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# No Paris, No Impressionists

How Place Affects Collaborative Creativity

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## Abstract

The focus of this study is on creativity and how place can affect it. Previous research on the subject has provided many answers to *how* and *why* places affect creativity, much because of the fact that a place can be such many things: a work place, a university, a city, a country – the list is endless. Studies have as such provided different answers in regards to the impact place can have on creativity, because they have investigated the impact of different sorts of places. However, what these studies have failed to clarify or acknowledge is that places exist within the boundaries of other places, and are as such inseparable if one are to ultimately understand the impact *place* has had on a creative outcome. In order to address this problem I have divided the concept of place into three abstract and physical levels: macro, meso, and micro. By applying this perspective on the historical example of the emergence of the Impressionists in Paris, France during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century I was able to distinguish how France as a nation, Paris as a city, and buildings such as cafés, artistic studios, and museums all contributed in different, but equally important, ways to the formation, cohesion and creative output of the Impressionists. As such, this study serves as an *example* that shows how collaborative creativity emerges within the boundaries of several places positioned on different abstract and physical levels; thus, it is only when we combine the different ways that each of these places contribute to creative collaboration that we are able to make any conclusions in regards to the impact *place* has had on its formation and creative output.

## Key Words

Collaborative Creativity, Place, France, Paris, The Impressionists, Historical Study, Document Research and Analysis

*There is a theory I have heard you profess, that to paint it is absolutely necessary to live in Paris, so as to keep up with ideas.* - Paul Gauguin to Camille Pissarro, 1881 (in Galenson, 2009)

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# 1. Introduction

For this study, creativity is a key concept – a concept surrounded by “magic” overtones. But, “why study creativity?” one might ask. Indeed, as Hennessy and Amabile (2010) ask themselves: “Even if this mysterious phenomena can be isolated, quantified, and dissected, why bother? Wouldn't it make more sense to revel in the mystery and wonder of it all?” (Hennessy & Amabile, 2010:570). The answer may lie in the ways we strive to understand the minds and experiences of Einstein, Mozart, Picasso, and the like, to discover whether we ourselves have anything in common with such creative greats. The answer may also be a more practical one: we need creativity to address the countless problems facing our schools, our cities, our nations, and our world. To be sure, one can argue that creativity is one of the key factors that drive civilization forward.

This view is, arguably, shared by U.S. president Obama who began his administration in January 2009 by calling for substantial increases in federal funds for research and education in science, math, and engineering. Still, as Hennessy and Amabile (2010) recognizes, money and rhetoric is not enough as “If we are to make real strides in boosting the creativity of scientists, mathematicians, artists, and all upon whom civilization depends, we must arrive at a far more detailed understanding of the creative process, its antecedents, and its inhibitors” (Ibid.:570). In regards to their argument, it is easy to acknowledge the importance of the study of creativity.

## 1.1. Background

Creativity (or the ability to create) has historically been seen as a Divine gift reserved for the very few – an individualistic perspective that has influenced the research to great extent (Bennich-Björkman, 1998; Ramella, 2015; Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009). Indeed, Sawyer and DeZutter (2009) sees how until 1980 much of the research on creativity focused on the individual in relation to creativity, with Guilford's (1950) research on the personality of the creator laying the foundation for a first “wave” of

research on creativity. However, by 1980 researchers started realizing that, by just focusing on the individual in studies on creativity, they could only discern a partial understanding of the phenomenon. This new insight, with Amabile (1983) and Csikszentmihalyi (1988) as its main advocates, resulted in a shift in attention from the individual to the social and cultural dimensions of creativity. This shift was greatly influenced by a similar shift emerging in cognitive science by the 1980s and 1990s resulting in research focusing not only on the internal mental states of the individual, but also analyzing how cognition is distributed across tools, people, and environments (Hutchins, 1995; Salomon, 1993). In relation to this shift, Csikszentmihalyi (1988, 1990, 1996) developed a systems approach – an approach influenced by sociological systems theories (see Burns et al., 2015a) – in which he incorporated the creative individual, the surrounding of other individuals working in the area, and the body of previous works and knowledge existing within a given *domain*<sup>1</sup> (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, 1990, 1996).

This, in turn, resulted in a second wave of creativity research exploring creativity in collaborations, networks, and groups (see Collins, 1998; Borgattis & Everett, 2000; John-Steiner, 2000; Farrell, 2001; Paulus & Nijstad, 2003; Sawyer, 2003, 2006; Cattani & Ferriani, 2008; Burt, 2005). This research has shown how creativity is embedded within social groups and how collaborative networks develop creative products, suggesting that “...creativity is not only, as myth tells, the brash work of loners, but also the consequence of a social system of actors that amplify or stifle one another's creativity” (Uzzi & Spiro, 2005:448). Moreover, this second wave of creative research has shown how *places* play an important role in relation to the emergence and success of collective creativity (see Corte, 2013; Sgourev, 2013; Farrell, 2001; Frickel & Gross, 2005; Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015). Almost simultaneously, parallel to the view that creativity and innovation today are important sources of economic growth in cities, regions, and nations, the interest regarding how places can affect the production of novelties has increased – not only among scholars, but also among the civic leaders in the world (see Florida, 2002; Malecki, 2010; Grant & Buckwold, 2012, Peck, 2005). This is however not to say that the concept of

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<sup>1</sup> The body of rules and conventions of a creative field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).



place has been completely neglected in earlier research on creativity, but still "...the spatiotemporal context in which creative persons live has consequences that often go unnoticed" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996:127).

But *why* and *how* do places influence collaborative creativity? Well, the answers have been many much due to the fact that the boundaries of places are both analytically and phenomenologically elastic (Gieryn, 2000). To be sure, a place can be such many things: the chair that you are sitting in right now, a room, a building, a city, a nation, a planet – the list is endless. As such, the majority of studies explaining how place (and its inherent surroundings) influence creative activity have delimited place by, for example, presenting it as: the work place (Amabile, 1977; Hemlin et al., 2008); universities, schools, and other institutions (Farrell, 2013; Frickel & Gross, 2005); islands (Parker & Hackett, 2012); cities (Lee & Rodríguez-Pose, 2014; Farrell, 2001; Corte, 2013; Grandadam et al., 2013; Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015; Sgourev, 2013); and regions (Boix et al., 2014; Marrocu & Paci, 2012).

Or, at least they have *tried* to delimit place. Make no mistake; all of these studies present valuable findings on how places on different abstract and physical levels influence creativity. But what they tend to overlook or fail to clarify is that places themselves are located within the boundaries of other places, like how a building is located within a city that in turn is located within a nation, making them inseparable if one are to understand how place ultimately affect creativity. To clarify, I argue that one cannot explain the role place plays in regards to spurring creative activity by solely looking at places positioned on specific abstract and physical levels, such as, cafés, universities, cities, or nations. Surly, each of these places can influence creative activity in different ways, but it is only when we look at them as pieces of a puzzle – a puzzle that, when finished, represents the actual creative outcome – that we can make any conclusions about the impact place has had in regards to spurring creativity.

## 1.2. The Aim of the Study

In order to highlight my argument I have for this thesis chosen the historical example of the Impressionist during their emergence in Paris, France in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the means of qualitative document analysis similar to that of Farrell (1982; 2001), Sgourev (2013), Charles and Théré (2011), and White and White (1993), I argue that, when investigating the impact place might have on collaborative creativity, one must refrain from focusing on a single place positioned on a specific abstract and physical level. Instead, my aim is to show that creative collaboration emerges within the boundaries of several places positioned on different levels, with each of them affecting creativity in different ways. Therefore, it is only when we look at the entirety of the context in which a creative collaboration have emerged that we can make any conclusions about the role place has played in regards to the creative outcome.

### 1.2.1. Research Questions

In order to fulfill my aim I have divided the concept of place into three abstract and physical levels: *macro*, *meso*, and *micro*. On the macro level I position places such as nations along with their inherent political and social structures. On the meso level I include places such as cities, their physical environment and their embedded communities. Finally, on the micro level I position locally bound neighborhoods, buildings, and squares. This dismemberment of the concept of place allows me to pose three research questions that, when answered, together will serve as an *example* that supports my argument and thus fulfills my aim. The three research questions are as follows:

1. How did France and its inherent political structure contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
2. How did the physical, social, and socioeconomic environment in (and around)

Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist?

3. How did the cafés, artistic studios, and museums located in Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist?

### 1.3. The Study's Delimitations and Contributions

What is important to mention is that this thesis is not an attempt to offer a grand theory of how place can affect collaborative creativity. No, as the concept of place encompass an infinite number of alternatives as to what can be regarded as a place, such a study may never be possible to accomplish. Instead, one ought to read this thesis as a study that exemplifies how place can affect collaborative creativity. Moreover, I'm very much aware of the problematic nature of dividing the concept of place into macro, meso, and micro levels. Indeed, there is no clear-cut line that separates macro from meso, meso from micro – something that can be emphasized by using Collins' (1998) argument that “The macro-level of society should be conceived not as a vertical layer above the micro, as if it were in a different place, but as the unfurling of the scroll of micro-situations” (Collins, 1998:21). But the point with this separation is however not to firmly dividing the concept of place into levels that should encompass all sorts of places. To be sure, if nations are macro level places (as in *this* thesis), what level of place is our earth positioned on then? No, the point with the separation is just to offer you (the reader) an understanding of how places can be located within other places and thus can affect creative collaboration in different ways. As a matter in fact, as you will see, they are intertwined in regards to how they all can contribute to collaborative creativity. Moreover, important to note is that I am not implying that the findings of this study are generalizable. No, the findings are the outcomes of this *particular* example of how place have affected collaborative creativity. But the theoretical perspective that I develop, that of looking at places as being positioned on different abstract and physical levels that, when combined, all contribute (in different ways) to the actual creative outcome, could on the other hand be generalizable – a perspective that is available for other scholars to test further.

But why is this study important? Well, understanding how places positioned on different levels can affect creativity in different ways helps us in the quest of gaining further knowledge of how to foster creativity, in turn helping us understand what we need to do (or avoid to do) in order to augment collaborative creativity. And, as mentioned earlier, with creativity being one of the key factors that drive civilization forward, any contributions that improve our understanding of the phenomenon is important.

## 1.4. Disposition

The study is organized so as to first provide the reader with general knowledge about creativity and the concept of place. As such, the following chapter will offer the reader a literature review of *creativity*: what it has been defined as, the processes behind it, and the role *place* has played in theories of creative collaboration. The chapter will also offer a review of the concept of place: its relationship to sociology, what it is considered to be, and how it brings people into a bodily co-presence.

Chapter number three comprise the theories that will be used as means of analyzing my historical example, in turn helping me answer my research questions and thus achieve my aim. The theories are separated and placed within the perspective of how macro, meso, and micro level places can affect creativity differently. As such, on the macro level I position theories that can explain the impact nations and their inherent place properties have on creativity. On the meso level I position theories of how cities can affect collaborative creativity. And, on the micro level I position theories of the impact buildings, squares, and neighborhoods can have on collaborative creativity.

