have a very different locus of attention (Runco, 2007): when creators direct their attention to the act, the audience attention tends to be on the creators themselves. Moreover, the evaluation, conceived as a set of processes that contributes to making judgments and assessing entities, requires categorization (Lamont, 2012: 206; Paollela & Durand, 2016). It then follows that the evaluation process consists in the categorization of the creator by the audience. Therefore a creator's generalist or specialist identity is a critical lens through which an audience forms its creativity judgment. A creator with a specialist (generalist) identity is associated with a limited number of (multiples) categories (Zuckerman et al., 2003). There is a trade-off: specialist identities simplify the evaluation process but restrict the freedom of action while generalist identities allow more flexibility but carry the risk of being perceived as mere incompetence (Zuckerman et al., 2003). Researchers have identified some boundary conditions under which a type of identity is preferred, such as the type of audience (Pontikes, 2012) or at the creator level, career age (Zuckerman et al., 2003) and status (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014).

3.2.3. The activation of a borrowed status: The role of a specialist identity

If an audience expects a generalist identity from a high-status individual who derives his status from his past success, it is because the audience wants to be certain that the individual is not resting on his laurels (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). Complacency has indeed been identified as the greatest pitfall of status and relates to the idea of high-status individuals developing self-satisfaction and subsequently succumbing to indifference and exhibiting less agency, which ultimately impairs their performance (Bothner et al., 2012). The audience higher demand for novelty is hence perfectly aligned with the avoidance of complacency. In contrast, when status comes from an affiliation, there is no such risk of the individual resting on his

laurels because the individual has not necessarily been successful in the past. It follows that an audience does not hold the same expectation for novelty because the risk of complacency is way lower. Nevertheless, if deriving one's status from affiliation rather than from past success solves the complacency issue, it raises the question of the link between status and quality: the quality of the borrower is often assumed but never certain. Therefore, an audience primarily looks for the activation of the link between the contact's status and the borrower's quality.

Specifically, a *specialist* professional identity activates the link between the contact's status and the borrower's quality in two ways. First, the affiliation to a limited number of categories associated with a specialist identity acts as a cue for competency. Pure players are perceived as developing a stronger expertise than their generalist counterparts because they can concentrate their limited resources on a unique category. For example, typecast movie actors are more likely to find a job than those who play parts ranging across multiple genres because they signal their expertise more easily on the job market (Zuckerman et al., 2003). Specialized learning from experience in a unique category increases an audience perception of the borrower's competency, and so activates the link between the contact's status and the borrower's quality.

Second, a specialist identity means superior creativity evaluation for the creator. An evaluation is indeed based on a comparison between the creative endeavor and the categorical prototype. The evaluation is then simplified and favors a creator when there is an alignment between the creator and the categorical prototype. Cross-categorization impairs this alignment and consequently leads to a lower evaluation by the audience. For example, when a movie targets multiple genres, the movie is less appealing to its audience because the latter will judge that the movie cannot neatly fit to any of the categories (Hsu, 2006). I argue that the same line of reasoning applies not only to the product (e.g., the movie) but also to the creator (e.g., the director). When a creator focuses on a limited number of styles during his career and thus

benefits from a specialist identity, he activates the link between his contact's status and his quality, favoring more positive creative evaluations.

Altogether the literature implies a complementary effect between the creator's status and a specialist identity, providing the creator with both cognitive flexibility and a higher competency perception, and so doing foster higher evaluations of his creativity by an external audience. Consequently,

Hypothesis: The more specialized the creator's identity, the more positive the effect of the creator's status on the audience evaluation of his or her creativity.

3.3. Methods

3.3.1. Setting: The American Haute Cuisine

The research setting is the American haute cuisine. This industry embodies key attributes of my theoretical framework: first, status is crucial. The cuisine industry is characterized by a high uncertainty: the product quality is difficult to measure, and discrepancies across evaluators are common (Slavich & Castellucci, 2015). Thus status as an informational cue about quality is critical to thwart uncertainty (Sauder et al., 2012; Simcoe & Waguespack, 2011). Moreover, in the haute cuisine field, status is usually gained through affiliation, whether it be with a prestigious culinary schools or with celebrity-chefs (Slavich & Castellucci, 2015). As a result, the American haute cuisine represents an ideal setting to explore the matter of relational status.

Second, the American haute cuisine is of particular interest to study creativity. Past studies on the haute cuisine industry have usually focused on the French (e.g., Durand, Rao, & Monin, 2007; Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003,2005; Stierand, Dörfler, & MacBryde, 2014) or European haute cuisine (Di Stefano, King, & Verona, 2015; Slavich & Castelluci, 2015). This focus is justified, as historically the French cuisine has laid the foundations of the cuisine industry. However, this historical dissemination of the French Cuisine is mostly due to its high codification. From the very 18th century, some methods, code, literature, and a general attitude

toward food emerged in France. The statesman Prince and renowned connoisseur Talleyrand nicely expressed the French emphasis on *speaking of* food: "After one sampled wine with eye, ear and nose, the next step was *not* to drink it but "to speak of it" (Flandrin & Montanari, 2013). However, if the French cuisine is highly codified, the American cuisine is emblematic of a non-codified cuisine (Davis & McBride, 2008). As a result, the American haute cuisine is an interesting setting to explore because its lack of codification allows the freedom required by creativity. In other words, since specific recipes – sum of ingredients and techniques – do not restrict the American cuisine, the emphasis is put on novelty. The American Cuisine is grounded in an attitude to food, defined as the "American attitude towards food" (Beard, 1983, quoted by Davis & McBride, 2008) and characterized by an openness to experiment, a willingness to mix things up, and an appreciation of the regional dishes (Beard, 1999, quoted by Davis & McBride, 2008).

Third, what also makes the American haute cuisine an extraordinary setting to explore the notion of a specialist versus generalist identity, conceived as a chef's degree of experimentation of different styles during his or her career, is the debate around the very existence of an American cuisine. The first cookbook published after the revolution – "American Cookery" written by Amelia Simmons in 1796 – was mostly composed of French and British recipes. Two centuries later, James Beard, the very same person often referred to as the father of the "American cuisine", stated: "I don't think [that developing an American cuisine] is necessary. I think we can stay as we are. […] We have a breadth of view and understanding" (Beard, 1983, quoted by Davis & McBride, 2008). Today, the debate around the existence of an American cuisine is still vivid among American food scholars, such as Sidney Mintz and Priscilla Ferguson. As a result, the pluralism of the American cuisine combined with its openness to experiment makes salient the diversity of styles that a chef has the freedom to explore: ranging from the classical American cuisine to regional cuisines (e.g., Southern, Californian,

Northwestern) to "foreign" cuisines (e.g., French, Italian, Thai, Mexican). Furthermore, with the advent of the nouvelle cuisine in France in the 1960s and 1970s, chefs became mediatized. This entailed a transformation of cuisine "from an occupation organized around dishes and the restaurants where they were served to one structured around chefs and their careers" (Leschziner, 2015: 15). One of the implications of this is that chefs strongly communicate about their professional paths (Svejenova, Mazza, & Planellas, 2010). This enables to trace back the experimentation of different styles by a chef during his or her career and thus to determine the specialism of a chef's identity. The American haute cuisine is hence particularly relevant for this study.

Fourth, this setting allows me to isolate individual creative contributions. It is true that achievements in the cuisine industry typically result from a collective endeavor – that of the "brigade de cuisine", usually including the apprentice, the commis, the cook, the chef de partie, the saucier, the sous-chef and the chef. Due to the highly hierarchical nature of the cuisine industry, the chef is though considered the sole responsible for the creation of the menu, even if its execution is teamwork. In other words, it is the chef who embodies the culinary model of the restaurant (Rao et al., 2003; Leschziner, 2015). The American haute cuisine is therefore highly appropriate to study individual creativity.

3.3.2. Data and Sample

The sample consists of the entire population of American Chefs who have been selected as semifinalists for the James Beard Foundation Awards (JBF Awards) from 2008 to 2015. Established in 1990, the JBF Awards are the highest honor for food professionals in America; their selection takes place in two stages where a first screening phase nominating 20 semifinalists is followed by the appointment of the 5 nominees and winners. I chose 2008 as the starting year for the data collection as it marked a major shift for the foundation. Susan Ungaro took over the leadership in 2006 and implemented radical changes during the following

couple of years. Specifically, she considerably revised the selection procedure of the awards. She made the selection an online process, which dramatically modified the scope of the voters for each stage of the process. Indeed, the selection of the semifinalists was no longer the effect of a 20-expert committee but rather enabled anyone interested in proposing their favorite chef as candidate. Likewise, the selection of the nominees and winners from the semifinalists' ballot began to involve a larger panel: before limited to the committee, the selection jury was now composed of 300 previous winners, 250 panelists (mostly composed of experts such as journalists, restaurant critics, and cookbook writers), and 17 members of the Restaurants and Chef Award subcommittee. After her arrival, Susan Ungaro also undertook to make the awards more glamorous by moving the ceremony to the Lincoln Center in New York City. This simple initiative had the effect to position the JBF awards as the "Oscars of the food industry". Formerly reserved mostly for insiders, the awards were now widely known. To avoid noise in the data due to these major changes in the selection process and the wider audience of the awards, I started the study two years after the change in leadership occurred. Moreover, it also corresponds to the period for which all of the required data sources were fully retrievable.

I focus on semifinalists for several reasons. First, one attractive feature of studying status using semifinalists is that it naturalistically reduces the unobserved heterogeneity in quality, so that we can disentangle the effect of status from that of quality (Kovács & Sharkey, 2014). Second, focusing on semifinalists is consistent with recent research showing a more complex effect of the creator's status on the evaluation of his creativity in the second phase of the selection process (Kovács & Sharkey, 2014) – when judges extensively examine the set of candidates under serious consideration (i.e., semifinalists) to identify the superior options (i.e., nominees and winners). Status does not simply act as a signal of quality but rather can play against the creator: high-status individuals can make it through the screening phase based on their name while low-status individuals are there solely on the basis of the fit of their work with

the audience's taste, which increases their likelihood of being selected as nominees or winners. Building upon this research, I specifically consider the most interesting phase of the selection process for exploring the impact of status, i.e., the selection of the nominees and winners among the semifinalists. Third, empirically, data on semifinalists were retrievable unlike all the names considered for semifinalist positions.

Data collection involved multiple sources and comprehended three main steps. First, I relied on the press releases issued by the James Beard Foundation between 2008 and 2015 to identify the chefs selected as semifinalists, nominees, and winners. Second, I used the Chef and Restaurant Database (ChefDb), an online source that management research has begun to use (e.g., Slavitch & Castellucci, 2015), to trace back each chef's career. However, since a certain number of those chefs were not listed on ChefDb and in order to check the reliability of the ChefDb data, I searched through the chef biographies available online. I started first with biographies available on StarChefs.com, an online magazine for American culinary insiders. It features numerous chefs' biographies since its primary mission is to provide exposure to the chefs in order to act as a catalyzer for culinary professionals' success. Furthermore, StarChefs.com position as the leading job board in the foodservice industry also means that it provides the most updated information concerning chefs' career changes. When the chefs were not featured on StarChefs.com either, I looked at the website of the restaurant for which they were nominated, in particular at the presentation section. Finally, I searched through interviews of the missing chefs with either newspapers or bloggers. Third, I used Yelp.Com – the first recommendation website and the 33rd most trafficked website in the United States (Alexa, 2015) – to identify the cuisine styles of the different restaurants a chef has been working for during his career up to focal year of observation. Yelp.Com even featured restaurant information for now-closed restaurants such that it was possible to retrieve all the necessary information. I then cleaned the data and checked for inconsistencies. Since not all the chefs are

selected as semifinalist in any given year of the observation period, the final sample is an unbalanced panel.

