

Generating spaces for exploration: The creative transitions of EU necessity entrepreneurs

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“... and yet a true creator is necessity,
which is the mother of our invention.”

The Republic, Book II, 369c, Plato

Introduction

As the old English proverb states, ‘necessity is the mother of invention’. In this paper, we show how necessity forces the unemployed in three EU countries to engage in entrepreneurial activities in a bid to creatively achieve sustainable outputs – e.g., an income, a living or a job/company – in conditions of austerity and constant crisis. As the term ‘necessity entrepreneur’ infers, it is necessity, rather than opportunity (Hessels et al., 2008), that is pushing, rather than pulling (Amit and Muller, 1995; Gilad and Levine, 1986; Poschke, 2013), them to become entrepreneurial, and the transition they experience is relatively poorly understood. By focusing on necessity entrepreneurs, we seek to contribute to the emerging, alternative tradition that recognises entrepreneurship as a diverse phenomenon (Gartner, 2008; Mitchell, 1997; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 2002), as a process rather than an ideal state to be reached and goes beyond a focus on wealth and business creation (e.g., Imas and Weston, 2012; Ogbor, 2000; Özkazanç-Pan, 2009). In doing so, we also hope to present a more nuanced understanding of both entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial process.

When it comes to entrepreneurship, and in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, increasingly, as Bauman (2013) submits, “state functions ... [have been] shifted sideways to the market ... or dropped downwards, onto the shoulders of human individuals, now expected to divine individually, inspired and set in motion by their greed, what they did not manage to produce collectively, inspired and moved by communal spirit”. Thus, public discourse in post-crisis Ireland and Spain, amongst others, has sought to position entrepreneurship as the panacea for unemployment (García-Lorenzo et al., 2014), presenting entrepreneurship as both socially desirable

(an attractive employment option) and socially feasible (an accessible and realistic employment option).

Alongside the fragmentation of old certainties, the unemployed are now responsible for creating their own jobs as well as for taking themselves through the transition between unemployment to self-employment, all with limited or no support. Further, not only are the unemployed to take on the risks associated with starting up a business, along with the pressure to live up to the ideal of the exemplar entrepreneur (Anderson and Warren, 2011), but they are also doing so in a context of personal crisis and economic uncertainty. Indeed, as concerns necessity entrepreneurs, and borrowing from Marris (1986: 121), “no one would surely undertake so uncertain and stressful endeavour unless they were excluded from easier ways of realising themselves”.

Necessity entrepreneurs are, in employment terms, “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremony” (Turner, 1995: 95). They find themselves in a space where the structure they know is dissolving (Jahoda, 1982), rendering them invisible, and forcing them to find structure by themselves, since the institutions they used to rely on (e.g., government or employers) find it difficult to provide structure for them. And yet, in a context where risk and uncertainty are the norm (Sennett, 1998; 2006), the transition represents a space of becoming wherein engaging with the context creatively is both a necessity and a possibility.

Recent research has expanded our understanding of entrepreneurship as a creative endeavour by focusing not so much on what is inside entrepreneurs or how the environment can enable or constrain them in being creative, but on how the creative process develops in interactions between would-be entrepreneurs and their social and institutional contexts (Hjorth, 2005; Weik, 2011; Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009). We aim to contribute to this work by exploring the everyday creativity of necessity entrepreneurs from a cultural psychology perspective. We see the creative process in entrepreneurship as a socio-cultural and psychological endeavour. Going beyond the understanding of creativity as traits located inside “unique” individuals, we focus on how ordinary *entrepreneurship* and common creative experiences emerge (Verduyn & Essers, 2013). In doing so, we follow recent efforts to “democratize” entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2004; Essers & Benschop, 2007), stressing that everyone is capable of being entrepreneurial (Calás et al., 2009) through on-going interactions within particular social and cultural contexts (Amabile et al., 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Mair & Marti, 2006).

However, we go beyond a conceptualization of the social and the cultural as coercive instances having the power to facilitate or inhibit entrepreneurial creative expression or the creative entrepreneurial act towards stressing the interdependence between would-be entrepreneurs and their socio-cultural context in everyday life as necessary to generate creative spaces.

In our research, over a period of 2 years, we have followed a group of necessity entrepreneurs in three EU countries – the UK, Spain and Ireland – who have actively tried to develop better contextual conditions for generating entrepreneurial activities in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. With such “entrepreneurs out of necessity” becoming a sizeable group across countries (Amit & Muller, 1995; Kelley, *et al*; 2012), our aim is to understand the cultural psychological dynamics of everyday creative entrepreneuring in very uncertain conditions.

Through the analysis of 45 in-depth interviews, field notes, observations, media articles and policy documents, we illustrate how, despite active ‘institutional support’, constant interruptions, postponements and upsetting situations, many of these would-be entrepreneurs have managed to generate potential spaces for exploration (Winnicott, 1971) that are leading them towards innovative and sustainable outputs. It is through engaging creatively with institutional and cultural constraints that our would-be entrepreneurs learn how to ‘navigate’ the system, explore new ideas and strengthen their social networks, while co-creating and re-shaping their immediate social context to accommodate their new entrepreneurial identities. Thus, both entrepreneurial self and environment are transformed and develop through creative interactions.

The paper is structured as follows: the first section looks at the literature on entrepreneurship and creativity. The second section focuses on the research design and methodology for data collection and analysis. Section three provides the results and findings, which are presented as a narrative, and the final section discusses the main insights from the case study, linking them to relevant literature.

Theoretical framework

Entrepreneurial creativity: Shifting focus from the individual to the social.

Entrepreneurship is about creativity and emergence, albeit some scholars emphasize the emergence of entrepreneurial opportunities (Shane, 2008), while others emphasize the emergence of innovative and/or creative¹ outputs (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2001; Gilad & Levine, 1986). However, what

1 In this paper, we use creativity and innovation interchangeably as they are strongly associated (Isar and Anheier,

happens during the creative process itself remains largely unspecified; it is assumed that whatever is necessary for creativity to emerge will be created by the entrepreneur's special skills as an automatic by-product.

This is because classical entrepreneurship theory sees creativity as a trait located inside "unique" individuals who are able to think differently and drive innovative creation in the economy (Brockhaus & Horwitz, 1986; Holcombe, 1999; Storey, 1982). Entrepreneurs are said to be able to thrive on risk and uncertain conditions and follow their intuition as a basis for action (Hornaday & Bunker, 1970; Pickel, 1964), whereas non-entrepreneurs are seen to prefer work patterns of control and routinisation (Penrose, 1995). A good illustration of this view is Coleman's (2000) argument that entrepreneurs' specific quality is their 'entrepreneurial spirit', a trait that includes vision, a need to achieve, high self-confidence and optimism, tolerance for failure, creativity, and tolerance for ambiguity. Olson (1985) also argues that a successful entrepreneur must have: a sense of role orientation, a high tolerance for ambiguous and unstructured situations, an acceptance of moderate risk, intuitive abilities, and a high need for achievement.

Focusing on entrepreneurial traits as central unit of analysis draws on a long history of individual-centred theorising in economic orthodoxy dating back as far as the eighteenth century (Ripsas, 1998; Shane, 2008). Cantillon (1680's-1734) and Say (1771) are said to be the earliest social scientists who paid considerable attention to entrepreneurship by drawing attention to the entrepreneur as a special economic actor with a positive function within the economic system. In Cantillon's (1775) work for instance, the entrepreneur appeared as a risk-taker, agent of change, arbitrageur, and innovator, who is responsible for exchange and circulation in the economy. Historic descriptions such as these underscore how, from the outset, individual entrepreneurs' traits were put centre-stage and how creativity is implied to emerge from the rational thinking of individuals who are equipped with such traits. Yet, what happens during the creative process itself is unspecified, as the focus is on final creative outputs. As Gartner (1989) argued, attention has mainly been paid to the research question 'Who is the entrepreneur?', with the normative aim to establish the optimum combination of personality attributes that would allow for a prediction of what determines creativity.