Chapter number four deals with the methodology of the study. Here I provide the reader with insight into: how the study has been conducted; the data gathering method and its implications; and the data sources selected to document the historical example.

Chapter number five comprise the historical example of France, Paris, and the

emergence of the Impressionists during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that is used to achieve the aim of the study. Here I have divided the chapter into three major sub-chapters: The first sub-chapter documents the political environment in France during the time. The second sub-chapter focuses on Paris: its characteristics; the physical and social changes that transpired during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; and how the city and its surroundings provided a creative source for the Impressionists. The third sub-chapter deals with the cafés, artistic studios, and museums of Paris in relation to how they affected the Impressionists.

In chapter number six I analyze the documented example by using the theoretical tools chosen to help me answer the study's research questions. As such, it is in this chapter that I answer the three research questions that, in combination with each other, allow me to achieve the aim of the study.

Lastly, chapter number seven offers a conclusion of the study. Here I shortly summarize the study, my findings, and its contribution to the field. Moreover, I also offer scholars suggestions for future research as of how to gain further knowledge about the impact place has on collaborative creativity.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Creativity: What is it?**

The vast number of literature that that investigates the process of creation and the creative capacity of individuals makes it almost impossible to gain an overview of the concept of creativity. Several years ago a Russian researcher reported that at least 10,000 scientific publications existed that in some way had to do with creativity – a number that certainly is much greater today (Törnqvist, 2003). As such, in this comprehensive literature the definition and usage of the concept of creativity vary considerably, having different meanings depending on the context it is used in (Törnqvist, 2009). Indeed, Amabile (1983) sees how creativity and the definition and assessment of it has been a subject of disagreement and dissatisfaction for a long time

among psychologists – resulting in a criterion problem that researchers have tried to solve in many ways. For example, some has argued that creativity can be identified with particular, specifiable features of persons, products, or thought processes – while others define creativity by the quality of the response that a given product evoke from an observer. Finally, some even sees creativity as something that cannot be defined – something unknown and unknowable (Amabile, 1983). Still, in order to understand what this study entails, some basic knowledge about what prominent scholars within the field have tried to define creativity as is necessary.

But before moving forward on the concept of creativity, a short comment on how it differs from the concept of *innovation* is important to bring forth. Galbraith (1982) argues that innovation can be defined as the process when a new idea is applied and developed in order to create a new product, process, or service; in other words, the work necessary to implement an idea into an actual product or service. Creativity, on the other hand, plays the part of generating the idea that in turn may become an innovation (Paulus & Dzinolet, 2008). Thus, creativity and innovation differs – being two distinct although related processes (Burns et al. 2015a; Corte & Parker, unpublished draft).

### **2.1.1. The Consensual Definition of Creativity**

Amabile (1983) does not believe that an all-encompassing definition of creativity ever will be successfully developed. She tries to overcome this obstacle by presenting a consensual definition – a definition that is based on the creative product instead of the creative person or process:

A product or response is creative to the extent that appropriate observers independently agree it is creative. Appropriate observers are those familiar with the domain in which the product was created or the response articulated. Thus, creativity can be regarded as the quality of products or responses judged to be creative by appropriate observers, and it can also be regarded as the process by which something so judged is produced. (Amabile, 1983:31)

To clarify, Amabile suggests that an all-encompassing criteria for identifying products as creative is ultimately impossible to articulate. Instead she argues that “Just as the assessment of attitude statements as more or less favorable ... or the identification of individuals as ‘physically attractive’ ... is a subjective judgment, so too is the assessment of creativity” (Ibid.:31). Therefore, it is more appropriate (for research purposes) to adopt a definition that relies upon a subjective criterion.

As seen in Amabile's definition, the appropriate observers within the domain, in which the product was created, are the ones privileged to judge whether it is creative and novel. But, in order to gain further understanding of the relation between domains and creativity, research made by the psychologist Csikszentmihalyi serves well.

### **2.1.2. The Systems Model**

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) compares creativity as the cultural equivalent of what can be seen in the process of genetic changes that result in a biological evolution. In a biological evolution random variations take place in the chromosomes – changes that “...result in the sudden appearance of a new characteristic in a child, and if the trait is an improvement over what existed before, it will have a greater chance to be transmitted to the child's descendants” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996:7). Therefore, Csikszentmihalyi argues that in order to understand creativity, “...it is not enough to study the individuals who seem responsible for a novel idea or a new thing” (Ibid.:7) due to the fact that their contribution is very much dependent on the previous work done within the field – leaving the novel idea to only be a link in a chain or a phase in a process. To clarify his argument further he turns to Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein stating that their contributions (regardless of the importance of them) cannot be credited solely to them, but that they *still are* credited to them due to how it “...satisfies our ancient predilection for stories that are easy to comprehend and involve superhuman heroes” (Ibid.:7). Neither Edison nor Einstein would have been able to discover their contributions if it were not for the prior knowledge, the social mechanisms that accepted and promoted their innovations, and the social and

intellectual network that surrounded them and in turn stimulated their thinking (Ibid.). Despite so being the case, there is no denying that they were extraordinary creative individuals with great intellectual capacities (see Burns et al., 2015b).

Before moving forward with Csikszentmihalyi's theory, a short comment on his views on creativity with a small "c" and capital "C" is needed to fully understand it. Creativity with a small "c" is referred to creativity in the everyday life, like new ways to decorate your living room, new baking recipes, or ideas on how to clinch a business deal – a kind of creativity that all of us are able to produce because we have a mind and are able to think (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Creativity with a capital "C" on the other hand refers to the "...process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed" (Ibid.:8) and is therefore, in contrast to creativity with a small "c", never exclusively in the mind of a single person (Ibid.).

It is this kind of creativity that Csikszentmihalyi mainly deals with as, if one are to one are understand creativity with a small "c", it is necessary to first understand Creativity with a capital "C" (Ibid.:8). So, Csikszentmihalyi's view on Creativity is that it is a systemic rather than individual phenomenon, developed in the interaction of the thoughts of the individual and the *sociocultural context*. However, the question he wants to answer is not *what* creativity is, but *where* it is. To answer this question he develops the *systems model*.

According to Csikszentmihalyi, creativity can only be observed in the interrelations in a system containing three parts: the *domain*, the *field*, and the *person*:

- The domain refers to the collective body of rules and conventions of a creative field. Within a domain it exists "raw materials" that are available to the creative individual along with the rules and conventions to use and combine them (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; 1990). He uses mathematics as an example of a domain; or more zoomed in, algebra and number theory can also be seen as domains (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).
- The field component includes all the individuals within the domain who act as gatekeepers. They are the social group that can decide whether an idea or product can be regarded as novel or creative, and whether it may be included in the



domain (Ibid.). Here, Csikszentmihalyi uses critics, art collectors, and art teachers, as examples of gatekeepers within the field of visual arts.

- Finally, creativity occurs when the individual person, using the symbols of a given domain, sees a new pattern or develops a new idea that is accepted by the field within that domain. This result in that the next generation (within that domain) will view the novelty as something that is a part of the domain; and, if they are creative, change it further (Ibid.).

Following this perspective of the systems model Csikszentmihalyi coins the definition:

Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one. And the definition of a creative person is: someone whose thoughts or actions changes a domain; or establishes a new domain. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996:28)

Therefore, the personal trait of “creativity” does not determine whether a person will be creative. Instead, what actually counts is whether the novelty that a person produces is accepted by the field and included in the given domain (Ibid.).

### **2.1.3. The Sociological Systems Model**

The third and most recent definition creativity that I wish to bring forth lies in the heart of the *sociological systems model* – a model that takes into account “...the social embeddedness of agents, either as individuals or groups, in their creative and innovative productions” (Burns et al., 2015a:180). Within this model Burns et al. (2015a) see how creative human action is universal, relating to innovation, discovery, invention, creation, design, and origination – all being observable in the actions of individuals, groups, networks, organizations, and entire communities, but is above all social in character. As such, in contrast to the previous two definitions offered, that argues that any idea, act, or product must be regarded as valuable or appropriate

within an existing domain or field in order to be considered creative, Burns et al. argue that:

Creativity entails a *process* of originating, transforming, or adapting ideas, artifacts, systems, a sector or domain, states of the world, or any other entity which is constructed as differing or deviating from what already exist in the context, for instance, a particular field or institutional domain. (Ibid.:181, emphasis in the original)

The process of acceptance and institutionalization, that both Amabile (1983) and Csikszentmihalyi (1996) include in their definitions, Burns et al. (2015) argue entail other mechanisms and development. Instead, they argue that for any act or product to be defined as being creative, it only needs to "...deviate from, or be original in relation to, existing entities in the context in which it is produced" (Burns et al., 2015:182) – in sum that it is new to the context.

## 2.2. What Triggers Creativity?

Now that we have gained some knowledge in regards to what creativity *is*, it is time to present some of the literature that attend to the question of what that *triggers* creativity. Background knowledge about the processes that triggers creativity is essential to possess due to how they ultimately shed light on the importance of acknowledging the effect place has on creative emergence and, more importantly, the emergence of *collective creativity*.

### 2.2.1. Creativity: A Result of Interpersonal Relationships

As mentioned in the introduction, many stories about the generation of original ideas emphasize on creative people, usually a creative individual with great intellectual (or other) ability that enables him or her to produce solutions that might be regarded as unusual. Therefore, a lot of the studies concentrated on creativity have drawn tight boundaries around the "self" as the privileged locus of inquiry, while the social

dimension that permeates creative processes often has been overlooked (Montuori & Purser, 1996; Ramella, 2016).

However, an increasingly large number of studies have examined and stressed the importance of social factors when investigating creativity, for example Amabile (1988) who in her seminal work sees how contextual factors such as organizational environment and groups have an impact on the individual creativity. Also, Hargadon and Bechky (2006) argue that, even though some solutions are products of individual insight, many other solutions are in fact product of momentary collective processes. This emerging perspective of how creativity is generated thus "...demands that the creative individual be placed within a network of interpersonal relationships" (Simonton, 1984a:1273), as well as include the social and cultural factors that shape the individual (Ramella, 2016). In regards to this perspective of creativity, two approaches have received significant attention within the field: the *core/peripheral approach* and the approach taking into account *structural holes* and *brokerage*.