3.3.3. Measures

Creativity. Creativity is the generation of novel and useful outcomes. Novelty and usefulness are not objective properties but are socially constructed properties (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihályi, 1988, 1999; George, 2007; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003), and consequently need to be evaluated and recognized by expert observers. Consistent with this definition, I measured chefs' creative performance using the awards and nominations attributed by the James Beard Foundation, whose mission is to identify and reward creativity in the cuisine industry: "In each category, the judges are looking for individuals whose contribution to their field is unique and long-lasting". The *unique* and *long-lasting* criteria respectively mirror the novelty and usefulness dimensions (e.g., Baer et al., 2015) – the two classical dimensions of creativity (Amabile, 1983). Moreover, the JBF Awards exist since 1990, and their credibility is widely recognized across the industry, as they reflect the judgments of hundreds of experts – peers and critics. This ensures data reliability and comparability across years and creators. This is also consistent with the reason why using awards and nominations is a well-established and -accepted method to provide an operational definition of creativity: awards and nominations reflect the perceptions of the field regarding the creativity of each outcome (e.g., Caird, 1994; Cattani, & Ferriani, 2008; Hocevar & Bachelor, 1989; Simonton, 2004; Von Nordenflycht, 2007; see Amabile & Mueller, 2008, for a review).

Furthermore, in order to clearly isolate individual contributions, I specifically focused on the award categories awarding the chefs individually (not just the restaurant they work for): (1) JBF Award for Rising Star Chef; (2) JBF Award for Best Chef: Pacific; Mid-Atlantic; Northwest; Northeast; New York City; Southwest; Great Lakes; Midwest; West; South; Southeast; (3) JBF Award for Outstanding Chef.

Status. A chef status is operationalized as a discrete variable taking the value of 0 if the chef is self-taught, 1 if the chef was trained in culinary schools not listed on the top 20 best culinary schools, 2 if the chef was trained in the school ranked 20th, 3 if in the school ranked 19th, and so on, until 20 for the school ranked 2nd and 21 for the school ranked 1st. The ranking comes from bestschools.com and is determined based on three main criteria: academic excellence, reputation and industry connections. The school affiliation measure is not only consistent with past measures of status used by Phillips and Zuckerman (2001) but also conceptually matches the concept of market status introduced by Podolny (1993), in which high status is derived from affiliations with other high-status individuals. In my case, the affiliation with the elite culinary school alumni network confers status to the focal individual. Although often denigrated, culinary schools play an essential role in determining the social ties that lead to future jobs. The best culinary schools provide better social networks given their connections with best chefs who make their restaurants available for externships, thus facilitating a high-status entryway to the field (Leschziner, 2015). The figures speak for themselves; there is a significantly higher concentration of formally educated chefs at high-status restaurants (the proportion of formally educated chefs is 85% and that of chef who graduated from the most renowned school, the Culinary Institute of America is 67%).

Identity Specialism. Each cuisine category has it own rules and procedures. A cuisine is clearly identifiable with a place of origin (Davis & McBride, 2008). This means that only certain ingredients are available depending on the region's climate. The region's economic conditions then determine the extent to which non-available ingredients can be imported. Culinary techniques are similarly determined by environmental and economic conditions. For example, Chinese food preparation often consists of cutting food into small pieces to cook it quickly, a technique originally meant to preserve scarce firewood. Thus, except for a few restaurants classified as "eclectic", each restaurant comes with a main cuisine category. Further,

as mentioned above, the American haute cuisine promotes the experimentation of different styles. It is hence not unusual for a chef to experiment different styles during his or her career. The number of styles experimented is measured as the number of different cuisine styles a chef has worked on up to the focal year. For instance, if a chef has previously worked in a French restaurant and is currently working simultaneously in a Thai restaurant and a New American restaurant, the number of styles experimented measure equals to three.

Using the genres experimented to account for the degree of specialization of an identity is in line with what has been done in prior research (Zuckerman et al., 2003): the lower the number of styles experimented, the more specialized the chef identity; the higher the number of styles experimented, the more generalist the chef identity. An experience in a distinct style was accounted only if the individual occupied a position equivalent or higher than chef de partie. This measure is particularly appropriate for two main reasons. First, the occupied position is a better indicator than the time spent in a restaurant to reflect the mastery of the ingredients and techniques of a cuisine style. This pertains to the notion of learning curve: a rapid rise at the beginning followed by a period of retardation (Bryan & Harter, 1897). The mastery of a domain is hence not uniquely a function of time. Second, this study focuses on the evaluation by an audience. The occupation of an important position in a given restaurant signals that the restaurant style must be an element of a chef's identity. In addition, chefs, in their biographies, rarely specify the duration of their job experience with a masterchef, which indicates in and of itself that the experience afford prestige (Leschziner, 2015)

Control variables. I included control variables to account for factors that can either affect the individual's likelihood of receiving nominations and awards and/or the number of styles experimented during a career.

I included a variable to account for the chef past success, calculated as the number of awards and nominations received prior to the focal year. Since the JBF Awards were created in

1990, the number of past nominations was retrieved for every chef since 1990. Research has shown that past success can be detrimental for creativity because creators can face difficulties to depart from what made them successful in the past (Audia & Goncalo, 2007). It also implies that past success can influence the number of cuisine styles a chef experiments, as successful chefs may tend to focus on the style that made them successful in the first place.

Second, in order to account for the relative influence of the creator's affiliation with masterchefs on the voters' perception, I included a dummy variable taking the value of 1 if an individual worked for a masterchef and 0 otherwise. I identified those masterchefs based on a recent management study (Slavich & Castelluci, 2015). In this study, a panel of experts was asked to name the chefs who were "well-know in the industry and could be considered relevant in haute cuisine on account of their experience, recognition and clear identity". They identified 13 chefs: Ferran Adrià, Georges Blanc, Heston Blumenthal, Paul Bocuse, Alain Ducasse, Pierre Gagnaire, Pierre Koffman, Alain Passard, Joël Robuchon, Albert Roux, Guy Savoy, Pierre Troisgros and Marco Pierre White. All of those chefs have the following characteristics: 1) they were awarded three Michelin stars at least once during their careers; 2) they are considered as highly influential and made significant contribution to the field; and 3) they are strongly connected to a cuisine movement, but are also very well known for the distinctiveness of their style. An affiliated chef can hence "borrow" the status of the masterchef he previously worked for (Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2015). Furthermore, an experience with a masterchef can significantly impact a career trajectory when the "apprentice" mirrors the master's identity and so doing his distinctive style. Consequently it can limit the number of different cuisine styles explored by the "apprentice".

Third, I included a career age variable, calculated as the time elapsed between the observation year and the year the individual started to work in the food industry. I controlled for career age in order to account for the relative preference that award voters may have towards

either newcomers or more established chefs. Indeed, voters may either want to rewards "new faces" (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008) or, on the contrary, more established creators who have already displayed their talents, considering that newcomers still have to pay their dues.

Fourth, I controlled for creator's exposure to different cultures, calculated as the number of different countries the creator has been working in up to the focal year (not including the focal country, the U.S.). Research has shown that time spent living abroad (but not time spent travelling abroad) showed a positive relationship with creativity (Maddux & Galinsky, 2009). Having worked abroad can also influence the repertoire of a chef (Svejenova et al., 2010).

Fifth, a chef's likelihood of receiving a JBF Award can also be influenced by the other accolades attributed by influential media (e.g., Bon Appétit Magazine; San Francisco Chronicle, Forbes, Boston Magazine), by important dining guide (e.g., Zagat, Gayot), or by peers (e.g., Bocuse d'Or, Maîtres Cuisiniers de France). In particular, research has shown the possible presence of a ceiling effect, or the diminishing returns in the benefits of status for producers who already are near the peak of the status hierarchy (Bothner et al. 2010, 2011; Azoulay et al., 2014). I thus controlled for other accolades measured as the number of other awards accorded to the chef prior to the focal year. As discussed earlier, such accolades can also greatly influence the creator's propensity to limit her style to the one for which she received the accolade.

Sixth, in order to account for the relative bias voters might have towards chefs whose restaurants are located in major foodies cities, I included a dummy variable that was coded 1 when the restaurant for which the chef was honored was located in New York City, Chicago or San Francisco and 0 otherwise. A recurrent critic of the JBF Awards is indeed a strong bias towards chefs whose restaurants are based in those three cities. Thus, out of the 24 Outstanding Restaurant Awards allocated since the JBF creation, 18 were located in those three cities.

Finally, since I have no a priori expectations about possible trends over the study period

(2008-2015), I controlled for unobserved factors (macro-economic trends, changes in taste or fashion, and other factors that might affect the food industry) by including dummy variables for each year (for a similar approach, see Cattani & Ferriani, 2008). Likewise, to take into account style-specific variations, I included dummy variables for each main style. Finally, to account for any awards category-specific differences, I included dummies for the type of awards (Rising Star Chef vs. Best Chef for a specific Region vs. Outstanding Chef).

3.3.4. Estimation Procedure

My dependent variable is a binary measure to model the peer- and critic-based selection of the candidate whose work is consecrated with an award or a nomination. However, having a categorical outcome variable violates the assumption of linearity in normal regression and would produce inconsistent and biased estimators. Consequently, I used a logistic regression model, which allows predicting an outcome variable that is categorical from predictor variables that are continuous and/or categorical. Following established procedures (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008), I estimated the final model using the generalized estimating equations (GEE) to control for heterogeneity at the individual level and the existence of any systematic difference across individuals due to unobserved effects. This method allows for correlation in the dependent variable across observations over time – due to repeated yearly measurements – by estimating the correlation structure of the error terms (Liang & Zeger 1986). My panel was characterized by unequal spacing between observations and by the presence of gaps. Thus, an exchangeable correlation structure was more appropriate (Hardin & Hilbe, 2003). This structure assumes that the correlations between repeated measurements of the dependent variable are equal across time. I report significance levels based on Huber-White robust standard errors to control for any residual heteroscedasticity across panels. I obtained my estimates using STATA 12.0.

3.4. Findings

TABLE 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations[a]

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Creativity	0.20	0.40								
2. Status	6.67	8.45	0.01							
3. Number of Styles	2.00	1.09	0.07	0.09						
4. Past success	0.73	1.53	0.39	-0.05	0.12					
5. High-status master	0.05	0.22	-0.06	-0.02	0.08	-0.06				
6. Career Age	17.62	7.76	0.05	-0.15	0.09	0.32	-0.01			
7. Number of Countries worked in	0.54	0.95	0.07	-0.02	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.19		
8. Number of Past accolades	0.23	0.53	0.24	0.03	0.15	0.29	0.01	0.08	0.15	
9. Restaurant in a Foodie city	0.09	0.28	0.10	0.04	0.07	0.14	-0.03	0.05	0.04	0.25

[a]All values greater than |.04| are significant at p< .01

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics and correlations. To evaluate the extent to which multicollinearity has an impact on the estimates (Fox, 1991), I computed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for each model and found that all the models' highest VIF statistics were below the recommended value of 5 (Studenmund, 2001). The VIF for the full model was 1.21; hence suggesting that multicollinearity was not an issue.

Table 4 presents the GEE coefficient estimates for the logistic regression model. To avoid multicollinearity issues, I centered the predictor variables before calculating the interaction term (Aiken & West, 1991). Model 1 is the baseline model, including only control variables. The number of past nominations has a positive and significant ($p<.01$) coefficient, suggesting that past success positively impacts creativity. In a similar vein, the number of other accolades received in the past has a positive and significant ($p<.01$) effect, suggesting that a nomination is more likely to be attributed to an already established chef. The number of countries a creator has worked in has a positive and significant coefficient ($p<.05$), indicating that the exposure to different cultures is positively related to current creative performance.