2010) but we are aware that, strictly speaking, they have distinct theoretical traditions and research focus. Creativity is rooted in psychological approaches focusing on the generation of new ideas or products (e.g., Amabile, 1996; Boden, 1994; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), whereas innovation is grounded in aspects of economic theory, technology, and classical entrepreneurship theory focusing primarily on contextual aspects and the deployment and transfer/dissemination of innovative technologies (McMullan and Kenworthy, 2015; Schumpeter, 1961, 1982). Some authors, however, combine creativity and innovation in a single definition, stressing the interdependence between both phenomena and considering them fruits of an interactive process for generating creative knowledge and its application to create new value (e.g. Shipton et al, 2006). We follow the latter approach in our paper.

This individual-centred perspective is particularly evident in the Austrian school of entrepreneurship research (Hayek, 1945; Kirzner, 1973; Schumpeter, 1934). Although barely stated, the way in which the main authors in this school link entrepreneurial traits to explanations of creative processes illustrates vividly how creativity is seen as a phenomenon emerging from the special qualities of individuals. According to Schumpeter (1949), successful innovation depends on entrepreneurs as prime triggers of economic development whose function in the economic system is to creatively introduce new products or processes, identifying new export markets or sources of supply, or creating new types of organisation. In a similar vein, Hayek (1937; 1945) and Kirzner (1973) emphasise individual entrepreneurs as prime generators of creative processes and innovation. Kirzner (1973), building on Hayek's (1937, 1945) emphasis on uncertainty and the 'logic of discovery' in economic markets, claims that amongst the personal qualities of entrepreneurs, alertness is the paramount ability to discover new opportunities and to creatively develop them. Thus, for Kirzner, the entrepreneur is an arbitrageur who, through superior alertness, discovers opportunities and creatively develops them, in the process correcting inefficiencies in disequilibrium in the market (Chiles, Bluedorn & Gupta, 2007).

The understanding of the entrepreneur as a creative 'genius' mirrors the classical definitions of creativity, which stress individual divergent thinking (Amabile, 1996; Boden, 1994). Traditionally regarded as a divine and irrational quality, creativity has long been seen as the trait of unique individuals (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010) who have the insight, outstanding ability and fertility of a 'genius' (Mason, 2003) and, in entrepreneurial terms, are able to occasionally disrupt the existing market equilibrium to create disequilibrium (Schumpeter 1954) or move the market from initial disequilibrium toward equilibrium (Kirzner 1973). The focus has therefore been on creative 'breakthroughs', giving an elitist and essentialist focus to entrepreneurial creativity research and presenting ordinary creativity (Bateson, 1999) and common creative experiences as unimportant (Calás et al., 2009). A direct consequence of this type of research has been the detachment of the entrepreneurial creator from his context and community, building an almost pathological image of the entrepreneur as eccentric or even anti-social genius (Anderson & Warren, 2011). Such an account also excludes the role of co-creation or collaboration in the process of reaching "great discoveries" (Barron, 1999).

Yet, looking closer, even for Schumpeter (1982), a creative entrepreneur needs a context to diffuse his creative innovations. While creative entrepreneuring is expressed in new goods, new markets, physical technologies, etc, it is the diffusion of creative innovations that explains the cyclical behaviour of economies, generating waves of development. Also, creative organizations are

seen as commonly surviving longer, occupying leading positions in their fields (Schumpeter, 1982). Thus, creative processes have to be considered as organizational and social phenomena involving exchanges between different actors inside and outside the organization in order to turn creative ideas into viable new products or processes. In addition, innovation brings a sustainable component since its value is also linked to development, feasibility, and market acceptance. This means that, to be successful, entrepreneurial efforts have to gain social legitimacy (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001) since creative innovations are dependant on a social assessment process, i.e., on perceptions, knowledge, and value judgements (Stierand, Dorfler, & MacBryde, 2014).

Not surprisingly, the trait approach to entrepreneurial creativity has been heavily criticised and more social perspectives have emerged (Baron, 1998; 2000; Herron & Sapienza, 1992). For instance, authors who have adopted an ecological approach have explored communities and clusters of organisations and their patterns of interaction when innovating (Mezias & Kuperman, 2001; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). From this perspective, any organization is socially embedded in networks, while entrepreneurs, being more than isolated decision-makers, exert and develop their innovative capabilities through interactions in networks of social relations (Zimmer, 1986). These formulations have lent more complexity to the process and context in which creative entrepreneurship occurs.

In short, the research focus has shifted towards a more systemic vision of the creativity phenomenon in entrepreneurship to include contextual and environmental factors, moving beyond partial theoretical models that explore individual cognition and personality in a decontextualized social vacuum and conceptualize creativity as a quality of the lone individual (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Methodologically, there has also been a shift from one-dimensional approaches and metrics toward multidimensional approaches to understand the creative process. As a result, researchers have put more emphasis on the role of social factors in creative processes in the last decades (Amabile, 1996) emphasising *entrepreneurialing* as the result of human interaction and collaboration within particular social contexts (Mair & Marti, 2006).

And yet, although this more systemic approach to entrepreneurial creativity incorporates multiple levels – from individuals and interpersonal interactions, to groups and cultures – it still sees the social and the cultural as coercive instances, as an environment that has the power to facilitate or inhibit entrepreneurial creative expression (Weik, 2012). Thus, it envisions self and other, the individual and the social, as two distinct units (Marková, 2003). This kind of conceptualization portrays the social as an external environment, a set of stimuli that facilitate or constrain the creative act (the “press” factor; Rhodes, 1961), and therefore remains largely oblivious

to the social roots, social dynamics and social functions of entrepreneurial creativity. In the end, the would-be creative entrepreneur would still sit “alone”, self-contained and self-sufficient, ready to confront the oppressive “system” and, if “creative enough”, to defeat it.

We see the creative process in entrepreneurship as a socio-cultural and psychological endeavour. Our understanding of entrepreneuring as historically and socially situated implies that community, co-creation, collaboration and agency become key in the process of reaching any discovery. Indeed, without the social context, there would be no creativity. Thus, our objective is to offer an alternative that focuses not so much on what is in people, or how the environment as a separate entity would enable or constrain them in being creative, but on how a creative process develops in-between necessity entrepreneurs and their social and institutional contexts to enable openness, heterogeneity and movement (Hjorth, 2004, 2005). We develop this perspective in the next section.

Necessity entrepreneuring as a creative sociocultural process .

Research on creativity has been heavily influenced by what is known as the 4 P’s of creative expression: person, process, product, and press (roughly linked with contextual influences). In organizations, this model has been used variously in problem solving and decision making (Isaksen et al., 2011), as well as generic organizational research, human resources, and marketing (Higgins, 1999; Horn & Salvendy, 2006; Horng, Hu, Hong, & Lin, 2011; Watson, 2007).

While this conceptual schema, initially proposed by Rhodes (1961), has helped researchers structure their thinking about the phenomenon, it has also supported an individualistic, static, and oftentimes disjointed vision of the process of creativity. A basic problem with this understanding is that person, process, product, and press are often studied in isolation (Glavenau, 2010). Furthermore, despite the “press” being part of the model, most studies on organizational and entrepreneurial creativity have decontextualized creativity and do not engage with societal and cultural elements sufficiently. The entrepreneur and the entrepreneuring process are repeatedly considered in atomistic ways, while the ‘press’ or context is considered, at best, as another factor in the creativity equation or, at worst, is suppressed or marginalized to allow for better control and an uninterrupted creative processes.

In our research, we aim to develop a perspective that overcomes this separation and consider both the psychological and social characteristics of the creative process of necessity entrepreneurs. We use the work of cultural psychology scholars to do so (Cole, 1996; Shweder, 1990).