### **2.2.1.1. The Core/Peripheral Approach**

The core/peripheral approach argues that individuals operating within a given field are all part of a network (see Cattani & Ferriani, 2008; Borgattis & Everett, 2000). The core of such a network is constituted by individuals deeply entrenched in the fields' social system, sharing similar ideas and habits. These individuals tend to be key members of the given community and have dense connections between themselves. Individuals that are more loosely connected to the core, on the other hand, constitute the periphery. They reside in the boundaries of the network and are therefore not as visible and socially engaged as those belonging to the core (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008). Within such a network, the chance that a creative outcome or response has to become recognized and legitimated is enhanced when the individual is closer to the core due to how they have greater access to relevant sources of legitimacy, support, and resources (Ibid.). However, core individuals might also have difficulties to develop new ideas because of how deeply entrenched they are in the norms of the field – being reluctant to abandon existing ideas to explore new ones

(Schilling, 2005). Actors positioned in the periphery, on the other hand, are more likely to produce new perspectives and ideas to the system as well as maintaining high intrinsic motivation, but don't have the visibility or endorsement to get their work recognized by the field (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008) – something that is noted by Collins (2004) who sees how “...a peripheral position condemns one to coming too late into the sophisticated centre of the action” (Collins, 2004:436). As such, creative performance can be expected to be higher among those individuals who have an intermediate position within the network between its core and periphery – a position called the *optimal marginality* (McLaughlin, 2001). Individuals positioned on the optimal marginality generally do not face the pressure to conform to existing ideas within the field (in comparison to core positioned individuals) and “are less likely to forgo opportunities from which new creative ideas originate” (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008:827). The optimally marginal thinker is as such able to transfer ideas from the creative margins to the center, having the access to the creative core of an intellectual tradition, “...while avoiding organizational, financial, cultural or psychological dependencies that limit innovation” (McLaughlin, 2001:273).

But being positioned on the optimal marginality within a field not only enables people to access creative ideas within *that* field, but also from *other* fields. To clarify, Ramella (2016) sees how innovation “...is the ability to combine various types of ideas and information in an original manner” (Ramella, 2016:83). Creative people therefore not only tend to be positioned on the optimal marginality, but also tend to work on a variety of overlapping projects within different fields due to how their participation in a variety of projects increases the possibility of *cross-fertilization* (Ibid.) or *brokerage* (Burt, 2005).

### **2.2.1.2. Structural Holes and Brokerage**

Burt (2005) argues that the gaps existing between different clusters can be referred to as *structural holes*, as they are holes in the structure of information flow. A structural hole does not have to imply that the members of different groups are unaware of each other – just that they are focused on their own activities to the degree that they are not

aware of, or do not attend to, the activities of people in other groups. Therefore, structural holes can be seen as empty spaces in a social structure. These empty spaces do however hold potential value for so-called brokers:

...brokerage is the action of coordinating across the hole with bridges between people on opposite sides of the hole, and network entrepreneurs, or brokers, are the people who build the bridges. These network entrepreneurs operate somewhere between the force of corporate authority and the dexterity of markets, building bridges between disconnected parts of markets and organizations where it is valuable to do so. (Burt, 2005:18).

Burt sees how a person who has a network that spans structural holes, having contacts in multiple groups, has an advantage in terms of early knowledge, width of knowledge, and opportunities for strategical coordination across groups. "A hole-spanning network that provides these advantages is social capital. People who have the social capital of brokering connections across structural holes have an advantage in detecting and developing rewarding opportunities" (Ibid.:55). This due to how people who are familiar with activities in two (or more) groups are more likely to be able to see behaviors or beliefs that combine elements from both groups. Indeed, "People whose network span structural holes have early access to diverse, often contradictory, information and interpretations which gives them a competitive advantage in seeing good ideas." (Ibid.:62). These individuals may seem gifted with creativity, however this is not creativity born out of deep intellectual ability, but of moving ideas between groups where they may be valued and regarded as new (Ibid.).

As an example of creativity through brokerage, Eugene Stoner, the father of the M-16 rifle, serves well. Considered a genius by experts, his creativity was in fact an act of brokerage as he transferred knowledge, familiar within one group, to another where it was considered new and important. Stoner served at first in the marines as an ordnance technician before joining the Fairchild Engine and Airplane Company, and later the company's prototype-gun division ArmaLite. The combination of knowledge of ordnance and of aluminum and plastics in aircraft gave him an advantage, resulting in a new ultra-light rifle: the AR-10, with its descendant being the M-16 (a rifle used

across the American military services). An interview with Stoner by the Smithsonian Institute confirms how the invention of the M-16 was an act of brokerage:

I think my aircraft background and experience allowed me to get into some of these light-weight materials, for instance forged aluminum receivers, which were rather unknown at the time in weapons. But it was nothing particularly new to what I'd been doing all along in the aircraft equipment, in the fiberglass and all that. (Ibid.:73)

As we now have seen, creative people are not necessarily creative in general, but are so because of their position within fields of knowledge and their ability to combine information and ideas from different fields. Creativity thus has (and is dependent upon) a social dimension – a dimension that emerges even more clearly in another kind of creative dynamics that is gaining prominence within the field of creativity, the *collective kind*.

### **2.2.2. Collective Creativity**

Within the field of creative study, a shift in focus appears to have emerged. Today, "...the most important forms of creativity are related to cooperative activities that involve complex networks of highly qualified experts" (Ramella, 2016:83). Creativity is, according to Ramella (2016), considered to demand the distributed knowledge from integrated creative individuals, possessing specialized knowledge in different fields. They constitute the members of creative groups whom: share knowledge and conventions; have worked together for a while; but also possess complementary skills (Ibid.). These forms of collective creativity demand other approaches of research in order to be analyzed, as the traditional individualistic approaches are not very appropriate when analyzing this relatively new form of creative study (Ibid.). Thus, psychological and sociological studies on creativity in collaborations now focus to a great extent on the organizational aspects as well as the interactional dynamics that either favor or hinder collective creativity (for a review of recent studies see Hennessy & Amabile, 2010) – something that this chapter will aim to show.

### 2.2.2.1. Collaborative Circles Theory

In regards to collective creativity, Michael P. Farrell's (1982; 2001) studies on so-called *collaborative circles* have received significant attention. In his book *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics and Creative Work* (2001), he finds that groups of collaborating friends can enhance their creative abilities by working together. Through the use of historical case studies applied on diverse sets of successful collaborations (the Impressionists, Nashville's Fugitive poets, the founders of psychoanalysis, the women's rights movement called the Ultras, and Joseph Conrad's Rye Circle) he is able to extract and articulate the regularities that seem to enable the success of creative collaboration.

Thus, since its birth, the theory of collaborative circles have been applied and discussed (see Collins, 2004; De Nora, 2003; McLaughlin, 2008; Gross, 2008; Forget & Goodwin, 2011; Goodwin, 2011; Forget, 2011; Charles & Théré, 2011; Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015), as well as further developed (see Corte, 2013; Corte & Parker, unpublished draft) by scholars operating within different fields.

Farrell defines a collaborative circle as a:

...primary group consisting of peers who share similar occupational goals and who, through long periods of dialog and collaboration, negotiate a common vision that guides their work. The vision consists of a shared set of assumptions about their discipline, including what constitutes good work, how to work, what subjects are worth working on, and how to think about them. (Farrell, 2001:11)

Essentially, collaborative circles are intellectuals, artists, scholars, activists or various cultural/scientific/political innovators who, through long persistent interaction, create a *new vision* for work in the given field within they operate. The usual setup of these groups consist of two to seven individuals forming an inner core of the circle – individuals which tend to be at a young age (around their 20s), being on relatively equal terms in regard to status and various sociological characteristics, as well as sharing a common cultural or/and intellectual/scientific/-political interest. What should be emphasized here is how the equality of exchange within the group is

essential to its success according to Farrell. To be sure, drawing on the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu's *Field of Cultural Production* (Bourdieu, 1993 cited in Farrell 2001) he argues that despite of each member having greater amount of some rather than other sorts of *capital* (e.g. economic, social, and cultural capital) the dynamics of the circle only work if the members are perceived to be on equal terms.

Although some may have more economic capital, others more cultural capital, and still others more social capital, circle members are able to trade of one type of currency for another, so long as, consciously or unconsciously, they have negotiated a degree of consensus on the rate of exchange. (Farrell, 2001:274)

Furthermore, Farrell argues that collaborative circles are more likely to be positioned at the fringes of a discipline rather than the core, and that they thrive in turbulent cultural environments where there are two or more different visions that battle for a dominate role. The new visions of a collaborative circle can be a result of a variety of provocations such as: rapid social change, contact with new ideas or cultures, change in the demographics of a discipline, or a technological change in the society. Also, new visions, in no matter what discipline, almost always has a political constituency due to “As the demographic composition of a discipline changes ... the political structure of a discipline is also likely to change, generating conflict over visions at the center” (Ibid.:269).

Collaborative circles have a lifespan of 10 to 15 years, involving seven stages: formation, rebellion, quest, creative work, collective action, individualization, and reunion (see Farrell, 2001:276-89; Corte, 2013; Corte & Parker, unpublished draft, for a more in-depth explanation about the stages). In regards to this study it is however mainly the formation stage that is of relevance, since it is during that stage he emphasizes the importance of place.

During the formation stage the collaborative circle gather at magnet places. In its simplest form, magnet places attract and unite people with similar aspirations (Farrell, 2001). Indeed, during the formation stage of a collaborative circle “...the members may be no more than acquaintances who happen to be in the same place at the same time. Although it may seem that they met by chance, it is likely that their



shared values and aspirations led them to gravitate toward a 'magnet place'" (Ibid.:18f). Here, Farrell sees how a laboratory, an art studio, a hospital, or an artist community can be referred as examples of magnet places as they are places "...where people value the expertise and practice the skills the prospective members hope to acquire" (Ibid.:19). Thus, a magnet place can be seen as a place where novices within a given field perceive there to be an opportunity to join a network that may help them in their quest in becoming experts. As an example, Farrell uses the art world in Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how the city had a major impact on drawing the Impressionists (Monet, Pissarro, Degas, Manet, Bazille, Cézanne, Morisot, Renoir, and Sisley) within proximity of each other. The Vanderbilt University had a similar impact on the Fugitive poets (Davidson, Hirsch, Ransom, Tate, Moore, Warren, Elliott, Starr, and Wills) – a group of young men who saw that the university "...offered access to an education and to the doors of the middle class. The members were drawn to the same place by the promise of the of the university" (Ibid.:72). Farrell also notes that magnet places that foster collaborative circles seems to be characterized by the presence of an intellectual or cultural conflict where two or more conflicting visions, ideas and/or beliefs of a discipline vie for centrality at a single place, while they are at the same time perceived as rich in resources. As a magnet place gains in reputation, sending signals of its existence out to a wide network, "...those who go there are likely to have much in common" (Ibid.:273).

Farrell also argues that so-called *magnet events* share similar attributes as to magnet places. He sees how the Ultras (a collaborative circle mainly constituted by women that fought for women's rights) did not meet at a magnet place as "Because of their exclusion from most colleges and professions, it was unlikely that women would be drawn to such places" (Ibid.:214f). Due to this, friendships within the Ultras circle developed out of interactions during events organized by the reform network, such as the abolitionist conventions – events that Farrell refers to as being magnet events. Farrell does not talk much more about magnet events, but based on what characterizes magnet places we can theorize that magnet events may share similar attributes, with the exception of having a shorter life span (being organized events) as well as not being restricted to a particular geographic location.