Finally, the positive and significant ($p<.05$) coefficient for the restaurant location suggests that a chef who is honored for a restaurant located in New York City, Chicago or San Francisco is more likely to get a nomination. Model 2 includes the controls and the independent variable. The effect of status is not significant. Model 3 includes the control variables and the moderator. The effect of the number of styles experimented is not significant. Model 4 includes the independent variable and the moderator. Neither the effect of status nor the effect of the number of styles experimented is significant. Model 5 reports the results for the full model. As expected, the coefficient for the interaction between status and the number of styles experimented is negative and significant ($p<.01$). This indicates that the effect of status becomes significantly positive when the creator develops a specialist identity, i.e., explores a low number of styles during his career. To better interpret the coefficients, I present in figure 5 the effect of status on creativity, measured as getting a nomination, due to having experimented a given number of styles during one's career. The figure is produced using the coefficients of the model 5. Figure 5, figuring the difference in the probability of getting a nomination/award between high- and low-status individuals for each number of style, shows that the impact of status decreases as the number of styles experimented increases, i.e. as the identity becomes more and more generalist. It is interesting to note that the effect of the number of styles experimented during one's career is only significant for certain levels. When the creator experiments 1 or 2 different styles, status has a positive effect on creativity (there is a positive and significant [at least $p<.05$] difference in margins). In contrast, when the creator experiments 5, 6 or 7 different styles, status has a negative effect on creativity (there is a negative and significant difference in margins [$p<.10$ for 5; $p<.05$ for 6 and 7]). In other words, status benefits are only activated for those with a limited number of styles (1 or 2), i.e. with a specialist identity, while status is a liability for those with a high number of styles (≥ 5). And when the creator has a low status (i.e., self-taught), the development of a generalist identity leads to higher evaluation of creativity.

TABLE 4

GEE Coefficient Estimates for a Logit Panel Regression Model Predicting Individual Creativity [a]

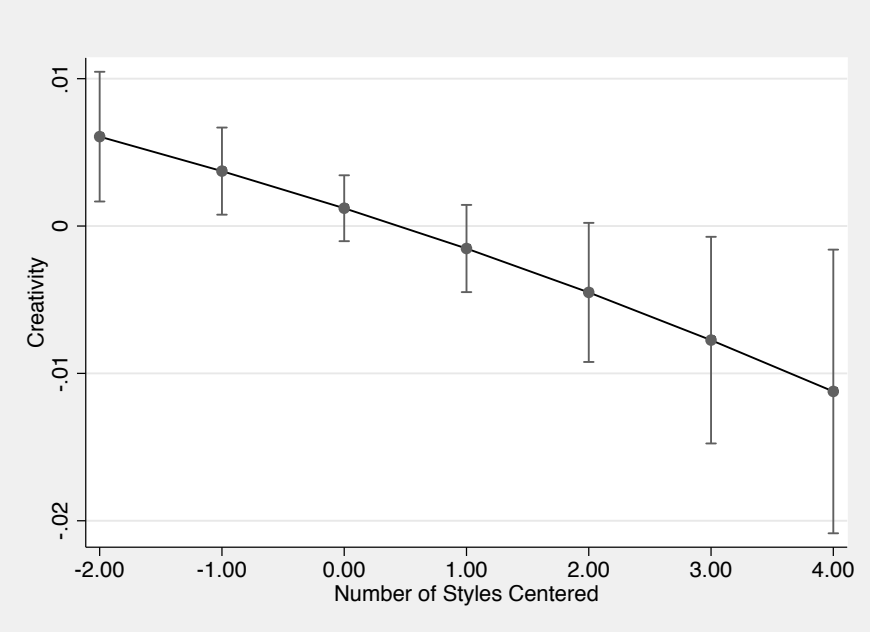
Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Past success	0.512**	0.511**	0.518**	0.516**	0.510**
	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.063)
High-status master	-0.414	-0.410	-0.437	-0.432	-0.422
	(0.401)	(0.401)	(0.402)	(0.404)	(0.4)
Career Age	-0.010	-0.009	-0.010	-0.09	-0.007
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Number of Countries worked in	0.156*	0.154*	0.151*	0.15*	0.16*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Number of past accolades	0.747**	0.745**	0.740**	0.739**	0.772**
	(0.14)	(0.141)	(0.140)	(0.14)	(0.139)
Restaurant in a Foodie city	0.537*	0.529*	0.517*	0.511*	0.481*
	(0.239)	(0.240)	(0.237)	(0.238)	(0.237)
Status		0.009		0.008	0.01
		(0.009)		0.009	(0.009)
Number of Styles			0.082	0.078	0.086
			(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.067)
Status X Number Styles					-0.022**
					(0.008)
Year dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Styles dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Awards dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Wald $\chi 2$	187.69**	186.06**	192.06**	189.96**	190.04**
Observations	1,970	1,970	1,970	1,970	1,970
Number of creators	831	831	831	831	831

[a] Unstandardized coefficients. Huber-White robust standard errors are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

FIGURE 5
Effect of status and number of styles experimented on creativity



3.4.1. Robustness Checks

To further explore my moderation hypotheses, I performed a split sample analysis (Shaver, 2007). I estimated Model 2 at above-mean and below-mean levels of number of styles. Overall, the results of this analysis were consistent with those presented above: at below-mean levels, the effect of status is positive and significant (b=.025, p< .05); at above-mean levels, status has a negative and marginally significant effect on creativity (b=-.03, p< .10).

I also tested the robustness of the results to a different measure of relational status. Consistently with recent research showing the importance of the affiliation with a renowned chef in the haute cuisine sector (Slavich & Castellucci, 2015), I estimated the model with status operationalized as the affiliation with a high-status master (coded "1" was affiliated with a high-status master, "0" otherwise), and the school ranking as a control variable. The results were consistent with those presented here, with the number of styles negatively moderating the effect of status on creativity (p< .05). Given that my status measure is an ordered categorical variable, assuming that every distance is equal to every different levels I am measuring, I performed

some complementary checks by using simple dummy variables (e.g., graduated from prestigious culinary schools versus other schools). The results were consistent with those presented here, with the number of styles negatively moderating the effect of status on creativity ($p < .05$).

3.5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed at better understanding the role of the creator's status in the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience. I propose to consider the source of status jointly with the creator's identity. When a creator does not derive his status from past success but rather borrows his status from his affiliation with high-status others, the audience in charge of evaluating his creativity looks for cues to activate the link between his contacts' status and his quality: a specialist identity acts as such an informational cue. I found empirical support for this hypothesis. Results support the view that the effect of status on the evaluation of creativity varies as a function of the creator's specialist identity. This means that after acquiring his status from attending a prestigious culinary school, a chef must develop a simple identity by experimenting a limited number of culinary styles during his career in order to activate the creative benefits of his or her "borrowed" status. For example, Jeff Michaud graduated from the renowned Culinary Institute of America in 1998. During the next decade, he only explored restaurants with two distinct styles – New American and Italian. In 2010, he received a JBF Award for Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic. Jeff Michaud's case exemplifies how a specialist identity harnesses the creative advantages of a prestigious affiliation.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, considering the role of identity allows to reconcile existing mixed empirical findings concerning the impact of the creator's status on the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience. As my results show, the creator's status positively affects the evaluation of his creativity only when the creator displays a specialist identity. This reinforces the contingency perspective on the relationship

between the creator's status and the evaluation of his creativity: the impact of status on creativity is contingent on the creator meeting the expectations that an audience assigns to his status. When status is derived from a prestigious affiliation and not from past success, the audience primarily looks for the activation of the link between the creator's status and his quality. To respond to this expectation, the creator must hence develop a specialist identity, a reflection of his quality. Future studies exploring the antecedents of creativity should consider the expectations that an audience assigns to a specific antecedent in order to fully understand its effect on creativity.

Second, by considering the source of status to explore the contingent effect of a specialist identity on the relationship between status and creativity, I specify the boundary conditions for inconsistency. A specialist identity and inconsistency relate to the same notion: a creator with a specialist identity is a creator who was consistent during his career. My results indicate that high-status individuals must have a specialist identity – i.e., be consistent – in order to elicit the creative advantages of their status. As it is formulated, the results seem to clash with those of prior research. Past research indeed showed that not only high-status individuals were allowed to be inconsistent because they were given the benefit of the doubt; but also they *had to* be inconsistent to dispel any impression of resting on one's laurels and so to be judged as creative (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014). However, these seemingly conflicting results are complementary. Prior research findings are premised on the conception of status as past success: participants of an experiment were asked to evaluate the creativity of a set of four artworks that were either stylistically consistent or inconsistent with Cubism and painted either by Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque or Roger de la Fresnaye. Those three painters' statuses (respectively high, middle and low) were indicated to the experimental subjects by referring to the painters' legacy. Therefore, status was the result of past successes following judgments of external arbiters. In contrast, in the current study, status is the result of the affiliation with a

prestigious school institution. As a result, these seemingly opposite results identify the source of status as an essential boundary condition to the joint impact of the creator's status and specialist identity on the evaluation of creativity. While a creator who derives her status from past success must be inconsistent to be judged as creative; a creator who borrows her status from affiliations must be consistent to activate the creativity evaluation advantages of her status. Such contrasted results prompt future research to consider the source of status for exploring its impact on any outcome of interest.

Third, by striving not to decouple the generation and evaluation times, this study allows for isolating the true effect of status on creativity, for two main reasons. First, creativity is fundamentally social and comes into being only after being judged as such by an audience composed of appropriate observers. And this evaluation is extremely complex since the intrinsic quality of creativity is to be novel. This implies that the evaluation criteria based on what currently exists cannot grasp the potential of the presented idea. In contrast, assessing creativity in retrospect does not make sense since it is easy to interpret novelty as creativity, i.e. when novelty is no more novel, when the product of the novelty has been for long integrated into the norms of the social context. This means that the generation and evaluation times must be the same. Second, if evaluative norms evolve making the co-occurrence of the generation and the evaluation warranted, the question of the evolution is also relevant for status. Status significantly changes over time making it inappropriate to consider the present status to assess its impact on past creativity. The time of status and of the evaluation must also be the same. For example, the different results mentioned earlier can also be associated with the decoupling of the creative effort and its evaluation. Prior research (Sgourev & Althuizen, 2014) indeed involved the evaluation of artworks created between 1912 and 1918. This implies that the participants of the experiment could more easily interpret inconsistency as creativity because what was inconsistent and deviant at the beginning of the XXth century has for long been

recognized and integrated as creative. In contrast, these results suggest that when idea generation and evaluation are concomitant and when status comes from a prestigious affiliation, the audience faces a double burden, a double uncertainty. The audience does not have the evaluation criteria to assess creativity (due to its inherent novelty) and cannot rely on past judgments of creativity as when status is the result of past success. The creator should then help direct the evaluation thanks to a specialist identity. Future studies exploring creativity must ensure that the generation of creative ideas co-occurs with their evaluation by an expert audience.

3.5.1. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Notwithstanding its contributions, this study has some limitations. First, regarding the generalizability of my findings, my results are expected to be generalizable to knowledge-intensive industries. Many of the problems and situations faced by employees and managers in cultural industries are indeed common to other knowledge-intensive industries where creativity and innovation are key for success and survival (Lampel, Lant, and Shamsie, 2000). The world being fast moving from a production-based economy to a knowledge-based one (Drucker, 1993; Powell & Snellman, 2004), organizations are becoming more knowledge intensive (Alvesson, 1995), suggesting an always broader generalizability of my results. Of course, my results are less applicable for industries that are not as dependent on creativity for survival.

Second, my results are also limited to contexts in which one individual has a significant impact on creativity. This is likely to happen in highly hierarchical settings where creativity is concentrated in the hands of the CEO or a small group of senior executives. Many successful companies have individuals with gigantic influence over the final output. This is especially true in cultural industries (i.e., fashion designers, movie directors,…) but can also be the case with influential CEOs in other industries, particularly those in technology (i.e., Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg) (Godart, Maddux, Shipilov & Galinsky, 2015). Future studies could

explore the relationship between status, a specialist identity and creativity in settings where ideas come from teams.