It was Vygotsky's early work on imagination and creativity in childhood (1930/1998) that laid the foundations for a cultural approach to creativity by asserting that: 1) creativity exists in the everyday and not only in great historical works; and 2) every creator is a product of his/her time and environment. Similarly, Winnicott (1971) claimed that creativity and cultural experience are twinborn in a potential space through creative playing in early childhood. This potential space is a relational space "between the individual and the environment" (p. 100), a space of experiencing the world situated between inner self and external life. Besides establishing creativity as relational, Winnicott's account is an excellent theorization of everyday creativity in its most basic expression. For him, creativity is not embodied in products but it is primarily a process, what he described as "creative living", a healthy way of living that leaves room for personal expression and spontaneity.

If Winnicott's account focuses on creativity being located in the space of interrelations, to understand how exactly creativity emerges in relations we need the notions of dialogue and stories. According to Winnicott, creativity is located in the space of interrelations through dialogue: Dialogue is the meeting ground on which new questions are raised, the mating ground on which new combinations are found, and the testing ground in which novelties are critically evaluated and assimilated into the body of shared knowledge and thought. (Gruber, 1998:139)

Creativity entails a communicative experience where intersubjectivity and interactive dialogue are made possible by the use of cultural resources. This leads us to the notion of symbolic resources developed by Zittoun (2007). The main thesis of this conception is that whenever we face a discontinuity, a break or rupture of our taken-for-granted ordinary experience (of our inner self, of the relations with others or the environment), we engage in processes specific to "transitions" and resort to symbolic resources to elaborate meaning and externalize the outcome (Zittoun et al., 2007). This outcome (not necessarily material) is most often creative, especially since it comes out of a situation where there is no learned or practiced solution (Torrance, 1988). To qualify as a symbolic resource, the element must be used by someone for something, usually re-contextualizing meaning into a newly resulting socio-cultural formation (Zittoun et al., 2007: 418). Symbolic resources vary in nature, from concrete artefacts to conceptual and procedural elements. All symbolic resources emerge from social interaction (Zittoun, 2007) and require symbolic labour, the necessary work "to ensure the daily production and reproduction of human existence" (Willis, 1990:9). This is especially so when the context is fragmented and changes constantly, as it is the case with our necessity entrepreneurs. A more cultural approach to creativity, stressing the interdependence between human beings and their socio-cultural context, promotes the contextual and situated study of creative acts, persons and organizations. Since creativity is a generative

process, it is connected to previous knowledge and cultural repertoires and is in a dialogical relationship with the “old” or the “already-there”. Any innovative idea or object never comes out *ex nihilo* but “uses what is already existing and available and changes it in unpredictable ways” (Arieti, 1976: 4).

This view is reminiscent of the view of innovation gradually permeating organisation studies. Conceptions of innovation are increasingly explained through relational models of creativity in interaction. For instance, in Daft and Weick’s (1984) concept of interpretive innovation, innovations are seen as produced in communicative interaction: created in the ways in which individuals convey what they know to each other through the practice of storytelling. Brown and Duguid’s (1991) studies on communities of practice as sources of innovation provide another example. They developed a view of innovation as social interaction, “putting knowledge back into the contexts in which it has its meaning” (Brown & Duguid, 1991: 47).

Methodology

Our aim is to understand the cultural psychological dynamics of the everyday creativity of necessity entrepreneurs in conditions of austerity and constant crisis. In order to do so, we have looked for both the micro-interaction between the entrepreneurs and their situation (Cornelissen et al., 2012; Holt and MacPherson, 2010), as well as at the macro-representation of entrepreneurs in the institutional and public sphere (Anderson et al., 2009; Radu and Redien-Colloot, 2008). As such, we have collected narratives from necessity entrepreneurs through 45 in-depth interviews, as well as employing digital blogs and media, in what Murthy (2008) calls ‘digital ethnography’, to collect stories illustrative of public narratives of entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland and Spain. We have also used publicly available documents, such as government and international organization reports (e.g., Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) to gain an appreciation for the cultural understanding of entrepreneurship in the three countries. Our aim is to straddle the micro-macro boundary, looking at the development of personal narratives of self and entrepreneurial creativity within particular social and historical contexts that shape how the narratives are developed and told.

Several authors have also stressed the importance of the media’s effects on entrepreneurial desirability and feasibility (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Swedberg, 2000). Through framing, exposure, and interpretation, the media tends to portray entrepreneurship as a more or less desirable condition. At the same time, media and public reports render entrepreneurship as more or less feasible, due to its (1) impact on efficient dissemination of information about available institutional

support and (2) portrayal of the personal skills required to become a successful entrepreneur. The stories we have collected in the media show generally positive portrayals of entrepreneurship, considered as vital to stimulating entrepreneurial career choices, as they convey perceptions that obstacles to success can be overcome, and failure can be transformed into a learning opportunity (Nicholson & Anderson, 2005; Radu & Redien-Collo, 2008). The use of different methods enabled the inclusion of different viewpoints to refine our understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Data collection

We have followed, over a period of 2 years, a group of necessity entrepreneurs in three EU countries – the UK, Spain and Ireland. These are countries that have actively tried to develop better contextual conditions for generating entrepreneurial activities after the 2008 financial crisis. During data collection in the three countries, we have used entrepreneurship networks (e.g., PRIME in UK or community enterprise partnerships in Ireland), as well as personal contacts to generate the interviews. During the in-depth interview process, we asked participants about their experiences as nascent entrepreneurs focusing on generating the *entrepreneurial* ‘pre-histories’ (Sarasvathy et al., 2010), looking for moments of interruption and crisis when the would-be entrepreneurs were forced to question and re-shape their taken for granted social, cultural and ideological frameworks to make sense of, and cope with, their changing situation.

We generated a total of 45 in-depth individual, paired or mini-group interviews collected between 2013 and 2014, from Ireland (11 interviews), the UK (18 interviews) and Spain (16 interviews). In addition, a total of 60 policy, international reports (including recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reports), field notes, observations and media documents were selected and analysed.

Data analysis

All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis. Thematic analysis using NVivo was applied, following inductive and deductive approaches and quality indicators to meet required qualitative standards (Hoover & Koerber, 2011). The documents were also thematically analysed to examine the ways in which public narratives present and frame the process of entrepreneurship, shaping institutional and organizational policies and practices that impact the way in which people respond to the difficulties they face at the symbolic, socio-cultural, institutional and practical level.

The analysis of the data was accomplished in two different steps. The first step sought to

identify the activities, experiences, and transition processes the necessity entrepreneurs go through from unemployment to entrepreneurship. It consisted of multiple readings of the interview transcripts, field notes and documentation for the identification of everyday activities, experiences, and events. These were initially coded according to four main areas: the personal historical narrative of their transition from unemployment to self-employment; their engagements with organizations, institutions and networks; their main activities as entrepreneurs; and the development of their negotiated identity as entrepreneurs. The second step involved refining the narrative of their daily entrepreneuring process according to the generic 4P's creativity model (Rhodes, 1961). Throughout the analysis, we developed the model as the narratives clearly indicated the entrepreneur was not an isolated individual but an actor in a network of social relationships working within a particular context ("press") and undergoing a process of creative transformation at a personal and social level. We also integrated the "product" (e.g., a job, an income, the setting up of a social project) as part of the "process", since entrepreneuring became clearly a process where the product was constantly being developed and modified. "Products" were therefore coded as "outputs" as the second largest subcode under "process" capturing how outputs are part of the on-going *doing* of entrepreneuring. This allowed us to extend the classical conceptualization of a creative product beyond its definition as a solid external object into revaluing and enhancing what would-be entrepreneurs co-produce with/in their social and cultural contexts. As Barron states (1995: 32), "many products are processes, and many processes are products. And a person is both a product and a process". Creative products are therefore re-presented as not just the production of an object but also as a process with an output (e.g., the ability to feed a community for a week) and becoming successful as more than gaining economic capital and power recognition.