### 2.2.2.2. The Importance of Place in Other Theories of Collective Engagement

Farrell's study on collaborative circles is by no means the only study that emphasizes the importance of place in regards to the emergence of collective engagements. For example: relatively early research on *scenes*, such as Irwin's (1973) study on surfers in California during mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, acknowledged the importance of places for actors to meet face-to-face and physically experience their membership to the scene; studies on *social movement scenes*, a concept integrating the characteristics of social movements<sup>2</sup> with that of scenes<sup>3</sup>, similarly sees how places offer locales for actors to organize themselves and articulate collective goals (see Leach & Haunss, 2009; Creasap, 2012); and lastly, studies on *Scientific/Intellectual Movements* (hereafter SIMs), which are "...collective efforts to pursue research programs or projects for thought in the face of resistance from others in the scientific or intellectual community" (Frickel & Gross, 2005:206), have shown that they tend to have a shared geographic center where the interactions are "...the most emotionally charged, as influential others in one's local milieu come to serve as gatekeepers, debating partners, sources of information about the latest scientific or intellectual developments, and collaborations" (Ibid.:219) – places that also are vital for the SIMs' recruitment of new members (Ibid.). Moreover, in relation to SIMs Parker and Hackett (2012) see how certain places and times enables SIMs and scientific groups to "...sustain its collaboration through brief, highly charged meetings [as they are] places and times of high emotion, creativity, and performance where transformative science is done" (Ibid.:39). Parker and Hackett label these places and times as *hot spots* and *hot moments*: recurring place and time bound episodes that fuel the group drive of SIMs, making the SIMs able to achieve intellectual fusion and overcome skepticism. Thus, hot spots and hot moments are vital for the success of SIMs –

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<sup>2</sup> "Whether about change or about resistance to change, social movements are collective endeavors collective put forth by a social group to obtain specific goals" (Corte, 2012:44).

<sup>3</sup> "A scene is *simultaneously a network of people* who share a common identity and a common set of subcultural or countercultural beliefs, values, norms, and convictions *as well as a network of physical spaces* where members of that group are known to congregate" (Leach & Haunss, 2009:259, emphasis in the original).

especially for SIMs without a geographic center and whose collaborations the Internet mainly mediates.

By now, we are as such able to make a number of conclusions about the role places play in regards to collective engagements:

1. Places allow novices who share similar interests within a field to meet, join networks that may provide them with the means of becoming experts, and, in some cases, form collaborative circles (Farrell, 2001; Corte, 2013).
2. Places may serve as geographical centers for collaborations and movements – centers where their members can interact and exchange intellectual information face to face, as well as recruit new members (Frickel & Gross, 2005).
3. Places can offer locations of high emotion, such as conferences, retreat research locations, conventions, and concerts, where groups can tighten social bonds, sustain collaborations, achieve intellectual fusions, fuel group drive, and overcome skepticism (Collins, 1998; Parker & Hackett, 2012).
4. Finally, places may serve as part of a group's identity. To be sure, specific locations can be seen as boundary markers where group members can physically experience their membership as well as validate and enact the signifiers of group membership (Irwin, 1973; Leach & Haunss, 2009; Creasap, 2012). As Oberlin and Gieryn (2015:28) puts it: “Place serves as a marker of distinction, separating insiders from outsiders, founders from latecomers.”

Evidently, places are vital for collectives in a variety of ways. However, neither the collaborative circles theory nor the concepts of scenes, social movement scenes, and SIMs offer a thorough explanation of *why* some places are better than others in the regards of spawning collective engagements, spurring collective creativity, and enhancing the chances of success. As Gieryn (2000) frames it: “... is there a 'place effect' [...] in which the tight coupling of geography, built-form, and subjective topological understanding mediates the effects of size, demographic patterns, and values on the possibility or achievement of community?” (Gieryn, 2000:477). Surely, Farrell (2001) notes that magnet places are places perceived as rich in resources and

characterized by the presence of an intellectual or cultural conflict, a rapid social change, and/or a technological change (Farrell, 2001); Leach and Haunss (2009) and Creasap (2012) see how places with cheap housing are key for the emergence social movement scenes; and Parker and Hackett (2012) show us how the Resilience Alliance (a SIM) value remote islands (or other isolated places) because they constitute neutral locations for collaboration in physical and social isolation, and because of how their exotic nature entice the members. But the question “what makes a place favorable for collective engagements and creativity?” still remain, in large part, unanswered – a question that I will answer later on in the theoretical chapter. However, before doing so a chapter dedicated to some of the literature that deals with the concept of *place* is necessary to present due to how this study depends on it to great extent.

### **2.3. The Concept of Place: An Overview**

In order to introduce the concept of *place* and its relationship to sociology, I turn to (mainly) Thomas F. Gieryn (2000, 2002; Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015). He, along with Oberlin (2015), sees how some argue that the technological revolutions of present time, such as in transportation and communication, have lessened the importance of place and location in regards to human interaction and the flow of capital, goods, or information. Indeed, some say that social life do not depend on place as much as it did before as it now moves through nodes in networks not necessarily anchored in place. For example, Cairncross (2001) writes:

The most important single theme is the economic and social importance of the steep fall in the distance premium for communications. The cost of communication ideas and data is now distance-free, thanks to the Internet [...] Wireless – the other communications revolution – is simultaneously killing location, putting the world in our pockets. (Cairncross, 2001:ix, 2)

However, Gieryn does not agree with the arguments that state that place does not

matter anymore. On the contrary, by referring to Friedland and Boden (1994), he argues that “In spite of (and perhaps because of) the jet, the ‘net, and the fast-food outlet, place persists as a constituent element of social life and historical change” (Gieryn, 2000:463). Gould (1995) offers a similar argument when he states that:

Despite the recent fascination in some circles with such phenomena as globalization and the “compression” of time and space by means of digital communication technology, most strong personal relationships in both Western and non-Western societies continue to rely in fairly regular physical co-presence. Financial obligations are much easier to transmit electronically than social ones. [...] If I associate primarily with my neighbors and most of those with whom I associate do the same, then my friends' friends are necessarily (at least) my neighbors. This simple fact means that social networks founded on spatial proximity provide fertile ground for the emergence of plausible collective identities. (Gould, 1995:205)

### 2.3.1. What is Place?

Before going further into the importance of place in relation to collective identities, one must first know what the concept actually is considered to be. In regards to this, Gieryn (2000) offers a definition based on three assumptions that should remain bundled due to how they “...cannot be ranked into greater or lesser significance for social life, nor can one be reduced down to an expression of another” (Gieryn, 2000:466). The three necessary and sufficient assumptions offered by Gieryn (2000) are:

- *Geographic Location.* A place is a unique spot in the universe that has finitude. Places allow people to appreciate what is near and far as it is the distinction between here and there. Thus, a place could be a lot of things such as a room, neighborhood, district, city, village, nation, state, making it difficult to point to what has been written about it within the sociological discipline since the phenomena has been applied differently within fields such as: urban sociology, suburban sociology, rural sociology, and sociology of work.

- *Material Form.* Place is stuff, as it is a compilation of things or objects at a particular spot in the universe – an assemblage of things. Thus, place has physicality; and it is through the material forms that we build, use, design, and protest that social processes happen.
- *Investment with Meaning and Value.* A place is not a place without the naming, identification, or representation by people. “A spot in the universe, with a gathering of physical stuff there, becomes a place only when it ensconces history or utopia, danger or security, identity or memory” (Ibid.:465). The meaning of a place is labile, despite of its enduring materiality, as different people or cultures may view it differently (see Kania-Lundholm, 2012). The meaning of a place is thus inevitably contested.

So, place is the assemblage of material and social things that can be found at a bounded geographical location. Places therefore have demographic and architectural qualities that have a mutually constitutive character. Here, place separates itself from *space*, as space is an abstraction that can be seen as a point in some Cartesian universe. Also, place has resources available for cultural construction and deployment for a wide array of purposes. Along with its material and social qualities, a place has a meaning that in turn structure the social and cultural life in that given place (Gieryn, 2000; Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015).

Grandadam et al. (2013) offer a similar explanation of place and how it differs from space. They argue that places are physically stable areas, while spaces on the other hand are cognitive constructions. Also, they see how places contribute to the local environment as they offer physical platforms where groups are able to reach a consensus, while spaces generate cognitive platforms where groups may exchange ideas, both locally and globally.

### **2.3.2. What Place Does**

Places bring people into a bodily co-presence, resulting either in engagement or estrangement (Sennett, 1990, 1994). As an example, Gieryn refers to studies made on

urban places – studies that conclude that urban places both can be described as the locus of spontaneous interaction, creativity, freedom, coping (Young, 1990), integration, tolerance, diversity, personal network-formation (Fischer, 1977, 1982); as well as the locus of loneliness, segregation, isolation, fear, mental illness, anonymity, and detachment (Halpern, 1995). Thus, urban places offer an example of how place can spawn both engagement and estrangement.

This study will however focus on how the bodily co-presence at a place can result in engagements – put more accurately: creative collaborative engagements.

### **3. Theory: How Place Affects Collaborative Creativity**

As previously showed, places are vital for the emergence of collaborative engagements – collaborative engagements that in turn allow collaborative creativity to emerge. However, none of the theories and concepts of collaborative engagement offered in this study does adequately account for the contextual factors that either enable or constrain their emergence and/or success. In order to address this issue I will in this chapter explain how places positioned on different abstract and physical levels influence collaborative engagements and their creative endeavors.

As mentioned earlier, places can be a lot of things such as a room, neighborhood, district, city, village, building, nation, or state. Thus, places can exist within other places as, for example, a building can be located within a city that, in turn, can be located within a nation, and so forth. Some places are therefore regarded as properties of other places because they are positioned on different abstract and physical levels. Indeed, Corte (2013) sees cheap living accommodations and universities as potential resources at a magnet place; and Oberlin and Gieryn (2015) similarly argue that shops, cafés, museums, and galleries are affordances of specific cities. However, they do not adequately acknowledge and problematize the fact that some places are properties of other places; neither does Farrell (2001) when

explaining his concept of magnet place. Therefore, in order for this chapter to be comprehensible in regards of clarifying what “level” a specific place is positioned I have framed the concept of place within the scales of *macro*, *meso*, and, *micro*. The way I have divided place into separate levels is influenced by Zarlenga (2013) who analyze the impact of place at micro, meso, and macro scale in regards to the artistic creativity processes of visual artists in the Poblenou District in Barcelona city – finding that each level of place offer specific functions in creative processes. Thus, to show how places at different levels influence creative activity and collective creativity in different ways I will: (1) at the *macro* level refer to places such as nations and their political and social structures; (2) at the *meso* level include cities, their physical environment, and their embedded communities; and (3) at the *micro* level refer to locally bound neighborhoods, buildings, and squares. However, although I divide places into these three levels my aim is not to separate them. No, they are very much intertwined as how they influence creativity, but by dividing them I hope to present in my example of the Impressionist (that comes after this theoretical chapter) a cohesive explanation of how they all played a part in spurring or restraining the groups’ creativity.