Third, though I develop my theory focusing on one type of affiliation (i.e., educational institution), individuals are typically embedded in several types of networks. For instance, a self-taught chef can have professional experiences in restaurants run by celebrity chefs. Thus, failing his affiliation with a prestigious culinary institution, a self-taught chef can compensate by affiliating with a renowned chef and so develops a high relational status. I controlled for past experiences with famous chefs to account for that bias. However, my analysis did not explore the interaction between the different types of affiliations. Future studies should hence address how an individual's different types of affiliations interact to affect his status and how in turn it impacts his creativity.

Fourth, although I accounted for an experience in a distinct style only if the creator occupied a position equivalent or higher than chef de partie in order to control for the degree of mastery, the archival nature of my data did not allow me to investigate the extent to which a chef experimented within one style. A chef could focus on a limited number of culinary styles during his career and so develop a specialist identity, while constantly innovating within that style and trying to push its very boundaries. Future research should explore the interaction between a specialist identity and the degree of experimentation within a particular style to provide a finer-grained analysis of the interaction between status, identity, and creativity evaluation.

3.5.2. Managerial Implications

My results suggest a number of practical implications. First, companies can be granted higher creativity if their leaders display the right identity (specialist versus generalist) for their level of status. This has some implications for the recruitment process. Depending on the educational background of the candidates, recruiters may want to select candidates with more

or less diversified experiences. In case of candidates with prestigious school affiliations, they may select candidates with experiences focused on a limited number of sectors while self-made candidates with highly diversified experiences may have their preference. Second, in doing so, my paper can also contribute to the diversity issue by specifying the way self-made candidates can be granted highest creativity in the eyes of the audience. In the new area of the war for talent (Chambers et al., 1998), companies do not have the luxury of "locking out folks who can really add value" (Kline, 2015). Diversity, therefore, acts as a precious recruitment pool and many prestigious companies, even in the most competitive sectors such as banking, associate with diversity programs (such as JP Morgan Chase's association with Year Up, the largest one in the US). My results suggest that to leverage this new labor force, large and diversified companies with varied markets may institute rotational programs into human resources policies for that particular population. Third, individuals with prestigious school affiliation and who want to enhance the perception of their creativity might proactively look for positions in a limited number of professional sectors.

In conclusion, this paper extends our understanding of the relationship between the creator's status and the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience. I have brought to the fore the role of a specialist identity and of the source of status in creativity. By showing that a specialist identity positively moderates the relationship between a status derived from one's affiliation and creativity, this study points out that the creative benefits of the creator's status must be activated through the development of a specialist identity essential for an audience recognition.

Chapter 4

Team Creativity: How idea selection links idea generation to idea implementation

4.1. Introduction

With companies' growing reliance on teamwork to foster creativity (Lovelace, Shapiro & Weingart, 2001), research has increasingly focused on team creativity (e.g., Gilson & Shalley, 2004). Working in teams enables access to diverse perspectives, which stimulates the recombination process at the origin of creativity (Guilford, 1957). Team creativity is defined as the generation of novel and useful ideas in the context of team objectives (Amabile, 1996). Until now, the main frameworks on team creativity have focused on isolated stages of the creative process, mostly on the different determinants of either idea generation — e.g., the interactionist model (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993) — or idea implementation — e.g., the four-factor theory of team climate for innovation (West, 1990). In contrast, Anderson, Potocnik, & Zhou (2014), Rietzschel, De Dreu, & Nijstad (2009) have theoretically argued for the importance of developing a more integrative framework, examining concomitantly the different phases of the team creative process. In fact, even if a team consistently generates creative ideas and is effective at idea implementation, this does not automatically mean that team creativity is maximized, as there is a need for the team to select the right idea for further implementation. Recent research further suggests that teams poorly perform at idea selection and tend not to recognize their most creative ideas (Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Strobe, 2006, 2010; Putman & Paulus, 2009). It is hence critical to approach creativity as a multidimensional sequence of behaviors (Rietzschel et al., 2009) and to further examine the selection sequence that chronologically unfolds after idea generation and before idea implementation and that can significantly impact the creativity of the team outcome, no matter how successful a team is at generating creative ideas or at idea implementation. Subsequently, addressing the following question is warranted to explain team creativity: How internal and external factors affect the team creative idea selection process and, in turn, how the difference in the selection process impacts the creativity of the team outcome?

Answering this question is all the more useful as the extant theories on creative idea selection tend to see selection as a mental process or a social phenomenon, overlooking how creative idea selection unfolds in teams. Indeed, the first theories of selection have focused on selection at the cognitive level of analysis. Campbell's (1960) evolutionary model of creativity describes creativity as the interplay between idea generation and idea selection in the mind of a creator: after having generated creative ideas, the individual selectively retains the ideas that she considers worth to disclose. Building on Campbell's model, Simonton (1988) articulates the impact of those two phases on the two components of creativity: idea generation fosters novelty by increasing the number of thought combinations and the uniqueness of the thought while idea selection promotes usefulness by ensuring that the chosen thought combination best meets the criteria for both novelty and usefulness. However, Csikszentmihalyi's (1999, 2006) systemic view of creativity challenges this view of selection as a mental process and emphasizes the social and cultural dimensions of idea selection. The selection is performed by the experts of a domain, or what Csikszentmihalyi calls "a field". The experts of a domain provide the domain-relevant knowledge to the individual in charge of generating creative ideas. The individual production of creative ideas ensues. The final selection of the creative ideas is up to the domain's experts. In this view, the audience is external and is "as important to its constitution [creativity] as the individual to whom it is credited" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006: 3).

Those approaches not only do not describe whether selection similarly unfolds at the team level but also neglect the process through which decisions are taken, rather focusing on the novelty and usefulness of the set of ideas that is selected (Harvey & Kou, 2013). Thus, the creativity literature sees selection as a singular entity, disregarding the fact that there are different approaches to the selection process. In contrast, research on group decision-making is replete with studies that conceptually distinguish between different group approaches to decision-making and explore their impact on the quality of the final decision (for a review, see

Kerr & Tindale, 2004). For example, Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner (1989) found that the organization of the decision-making process in a group impacts the quality of the decision by influencing the levels of critical discussion and conflict. This conceptual distinction between the different group approaches to the decision-making process must be integrated into team creativity research to explain why certain teams are able to identify and select the most promising ideas for future implementation while others are not.

To establish the categorization for team selection of creative ideas, I draw on team creativity and decision-making theories. The main assumption of team creativity is that teamwork positively affects creativity because of an increased exposure to diverse perspectives that stimulates the recombination process. I further question the impact of the team's access to diverse perspectives on team idea selection: how does team cognitive diversity impact team idea selection? The course of a decision-making process is intricately linked with the alternative possibilities. I use an analogical reasoning to question the impact of the choice set on team creative idea selection. Specifically, I echo the question of the diverse perspectives fostering team creativity and posit the question of the impact of the choice set diversity: how does a diverse choice set affect the team idea selection? Therefore, I present a typology of creative idea. I make several contributions to the literature. First, this classification can explain the discrepancy between teams' supposed advantages for creativity (Amabile, 1996; Drazin, Glynn, & Kazanjian, 1999; Woodman et al., 1993) and teams' creativity challenges (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Miliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Indeed, the complexity of the selection phase provides a potential explanation as for why teams are not the breeding ground for creativity despite that teamwork increases the access to diverse perspectives and so stimulates the recombination process at the origin of creativity.

Second, my analogical reasoning used to transpose the existence of the different approaches to the group decision-making to the team selection of creative ideas can also

advance the decision-making literature. Research on group decision-making has mostly focused on the quality of the selected idea at the expense of other outcomes, such as how groups select their most creative ideas (for a review, see Kerr & Tindale, 2004). The same organization of the decision-making process can yield very different results whether the quality or the creativity of the final decision is to be assessed. Examining the desired outcome is necessary to determine the impact of a certain approach to group decision-making.

Third, examining creative idea selection at the team level of analysis modifies the traditional view of the creative process, whereby creative ideas are generated at the individual level and then evaluated by appropriate observers (Amabile, 1983, 1996). Indeed, it introduces an intermediary stage between these two phases: a first selection occurs at the team level before turning to the external audience. In teams, the evaluation of creative ideas is therefore a two-step process: first, ideas generated at the individual level are presented to the team members who evaluate their novelty and usefulness; second, the idea selected by the team is presented to the relevant audience who again evaluates its novelty and usefulness.

I present the typology in the following section. First, I elaborate on the dimensions previously outlined: "Choice Set Diversity" and "Team Cognitive diversity". Then, using examples from the company Apple and the creativity literature, I draw the implications of the selection modes on team creativity. In the next section, the boundary conditions are discussed. Finally, in the last section, the main contributions are drawn and the possibilities for future research are presented.

4.2. Archetypes of Team Selection of Creative Ideas

4.2.1. First Dimension – Idea Type: Choice set diversity

The first dimension of team creative idea selection is related to the set of generated ideas itself. Teams can evaluate two types of ideas: similar or diverse ideas, depending whether the ideas generated by the team members are mainly redundant or diverse. This dimension answers

two main calls: the first relates to the decision-making literature and the second pertains to the creativity literature. The decision-making literature called for the analysis of the choice set under consideration to understand a decision situation (Hastie, 2001). Focusing on idea type means investigating the role played by the distinctiveness of the alternatives not only on the difficulty of the decision process (Hastie), but also on the creativity of its outcome. In the creativity literature, there is some disagreement to the role diverse information play on creativity. The traditional stream of the creativity literature argues that diverse information fuels the recombination process at the origin of creativity (Welch, 1946), leading the selective retention to draw from more creative ideas (Campbell, 1960). However, this view is theoretically and empirically challenged. Some theoretical explanations suggest that when the choice set is limited and based on domain-relevant knowledge, the selective retention process leads to more creative ideas (Harvey, 2014; Sternberg, 1998). Recent empirical evidences show that similar ideas are more valuable for creativity than diverse ideas (Kornish & Ulrich, 2011). The gain in usefulness ensured by similar ideas outweighs their detrimental effect on the novelty of the outcome. My first dimension raises this question of the "optimal diversity" for the alternatives of the choice set. Furthermore, when the choice set is mostly composed of diverse ideas; team members do not necessarily explore the full range of such diverse ideas. Teams may indeed value harmony over critical evaluation (Janis, 1972), which impacts the course of action of the selection process. In that particular case, team members only consider the most consensual ideas. Therefore accounting for team characteristics (e.g., values) is critical to understand how a team will select a creative idea.