Ultimately, the analysis illustrates processes of creative entrepreneuring in uncertain conditions. Thus, it shows how, despite active 'institutional support', constant interruptions, postponements and upsetting situations, many of our necessity entrepreneurs have managed to generate potential spaces for exploration (Winnicott, 1971) that are leading them towards innovative and sustainable outputs. The next section outlines this narrative.

Results: Entrepreneurial creativity

The research explores creative responses from necessity entrepreneurs from Ireland, the United Kingdom and Spain to conditions of crisis and economic austerity in their countries. We present them below in the form of a narrative that focuses on three main areas: (i) the situated necessity

entrepreneur; (ii) the contextual constraints necessity entrepreneurs face -institutional and cultural; (iii) and their experience of the process of entrepreneuring and how they generate spaces for entrepreneurial alternatives in scarcity – finding institutional and organizational 'pores' through which they can develop their ideas as well as rewriting both their context and themselves in the process. The narrative presented below helps us to reconceptualize what constitutes 'success,' and 'creativity' in entrepreneuring going beyond the more static individualistic understanding of the successful innovative entrepreneur.

The situated necessity entrepreneur

The first of the 4Ps in Rhodes (1961) model describes the person as an individual, usually without considering the relationships and interactions with his/her environment. Our analysis shows necessity entrepreneurs as situated actors who engage in different positions, manage a string of relations and deal with other's expectations. Our necessity entrepreneurs go through the process of leaving behind their old (un)employed identity, coping with fears, self-doubts and the difficulty of developing a new (entrepreneurial) identity. The would-be entrepreneurs become transformed in the process as their sense of self and their level of contextual engagement are articulated in everyday practices. The narratives we present below explore the psychosocial resources they use to overcome the breakdowns and the rupture in their life trajectories as they embark on the *entrepreneurial* journey.

Relational transitions into entrepreneurship

Entrepreneuring for the necessity entrepreneur rarely starts with a 'call' or a bright idea that needs implementation. It tends to start with a break down: the redundancy, illness or disruption. In some cases it comes as a surprise, in some others it is presented as expected. Their recollections tend to follow a similar pattern: there is a great deal of suffering and strife with some hope of success but in general the journey as 'salaried employee' is still considered unfinished. So the narratives recount the strategies followed to return to full employment while starting to think of becoming self-employed --- job searches, activating business networks, and seeking institutional support to be back where they left.

"I was made redundant... it was the kick that was needed, the catalyst. I was forced to think – OK what am I going to do next? Either search for another job yet again and I tried many times or take the plunge, grab the bull by the horns and acknowledge I was

not going anywhere. Then I joined in a networking group mainly trying to get photography clients by word of mouth.” (UK, K)

For a few, conditions related to their personal circumstances acted as the trigger, via separation from a partner, a place or work environment. But a common element in the stories is the relational nature of those interruptions which position the necessity entrepreneurs as actors that are forced to derive confidence through the engagement with others (as sounding boards, as clients, as sources of support). Their narratives ooze fear of the unknown and the understanding that to gain confidence and ‘courage’ interpersonal success is required. Engagement with others is necessary, almost as a form of therapy to reconstruct -as first step- unraveled identities.

“It isn’t simply going on free VAT courses or whatever; it is a psychological process and I’m not under-estimating how lonely this can be actually [...] I mean that’s where the role of psychological support would be important where people can sit around almost like Alcohol Anonymous and say “actually I’m terrified or I’m worried about the bottom line and whether I am going to be eating through the bottom line”. I don’t feel I have the social skills to engage with clients. How can I simply develop the confidence to get out there? ” (UK, T)

Yet it is a journey that might need to be started many times over. Most of our necessity entrepreneurs have been entrepreneuring for some time although many of their attempts have not been successful. A very recurrent metaphor was that of ‘resilience’ seen as required to start finding a living (*‘buscarse la vida’* as the Spanish describe it):

“I’d fallen out with a business partner at the time... he ripped me off one day.... [...] And that crippled me and I was actually back to square one, again. ...I mean, I was 10 grand down with the rent then, back to square one, but I knew, the belief I had that all I had to do was be nice to people; it sounds really, really naïve but that’s what I did.” (Ireland, ST).

In all cases ‘the other’ plays a big role in supporting the interviewees (or not) at different junctures when starting their process.

“There was also the bit that I went and got advice from people [...] I learnt not to go to people giving you bad advice; just don’t see them very often. Go to those who give you good advice and one of those lives in Scotland. I used to go up there about once a year and I went up there, had lots of conversations late at night. That was the one that helped me to expand from part time job plus training adults... we had a long chat about that and that’s how I developed the second bit of business with children” (UK, HF)

Press: environmental constrains to the entrepreneuring process

The fourth P in Rhodes's (1961) framework addresses the relationship between person and environment understood predominantly as a social environment. The term refers to the "pressing" influence of others and society over the creator and her work. In our analysis we have explored (i) the institutional constrains, focusing on policy and institutional regulations; and (ii) the cultural constrains, such as the dominant entrepreneurial narratives that shape our necessity entrepreneurs' daily activities.

Policy and regulations

The analysis of the interviews and documents shows that policy and regulatory constrains at the institutional level can act more as heavy interrupters than enablers in the entrepreneuring process. There are policy and institutional differences in the three featured countries in terms of provision of resources and degree of regulation for entrepreneurial activities. There are, however, relevant patterns, such as restricted access to resources for necessity entrepreneurs as well as an emphasis on individual success stories, especially present in the UK and Ireland, where hegemonic narratives are promoted by Government and media. In Spain, given the cultural and economic constraints, these narratives -also present and very much promoted- are however very much hampered by the dire grounded realities most of our necessity entrepreneurs experience. It is in Spain where the greater misalignment between the necessity entrepreneur's realities and the State intentions is bigger. Besides the interviews, we have analyzed public and media documentation pertaining to these issues in each of the three featured countries.

Unsurprisingly given the economic difficulties, the higher levels of unemployment, institutional rigidity and overall precariousness, Spanish respondents voice more constraints with policy and regulations in their country than those in Ireland and the UK. According to the GEM España (2013) report, the practice of entrepreneurship in *Spain* has been directly impacted by the economic crisis where entrepreneurial (opportunistic) activity has decreased compared to the levels found prior the start of the crisis. However, the relative prevalence of budding entrepreneurship practice has increased during the last five years, which is largely due to the high unemployment levels and lack of access to the labour market found in the country (Legazkue, Guerrero, González-Pernía, Navarro & Medina et al., 2013).

"Entrepreneurship in Spain is also highly constrained by governmental policies and financing for entrepreneurs. In particular, governmental policies characterized by

bureaucracy (i.e., paper- work and administrative hassle) and multiple taxes (i.e., higher contributions to Social Security and corporate income tax) hamper the speed of the entrepreneurial process (i.e., start-up, growth and consolidation). Rising funding was a major constraint and cause of failure. During recession, financing for entrepreneurs is more difficult because [it has] limited the access to credit and unavailability of cash flow from companies” (Legazkue, Guerrero, González-Pernía, Navarro & Medina et al., 2013, p. 34).

The Spanish Government has attempted recently to reduce institutional barriers to entrepreneurship with decrees such as the 2013 “Law to support entrepreneurs and their internationalization” and the “Strategy for youth entrepreneurship and employment”. However, awareness of these policies has not transpired into our post-law data from 2014. The main objective of these decrees was to support entrepreneurship through lower taxes and provision of health insurance (NHS), reducing bureaucratic burdens and promoting internationalization (Legazkue et al., 2013). Yet, despite the encouraging institutional intentions, none of those initiatives were used, accessed or even discussed by our research respondents, which might potentially reflect implementation issues. Indeed, the Spanish necessity entrepreneurs (more so than in the Irish or Uk ones) vociferously express a profound dissatisfaction with prevailing static and monolithic institutional structures that rigidly enforce bureaucratic processes at local and national levels whilst limiting access to resources.