### **3.1. How Macro Level Places Can Affect Creativity**

As I have stated before, places on different levels have properties – material and social things that can be found at a bounded geographical location. So, how can places positioned on a macro level and their inherent properties influence artistic and creative activity? Well, all nations have a governing state, so to answer this question I will first turn to (mainly) Howard S. Becker and his influential work *Art Worlds* (2008) (more precisely his chapter on the role that the state plays in regards to artistic and creative activity), and then to Roche (2000) and his work on so-called *Mega Events*.



### 3.1.2. Creativity and the State

According to Becker (2008), the state always plays a role in the making of art works (creativity) as it has monopoly on making the laws of production and distribution of art within the borders of the nation. As such, artists, suppliers, and distributors have to cooperate within the framework of those laws set by the state. Indeed, when artistic activity is made into products it is the laws that define who has what to sell, and the rules of how a sale must be conducted (Ibid.). Moreover, the state also has interests in regards to artistic work – interests that may or may not concur with those of the artists. But on what is this interest based on? In reference to this question Becker (2008) explains that:

The interests the state pursues through its intervention in the arts have to do with the preservation of public order – the arts being seen as capable both of strengthening and of subverting order – and with the development of a national culture, seen as a good in itself and as something which promotes national unity ("our heritage") and the nation's reputation among other nations. (Becker, 2008:180)

To be sure, Kapferer (2008) argues that the arts (across all fields of creative production) have, from ancient times, been used to promote and represent the power of socio-political regimes. As has been seen in Chinese, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Aztec, Pharaonic, Reformation, Enlightenment, industrial, and post-industrial projects, art has always been implicated, for good or for worse, in the manipulation, operation, and legitimation of regnant social orders (Kapferer, 2008). Naturally, as Sassatelli (2007) remarks, the use of the word 'interest' is used a metaphor since institutions do not have interests (as they are not subjects). But by acting like subjects, states give themselves the opportunity to develop a particular style according to which reality is framed (Sassatelli, 2007). Certainly, states have been, and still are, the prime agent to create the reality within the borders of the nation. In relation to this, the states' interference with the arts plays a major role as it offers ways for them to foster compliant citizens who share common tastes and

conduct (Ibid.). But what should also be emphasized is the way art has been, and still is, "...engaged in challenging those institutions of power and in breaking through those conceptions, values, and conventions that are associated with hegemonic state authority and governing social orders" (Kapferer, 2008:5). As such, due to how art constitutes *both* a powerful tool (in regards to forming a nation's identity, supporting the national order, diverting people from undesirable activities, and mobilizing the population to reach desirable national goals) as well as a potential threat, the state can directly intervene in the activities of the artists; either by openly supporting artistic work it approves, or discourage, suppress, or censor work that it considers inimical to its interests (Becker, 2008). For example, the state can offer support to artists by funding training institutions, exhibition spaces, publications, and expenses of production. However, what is important to acknowledge is that, when the support by the state dominates the arts budget, the "...artists must take into account as a constraint what the government will and won't support" (Ibid.:184). This in turn result in a "censorship by support", as the state can pursue its interests by making funds available for some kinds of work, but withhold funds for others. Furthermore, Becker notes: "Almost all governments have the idea, enforced through censorship, that some topics and treatments of them are offensive to public morals" (Ibid.:187). As of more explicit sorts of censorship, the state can influence the distribution channels of art by intervening in the selection processes – forbidding magazine editors, art dealers, or television network executives to distribute some kinds of works or works made by particular artists. Moreover, the state can forbid the artists to sell, exhibit, or perform their works at locations where "...in the ordinary workings of the art world, they would be sold, exhibited, and performed" (Ibid.:187). Thus, the artists are in a way allowed to produce whatever work they wish, but the work produced cannot be appreciated or supported in the usual way due to the interventions of the state. As a result of the power that the state possesses in relation to artistic work:

Artists remember, as they work, that the state can support their work or use police power to suppress it. Their work shows the result, either in conventionally staying within allowable bounds or in the chances it takes and the way it takes them. (Ibid.:181)

### 3.1.3. Mega-Events

As mentioned before, states can offer support in different ways to favored artists as means of protecting or acquiring interests of the nation. Drawing primarily from research made by Roche (2000) the focal point will now be upon the way states can offer support by funding grand scale exhibition spaces to artists in order to strengthen its own power. Roche refer these grand scale exhibitions or “shows” as *mega-events*: “...large scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance” (Roche, 2000:1). Being typically organized by national governments, but also by combinations of governments and international non-governmental organizations, they play an important role in creating “official” versions of the public culture. Using the Olympic Games (particularly during the post-war period) and World Fairs/Expos (particularly during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) as examples, Roche finds mega-events to be important phenomena on many levels. To be sure, at the *national historical level* he sees how staging mega-events was and remains important when writing the “story of a nation” as “They represented and continue to represent key occasions in which nations could construct and present images of themselves for recognition in relation to other nations and ‘in the eyes of the world’” (Ibid.:6). Also, on a *cultural historical level*, mega-events (in particular expos) involved some of the greatest contemporary achievements in many of the main 'high cultural' forms of Western civilization including art, architecture, science, and technology. These mega-events were very popular and attracted domestic as well as international visitors on a grand scale, popularizing high culture. This, in turn, had institutional and place effects as their popularity enabled the creation of permanent cultural exhibitions, such as museums, art galleries, theme parks, and department stores.

Furthermore, Roche (2000) sees how nationally based mega-events was and still very much are occasions for the national elites to network amongst themselves (and with international elites) as well as occasions to project and disseminate hegemonic and 'official' ideologies to the people. However, mega-events:

...also create opportunities – through information overload, mixed messages, selective readings, message failures, creative responses by sections of the crowds which gather for the event, and also through some of the divisive and exclusionary dynamics – for the development of 'popular cultural' and occasionally 'resistant' responses by members of the public. (Ibid.:9)

This last quote implies that mega-events not only serve as showcases for the nation and its government to “flex its muscles”, but also as phenomena that spawn creativity and resistance towards the hegemonic ideologies – aspects that, as I will show, indeed played a part in the emergence of the Impressionists.

## **3.2. How Meso Level Places Can Affect Collective Creativity**

As shown in the previous section, a nation can, through its ruling state, intervene and affect the creative production within its borders. As such it serves as an example on how a place that I position on a macro level should be taken into account when investigating the impact place has on creativity. Cities, on the other hand, are located within nations and are therefore positioned on another abstract and physical level of place – a level of place that I call the meso level. This is however not to say that nations and cities are disjointed from each other, existing without the one having an impact on the other. Surely, that is not the case. But they do differ in the ways they can affect collaborative creativity, resulting in another question that needs to be answered: how can meso level places affect collaborative creativity?

### **3.2.1. Three Ingredients for a Creative City**

By looking at a vast number of cities that in the past have served as places where creativity has flourished, Hospers (2003) identifies three ‘ingredients’ that jointly contribute to an increased chance of urban creativity: (1) concentration, (2) diversity, and (3) instability.

Hospers (2003) sees how the presence of a substantial number of people in a given city constitutes the first stimulant of urban creativity. The more individuals present at a place allows for more chances of human interaction and communication to occur. But even if a large population enhances the chances of creative interactions, it is not a requirement. To be sure, Athens of classical times, a creative city par excellence, only contained roughly 200,000 inhabitants (including slaves), in comparison to the metropolitan cities of today which houses millions of people (Hospers, 2003). As such, in regards to urban creativity it is not as much a matter of the number people located in a city, but rather the density of their interaction. As Hospers (2003) puts it: "A dense concentration of people at a certain location favors frequent meetings and happenstance contact between individuals and thus makes new ideas and innovations more likely" (Ibid.:149).

Diversity constitutes the second factor that encourages urban creativity – not just the variation between the citizens, but also the variation in regards to buildings a city hosts (Ibid.). To be sure, Hospers (2003) sees, by referring to Jacobs (1969), how a diverse population (artists, migrants, entrepreneurs, students, old people) can benefit creativity, as the individuals constituting the population possess varied sets of skills and demands. The built up environment in the city can, in turn, help the inhabitants to meet, swap knowledge, and exchange ideas. Indeed, "...in a street with 'function mixing' – that is, a mix of buildings with differing functions [...] there is always something happening, day and night, and the chance of accidental encounters and 'new combinations' the greater" (Hospers, 2003:150); as such allowing cities to develop into a breeding place for entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation (Törnqvist, 2004; Fischer & Merton, 1984).

Finally, the third factor that, combined with the previous two, allow for urban creativity is instability (Hospers, 2003). Similarly to how Farrell (2001) sees how collaborative circles tend to form in places of intellectual or cultural conflict, Hospers (2003) argues that cities succumbed by crisis, confrontation, and chaos has historically been places of great creative emergence. But why can creativity flourish in instable cities? To answer the question Hospers, by referring to Buttimer (1983), uses the metaphor of a river running off a mountain:

...if the river's fall is steep, the direction of the flow is clearly defined (stable); but when the fall levels out the river's situation becomes unstable [...] It then takes very little to determine the further progress of the river. Like a river, a city can also find itself in a vulnerable situation and invite creativity. (Hospers, 2003:150)

As such, it is probable that structural instability "...makes it easier for creative people to break with the ingrown patterns of thinking and rigid regulations of their surroundings" (Törnqvist, 2004:233f); being one of the reasons why stable cities seldom spur creativity in the deepest sense of the word. To be sure, numerous inventions and changes have been made in connection with war and revolution – for good and for evil (Ibid.). But this is however not to say that stability is always bad for creativity. Undoubtedly, as we shall see in the next section, stable cities can – just as instable cities (or even more so) – provide its inhabitants with specific *resources* that in turn can heighten creative activity.

### **3.2.2. Resources: A Necessity for Creative Collectives**

As we have now seen there are three ingredients that a city can possess which, when combined, allow for an enhanced possibility of creative emergence – a core factor in regards to why creative collectives tend to emerge within its premises. But it is not the *sole* factor. Within the field of social movements Edwards and McCarthy (2004) sees how the availability of specific resources at a place enhances the chance of collective action. Certainly, "When movement activists do attempt to create collective action [...] through historical time and across geographical locations their successes are consistently related to the greater presence of available resources in their broader environments" (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004:116). This insight resulted in the development of the resource mobilization theory (RMT) – a "...structural perspective of social movements that takes grievances as given and thus seeks to explain the emergence, persistence, and decline of social movements by examining how social actors create or gain access to key resources to pursue a common agenda" (Corte,

2013:29).

Someone who acknowledges the value in combining the resource mobilization theory (RMT) with that of creative collaborations is Corte (2013) who, in his study on freestyle BMXers in the city of Greenville, North Carolina, extends and redefines the previously discussed theory of collaborative circles and magnet places offered by Farrell (2001). By referring to McLaughlin (2008), Corte (2013) argues that the collaborative circles theory is focused too narrowly on the interpersonal dynamics among the group members – resulting in a loss of attention paid on the context within they operate. Indeed, he sees how “Currently, collaborative circles theory (CCT) does not adequately account for the contextual factors that enable or constrain collective endeavor of the kind that collaborative circles are pursuing” (Corte, 2013:27). Therefore, in order to address the shortcomings in Farrell's theory, he integrates it with RMT.