4.2.2. Second Dimension – Team Type: Team Cognitive Diversity

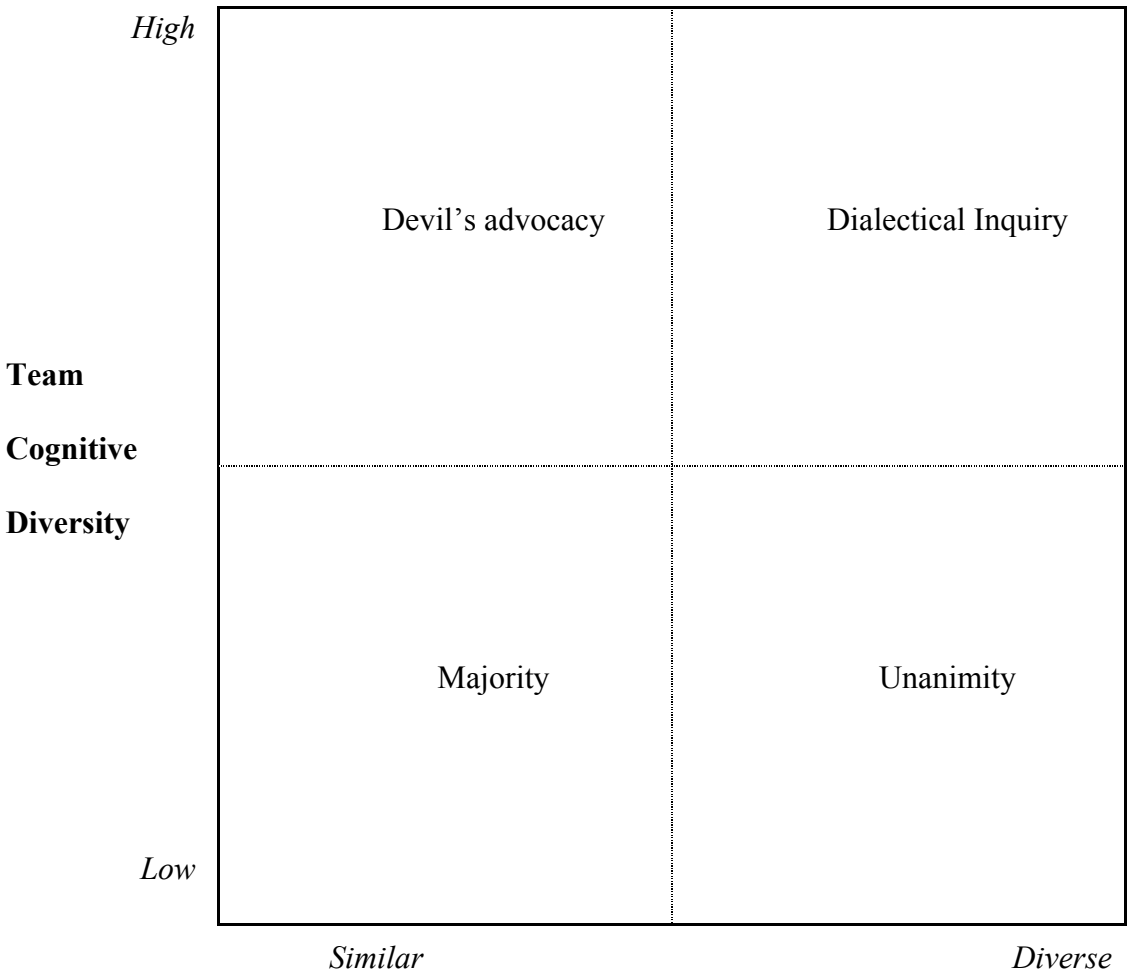
My second dimension of team creative selection meets this need to focus on the team characteristics. In particular, I investigate the notion of cognitive diversity. The notion of diversity has generated mixed findings in the literature (e.g., Ancona & Caldwell, 1992 vs.

Choi, 2007). The opponents of diversity argue for the "similarity attraction" according to which diversity is negative for creativity because of relational conflict resulting from being different (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). In contrast, the proponents of diversity advocate the "value in diversity" argument, according to which the exposure to differences stimulates team members' generation of creative ideas (Ancona & Caldwell). Researchers have suggested that considering the type of diversity solves the diversity puzzle (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999). In particular, while surface-level diversity negatively impacts creativity, deep-level diversity has a positive impact. Deep-level diversity, or "cognitive diversity" — defined as the perceived differences in thinking styles, knowledge, skills, values and beliefs among individual team members (Shin, Kim, Lee, & Bian, 2012) — fosters the cross-fertilization of ideas and results in more creative outcomes. For instance, at Apple, the most innovative company for nine years in a row (Boston Consulting Group, 2014), cognitive diversity is praised: "If you look at the top 100 people at Apple, you're going to find very different people, very different personalities, very different styles […] We really value diversity with a capital D. We want diversity of thought. We want diversity of style." (Apple CEO Tim Cook; cited in Tyrangiel, 2012). Cognitive diversity intervenes at different stages of the selection process: it first impacts the collective interpretation of issues by team members and then affects how decisions are framed, greatly impacting the team's preferences (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2011). In addition, the uncertainty of the evaluation process increases with cognitive diversity: when assessed through diverse perspectives, the value of each alternative becomes increasingly uncertain, and so does the optimal way to combine those alternatives (Taylor & Greve, 2006).

4.2.3. Four Archetypes of Team Selection of Creative Ideas

Combining these two dimensions of idea type and team composition results in the matrix depicted in figure 6.

FIGURE 6
Matrix of Team Creative Idea Selection



On the vertical axis, team cognitive diversity ranges from low (all the team members hold the same knowledge and the same perspective) to high (team members display highly diverse perspectives). The horizontal axis represents the types of ideas under scrutiny during the selection process and ranges from similar to diverse ideas. Among these four types, finer nuances appear: some ideas may be more or less similar; teams might more or less hold similar knowledge. I want to clearly assert that those four categories represent continuous and different contexts that can be located anywhere within the bounded space. I also want to acknowledge that the relationship between the two dimensions might not be orthogonal. Highly homogeneous

teams might be more likely to produce similar ideas. In contrast, highly diverse teams might be more likely to generate diverse ideas (Harrison & Klein, 2007). However, because I am primarily concerned with the selection phase (and not the generation phase), I will not go into detail on this aspect. Below I explain the four major archetypes and how they allow teams to select creative ideas (see table 5).

TABLE 5
Meanings and Implications of Team Creative Idea Selection Modes

Label	Meaning	Selection mode	Predicted impact for team creative outcome	Foundational theories
Majority	Mechanism through which a low cognitive diverse team selects creative ideas among highly similar ideas.	Based on the number of team members that share the idea.	Reduced information elaboration, reduced conflict, higher interpersonal agreement.	Similarity attraction
Unanimity	Mechanism through which a low cognitive diverse team selects creative ideas among highly diverse ideas.	Based on the assessment of a partial range of the idea presented.	Higher member input but still a lack of critical evaluation, low conflict.	Cognitive fixation
Devil's advocacy	Mechanism through which a high cognitive diverse team selects creative ideas among similar ideas.	Based on the build up of similar idea. The selection is a collective product.	More reflexive decision, moderate task conflict.	Collective cognition
Dialectical Inquiry	Mechanism through which a high cognitive diverse team selects creative ideas among highly diverse ideas.	Based on the development of new alternatives.	Enhanced critical evaluation, more conflict, and difficulty for implementation.	Information processing

I base my typology on the decision-making theory, in particular, Schweiger, Sandberg, & Rechner (1989) approaches to group strategic decision-making structures. They distinguish between three main decision-making structures: a decision is either reached through consensus, through the critical evaluation of a set of recommendations or through the collective buildup of ideas and the development of new alternatives.

Majority. *Majority* refers to the mechanism through which a low cognitive diverse team selects creative ideas among highly similar ideas. It builds on the fact that in a low cognitive diverse team, team members will hold similar knowledge ("same domain-relevant knowledge" Amabile, 1983) and similar perspectives. As a consequence, team members are expected to similarly interpret the presented ideas, which are also similar in content. Team members will thus not feel the need to discuss the assumptions underlying the decision issue, i.e., the "system of shared meaning that governs collective perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions" is uncontested (Schneider & Shrivastava, 1988: 494). As a result of the absence of discussion, a team converges on an idea as creative based on a majority-voting rule: the most valuable idea is the most shared as claimed by the majority argument (Kornish & Ulrich, 2011).

Decision theory sets the majority rule as the most efficient decision-making process since it is the least time-consuming and prevents impasses (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2011). However, the aforementioned lack of discussion implies a lack of critical evaluation, detrimental to the decision's quality (Schweiger et al., 1989). Quality refers to the usefulness dimension of creativity: quality is the "the consistency of the final decision with a firm's external environment, its *appropriateness* in light of the firm's resources, and its internal consistency and workability, given the firm's situation" (Schweiger et al., 1989: 757). Thus, if the *majority* selection mode is detrimental to the quality of the decision, it means that its outcome is also low on the usefulness component. Creativity being defined as a combination of novelty and usefulness (Amabile, 1983), in order to evaluate the creativity of the selected outcome, its novelty must be assessed. Diverse information and perspectives are critical to the recombination process inherent to novelty (Perry-Smith, 2014). Thus, by emphasizing low informational and perspective diversity, the *majority* selection mode is unfavorable to the novelty of the selected outcome. Therefore, the *majority* appears as the poorest mode of selection in terms of team creative outcome since its selected outcomes are low on both

usefulness and novelty dimensions.

The failures of NeXT exemplify the detrimental effect of the *majority* selection mode. When Steve Jobs launched his second venture NeXT after having been fired from Apple, he hired away some of his favorite engineers of Apple. This eventually left Steve Jobs with an uncontested power. Moreover, considering that cognitive diversity is the product of career experiences and cognitive strategies (Taylor & Greve, 2006), NeXT mainly had employees holding similar perspectives. In parallel, Steve Jobs was mostly focusing on one idea: to answer the need of education institutions for computing power (Isaacson, 2011). The low cognitive diversity of the team combined with the narrow spectrum of the choice set led Steve Jobs to persist with the wrongly selected idea, as the market did not want NeXT products.

However, the effect of the *majority* selection mode can be less detrimental than the effect advocated by the traditional literature and suggested by the NeXT example, especially if we consider the potential mediating role of conflict for the relationship between the team selection mode and the creativity of the final outcome. Research traditionally suggested that task conflict is positive for creativity while relational conflict is detrimental to creativity. However, recent empirical findings found that task conflict asymmetry — the difference in perceptions of task conflict among the team members — was negatively related to group creativity (Jehn, Rispens, & Thatcher, 2010). It results that the *majority* mode of team creative idea selection positively impacts the team creative outcome by alleviating any type of conflict due to the absence of any difference in terms of perspectives or information. The absence of conflict also increases the likelihood of a creative idea to get implemented: trust determines the effectiveness of idea implementation (e.g., Fleming, Mingo, & Chen, 2007) and conflict, even constructive conflict, undermines that trust (Schweiger et al., 1989). Altogether, the *majority* mode of selection lessens conflict and so doing the creativity of the selected outcome is higher as well as its likelihood of getting implemented.

Last, recent development of the literature puts into question this general assumption that diverse ideas are critical for creativity, and outlines the value of redundant ideas. The estimated value of an idea is likely to increase with the number of similar ideas (Kornish & Ulrich, 2011). In this view, the *majority* mode of team creative idea selection positively impacts the usefulness of the team creative outcome since it induces the selection of the idea that was the most shared within the team. Overall, the *majority* mode of selection can lead to outcomes of higher usefulness. A peculiar example is the story of the name "iMac". While working on the name, Jobs purposefully gathered a small, tight-knit group: "Steve Jobs didn't want to have a lot of opinions at the tables, he also didn't do any market research or testing" (the veteran TBWA/Chiat/Day creative director Ken Segall; quoted in Kahney, 2009). In other words, Steve Jobs expressly wanted cognitive diversity to be limited. Moreover, the final choice set was mostly composed of the names iMac name proposed by Ken Segall and Jobs' initial idea of MacMan, i.e., two similar ideas referring to the notion of individuality (the prefix "i" indeed sets for individual—among internet and innovation—while Mac was a reference to the Macintosh of 1984). Jobs settled on the iMac, and the name was a big success and became the foundation for the whole range of the future Apple products (iMac, iPod, iPhone). The combination of a low cognitive diversity and a similar choice set led to a creative idea being of a great usefulness as it massively increased the brand identity.

Unanimity. The second category describes a selection mode where team members with similar perspectives have to select creative ideas among highly diverse ideas. This category is labeled unanimity. The *unanimity* selection mode relates to the consensus structure of decision-making where all members are encouraged to state their assumptions and recommendations and then freely discuss until they reach final decisions (Schweiger et al., 1989). In other words, unanimity requires agreement by all group members before a decision can occur (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2001). Further because of the similarity of their perspectives and thinking style,

team members will not formally structure the argumentation and debate. This absence of a formal procedure for testing and evaluating these expressions is the hallmark of the unanimity structure of decision-making (Schweiger et al.). This explains why the selection process of team members with similar perspectives selecting among highly diverse ideas is named *unanimity*.