“I cannot have a full infrastructure on a permanent basis... they are not really giving a chance to anybody, nobody... because, you know, I’ve been going to the town hall asking around and... “no, sorry but no, you need help? Sorry, there isn’t”. They just give 50€ for a flat rate on internet to those younger than 30 years old. Only for 6 months... but what about the rest? (...) [Or] you might want to use a small space you already have for your business, and no, it has to be a shop.” (Spain, E and E)

“We went to the town hall, and Juan Pablo went to call the mayor. We requested an appointment to talk and that was already months ago... it is really such a pity that they close the doors on us in such a manner... and they do not really have to do more work... these are things that could go right if there is willingness [from institutions] but between their lack of reason and the unwillingness to do anything...” (Spain, O)

Even when people have access and applied for financial resources, the bureaucratic process continues to impede it, thereby leaving many to stay disconnected from potential institutional benefits. Yet, against this background people are finding ways to navigate the system. In Spain, some of our necessity entrepreneurs have set up cultural societies, charities or associations that can be invoiced but do not pay so much taxes instead of registering as self-employed, as this will cost them over 300 euros per month.

“...because that is what I have done. I started a cultural society but I have not done it with the idea of creating some form of association, but as a way to... if there is a big group that needs to contract me for a service, they can do so through the society and I can be invoiced, produce a bill, pay taxes and the whole deal... without having to be registered as self-employed because it is very expensive. But really, it is not a society, or a charity but right now that’s the way to do so... I mean, it is a way to live. Why? Because I cannot be expected to have a proper business structure on a permanent basis.”
(Spain, J)

In *Ireland* the situation reflects a more positive panorama than in Spain. Among the most encouraging overall findings of this year’s CPA Entrepreneurship Report (2012) is a general improvement in entrepreneurial activity (McCall, 2012:1). However, similar constraints are identified in terms of policy barriers:

“Difficulties surrounding access and availability of finance was the framework condition singled out most frequently as a constraint by the GEM experts and entrepreneurs consulted in 2013, as it was in 2012. One in three of the experts and entrepreneurs consulted felt that certain aspects of Government policy were constraining entrepreneurial activity in Ireland. Many have indicated that Government policy has made it even more risky for people to set up their own business. In particular the lack of a social welfare safety net for owner managers, if the business failed, was highlighted” (Fitzsimons & O’Gorman, 2013: 30-31).

After the 2008 crisis new initiatives have also been developed in Ireland to encourage entrepreneurship. Highlighted initiatives include the support of Government and development agencies, role models and the media and the educational system (Fitzsimons & O’Gorman, 2013:31). In addition, “the perception of supportive media attention for entrepreneurship continues to be stronger in Ireland compared to across the OECD and EU” (Fitzsimons & O’Gorman, 2013:31) which is corroborated by the media articles we found promoting entrepreneurial initiatives. A key initiative worth highlighting was launched by Taoiseach Enda Kenny and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Richard Bruton in 2014 for a competition for the country’s best young entrepreneur where the key objectives were: “to encourage and support a culture of entrepreneurship among young people in Ireland, to promote entrepreneurship as a career choice, and to encourage the establishment and development of new innovative businesses by Ireland’s young entrepreneurs” (The Irish Times, accessed May 15, 2014). Yet, these official and media documents portray and address mainly the opportunity entrepreneur, where people driven by necessity are far less visible. In terms of policies, Irish respondents while more aware of potential funding also discuss its limited accessibility: rigidity, bureaucracy and inefficiency act as barriers

when applicants do not fit the criteria set under dominant views on what an entrepreneur is supposed to be or do. They express detachment and lack of understanding on how these policies are to be implemented.

“Different government agencies don’t seem to talk to each other; it’s mad... Recently I got a letter saying I have to do this Tús Programme, which is a new initiative where you work 19.5 hours a week for your dole and you get an extra 20 Euro. So I went up telling them my information was in the system already about setting up a business etc. but I’ve had to go from Tús, which is nothing to do with the dole, to the dole, then from the dole back to the Northside Partnership and from there back to Tús and Tús are still saying to me, ‘You’re going to have to do this 20 hours a week,’ and I’m saying, ‘But how is that going to help me set up this business when I’m having to give up 20 hours a week?’ ... ‘Jesus! Ridiculous!’” (Ireland, JL).

Figures for necessity entrepreneurs in *United Kingdom* remain low compared to opportunity entrepreneurs: “Necessity nascent entrepreneurship decreased from 1.2% to 0.5% [...] Rates of opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship in 2013 were similar to the levels seen in 2011, at 5.8% for opportunity and 1.2% necessity. Notably, both rates were down significantly on 2012 for nascent entrepreneurs, but remained largely unchanged for new business owners” (Levie, Hart & Bonner, 2013:4).” Yet, a recurrent problem shared across all contexts is the disconnection between people and formal funding sources. As the UK GEM (2013), explains “nascent entrepreneurs showed that their expectations of funding streams decreased substantially over the year for most categories whilst their experiences of using those sources has fallen below the record low levels seen in 2011” (Levie et al., 2013:5). Unsurprisingly, UK respondents have not found policies to help them:

“I’ll be honest, since I started the company, anything I try to do or related to government, banks, just bores me. It becomes so difficult that you give up. So as far as I can see, there are no um... I’ve not yet found a policy... I have not yet seen a policy or bank system or government plans that really would help me as an entrepreneur” (UK, W).

Lack of awareness and grounded knowledge by the institutions and the Government about the challenges of becoming an entrepreneur are also reported as barriers for development.

“I think although it’s good to know about different types of business structures and networking and sustainability and policies etc., it’s good but if you have not been there yourself, if you never had to speak or pitch to board or stand up to 20 people even for 60 seconds to talk about your own business and you are teaching about business and not have experience of that, I think you are missing a trick... the knowledge and support of another person who went through that journey can tell you “look, we’ve been through

that and we've experienced that phoenix from ashes situation"... it would be great ..."
(UK, K)

Cultural constrains: Dominant (entrepreneur) narratives

The institutional and public documents, most training programmes in which especially Irish and UK respondents have participated as well as all interviewees refer to the dominant public narrative of the successful (male) individual entrepreneur.

"Actually not everyone can be an entrepreneur. Sometimes they are pushed to it and they don't really want to be and that's when people fail. That is their last option. Actually they are not prepared to. They are not ready to do [...] To be an entrepreneur is to have certain traits in your character. You have to have a certain personality. You have to be able to think. You have to be 'jack of all trade'. You should be able to prepare to work hard, to be able to do everything from PR to marketing, hiring people, managing accounts, product launch, literally from A to Z in your company." (UK, S)

However, once they talk about their own individual experiences the the dominant narrative is cast in doubt. Respondents switch from outlining the necessary 'individual hunger and drive' relayed by most entrepreneurial success stories to acknowledging that creating a business is neither linear nor attainable by one individual.

The Irish and UK entrepreneurs believe in their potential economic success, but also, like the Spanish, they envision their business as part of their own personal life project and contribution to society (further discussed latter on).

"You need that Alan Sugar hunger and drive and just not take the bullshit, yeah, you need that knowledge of how to wheel and deal ..., so just a totally original idea; we're not doing anything really original but I guess by the dictionary definition, I am" (Ireland, JL).

"There's a lot of stories in the Guardian social enterprise column about social entrepreneurs; but it seems to me nearly all the people they quote are successes. They have gone into their enterprise, whether social enterprise or not, from a position of strength. You know they have been successful in their other job, manufacture or whatever and then they had an idea and then they changed and developed that idea" (UK, A).

Further, in many cases we found those narratives embedded in social structures and representations that position the would-be entrepreneurs as outsiders, constraining any entrepreneurial development as they lack access to the networks or power.