By using RMT Corte is able to reconceive the concept of magnet place as a constellation of resources. In doing so, Corte shows how specific resources present at a place (in his case the city of Greenville) can influence group formation development and separation. Specifically, Corte argues that “... the 'incubation period' characteristic of collaborative circle formation depends crucially on a distinct arrangement of resources that affords the group privacy and tolerance from the local community” (Corte, 2013:30). Out of the five categories of resources that Edwards and McCarthy (2004) present, that is *human, material, moral, social-organizational, and cultural resources*, only the first three find their ways into Corte's (2013) analysis, with the addition of a fourth resource termed *locational resources* (developed by Corte himself). However, out of these six resources all but cultural resources will serve a purpose in my meso level place analysis of Paris and its impact on the Impressionists.

Human resources include people with certain skills, experience, and expertise within a field present at the place – people that may provide others with knowledge as well as attract other like-minded individuals to the place. What is important to mention here is that movements often require individuals with varying kinds of expertise, for example organizers, spokespersons, lawyers, and/or others that



ultimately can help the movement reach its goals. Ultimately, a key issue in regards to human resources is whether the expertise that the skilled individuals hold actually fits the needs of the movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). For example, a psychologist would be of little help to a movement that wants to promote its activities through the media, but a journalist surely would.

Material resources combine what economists would refer to as financial and physical capital and are constituted by tangible artifacts such as money, equipment, supplies, training facilities, office spaces, or property that a place can provide a movement. Here, money has received the most analytic attention as, "No matter how many other resources a movement mobilizes it will incur costs and someone has to pay the bills" (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004:128).

Moral resources tend to originate outside of a movement and include solidarity support, sympathetic support, legitimacy, and celebrity (Ibid.). Out of these kinds of moral resources legitimacy has received the most attention as it has been shown how movements that closely mimic institutionally legitimate features in their endeavors has an advantage compared to movements that are more "rebellious" (see Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1992). Still, creating or gaining moral resources is not an impossible task for movements, as shown in the case of the US Southern civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004).

Social-organizational resources can be both intentional and appropriable. Those that are intentional social organizational resources are created specifically for the purposes of the movement, while those that are appropriable social organizational resources are created for non-movement purposes but are still available to movement actors as means to, for example, gain access to other kinds of resources (Ibid.). Infrastructures, an appropriable resource, will in my analysis play the most prominent role out of all the social-organizational resources. Infrastructures include roads, sidewalks, and railways that facilitate the everyday life and, maybe more importantly, allows movement actors to travel easily in order to acquire other types of resources.

Finally, locational resources refer to "...properties inherent to the location that can be enjoyed as a resource for virtually any group in the area without having to be actively mobilized" (Corte, 2013:39). Here, Corte sees climate, demography, local



economy, and cultural history of the place as examples of locational resources – resources that also can positively augment the accessibility or usefulness of the other resources mentioned above.

As a concluding remark, what should be noted is that the resources that a collective need in order to accomplish its goal is dependent on the context in which the collective operates (Corte, 2013). This means that the resources a specific city hold may be necessary for some collectives, but not for others. For example, the mild weather in Greenville allowed the BMXers to ride outside year-round – an example of a locational resource that was of great beneficial for the riders' development (Ibid.). The mild weather would however probably not be of such great value for collectives operating mainly indoors, such as chess players for example (see Fine, 2015). As of moral resources, in Greenville the riders attained recognition and support from the inhabitants of the city, taking the form of privileges granted by authorities, employers, and the wider population (Corte, 2013). To cut things short, if a city – a meso level place – holds a specific set of human, material, moral, social-organizational, and locational resources valuable for specific kinds of activities (whether it involves doing tricks with bicycles, paint, produce music) it can greatly enhance the productivity and creativity of creative collectives operating within those fields of activity.

### **3.3. How Micro Level Places Can Affect Collective Creativity**

In the section above both Hospers (2003) and Corte (2013) acknowledge that training facilities, office spaces, and other buildings with differing functions are places that enhance the possibility of a city spawning creative collectives within its city limits. These smaller places, which I refer to as micro level places, are as such regarded as properties of a city, just like how a city may be regarded as a property of a nation. As an example, Hospers (2003) argues that:

The most important background to *Vienna's* creativity around and after 1900 was the 'café factor': the countless Kaffeehäuser open from early in the morning to late at night, served as the meeting place of the local creative minds. In this inspiring environment a number of 'new combinations' emerged while drinking a cup of Weiner mélange, or the local beer. (Hospers, 2003:151, emphasis added)

But, just because a place is considered a property of another place does not mean that it cannot impact collective creativity in its "own way". On the contrary (as the above quote hints of), micro level places located within the limits of meso level places have distinctive ways in regards to how they affect creativity, even though it is usually the meso level place that receives the credit. That is why this section will emphasize the impact micro level places can have on collective creativity.

### **3.3.1. Material and Institutional Affordances**

By examining the formative years of 49 twentieth-century schools of painting and focusing on the location of key participants, Oberlin and Gieryn (2015) sees how, in most instances, artists identified as belonging to a certain school lived in in the same city or region during the school's emergence – in some cases even in the same neighborhood, building, or street of large metropolitan areas. Based on this they argue that "...the co-location of artists and at a circumscribed geographical location in the immediate presence of diverse material, social, and cultural surrounds [...] plays a critically important role in the emergence of artistic schools and in the success of member artists in the art market" (Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015:21). Building on previous research made on the emplacement of cultural production and of collaborative creative circles, Oberlin and Gieryn (2015) develop a sociological explanation for the omnipresent pattern of geographic clumping – referring the explanation as *place effects*.

Place effects is composed by two distinct entities: (1) the "co-presence" or the "...geographical proximity of artists involved in an emergent school of painting who live and work within a small area like a city neighborhood or small town" (p:26); and

(2) the specific “geographical location” where the clumping happens. This second entity is in turn dependent on two components referred to as *material affordances* and *institutional affordances* – two components that will play a role in the forthcoming analysis of the impact micro level places in Paris had on the emergence of the Impressionists.

According to Oberlin and Gieryn (2015), material affordances “... create physical environments that enable the production of distinctive art works, in large measure by bringing to convergence the intersecting lives of school members” (Ibid.:28). Places such as apartments or houses that offer “starving artists” cheap housing may attract them to specific neighborhoods or towns – an attraction that grows even greater if garages and lofts are available for conversion to studios. These kinds of micro level places enhance the chance of unexpected interaction among the artist, being important opportunities to share “the latest news” in the world of painting (Ibid.). Furthermore, just as important are gathering places where groups can talk and scheme such as cafés, bars, centrally located studios/ateliers, restaurants, and supply stores – places that also offer opportunities for artist to share ideas and techniques amongst each other, spurring creativity and enabling relationships to develop (Ibid.). To be sure, direct personal contacts are of great importance in regards to creative processes, regardless of whether they refer to science, technological development, or artistic activity (Törnqvist, 1998). What is also notable is that these meeting places “...often exist outside the formal institutions and organizational forms, in contexts where professional and commercial competitions is not able to block the free exchange of information” (Törnqvist, 2004:233).

Out of the exemplified material affordances, cafés have arguably gained the most attention in relation to how they stimulate creativity, create and maintain friendship networks, and function as arenas for social and political discourse (see Haine, 1998; Hospers, 2003; Laurier & Philo, 2007; Laurier & Philo, 2006b). Sayers (2009) sees how cafés are places that enable a relaxation of the hierarchical status positions among its visitors, as every customer tend to be treated the same way regardless of their social status – something that in turn enhances the chance of individuals with differing socio-economical backgrounds forming relationships with

each other. Cafés are also places where members of groups or organizations meet to strengthen their relationships and articulate common goals, as well as places for 'idea work' to be done (Sayers, 2009). Indeed, in regards to 'idea work' "...the café as a place seems to be essential in the production of synthesis and presumably this is because of the social interactions which are a primary condition for creative process" (Ibid.:82).

Institutional affordances, on the other hand, have more of an impact on the eventual success and recognition that a painter may achieve, rather than on the process of painting itself (Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015). Here, the presence of places such as art museums, universities, and galleries plays vital roles as they attract already established art-world gatekeepers and augment the artistic "status" of the city. Indeed, "...the odds of getting noticed go up if the place of origin [for the artistic school] is rich with art-world gatekeepers situated locally" (Ibid.:29). But although institutional affordances may have more of an impact on the eventual success and recognition of an upcoming artist rather than on the creative process, it does not mean that they do not have *any* influence on the creative process. As I will later show, they can function as places where artist can draw inspiration from previous works as well as places for face-to-face interactions that, in turn, can lead to friendships being formed.

## 4. Methodology

Qualitative studies include ethnographies of groups, places, organizations, or activities; analyses of people's lives and experiences; historical case studies of a wide range of phenomena, including social movements, revolutions, state-building, and other political phenomena; and comparative historical analyses. (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002:34)

Thus, when choosing between either a quantitative or qualitative research approach for this study I early on opted for the latter one – more precisely, a qualitative historical approach. To be fare, it was tempting to label this study as a historical *case* study, but due to how it currently exist an academic debate regarding whether a case

study can or should be applied on historical research – a debate largely based on the different definitions of case studies and how to conduct them (see Johansson, 2000; Yin, 1994; Stake, 1998) – I decided to not label it as such in order to avoid entering this methodological debate. Some may argue that this study is a case study; some may argue that it is not. What is for certain is that it is a historical one.

As my study investigate the impact place has, in various forms, on collaborative emergence and creativity, I've used the historical example of the emergence of the Impressionists (a group renown for their creative contributions) during late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Paris, France mainly because it is considered difficult to study the impact a place might have had on creativity in a contemporary context (see Törnqvist, 2009). Indeed, how does one investigate how a place may have influenced collaborative creativity before any examples of collaborative creativity have emerged there? For example, Farrell (2001) sees in his study on collaborative circles how it takes years for the members to acquire the expertise needed to develop a new vision, and years more to win acceptance for their innovating work – making it difficult to study them in a contemporary context.

Still, one might ask: why is a historical study of Paris and the Impressionist during late 19<sup>th</sup> century of any relevance today? Well, just because the study focuses on past events it doesn't render it irrelevant. For example, Collingwood (1978) states that "...the past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present" (Collingwood, 1978:97). To be sure, the past is embedded in the present and, as historical research involves creating meaning of the past within the present, history is always in a way contemporary (Johansson, 2000).

In contrast to the relatively easy choice of a qualitative approach in favor of a quantitative approach for this study, the way of gathering the necessary qualitative data in order to fulfill its aim proved more difficult to decide upon. Indeed, as Goodwin and Horowitz (2002) argues, a variety of data-gathering strategies and data sources can be classified as being qualitative, with the variation of qualitative sociological studies often appearing greater than their similarities. To be sure, in-depth interviewing, participant-observation, photography and video analysis, document analysis, and archival and historical research can all be classified as

qualitative data-gathering strategies; but, despite their differences, most of them are similar as how they require "...long-term involvement that in turn allows access to the rich details and complexities of social life" (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002:45).