The *unanimity* mode of selection leads to higher critical evaluation of the choice set than the *majority* rule of decision (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2001). The ideas proposed for selection being different among the team members; it implies that team members will have to justify their preferences. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, emphasizes the importance of the discussion during the selection process: "We argue and debate like crazy about what we are going to do because we know that we can only do a few things great" (Cook; cited in Tyrangiel, 2012). Critical evaluation is a key mechanism to improve the quality of the final decision and so to increase the usefulness of the selected outcome. However, the novelty dimension of the outcome is impaired by the homogeneity of the team members in terms of knowledge and perspectives and its subsequent fixation mechanism. Cognitive fixation means the non-exploration of a full range of ideas. Jansson & Smith (1991) revealed that when individuals are shown an example of a potential solution to the design problem, they generate a design solution that likely includes features of the example (even features that totally violate the problem statement). Similarly, past successes are detrimental to creativity because ideators tend to come up with ideas similar to their past successes (Audia & Goncalo, 2007; Bayus, 2013). At the collective level, exchanging ideas in a group leads members to become fixated on their peers' ideas, what is called collaborative fixation (Kohn & Smith, 2011). We advocate that cognitive fixation can also refer to the conformity to commonly held knowledge and not to group members' ideas (Stasser & Titus, 1985). It further yields similar effects: cognitive fixation to commonly held knowledge limits the range of domains for future selected ideas and so decreases the novelty of such ideas. In other words, team members only build on other ideas if

they conform to the team common knowledge, which limits idea exploration. Overall, it indicates that if the *unanimity* mode of selection improves the usefulness dimension of the selected outcome, the novelty is still impaired since team members do not capitalize on the idea diversity they are presented with.

At Apple, the Power Mac G4 Cube is a case in point of how the prevalence of one perspective pervaded the selection process. On the strength of the iMac success, the desktop computer that revolutionized the design of the computers with its colored transparent case, the design perspective was placed at the heart of the creative process of the next computer. Indeed, the minimalist and miniaturized computer Power Mac G4 Cube was largely acclaimed as a marvel of design (Stone, 2011). It was even so beautifully designed that it won a place in the New York Museum of Modern Art. But commercially, it turned out to be a failure: consumers complained about its low performance and its major lack of upgradeability for its price. The narrow focus on the design perspective was to blame for the flop of the Power Mac G4 cube.

However, the *unanimity* mode of selection prevents the constructive conflict to occur because of the lack of argumentation and debate coupled with this fixation on one perspective. The same logic as for the *majority* mode of selection applies — the ideas resulting from the *unanimity* mode of selection are likely to get implemented (Mohammed & Ringseis, 2001). Altogether, the *unanimity* mode of selection is expected to lead to moderately creative ideas that are highly likely to get implemented.

Devil's advocacy. The selection of creative ideas among similar ideas by a highly cognitive diverse team is labeled *devil's advocacy*. Devil's advocacy "relies on critiques of a single set of recommendations" (Schweiger et al., 1989:52). The selection process will consist of similar ideas being apprehended through diverse frames. The similar ideas hence constitute the "single set of recommendations" described by Schweiger et al. while the multiple perspectives used to evaluate this single choice set refer to the "critiques", justifying the use of

the devil's advocacy decision-making structure. The devil's advocacy decision process recommends the use of constructive conflict and aims at determining what is wrong with the presented set of recommendations.

In the decision-making literature, decision-making processes involving conflict improve the quality of the final decision because of an enhanced critical evaluation of the choice set. The ideas selected through the *devil's advocacy* selection mode are of higher quality than those selected through a consensus decision-making process (Schweiger et al., 1989). The *majority* and *unanimity* modes of selection refer to the consensus decision-making structure due to their lack of formal argumentation and structured discussion about the choice set. Consequently, the *devil's advocacy* should lead to decisions of greater quality than the *majority* and *unanimity* modes of selection. Applying the same logic on the link between the quality of a decision and the usefulness dimension of creativity, it could be argued that the *devil's advocacy* mode of selection will lead to ideas of greater usefulness. In the *devil's advocacy* selection mode, team members build upon a similar choice set from diverse perspectives. Recent findings show that diverse perspectives help an individual to alter the way she sees a problem (Perry-Smith, 2014) and so ease the recombination process at the origin of the outcome's novelty. It results that the *devil's advocacy* selection mode positively impacts team creative outcome.

At Apple, the iPod exemplifies how the combination of different perspectives with a similar choice set can lead to a huge success. Unhappy with the digital music players existing on the market, Apple saw an opportunity and mandated Jeff Robin, the computer engineer who turned its own venture Soundjam into iTunes and Jon Rubinstein, the veteran Apple engineer who's been responsible for most of the company's hardware. Rubinstein further hired Tony Fadell as a consultant in order not to disturb any of the engineers working on new Macs. Tony Fadell had prior experience developing popular gadgets for Philips and General Magic.

Altogether, the different career experiences of the three "fathers" of the iPod led to different cognitive strategies and different approaches to problem solving (Taylor & Greve, 2006) while the core idea of the music player early defined in the creative process outlined the limited choice set. It results in the iPod success exemplifying the positive effect of the *devil's advocacy* selection mode on the creativity of the team outcome. Furthermore Jonathan Ive, Senior Vice President of Design at Apple, emphasizes the "reflective reframing" (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006) dimension of the iPod design process: "It's not serial, it's not one person passing something on to the next. My design group collaborated closely with manufacturers and engineers, constantly tweaking and refining the design" (Apple Senior Vice president of Design Jonathan Ive; quoted in Kahney, 2006). In other words, the final iPod got selected through a collective buildup of ideas.

However, recent empirical findings challenge the positive effect of such "buildup of ideas" on team creativity. For example, Girotra, Terwiesch, & Ulrich (2010) showed that the suggested advantage of interactive buildup is not supported by empirical evidence. They tested the role of buildup of ideas through an experimental design involving students from an upper-level product design elective course working on design challenges and modeled interactive buildup as similarity in the content of consecutive ideas. They found no support for the often-cited effect of buildup of ideas on improving the quality of ideas. They even found the reverse effect: because of increased buildup, the mean idea quality actually decreased. Subsequently the *devil's advocacy* mode of selection, which consists of such buildup of ideas, raises the issue of the quality of its selected ideas. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, constructive conflict while enabling an increase in the quality of the final decision impairs the implementation of the selected idea. In other words, not only the higher creativity of the ideas selected through the *devil's advocacy* is not ensured but also team members may be more likely to implement creative ideas selected through the *majority* or *unanimity* modes of selection rather than through

the *devil's advocacy* mode.

Dialectical Inquiry. *Dialectical inquiry* is the selection of creative ideas from highly cognitive diverse teams among highly diverse ideas. Within the decision-making literature, dialectical inquiry has been described as the decision-making process where the decision-making group is divided into two subgroups. One subgroup is dedicated to the development of recommendations supported by diverse assumptions while the second subgroup is devoted to developing plausible assumptions that negate those of the first and then use those new assumptions to develop counter-recommendations. It can be argued that diverse perspectives are a prerequisite for developing counter assumptions. Cognitive diversity indeed provides the different perspectives, ideas and thinking styles (Shin et al., 2012: 197) required to develop a new "system of shared meaning that governs collective perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions" (Schneider & Shrivastava, 1988: 494). However, I extend the notion of diametrically opposed set of recommendations to that of diverse choice set. The presented ideas for selection do not necessarily need to be opposite, but they should be different. I expect from the combination of diverse information and diverse framing, the development of new alternatives and not the mere selection of one idea among the recommendations set. This relates to the elaboration of new alternatives characterizing the dialectical inquiry decision-making structure. Altogether, those arguments emphasize the appropriateness of naming "dialectical inquiry" the selection of creative ideas by highly cognitively diverse team members among diverse ideas.

The *dialectical inquiry* is the most suitable selection mode to build alternatives. While the *devil's advocacy* selection mode focuses on one set of ideas and determines what is wrong with this choice set, the *dialectical inquiry* selection mode benefits from the juxtaposition of different perspectives and different ideas to deduce new alternatives. Further, the exposure to diverse perspectives leads team members to develop assumptions that include all the different facets of an issue, hence increasing their accuracy. In turn, the quality of the recommendations

should increase and so the quality of the final decision (Schweiger et al., 1989). The usefulness of the ideas selected through the *dialectical inquiry* selection mode should hence be the highest. Moreover, the buildup of diverse ideas from diverse perspectives is supposed to ensure the novelty dimension of the creative outcome, reinforcing its uniqueness (Guilford, 1957; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2014). Thus, the *dialectical inquiry* mode of selection positively impacts both usefulness and novelty of the team final outcome and subsequently its creativity.

At Apple, the iMac — the bulbous all in one computer with a translucent indigo casing — was the product of art and technology perspectives. It combined a top performance computer with a redefinition of people's mindsets about what computers can look like. Jonathan Ive recalls how this highly creative design got to be selected among diverse ideas: "A small team of designers worked like maniacs for several months to come up with the design, which was largely informed by what consumers wanted" (Ive; quoted in Essick, 1998). The diverse perspectives — engineers, design and consumers — coupled with a large choice set hence led to the selection of one of Apple's most iconic and beloved product, the iMac.

Schweiger et al. (1989) tested the hypothesis according to which the *dialectical inquiry* decision-making structure leads to decisions of higher quality than the *devil's advocacy* process. If they found that the *dialectical inquiry* process was leading to assumptions of higher quality, the final set of recommendations was not of higher quality. Surprisingly, the final set of recommendations deduced from those more accurate assumptions was not of higher quality. Contingencies — such as a good management tool — hence influence the relationship between the quality of the assumptions and that of the final recommendations (Schweiger et al., 1989). This, in turn, suggests that the positive impact of the *dialectical inquiry* mode of selection on the team creative outcome highly depends on contextual elements. Furthermore, the *dialectical inquiry* mode of selection — summing the differences on ideas and perspectives held by the team members — is likely to induce high task conflict and the resulting management

difficulties.

The situation of Apple in 1997 just before Steve Jobs came back is a good example. The company was just a few months away from bankruptcy and Steve Jobs' diagnosis of the company was clear. Even if Apple was investing millions in R&D, the lack of focus was to blame: "If we want to see Apple healthy and prospering again, we have to let go a few things" (Steve Jobs, MacWorld Expo, 1997). It was not people's fault: "there are some awfully good people there" judged Jobs (1997). However, too much diversity in terms of perspectives and choice set led to a poor (and a lack of) selection of differentiating products. The *dialectical inquiry* selection mode can hence lead to management difficulties but, if overcome, the team creative outcome is likely to be explorative: by focusing on few promising projects, Steve Jobs saved Apple from bankruptcy and turned the company into the "most innovative company" in the world.

4.3. Boundary Conditions of Team Creative Idea Selection

The team selection modes can fail to produce the expected outcomes in two ways. First, the *dialectical inquiry* and *devil's advocacy* selection modes can fail to capitalize on the diversity of perspectives they are provided with. Put in other words, due to different environmental contexts, one perspective is preferred over the other. For example, Drazin et al. (1999) have shown that crises determine when the perspective of the management is preferred to that of the technical staff. Second, in the *unanimity* and the *dialectical inquiry* selection modes, team members can fail to capitalize on the diversity of ideas they are presented with. For example, team members can fixate on the ideas that best fit the team harmony (Janis, 1982). These two limitations pertain to the idea of critical elaboration and how critical elaboration is impaired. Cognitive, social, and environmental resources can mitigate the risk of an ineffective critical collaboration.