"Seville is a city at the hands of some Christian oligarchies that conquered them in the XIII century, and are still around. And that is still embedded in Sevillians' social

behavior... where... especially the religious brotherhoods have become an entire system of management of reality. [In the Expo'92] I had to select 45 people amongst 3000, I had in my hand the key to work... so the course will finish and when I evaluated the results they said "give us a list of the best ones". And they gave me back a list of 50 people; the first 25 were the kids of the Sevillian oligarchy. Those will go through the main door. And the ones I taught, the best ones whose training was paid by the State with my team's effort, those did not necessarily make it..." (Spain, J).

Many of our respondents found themselves socially categorized as outcasts because they were perceived as breaking implicit social norms. In our sample, this was especially apparent in relation to gender and other forms of breaking societal conformity (e.g. in terms of age, following 'respectable' professions, not maintaining formal employment, etc.). In many cases the necessity entrepreneurs faced social stigma when their our social network or community questioned or rejected their first -unsuccessful- attempts at entrepreneuring.

"Gardens that promote biodiversity?..." People would look at you as if you were possessed: "she's become a hippy, after the separation she's gone hippy", "she is crazy, that the 40's crisis, right?". That was typical. "Menchu the crazy"... before it was kind of funny but now it makes me upset, you know?... "oh, she is mad, she wants to be creative, and there she goes doing her little sculptures". And "off she goes, crazy, by herself, going to Galicia for 3 days to a competition", "she is raving mad, and driving alone, doing drives of over 4 hours all over the place in search of inspiration", "this woman is really bonkers"...but in my landscaping workshop I understood that one has to 'release the child'... if you do not release the inner child you are not able to be creative, nor...I think it is otherwise impossible, you have to be at it all day, being a bit like that. And then you have plenty of ideas, not only for work but to be an entrepreneur, to start your business to create your contacts... but there is so much boicot, almost all my friends... [...]" (Spain, M)

Yet, in many cases as the entrepreneuring process unfolded, the outcasts managed to incorporate those that initially rejected them, as in the case of Debora's mother.

"One day I said to my mother, "look mum, I had an idea for a business"... "Are you crazy? Don't even dream about it! That is crazy! It will be a disaster!"... because I did everything before, right? Of course, I did not have so many clients, and there was not so much demand. So eventually I did the most intensive work, such as the vegetables... and my mum will help with the flowers, with the mixing of the lettuce leaves... you have to cut leaf by leaf and measure and pack them in bags... so when restaurants and clients started demanding bags of 5 kilos, she was there helping me out" (Spain, D)

The entrepreneuring process: Generating spaces for exploration

“To create is to act in the world, or on the world, in a new and significant way” (Mason, 2003:7). Thus, we need to look at the creative process in entrepreneurship acknowledging the double nature of creativity: an internal, more psychological dimension and an external, behavioral one. In this section we will explore how our necessity entrepreneurs manage to create spaces for exploration through their engagement with contextual interruptions (e.g. institutional, legal or cultural) as well as how they are forced to reflect upon and eventually redefine their own lives.

With/in the organizational context: Navigating interruptions using institutional 'porosity'.

Most responses to interruptions and constrains develop into strategies and daily tactics (De Certeau, 1984) where displacement can be turned into innovative responses. People report on how innovative pathways emerge out of need, by having to circumvent societal or personal constraints to create living possibilities. Necessity entrepreneurs depict spaces for exploration where they tried out *different avenues* that may have not been considered before. For instance in Spain we find Osset, his architect consultancy business emerged out of his critical circumstances: he could not afford a house in the city, moved to a remote low cost village where he made use of his professional skills and his network to build an affordable home--thereby showing his skills to local people who in turn started requiring his services. Or Jorge and Daniel whose relocation 'by chance' to a different venue opened up business opportunities they were not aware of:

“Just by chance... we did a web campaign for this street – streetfair.com – that was a success for many local shops and has really revitalized the street. We started in the website a “tapas trail”, a “Valentine competition” “a literary fair feast” where in many shops there were onsite readings... when we started [...]we had clients that paid no attention to our demands... but since we moved here they have started asking us to do everything for them... Here people believe you... They come and you say “the cards are 100€, oh, fine” they say... before it was like “100€!! But who do you think you are!?! And now they see them as cheap!... just like that. Automatically... since Thursday there has always been people coming in to ask for quotes on different jobs... And we’ve started to sell clothes and art pieces. ... and everything just by chance” (Spain, J and D)

In many cases the generation of those spaces for exploration are enabled due to the *'porosity' of the institutional domain*. It is through that porosity that people are able to explore potential gaps and navigate the system to make ends meet. Examples abound from all countries; from unlicensed food vendors, to working out alternative arrangements with business partners:

“so we are very careful, as we cannot afford to buy a delivery van just yet... so we go with my car and if the police stops me... [...] and we had to take the seats out... So my

plan is, when they stop me, to say that we have a bartering group amongst friends. So there is one teaching English, another one teaching pottery... we do have a client that cannot really afford our products but he gives therapeutic massages in exchange of our vegetables..." (Spain, D)

Some others do not pay the high taxes and fees of the self-employed 'all the time', but switch between not paying and paying as self-employed sometimes, according to the 'size' of the deal.

"Many times we work as art dealers representing an artist. Then it is him who sells it, and he only has to pay 8% taxes on it, so then he gives us some remuneration for our services, as art dealers, not as art sellers – as it will be us paying up to 21% on taxes then... I mean, it is always very complicated, you have to really 'entangle' everything you do..." (Spain, J and D)

"so the two of us started off registered as self-employed, then just the one. Instead of us both paying as self-employed, paying for two insurances and two professional collegiate associations (which is compulsory for architects as part of the health insurance)... we just had one paying and the other one working for him. It is a bit illegal... but now I only pay intermittently – in those months where I have to issue invoices... otherwise I don't." (Spain, O)

The quotes above illustrate the process by which our necessity entrepreneurs engage or disengage with the institutional and legal domains that often prevent them from developing an enterprise. Some necessity entrepreneurs might choose a questionable semi-illegal path to make ends meet but what they all express is the unequivocal need to find some 'breathing space'.

Necessity does indeed act as a strong pushing force for entrepreneurs to open up avenues for 'trying things out' on the ground, navigating around heavy policy and bureaucratic barriers. It is not 'informal economy' as most entrepreneurs are registered and pay taxes, at least from time to time.

As one Irish entrepreneur stated:

"I did break the rules though, you have to, sometimes. But if it's going to be to your benefit, and you look at the bigger picture, always the bigger picture" (Ireland, SD) .

Culturally: Redefining life, entrepreneuring and everything.

Our necessity entrepreneurs also had to engage and confront frequent sociocultural inhibitors and stereotypes. The salient themes that encompass these responses relate to the redefinitions presented below.

Beyond wealth creation

Interestingly for most of our necessity entrepreneurs, entrepreneuring seems to have further meaning than just creating wealth. The decrease in financial rewards through formal employment has forced people to re-evaluate their perspective on life and on the way they interact within their social context. The entrepreneuring journey is presented as having forced periods of profound self-reflection where ethical issues and a coherent relation with one's ideological position as well as with others become central concerns.

“ I would not work for somebody who doesn't want to offer that line to their employees. If they are not interested that their design to have a true positive effect on their customers and clients, I wouldn't work with them.” (UK, Mn)

Wealth in itself does not seem to be a driving force for the necessity entrepreneurs. Living and working in precarious conditions enforces a different mind-set where future is limited to short term and objectives become more grounded in daily requirements. People then tend to come together to generate spaces for exploration of outputs or to create their own ways of making a living by sharing skills and resources. Scarcity calls people to question not only their job but their life.

“Yes, indeed, living in a hut in the middle of the countryside, without electricity or a toilet, was an experience. I would get back home with no worries, just a backache. But I was there picking peppers and I had a million ideas in my head...so we need to try out those ideas, so we don't end up regretting it. Same happens now. It is a risk to do this, change the shop from a place where no one saw us but where we paid a low rent, to this place now. But, what if you don't do it? So if you loose 5000€ , you loose it. But I am not in debt with a bank, or I will not lose my home... so we actually took the rish. 5000€ might be recovered... it is the opportunity...”(Spain, J & D)

Additionally, people find intrinsic value in selling their own work. It increases their self-esteem and self-worth, thereby bringing other psychosocial resources to the self. Here, again, wealth has to be understood beyond financial rewards.