In the end, the way data was gathered for this study was through document analysis/research – a data gathering method equated with a deep and detailed analysis of a sample of publicly available texts (Silverman, 2000). To be more precise:

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. (Bowen, 2009:28)

I am by far not the first one applying document analysis when investigating historical examples of creativity. For example, Farrell (1982; 2001) applies it in his studies on collaborative circles; so does Sgourev (2013) in his study on how Paris influenced the rise of Cubism; and so do Charles and Théré (2011) when investigating the Physiocratic Movement.

But what kinds of documents are appropriate when conducting this sort of study? According to Bowen (2009) documents that may be used when conducting document analysis/research can take a variety of forms, for example advertisements, agendas attendance registers, background papers, books, brochures, diaries, journals, letters, memoranda, newspapers, survey data, public records; in other words, documents that allows the researcher to develop understanding, uncover meaning, and discover insights that is relevant to the study. By citing Merriam (1988) Bowen mentions an important aspect of document analysis/research in relation to my study, namely that "For historical and cross-cultural research, relying on prior studies may be the only realistic approach" (Bowen, 2009:29) and that "...documents may be the most effective means of gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when informants have forgotten the details" (Ibid.:31). Thus, the main sources used for the study consists of:

- Two biographies on Impressionist painters. One on Pissarro by Rewald (1989) and one on Manet by Schneider (1969);
- A prosopography on the Impressionist painters Monet and Bazille by Champa et al. (1999);
- Four prosopographies of the Impressionists as a group by Rewald (1961), Bellony Rewald (1976), Blunden et al. (1980), and Roe (2007);
- A memoir written by Moore (1917[1886]) in which he writes about the (at the time) emerging Impressionists (being one of the first to do so);
- A report by Galenson and Jensen (2002) that examines the process of how the market for modern painting emerged in Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- A study by Farrell (2001) documenting their emergence, success, and disintegration;
- Three historical works placing the Impressionist within the political, socio-economical, structural, and artistic context of Paris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by White and White (1993), Clark (1986), and King (2006);
- And two historical works on Paris that illuminates the social, political, and structural transformation of the city during the 19<sup>th</sup> century by DeJean (2014) and Gould (1995).

The selected data sources, gathered through the use of public and university libraries in Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden, as well as through online bookstores, provided me with detailed information regarding the lives of the Impressionist, how and where they met, their relationships with one another, their frequent topics of discussion, their political opinions, their position within the art community, and their creative influences. Furthermore, the selected data sources also shed light upon the social, economical, political, artistic, and structural characteristics of France and Paris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The data sources did as such provide me with both detailed information regarding the group, as well as with general historical knowledge about France and Paris during that era – two aspects that are vital when investigating the impact France and Paris, along with the cafés, studios, and museums (in other words places positioned on different abstract and physical levels) had on the group.

Certainly, historical knowledge of the time during the emergence of the Impressionists is essential when interpreting the actions of the group, much like how when reading Marx and Engel's "The Communist Manifesto" and Weber's "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism":

...historical knowledge is essential to interpretation of the argument. To read the works of Marx and Weber, one must also understand how the nineteenth-century historians interpreted the past. [...] To understand Marx and Engel's "political pamphlet" The Communist Manifesto, one must understand the social relationships and processes associated with feudalism, including both the interdependence of the church and the state and the economic interdependence of families [...] Similarly, unless one knows of the existence of dress codes in medieval cities (not discussed in Marx), one cannot comprehend the failure of many urban servants to flee their masters. (Tuchman, 1994:307)

Evidently, the study relies heavily on historical work produced by others, something that *can* be problematic if not done properly as, when it comes to history:

Man's knowledge of the past is limited to the amount of information that can be derived from the sources at his disposal. The historian is like someone whose only way of viewing a landscape is by looking at photographs. He can see everything that is revealed by the photograph, but has no idea what exists beyond the field of vision covered by the camera. [...] He only sees certain aspects of it [the past], from which he may to some extent make extrapolations; but he can never know more than what his documents have preserved for him. [...] Every photograph of the past has been made with a special kind of camera, fitted with a lens that is suitable for a given situation. Each type of historical source not only has its own limitations, but also its own particular way of seeing things – its own particular bias. (Vansina, 1972:141)

Indeed, historical social scientists are warned against gaps and biases in historiography (Amenta, 2009), and how it may impede research due to how historians, when conveying the past, bring their own points and arguments into it (Tuchman, 1994). But, even though historical documents are biased "...each type of source has its own advantages as a means of conveying information about the past"



(Vansina, 1972:141). Therefore, to tackle this problem I have opted to read and refer to a large sample of sources as each of them offer their own pieces to the puzzle. In addition, a large sample of sources have been used because:

When data are presented by multiple independent sources, one's confidence in that data is increased. Given all of the problems that may be present in secondary data and the frequent difficulty with identifying how the data were obtained, the best strategy is to find multiple sources of information. Ideally, two or more independent sources should arrive at the same or similar conclusions. (Stewart, 1984:30)

Naturally, when selecting document samples I've done so with a critical eye, investigating their authenticity (external criticism) before adding them to the study (see Topolski, 1977). With each of the documents I conducted thematic analysis as means of recognizing emerging themes relevant to the study. Thematic analysis, as a process, involves a careful and focused re-reading and review of data (Bowen, 2009).

Furthermore, thematic analysis induce that "The reviewer takes a closer look at the selected data and performs coding and category construction, based on the data's characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon" (Ibid.:32). For this study, the data was coded into three major themes as of how place affected the creative life and thus inevitably the collective creativity of the Impressionists: (1) France and its state's impact on creative activity; (2) Paris' impact on creative activity; and (3) locally bound cafés, studios, and museums impact on creative activity. Within each of these three major themes the data was further coded in regards to how well it fitted into any of the theoretical tools applied to analyze the collected data.

## 5. The Emergence of the Impressionists in Paris, France During the Latter Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

On 15 April 1874, a group of artist held its first exhibition in Paris at 35 Boulevard des Capucines (Bellony Rewald, 1976). The paintings on show, by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley, Edgar Degas, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne, Berthe Morisot, and a few guest painters, appalled the visitors as they were painted with none of the traditional pictorial perspectives, framing devices, or conventional subject matter preferred by the upper middle classes of Paris at the time (Bellony Rewald, 1976; Roe, 2007). Indeed, the painters were unconcerned by the public's preferred subjects of dramatic scenes from history or mythology, moral tales, or biblical parables. Instead they painted life as they saw it: in the country lanes, the city streets, and the riverside cafés in an around Paris (Roe, 2007). One of the paintings at the exhibition was Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* – a painting that gave the facetious critic Louis Leroy the idea of coining the word 'impressionist' to describe the group's new style and technique. The group composed by the above named painters (along with Édouard Manet and Frédéric Bazille) subsequently adopted the term, naming themselves the 'Impressionists' (Bellony Rewald, 1976). "The extraordinary history of the movement, which marked the beginning of modern art, covers the twelve years that preceded, and the twelve that followed, this decisive exhibition; it also coincides with a particularly intense period in the history of France" (Ibid.:7).

What follows is a documentation of how France and Paris, as well as the cafés, the studios, and the museums affected the rise and creative output of the Impressionists.

## **5.1 France During the Latter Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: A Macro Level Place**

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the principal concern the governments of France was legitimation; and, following the royal examples of the past, art came to be regarded as an essential symbolic exposition of power. France, during this time, therefore exhibited one of the most widespread and comprehensive government involvement with art of our time, with its culmination being the international exhibitions in 1855 and 1867 at which Louis Napoleon captivated the rulers of Europe with French art (White & White, 1993).

### **5.1.1. Napoleon III and his Desire for Power**

During the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the state of France exercised ruthless political oppression and a rigid censorship. Napoleon III had, three years after his election to the presidency of the Republic in 1848, broken his solemn oath to the constitution and proclaimed himself Emperor. As such, “Only through the use of absolute power could he maintain himself against a republican opposition on the one hand and various royalist factions on the other” (Rewald, 1961:44). The censorship muzzled liberal press and led to the prosecution of authors such as Baudelaire and Flaubert as Napoleon III attempted to strengthen his power (Ibid.). But Napoleon III also wanted France to become one of Europe's leading powers and as means of reaching his goal the Great Exposition Universelle was arranged in Paris in 1855. It was the first of its kind to include a large international section dedicated to arts, along with the more conventional sections of industry and commerce, as Napoleon III spared no costs or efforts to make it a true manifestation of strength and progressive ideas (Ibid.). At the exposition, artists from twenty-eight nations had their works exhibited, constituting the, at the time, most remarkable collection of paintings and sculptures ever brought together in a building – a collection of which France's section was the most brilliant one (Ibid.).

There were more than five thousand paintings crowding the walls, without any space between them, frame touching frame from the floor in three or more rows up to the ceiling – not to speak of all the other attractions, most of which were assembled in the new Palais de l'Industrie. (Ibid.:16)

### 5.1.2. The Académie and École des Beaux-Arts

The states ability to involve itself with French art had been made possible with its establishment of the *Institut de France* in 1795 that, after some reorganization, in 1816 held four academic sections: *Académie française*, *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, *Académie des Sciences*, *Académie des Beaux-Arts*; and later a fifth *Académie des Sciences morales et politiques*. Attention will here be given to one of the sections: the Académie des Beaux-Arts (hereafter the Academy), a section controlled and funded by the government with the task of censoring and nurturing French art (see White & White, 1993; Roe, 2007; Rewald, 1961, 1989).

By mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Farrell (2001) sees how three strong cultural currents ruled the art world: classicism, romanticism, and realism. Classicism was the art form favored by the Academy – an art form that valued idealized and pastoral scenes, favorably with references to historical or religious allusions. Romanticism were embraced by more marginal members of the Academy (for example Delacroix) and allowed a wider range of colors than that of classicism along with motives of acts of heroism, or states of suffering or ecstasy. Finally, realism was even more marginal than romanticism in relation to the Academy. This art form, represented by the likes of Courbet and Corot, mostly depicted contemporary scenes of peasants at work in rural landscapes. Furthermore, realists preferred to paint outdoors in the open, while classicist, in contrast, painted in studios (Farrell, 2001).

Some of the members of the Academy were chosen to teach at the state funded *École des Beaux-Arts* (hereafter the École), entrusting them with the education of new generations. Aspiring artists were thus either educated at the government's École where they were taught traditional methods to emulate their teachers' works

(something Delacroix saw as teaching ‘beauty as though it were algebra’) or at private studios under the mentorship of influential and famous painters (Bellony-Rewald, 1976). The *École*, founded in 1795, was the heart of the Parisian art system and the breeding ground for new talent. White and White (1993) see how, at the *École*, the students were able to advance if they passed annual examinations and participated in contests set up by the school in order to identify the most talented ones. Professional success was virtually guaranteed if graduating the school as the students were educated under the aegis of the state – a state that never failed to reward its better students with more than two-thirds of the graduates receiving some kind of medal at the *Salon* (Higonnet, 2005).