Cognitively, the *unanimity, devil's advocacy* and *dialectical inquiry* selection modes

require team members to respectively build on each other ideas, perspectives or both. The extent to which team members take the perspectives of their teammates hence forms a boundary condition for the selection process. Perspective taking entails the "attempt to understand the thoughts, motives, and feelings of the other teammates" (Hoever, Knippenberg, Ginkel and Barkema, 2012). Perspective taking helps in realizing the creative benefit of cognitive diversity by fostering information elaboration (Hoever et al., 2012). Taking another perspective indeed implies taking another evaluative standard. In turn, the sharing of evaluative standards fosters more constructive appraisal, which promotes the elaboration on each other ideas. The information elaboration fosters collective reframing, and so team creativity (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). Altogether it suggests that perspective taking moderates the relationship between cognitive diversity and creativity. Perspective taking also shapes conflict perception and even reduces the conflict level due to more careful message framing (Hoever et al., 2012). It implies that perspective taking will not only increase the information elaboration of the *devil's advocacy* and the *dialectical inquiry* selection modes but also reduce the conflict associated with those two selection modes. Subsequently, perspective taking is likely to positively impact the quality and the creativity of ideas selected through the *devil's advocacy* and the *dialectical inquiry* selection modes as well increasing the likelihood of those ideas to be implemented. However, perspective taking will reinforce the negative impact of low cognitive diversity on creativity (Hoever et al., 2012). When there is homogeneity in perspectives and thinking styles, perspective taking reinforces the existing perspective on the problem and constraints new approaches. Thus, the lack of critical evaluation experienced in the *majority* and *unanimity* modes of selection is intensified when team members engage in perspective taking. Furthermore, perspective taking is a resource-demanding cognitive process: if perspective taking is not likely to lead to new insights in homogeneous team, its cognitive load is not compensated. Subsequently perspective taking becomes a liability in the *majority* and

unanimity modes of selection.

Socially, cohesion is one of the processes that most affect team creativity (for a review, see Hülsheger, Anderson and Salgado, 2009). Cohesion promotes cooperation and information exchange among team members, which enhances critical elaboration on diverse information and perspectives (Hülsheger et al., 2009). In so doing, it provides the conditions for the *unanimity, devil's advocacy* and *dialectical inquiry* selection modes to lead to highly creative ideas. Furthermore, cohesion also involves a high commitment of team members to their teamwork, a group pride associated with a desire to maintain group membership and high interpersonal attractions (Lott and Lott, 1965). These high interpersonal attractions, in turn, induce a team climate characterized by psychological safety. Since creativity faces a high risk of failure (e.g., Simonton, 2003), psychological safety encourages the expression of voice during the selection process. However, the feeling of belongingness developed in a highly cohesive team can mitigate this positive effect. In highly cohesive teams, team members tend to value the harmony of the team over the creativity of selected outcome (Janis, 1982). Teams are not a one-time occurrence but instead refer to long-term mutual influence and interdependence experienced between teammates (e.g., Mueller & Cronin, 2009). Consequently, they select ideas based on potential future consequences for the team. This, in turn, generates what Kaplan et al. (2009) call conformity, i.e., the modification of actions and behaviors to conform to norms that promote and express team unity, but not necessarily cognitions. As a result, a team still generates diverse ideas but their selection mode is biased towards the expression of the team unity. For example, in the *dialectical inquiry* selection mode, diverse ideas are still expressed and then apprehended through the diverse "lenses" of such highly cognitive diverse team. However, the final selection favors the idea that best complies with the team unity. Recent empirical findings have further shown that creativity is detrimental to interpersonal liking (Yong & Schulte, 2013). Consequently, members of highly cohesive

teams may select less creative ideas in order to preserve the unity of the team and the interpersonal attraction, characteristic of their team's cohesion. It echoes the notion of groupthink in the decision-making literature with the idea that cohesiveness is detrimental to the quality of the decision (Kerr & Tindale, 2004).

Environmentally, high external communication forms a boundary condition to the influence of the team selection mode on the creativity of the selected idea. High external communication refers to the idea that a team is not an isolated island and that its team members easily build ties and seek advice from colleagues external to the team. Such external ties mitigate the lack of diverse perspectives of the *majority* and *fixation* selection modes. For example, Perry-Smith & Shalley (2014) found that nationality outside tie diversity is positively related to team creativity, because they not only enable the access to non-redundant information for the team, but also and more importantly, serve to alter members' schemas so that they develop cognitive habits and skills that help them approach problems creatively (what I call "perspectives"). It echoes the notion of team shared task representation in the decision-making literature. In other words, external communication enhances the complexity of the team shared task representation and, in so doing, it ensures the development of more accurate "assumptions" for the selection process. A more complex shared task representation indeed implies that the shared meaning that governs team members' collective perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and actions depicts more accurately the situation. When assumptions are accurate, the quality of the decision increases and thus the usefulness dimension of the creative ideas. Thus, external communication at least enhances the usefulness dimension of the selected idea. However, all relationships with colleagues external to the team will not equally benefit the selection of creative ideas. For example, Perry-Smith & Shalley have pinpointed the role of nationality and the importance of the strength of the relationship: if weak nationality diverse outside ties are significantly and positively related to team creativity, the strong nationality diverse outside ties

are not (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2014).

The list of team resources impacting the team selection modes is far from exhaustive. Other resources impacting the creative process (for reviews, see Anderson et al., 2014; George, 2007) and the group decision-making (for reviews, see Kerr & Tindale, 2004) are likely to be important for the selection modes to lead to high creativity. The team selection modes might not always lead to the same level of creativity for the selected outcome. The argument is that the four selection modes provide a foundation for predicting the creative outcome of the selection process.

4.4. Discussion

The literature on decision-making has long studied the implications of the decision-making procedures on the quality of the final decision (for a review, see Kerr & Tindale, 2004). I use an analogical reasoning to challenge the view of team creative idea selection as a singular entity and posit that different team selection modes exist and have unique impacts on the creativity of the selected idea for further implementation. I, however, depart from the conception of team creative idea selection as a one-time decision and argue that selecting novelty implies a collective construction of alternatives that the selection of quality does not involve.

Empowering team creativity. A central contribution of my research is to provide insights to reconcile the supposed advantages of teamwork for creativity and teams' apparent difficulty to be creative. Indeed, previous research has shown that teams enjoy a greater access to diverse perspectives, this, in turn, stimulates the recombination process at the heart of the creative idea generation (Amabile, 1996; Drazin et al., 1999; Woodman et al., 1993). Concomitantly, the literature on team creativity has pointed to the difficulty of teams to achieve creative synergy, in particular for diverse teams (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Miliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). The role of the selection process has been highlighted but

not without major disagreements. One stream of research has suggested that diversity impairs the selection process because of the increased difficulty to converge on a final solution (Milliken, Bartel, & Kurtzberg, 2003; Harvey, 2013). Thus, the greater exposure to diverse perspectives in teamwork fosters idea generation but undermines the selection phase and ultimately the implemented idea poorly reflects the richness of the idea generation. In contrast, a second stream of research advocates that teams have an increased ability to identify and select the most appropriate ideas as the overall set of knowledge in a team is bigger (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Indeed, the selection of creative ideas entails selecting ideas that depart from the existing knowledge (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988). Thus, the ability of a team to compare its ideas against a larger set of knowledge increases the likelihood to select the most novel ideas. My research provides insights to solve the discrepancies concerning team creativity and the specific role of the team selection of creative ideas.

The proposed solution is to challenge the view of selection as a singular entity and to unpack team creative idea selection. Indeed, my classification of four selection modes enables to explain the mixed effect of teamwork on creative idea selection as well as to justify the disparities between the team's increased ability to generate creative ideas and its difficulty to implement such ideas: certain selection modes are more likely than others to lead to the implementation of the most promising idea. In addition, since my typology of team creative idea selection is based on the cognitive diversity of a team, it contributes to the recent literature that challenges the view that diversity mostly impacts idea generation and advances its critical role on idea selection (Harvey & Kou, 2013; Mueller & Cronin, 2009). In my conception of team creative idea selection, selection is not the one-time decision of eliminating the non-appropriate ideas but rather involves a critical elaboration of the presented ideas. Diversity is hence supposed to stimulate critical elaboration and improve the selection process. It implies that diverse perspectives are not only valuable to stimulate divergence but also to converge on

a final outcome, as some other researchers have recently observed (Harvey & Kou, 2013). Altogether, my study identifies selection as a key element of the team creative process that unites idea generation and idea implementation and calls for future research on additional determinants of the selection phase and the conditions under which a certain selection mode leads to the implementation of the most promising idea.

Surmounting the obstacles of the selection of creative ideas in teams. My research also provides a potential explanation to a paradox in the literature: if teams are good at decision-making, they poorly perform at recognizing their most creative ideas (Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2006, 2010; Putman & Paulus, 2009). In other words, the criteria used for the selection matter and teams are better at recognizing quality than novelty. My framework conceptually distinguishes the impact of a given selection mode on the usefulness and the novelty components of a selected idea. The usefulness dimension is associated with the quality of a decision in the decision-making literature. In contrast, selecting a novel idea, as aforementioned, departs from the mere elimination of the non-novel ideas to involve a collective construction of alternatives, a sort of collective reflective reframing, that others have observed as the hallmark of team creativity without, however, reflecting upon its role on the selection process (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). My research hence suggests that the discrepancy between the team's performance at decision-making and at selecting creative ideas relies on the misconception of creative idea selection as a one-time convergent phase similar to decision-making. Future research should explore the additional factors stimulating the reflective reframing process during the selection phase. For example, the degree to which a team member perceives his relationship with the person at the origin of a presented idea as one of mutual creative collaboration rather than one of an expert-incompetent pair can influence a team member's willingness to engage in reflective reframing (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003).

My research also emphasizes a certain trade-off between novelty and usefulness and a

certain selection mode might be more conducive to one component at the expense of the other. For example, the majority rule might be the mode efficient selection mode for the usefulness dimension of creativity while it impairs the novelty of the selected idea. My framework delineates the respective impact of the different selection modes on the outcome in terms of the two components of creativity.

The impact of the team context on the creative process. I contribute to the creativity theory by expanding the systemic view of creativity (Csikszsentmihalyi, 1999, 2006) to introduce an intermediary stage between the individual production of creative ideas and the evaluation of their usefulness and novelty by an appropriate audience (Amabile, 1983). Indeed, considering the selection process at the team level implies that a first selection occurs at the team level before turning to the external audience. It hence shifts the emphasis to a two-stage selection model. In a first step, the ideas generated at the individual level are presented to the team members who evaluate their novelty and usefulness. This selection process depends on the cognitive diversity of the team and the set of alternatives the team is presented with. In a second step, the idea selected by the team is presented to the relevant audience, who evaluates again both its novelty and usefulness. Furthermore, considering the selection process at the team level also offers a more holistic approach to the creative process, answering the recent call in the creativity literature to develop more integrative frameworks in order to gain a deeper understanding of creativity (Anderson et al., 2014; Rietzschel et al., 2009). Indeed, in the systemic view of creativity (Csikzsentmihalyi, 1999, 2006), selection performed by an external audience is a one-time decision, independent from the individual production of creative ideas and, thus, this approach enables to study the idea generation and idea selection phases separately. However, in teams, as aforementioned, selection is first team-based and evolves as ideas are collectively reflected upon such that idea generation and idea selection cannot be considered as separate entities anymore. It is only after this selection in teams has been

performed that the external audience can proceed to the one-time creative decision. It implies a greater complexity for the creative process that has not been identified in the creativity literature to date.