“When people were buying the things I made I just got a high. I couldn't believe people would buy the stuff that I made; I just loved it, it was just an obsession from then on. Online played a huge role initially; I'd be scraping through these blogs and craft forums just trying everything and anything. Probably another year and a half after that even, so it was a good long while, I started to do... I did my first market” (Ireland, EG).

Creating their own companies means shaping them. As a result necessity entrepreneurs are reluctant to compromise their ethical values or their approaches, as they have taken ownership of their

projects and are now able to make decisions without been accountable to anyone above, as it was within a formal organisational working structures. This relational aspect of the entrepreneuring process is a powerful incentive for engagement by necessity entrepreneurs. A means that becomes an end. It also illustrates Winnicott's (1971) understanding of 'relational creativity' as a process which is co-constructed and situated in interpersonal spaces between self, other and sociocultural context. This understanding of creativity as 'relational' fundamentally challenges the myth of the lone genius. Our necessity entrepreneurs recount their entrepreneuring process occurring fundamentally through the interplay of self-other relations.

Entrepreneurial outputs: from product (object) to service (relations)

Most of the entrepreneurs we interviewed are self-employed professionals, providing a service rather than developing a particular 'product'. Even when the 'product' is very tangible like the vegetables that Debora's company produces in Sevilla, Spain; the narrative's emphasis is very much on how professional skills and capacity enable them to provide services based on improving relations rather that 'building an enterprise to sell a new product'.

“ But really, as self-employed the aim is around the service... because it is what will generate employment, because you can contract out more people [...]but when you start in the market you cannot actually just say 'I am So-and-so, and here I am because I came'... you have to provide a history, a client portfolio, experience, have the know-how and be able to provide answers to a specific need,... and that is very complicated, it is not just the product but you are on your own as a self-employed and as an entrepreneur... ” (Spain, P)

Successful 'outputs' are re-presented by our interviewees in ways that highlight interactions rather than wealth or power recognition. Our necessity entrepreneurs tend to stress their links to their local community when recounting their entrepreneuring projects. In the process of 'reaching out' to others in order to survive they inevitably become aware and sometimes involved in addressing others' needs. Indeed, those that understand the meaning of precariousness are more attuned to the need of the collective and more willing to provide support to their community, as it can very well be their only mechanism for survival. This means engaging in a network and making use of all the attainable material resources they have at hand (this was particularly poignant in the south of Spain).

“So if there is no work, I make it up. [...] Many times we said “we are missing 300€ to pay this month expenses” so we would just make up something of 300€, or more, if

possible. So, for example, when we went to propose to the shops to do something for Saint Valentains day. So we said “let’s do something, everyone puts 10 euros, which is not much, and we do something for everyone” – and we take 200€ for the design and the printing. Things like that.....” (Spain, J and D)

Not surprisingly, many of the necessity entrepreneurs we interviewed were leading community-based initiatives where 'successful outputs' became re-framed: a successful output is providing food or clothes for a community program or helping those that are suffering different types of conditions of vulnerability.

“There always was a value in it anyway. It was something with music and people with disabilities that I wanted to do but I only found out when the other job disappeared in the recession; it became my job and because I have been there now I am really discovering the excitement of its social value [...] my personal success is people’s faces when we are doing music and that is also what I want to convey to other people, doctors, families and so on. People with profound disabilities or dementia or whatever is doing music, they grow in confidence... That is the real success for me” (UK, A)

Obviously building networks in the community is part of becoming established and building the sustainability of the business.

“I’m looking after the community, sort of thing, day to day is making sure that everyone gets on well...Staff and clients, everyone gets on well. ” (Ireland, SD)

Entrepreneuring as a 'we' process: Intersubjective support and shared intentionality

People report the importance of mentoring that they have accessed through formal or informal relations. In the UK and Ireland, mentors are more likely to be linked to established training programmes such as KPI (Key Person of Influence). Training programmes are generally regarded as key enablers to build confidence for people to engage in creative entrepreneuring.

“The KPI programme did a lot for my consultant business and that actually introduce me to the whole [Mentor] thing. And being able to have a mentor like [name] who works in billion dollar businesses; who clearly sees something in the idea that I got that is probably way beyond my dreams but to actually be part of that group and to have him as mentor is, I actually don’t think I could do it, and the reason why I feel confident is because I got that mentoring in place and I’ve made commitments to him and that he agrees to what I’m going to do and therefore you got a much bigger, you know, produced again a put-in-together plan and suddenly a real vision. All these small little problems that we had on a daily or a weekly basis, it’s just part of the learning curve and you know, I think that’s been really really helpful.” (UK, A)

After and during the mentoring experience, many of the entrepreneurs develop life coaching skills, i.e., using the psychosocial resources that have supported them throughout the entrepreneuring process to then help others believe they can improve their lives and re-write their trajectories by exploring other avenues, skills and resources.

“they all had some sort of resentment, an anger entrenched by their failure, that I had to work with without making them aware on top of it...there is a very important psychological element... you are not really just helping unemployed people to learn a trade, you are helping them to reconstruct themselves as humans, because most of them are... they are the left-overs of a labor system that is very much in deficit, regardless of how you wanna look at it...” (Spain, J)

Building community also requires a more social approach to leadership, where participants have to absorb any issues that arise. Some people display a capacity to have positive encouragement and relational leadership skills to maintain motivation levels and a sense of shared intentionality (Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne & Moll, 2005) in the workplace through cooperation and intersubjective support.

Accepting lack of structure and constant learning

The first and constant hurdle is to accept the constant need for learning in creating something: a network, a project, a business usually from nothing. The necessity entrepreneurs report the lack of 'solid structures' to rely on yet it is precisely this lack of structure which permits the opening of creative avenues to explore other possibilities. This though requires constant self-reflection, questioning psychosocial resources, sense of self as well as resilience.

“I am actually very positive and in a wonderful place personally, but the boycott has been really big, there are really two sides. One is when you find yourself with the blank paper, as a painter in front of a blank canvas and you say “how shall I start?” And now, what do I do? I know what I feel like doing, I do like gardening, but how do I build this up? Well, that is terrible, you are months looking for information, trying to build some sort of organizational structure, it is horrible and very very tough, a very lonely time and very taxing. I am a bit like “Come on, Menchu, let’s go, let’s go...” a bit like a heroine, right? That is such a tough time, really, really tough...” (Spain, M)

The second step is to accept that nothing is 'ever finished' and that constant re-inventions, learning and changing are very much part of the process. This is another intrinsic value highlighted by respondents: the experience of fending for oneself having to be as a UK entrepreneur put it 'intimately entwined' with the system, which also goes beyond creating wealth for themselves.

“We kind of realize that you cannot do everything and that at the end projects come out better, you save time, you can actually dedicate yourself to other things when you delegate and let go, you open up a bit and release work, because many times is almost as if you want it all for yourself. You know is not right but you go “mine, mine, mine”... And so we are now also trying to delegate a little... because at the end you start asking yourself what comes next, right? And really, the best scenario would be that we would engage in manage some things, whilst more projects for web design will come and we will steer and manage them but also be able to do the magazine, the art in Seville, but in a relaxed manner.” (Spain, J and D)

Psychological: Re-writing the (entrepreneurial) self

Engaging in entrepreneurship requires a re-writing of the self to be able to find and generate the necessary resources (psychosocial, professional, material) to co-construct the project, idea or enterprise. In the research, re-writing the self is understood as actions to promote future survival which involves re-shaping and changing self-understandings as well as the interactions with others and with the context. Creative entrepreneuring calls people to experience opportunities and explore pathways not previously considered. This enables them to have a larger vision about life itself and not be constrained by the boundaries of an employed condition or on day-to-day financial (or other) struggles. This process shows psychological resilience (Ungar 2004; 2012) to absorb challenges through high levels of commitment and continuity to acknowledge, believe and practice their own capacities as they interact with others. The relations will enable to produce entrepreneurial (ongoing) projects, and its learning process leads to wards personal development.

“To be an entrepreneur is difficult, because to launch something includes a lot of yourself, right? It is not only about starting up a business; it is a very personal process. But I think you have to have a lot... a lot of creativity, and concentrate a lot on that, on that identity, and on having the strength and willingness, be very self-disciplined... if you are alone you need a lot of discipline to pull the wagon and determination: “I believe in this, I want to do it, and let’s move forward”. .. Because you start doing what you know, and then you realize you need to know other stuff, and no one is supporting you, and you have to start learning to do all those other things. I am an architect, and I know about gardening, but I don’t know about many other things I need: a bit of economy, a bit of law, a bit of marketing, a bit of psychology to select my staff..., so you start learning crafting, from a job well done, from your ethics and your stories, you start developing out of necessity, as you grow” (Spain, M)

The acceptance of the condition of entrepreneur arrives after the shedding of previous identities and the constant effort to discover the new one(s). Working for others now seems like an exercise against the expression of their true self and their creative forces. This has repercussions for the way

the live with its challenges concerning the lack of stability, of constant financial constraints, of maintaining high levels of commitment and continuity and of been prepared to face the next hurdle in the process. Narratives contain many references to happiness, sense of purpose and passion.

“There is an incredible value in people’s talent and there’s an incredible wastage of talent out there. People cling to minimum wage jobs because they believe that is the best they can get. When they finish their day job and they go on creating incredible things like furniture or gilded icons or paintings because they love it. They would never look at that as a career. Some are not viable businesses but some are. Encouraging people to make their passion their day job is a great thing. Risky, but when there is no other option... What’s more... so that’s one way entrepreneurship can change the job market. Successful businesses even if it is just a team of five people, that’s five people making a living and they are not at the job centre” (UK, EK)

The project or business becomes attached to people’s lives in a way that does not create the usual work-life separation that an office job entails. Entrepreneurs are ‘living’ their projects in this way. Apart from the series of frequent and innovative collective creations that some respondents develop, creative living is a way of life where they continue to re-engage in new options and enterprises despite constant failed attempts and difficulties.

“So we then started a second hand shop that the peculiarity that we will invite you to tea, an ecological tea from a friend, and we would then do bids or other events with live music... in La Alfalfa, and it was always very successful, I was making money but I had no legal papers for the shop and the owner was always saying that he would sort it out, but never did... I rented the place, first I had it two months rent free, and by the third month we could afford to pay the rent,... my partner and I, we were two, did not make a lot of money because we were investing it in the shop – and then, from the tea we moved on to beers and tapas, so we started a tapas bar... so you would arrive, will get your beer, look at the clothes, go to the changing room and say ‘don’t I look pretty?’ and then you will take it with you. And it was working...” (Spain, In2)

These preliminary results illustrate the ways in which necessity entrepreneurs navigate the scarce economic situation they face by mapping out their experiences from Ireland, the UK and Spain on embarking on a trajectory of creative entrepreneuring by necessity. The pre-analysis primarily identifies the grounded narratives that reflect the complex and challenging process that entrepreneuring is, moving away from reified conceptions of the individual successful entrepreneur, which we found to be more commonly displayed in official and media documentation. The narratives collated here simply reflect people’s grounded and complex trajectories, which highlight the importance of the other in the creative process. We found that people seek different pathways

out of necessity by making use of the resources they have available. These integrated experiences are put together to uplift the perspective we propose: to re-conceptualise creativity as a relational process, which goes beyond economic wealth. It fundamentally enables people to re-evaluate and re-write their lives, which—at times—provides them with a more humane and meaningful co-construction and co-production of the self and the social context.

Concluding remarks

Steyaert and Katz (2004) define entrepreneurship as a model for innovative thinking, for reorganising and for crafting the new, or, as Hjorth (2004) puts it, a ‘handy disturber of order’. According to Styhre (2005), this potential to generate creative disruption enables entrepreneurship to deal with many social and managerial problems. Entrepreneurship therefore is not a ‘thing’ but a process. Shaped by context, it often exists at the boundaries, occupying liminal spaces of “in betwixtness” (Turner, 1995), being at the confluence of many factors and projects into the future. As Anderson et al. (2012) state, entrepreneuring is very much about becoming and becoming is always a co-production between the entrepreneur, the other and their historical and cultural contexts.

As our analysis has shown, the necessity entrepreneur is an actor embedded in a field of social relations. Referring to the entrepreneur as an actor acknowledges that the entrepreneur acts from within a sociocultural context and, in coordination with others, changes and moulds this context in suitable ways. Therefore, the entrepreneur is simultaneously learning and performing societal and cultural scripts while being an agent, active in relation to both particular entrepreneurial scripts and other actors. This supports a more sociocultural view of entrepreneurial creativity that “demands that the creative individual be placed within a network of interpersonal relationships” (Simonton, 1984: 1273) as s/he develops in everyday life. As Torrance (1988: 43) noted, creativity is required whenever we have no learned solution for an existing problem. As we have seen in our necessity entrepreneur stories, there are countless situations in daily life when this is the case. We should not disregard, of course, the power of ‘routines’ in leading human behaviour, and yet, even when faced with habituated ways of doing things, novelty can characterise the details of our actions.

Thus, entrepreneurial creativity is outlined in our analysis as a relational way of life that enables our necessity entrepreneurs to reconstruct their social and organizational contexts (Winnicott, 1971) through the development of innovative responses to different personal, societal

and institutional interruptions and constraints. The analysis also reveals the process of (re)construction of entrepreneurial selves. It is through engaging creatively with institutional and cultural constraints that our would-be entrepreneurs learn how to ‘navigate’ the system, explore new ideas, and strengthen their social networks, while co-creating and re-shaping their immediate social context to accommodate their new entrepreneurial identities. Thus, both entrepreneurial self and environment are transformed and develop through creative interactions. Furthermore, for our necessity entrepreneurs, opportunities are created and actualized in complex networks of interpersonal relations through language and activity, rather than existing as independent realities that could be anticipated in advance (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Rae, 2004).

Thus it is that our findings enable us to re-conceptualise entrepreneurship into *entrepreneuring* by stressing its relational and processual aspects. Through the re-framing and uplifting of grounded social realities, relational creativity, shared intentionality, commitment and continuity to develop sustainable and innovative outputs beyond wealth creation permit a re-evaluation of life and social positioning. Together, these responses make creative living possible.

We see the contributions of our research as threefold. First, it reinforces and extends the ‘creative process view’ (Sarasvathy et al., 2010; Steyaert, 2007: 454) of entrepreneurship, illustrating how relational processes of enactment, interpretation and creativity occur in daily life. *Entrepreneuring* is experienced as an on-going generative process emerging from the interdependence between our necessity entrepreneurs and their particular socio-cultural context. This perspective allows us to go beyond the essentialist and equilibrium-based notions underpinning both the opportunity discovery perspective (Venkataraman et al., 2012) and the evolutionary perspective (Aldrich & Martinez, 2001).

Second, in looking at necessity entrepreneurs’ pre-histories, we go beyond what Sarasvathy et al. (2010: 77) call the “just so stories” of entrepreneurship. These stories only serve to sustain the fallacy that “because certain things came to be, there is some element of ‘optimality’ or ‘correctness’ attached to their origin and structure” and lead us to discount the significance of untold stories of how *entrepreneuring* unfolds (Boje & Smith, 2010; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2014).

Third, in understanding *entrepreneuring* as an on-going socio-cultural and psychological phenomenon, we also contribute to its further “democratization” by going beyond the focus on wealth creation and stressing its social emancipatory potential (Imas & Weston, 2012; Rindova et al., 2009).

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