In addition, my research shows that some contingencies determine the extent to which adopting a selection mode leads to a certain creative outcome and points to the role of perspective taking, team cohesion and external communication. Future research may explore additional contingencies. For example, nominal teams — i.e., when team members first work independently before working together — produce more ideas than regular teams — i.e., team members work together in time and space (Girotra, Terwiesh, & Ulrich, 2010: 591). Future studies can explore how the fluency gain in nominal teams influences the selection process, in particular whether the higher quantity of produced ideas means more similar or more diverse ideas, and, in turn, how it affects the selection modes of team creative ideas and their creative outcome (Baruah & Paulus, 2009). Similarly, teams are not necessarily in the same development phase: some are in a very early phase wherein the focus is on developing social knowledge among team members; others are in intermediate phases wherein team members mainly focus on their individual responsibilities and start discerning some interdependencies between their roles and other team members' roles; finally, some are in a mature phase wherein team members have a rich understanding of the complex interdependencies in the team (DeRue & Rosso, 2009; Kozlowski, Gully, Nason, & Smith,1999). Thus, these development phases can influence the team's ability to engage in the collective reflective reframing process inherent to the team creative idea selection process and as such deserve further attention. Alternatively, future research can investigate the temporality of the selection modes itself. It would be interesting for future studies to explore how teams can navigate between the different selection modes. For example, an outsider entry into the team or a team member change may modify the level of cognitive diversity within the team (Skilton & Dooley, 2010), which may generate a

shift from a certain selection mode to another. Examining the evolution of the team selection process might further provide some insights on how to solve the trade-off between novelty and usefulness.

Chapter 5

General Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. General Discussion

The objective of the present dissertation was to gain a better a better understanding of how people assess creativity, and of the antecedents and outcomes of this creativity assessment process. In the first essay, I addressed the question of how people *in different cultures* assess creativity. Building on the cross-cultural decision-making literature, I explained that the impact of the cultural context on the assessment of creativity can not be understood without conjointly analyzing assessment process and criteria. Indeed, striking cultural differences both in the moves used at each step of the assessment process and in the frequency and valence of the criteria emerged from my inductive study of the French and US versions of *Top Chef*. In particular, in terms of process, I observed a culturally imprinted requirement of decipherability for the creative process; and, in terms of criteria, I found cultural differences in the frequency and valence of the two traditional dimensions of creativity (i.e., novelty and appropriateness) as well as the use of two additional criteria (persistence and coherence).

In the second part of this dissertation, I focused on the cues upon which evaluators rely to assess creativity. In particular, I disentangled the mechanism underlying the relationship between the creator's status and the evaluation of his or her creativity. I developed the role of a specialist identity and I argued for a complementary effect with the creator's status. Status is mostly assigned based on the creator's affiliation with high status others rather than on his or her past successes. A high-status creator, therefore, benefits from an enhanced reputation without being constrained by past success but there is no direct link between the creator's status and his competency (in contrast with when status derives from past success). A specialist identity compensates by conveying to the audience a higher competency perception for the creator. I hypothesized and found evidence that the creator's status is only beneficial for his creativity evaluation when he has a specialist identity.

Finally, in the third part of the dissertation, I focused on team creativity and developed a theoretical model where the assessment process provides an explanation as for why teams are not always the breeding ground for creativity (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Miliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). I did so by conceptually distinguishing between different team assessment processes and delineating their respective impact on team's ability to select its most creative idea for further implementation. I suggested the distinctiveness of the generated ideas constituting the choice set and the team cognitive diversity as the key drivers of the team assessment process, hence proposing four archetypes of team assessment processes. I further presented the cognitive, social and environmental boundary conditions that enrich or deprive the relationship between the assessment process and the creativity of the team outcome.

5.1.1. Theoretical Contributions

This dissertation contributes to the creativity literature in several ways. First, I develop the understanding of the assessment phase of the creative process. In doing so, it responds to the call to approach creativity as a multidimensional sequence of behaviors (Rietzschel et al., 2009) and to further examine the selection sequence that is the "crucial starting point in the long process of putting new ideas generated into good use" (Zhou, Wang, Son & Wu, 2016:1).

Second, I contribute to prior work on creativity assessment by elaborating on the antecedents that affect an *evaluator's* assessment of a creator's creativity. Despite the seminal contributions on creativity showing that something can be called creative only if it is recognized as such by an expert audience (Amabile, 1983; Csikszentmihályi, 1996, 1999), the scant research on creativity assessment focused on the individuals' assessment of their own ideas (Rietzschel, Nijstad, & Stroebe, 2010). Yet, assessing one's ideas and others' ideas are very different endeavors: when an external audience assess creativity, information is scarcer, and the audience tend to rely on cues to assess creativity (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). In particular, findings from the second empirical study stress that the creator's status and his or her specialist

identity jointly influence the audience's perception of the creator's creativity. In doing so, I also make sense of the contradictory findings on the impact of the creator's status on the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience: status creative advantages need to be activated by the creation of a specialist identity. Likewise, I also reconcile the existing inconsistencies about the effect of a specialist identity on creativity evaluation by stressing the role of status. Future research could further explore the creator's characteristics influencing the evaluation of his creativity by an external audience. Moreover, future research could also develop the research avenue of the antecedents of creativity assessments by looking at the impact of *evaluators'* characteristics on their evaluation of others' creativity. For example, recently, Zhou, Wang, Song & Wu (2016) have looked at the impact of evaluators' promotion focus and prevention focus on their novelty perception.

Third, related to the prior point, I elaborate on the *contextual* antecedents that affect an evaluator's assessment of a creator's creativity and in particular on the role of the cultural context. In today's globalized environment, it is of primary importance to understand how culture affects the assessment of creativity. Recently, scholars found the creator's cultural distance with his or her audience to be detrimental to be assessed as creative (Chua, Roth, & Lemoine, 2015), yet without specifying the mechanism underlying this detrimental effect. One possible reason lies in the cultural differences in assessing creativity: the findings from the first empirical study show that French and US evaluators engage in different moves at each step of the assessment process and that the assessment criteria have different frequency and valence across France and US. In doing so, I also highlight striking cultural differences in two countries deemed to be culturally close, showing that culture can generate deep differences in creativity assessment even in two culturally close countries and calling for a greater awareness of the risk of overlooking cultural differences for creativity and its assessment in particular. Moreover, since organizations largely rely on teamwork to foster creativity (Lovelace, Shapiro &

Weingart, 2001), future research could explore the impact of the cultural context on the assessment of outcomes generated by teams. And, relatedly, the impact of the cultural context on team dynamics among evaluators might be worth investigating.

Finally, I contribute to existing research on team creativity. The theoretical framework in the third part of the dissertation introduces an important focus on the different team creativity assessment processes and their respective impact on the ability of a team to select their most creative ideas for further implementation and so doing to capitalize on the richness of the perspectives at their disposal. Future research could explore additional determinants of team assessment processes. In particular, an avenue worth of inquiry is the role of the team development phase. While recent research (DeRue & Rosso, 2009; Kozlowski, Gully, Nason, & Smith,1999) suggests that the team development phase impacts creativity, the underlying mechanism is still unclear. Future research could explore how the team development phase impacts its assessment process. Alternatively, it would also be interesting for future studies to explore the temporality of the assessment processes or, put it more simply, how teams can navigate between the different assessment processes.

5.1.2. Practical Contributions

This dissertation has important implications also for practice. First of all, in today's dynamic environment, organizations are faced with problems and challenges never seen before, and they rely on their employees' creative ideas to survive and thrive (Amabile, 1996; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; George, 2007; Rietzschel, Nijstad & Stroebe, 2010). Recognizing the creative potential of workers' ideas is crucial for organizations. Managers should be sensitive to the factors that influence their creativity assessments.

Second, and related to the above, this dissertation suggests that people assess creativity differently across cultures. Therefore, in our globalized economy, employees should be aware of their cultural biases when assessing creative ideas from workers in different cultures. This

can help them not failing to notice a creative idea that could provide the organization with a novel source of competitive advantage. In the same fashion, a greater awareness of the cultural differences in the assessment of creativity can help managers to select the creative idea that will be the most likely to be recognized as such in a given cultural context. Put it differently, the better understanding of the way people in a given cultural context assess creativity allows the managers to select the creative ideas that will work in that specific context.

Finally, this dissertation also speaks also to the issue of whether specialization or diversification is better to foster the recognition of employees' creativity. This has some implications for the recruitment process. Depending on the educational background of the candidates, recruiters may want to select candidates with more or less diversified experiences. In the case of candidates with prestigious school affiliations, they may select candidates with experiences focused on a limited number of sectors while self-made candidates with highly diversified experiences may have their preference. In doing so, this dissertation also contributes to the diversity issue by specifying the way self-made candidates can be granted highest creativity in the eyes of the audience. In the new area of the war for talent (Chambers et al., 1998), companies do not have the luxury of "locking out folks who can really add value" (Kline, 2015). My results suggest that to leverage this new labor force, large and diversified companies with varied markets may institute rotational programs into human resources policies for that particular population.

5.2. Conclusion

The idea that creativity is socially constructed is one of the oldest topics in the creativity literature, yet the assessment phase of the creative process has so far been overlooked. This thesis attempted at addressing this gap by investigating the characteristics, antecedents, and outcomes of creativity assessments. I hope that this work spurs an increased interest in the topic and prompts other researchers to further our understanding of how people assess creativity,

something that is deeply needed by both theory and practice. Creativity assessment could be investigated both qualitatively and quantitatively in a variety of settings, helping us to disentangle its mechanisms. This would deepen our understanding of the phenomenon, which I believe to be one of the most crucial for organizations today.

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université PARIS-SACLAY | ÉCOLE DOCTORALE Sciences de l'homme et de la société (SHS)

Titre : Une affaire de goût : Etude de la sélection des idées créatives

Mots clés : Créativité, Statut, Culture, Industries culturelles

Résumé : Cette thèse étudie la phase d'évaluation de la créativité, ses antécédents et ses effets. Dans le premier article, j'étudie l'impact de la culture sur le processus d'évaluation de la créativité, posant la question de la manière dont la créativité est évaluée dans différentes cultures. L'étude inductive des versions française et américaine de *Top Chef*, un concours destiné aux cuisiniers professionnels, révèle des différences culturelles frappantes à la fois dans les processus d'évaluation et dans la fréquence et la valence des critères. Dans le deuxième chapitre de cette thèse, je tente d'expliquer le mécanisme derrière l'un des prismes majeurs par lequel les évaluateurs forment leur jugement concernant la créativité, à savoir le statut du créateur. Je soutiens que l'effet du statut du créateur sur l'évaluation de sa créativité diffère en fonction de son identité de spécialiste ou de généraliste. J'émets l'hypothèse et obtiens confirmation par une étude empirique longitudinale du contexte de la haute cuisine américaine que le statut du créateur n'est bénéfique à son évaluation de la créativité que lorsque le créateur a une identité de spécialiste. Enfin, dans la troisième partie de cette thèse, je me focalise sur la créativité en équipe et développe un modèle théorique où le processus d'évaluation explique pourquoi les équipes ne sont pas toujours un terrain propice à la créativité. Je propose de distinguer conceptuellement les différents processus d'évaluation et d'étudier leur impact respectif sur la capacité de l'équipe à sélectionner son idée la plus créative en vue de son application.

Title: A matter of taste: A deep dive into assessing creativity

Keywords: Creativity, Status, National Culture, Cultural Industries

Abstract: The objective of the present dissertation is to gain a better understanding of how people assess creativity, and of the antecedents and outcomes of this creativity assessment process. In the first essay, I address the question of how people in different cultures assess creativity. In an inductive study of the French and US versions of *Top Chef*, a professional chefs' competition, striking cultural differences emerge both in the moves used at each step of the assessment process and in the frequency and valence of the criteria. In the second part of this dissertation, I focus on the cues upon which evaluators rely to assess creativity. In particular, I disentangle the mechanism underlying the relationship between the creator's status and the evaluation of his or her creativity. I develop the role of a specialist identity and argue for a complementary effect with the creator's status. I hypothesize and find evidence that the creator's status is only beneficial for his creativity evaluation when he has a specialist identity. Finally, in the third part of the dissertation, I focus on team creativity and develop a theoretical model where the assessment process provides an explanation as for why teams are not always the breeding ground for creativity. I propose to conceptually distinguish between different team assessment processes and to explore their respective impact on team's ability to select its most creative idea for further implementation.