### 5.1.3. The Salon

The Salon was a great biannual or annual (biannual until 1833 and annual thereafter) showcase for new French art, organized by the Academy and funded by the government (Higonnet, 2005). They were huge and costly “machines” with an estimated 7,000-8,000 painters exhibiting 68,238 paintings between the years of 1791 and 1860 – a number that rose steadily as it, for example, showed works from 5,184 artists in 1880 alone. However, those were among the fortunate that year, with some 3,000-4,000 painters being rejected by the jury – a jury that was (just as the teachers at the *École*) mainly constituted by members of the Academy (Ibid.). The power that the jury (i.e. the Academy) possessed also meant that it could exclude any artist who did not comply with its requirements (Rewald, 1961). In fact, the jury only included works from members of the Academy, students of the *École*, and students of the *École*'s affiliated studios. As such, already established artists (invariably members of the Academy) were favored to a great extent, making the competition between lesser-known artists fierce (Roe, 2007). This art system thus had two poles: the rejected artists (the *refusés*) and the jury (Higonnet, 2005)

The Salons were held during the two first weeks of May in the Palais de l'Industrie (a big exhibition center in the Champs-Élysées) and were crowded by visitors. Émile Zola described it as a seething tide of humanity, with people being

“...spilled out into the gardens, wedged in between sculptures; at lunchtime, Le Doyen's, Tortini's and other nearby restaurants, particularly those with a café-concert, did a roaring trade” (Roe, 2007:7). The event was popular indeed, with some 520,000 visitors attending the exhibition of 1876 (Higonnet, 2005). But who were the visitors? The historian Hippolyte Taine answered the same question by stating that it was the general public, the intelligentsia (to some degree), the collectors, and the art dealers; but also the:

Frenchmen who have struck it rich: bankers and speculators [who] want to embellish their châteaux and town houses. They know that painted murals set a home apart from the run of the mill, and so, like headwaiters or entrepreneurs, they order ... allegories and mythologies for their ceilings. (Ibid.:417)

Present at the Salons were also foreign artists and buyers, something that reminded everyone that Paris was the major art center in the world. Certainly, the success the art system, referred to as the academic system by White and White (1993), enjoyed in recruiting artists, increasing artistic production, and raising the artistic standards contributed to the international dominance of France and Paris – in turn attracting a rich and varied cosmopolitan elite (White & White, 1993). It was to Paris, rather than cities such as London or Munich, painters from all over the world went in order to gain recognition (Higonnet, 2005).

As it were, showing ones work at the Salon was, until 1874, a necessary condition for establishing a reputation as an artist in Paris and “...no major French artist was able to forego showing at the Salon, at least at the beginning of his or her career, until the last quarter of the century” (Galenson & Jensen, 2002:9). Indeed, the Salon was crucial for artist since it was, at the time, the only legitimate way for them to exhibit their work and earn the attention from potential buyers such as aristocratic patrons, collectors, and museums (Roe, 2007). For example, Renoir wrote to the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel in March 1881:

I will try to explain to you why I'm sending my work to the Salon ... There are 80,000 people who wouldn't buy a thing if a painter was not in the Salon. That is why I send two portraits every year, as little as that may be ... My shipment to the Salon is entirely commercial. (Higonnet, 2005:419)

In fact, to refuse participation in the Salons was seen as an act of cultural or even political insubordination, with Napoleon even announcing that he would only buy paintings that had been showcased at the event (Higonnet, 2005). To add to the Salon's power, the state and the Academy rewarded the most favored artists in a number of ways: offering them state commissions, purchasing their works, and awarding them Salon prize medals accompanied with cash (Galenson & Jensen, 2002). Bourdieu, in reference to the power that the Salon had during this time, even went as far as stating that “the artist is a high-level servant [who has a highly structured] *career*, a well defined succession of honors ... by way of the hierarchy of awards given at the Salon exhibitions” (Bourdieu, 1993:242f). But, the state monopoly that ruled the art world in France did not occur because of the lack of rival exhibition venues. In fact, there were a number of art exhibitions during this time in Paris, especially during the expositions, but yet it was to the Salons that almost all Parisians gravitated toward (Higonnet, 2005). This was due to how both artist and the public sustained the belief that “the Salon was the only truly legitimate arena for exhibiting and evaluating works of art” (Galenson & Jensen, 2002:8).

#### **5.1.4. The State Sponsorship Was Questioned**

The art monopoly exercised by the state was far from appreciated by all the artists, as demonstrated by the realist painter Courbet who bluntly stated that “The state is incompetent when it comes to art ... Its intervention is entirely demoralizing and deleterious to art, which it confines to what is officially approved and condemns to ... the most sterile mediocrity” (Higonnet, 2005:402). Similarly, Ingres bemoaned the influence of the state and the Salon by frankly admitting that:

The Salon stifles and corrupts the feeling for the great, the beautiful; artists are driven to exhibit there by the attractions of profit, the desire to get themselves noticed at any price, by the supposed good fortune of an eccentric subject that is capable of producing an effect and leading to an advantageous sale. Thus the Salon is literally no more than a picture shop, a bazaar in which the tremendous number of objects is overwhelming, and business rules instead of art. (Rewald, 1961:20)

As a matter of fact, Ingres not only abstained to exhibit at the Salon, but also refused to participate as a jury member in protest of the ruling art system (Ibid.). Thus, the Salon was evidently a highly unsatisfactory institution to many of the artists, but yet carloads of pictures came every year to it. "The painter could not live with it – but neither could he do without it under the existing system" (White & White, 1993:51). But despite the displeasure expressed by some regarding the art system in Paris, the protection that the state offered aspiring artists did not diminish. Instead it steadily increased, as:

...the state sponsorship of art was one of the few things that almost everyone agreed about during a century when France knew two empires, two monarchies, and three republics, to say nothing of communitarian or communist-inspired insurrections. Each regime, regardless of its political coloration, saw protection of the arts as part of its political vocation. (Higonnet, 2005:413)

Indeed, for more than three centuries the French state, whether being monarchical or republican, favored and supported Parisian artists through commissions (on quite generous terms) and inspiration (to some degree); and at times even organizing them (Higonnet, 2005).



## 5.2. Paris During the Latter Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: A Meso Level Place

The painters Monet, Manet, Bazille, Pissarro, Sisley, Degas, Renoir, Morisot and Cézanne arrived in Paris in the late 1850s, early 1860s – the capital of a country that by the time hosted between four to five thousand painters and sculptors (Higonnet, 2005). At the time of their arrival they were unaware of each other's existence – something that however would come to change.

### 5.2.1. A City Under Reconstruction

The Paris to which they arrived was a city in great change and development. Still, Roe (2007) sees how Paris in the 1860s was a medieval city characterized by moldering, rat-infested, and dark streets with no sewage system. A city of crumbling buildings and an omnipresent stench of decay and detritus resulted by the absence of sunlight and air. To be sure:

Household waste ran in indentations down the middle of the grimy cobbled streets. The poor lived in filthy, broken shacks and shanties clustered around Clichy, Mouffetard and the Louvre. Balzac had called all these the Louvre's 'leprous façades'. Napoleon III himself, who was far from sentimental about the conditions in his own city, called Paris 'nothing but a vast ruin, with plenty to suit the rats'.  
(Roe, 2007:6)

However, the prospect of change had already been initiated during the mid 1850s as Napoleon III mandated a new remodeling of Paris. The responsibility of carrying out this great task fell on an administrator and technocrat (rather than a architect or urban planner) named Georges Eugène Haussmann (DeJean, 2014). Haussmann, armed with the expanded powers such as the title of Baron and a seat in the Senate, immediately set to work on enormous street improvements and, over the next seventeen years, he oversaw the annexation of eighteen suburban communes; the

opening of two vast parks; and the creation of three systems of boulevards (Gould, 1995).

Hausmann started off by tearing down the inner city wall resulting in the former suburbs – Auteuil, Belleville, and Montmartre – becoming a more integrated part of Paris (Roe, 2007). Despite this, the suburbs were still rural, in particular Montmartre which, in 1859, was a mixture of houses of gardens, cheap run-down bars, broken-down shacks, and *creameries* – with a country lane housing the poor workers employed by the florists, seamstresses, and laundresses working at Pigalle, located at the foot of the hillside (Ibid.). Just as in Auteuil, Belleville, and Montmartre, annexed districts such as La Villette, Vaugirard, and Grenelle were at the time areas of crushing poverty, vagrancy, crime, and unsanitary living conditions, but they also provided the inhabitants with:

...innumerable places of sociability, such as the *marchands de vins* or *bals populaires*; narrow, winding streets on which one could not but acknowledge the people in one's path; and patterns of close personal association that bridged social strata and trade boundaries but consistently favored residents of the immediate neighborhood. (Gould, 1995:94)

Furthermore, despite the districts relatively run-down milieu it was also lively due to the cafés, brasseries, and café-concerts located there – attracting artists of various kinds (Roe, 2007).

Also central to the new Paris was the boulevards that were built throughout the city, ushering in the boulevard culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century renown for the cafés, shopping arcades, and department stores; as well as for the people seen as representatives of Hausmann's new Paris – the banker, the cocotte, and the stylish Parisienne (DeJean, 2014). They were each designed to enhance the imperial majesty and beauty of the capital while at the same time easing the burden of the rapidly increasing commercial traffic between city's market-places, docks, and rail stations (Gould, 1995). Indeed, the boulevards played a major role in the new Paris; being much broader than the medieval streets they replaced, "...these new boulevards included the 140-yard-wide Avenue de l'Impératrice, which cut a majestic swath

through the wealthy Sixteenth Arrondissement from the Arc de Triomphe to the Bois de Boulogne, an enormous park where, on orders of the Emperor, 400,000 new trees had been planted” (King, 2006:195). All in all, between 1853 and 1870, 85 miles of new streets were added to the 450 miles that already existed and the average width of the city’s thoroughfares were doubled. Furthermore, in order to satisfy Haussmann’s predilection for streets with a monumental terminus, plazas and public buildings, such as the Opera and district town halls, were in many cases built on the axes of the boulevards (Gould, 1995). In addition, less visible, but maybe the most important to the modernization of Paris, was the ingenious new 200 mile sewage system that made the streets more passable during the rainy season and dealt with the sewage and rainwater that previously had flooded them, promoting disease and flooding cellars (Ibid.). These sewers (gravitational tunnels) proved to be an effective way of discharging waste into the Seine and turned out to be the achievement of which Haussmann was the most proud (King, 2006; Gould, 1995).

### **5.2.2. A Growing, Diverse, and Segregated City**

Haussmann’s infrastructural developments and city center reconstruction pushed thousands of less affluent woman and men outward toward the periphery, often to the annexed districts. Even though more housing units were constructed than had been demolished, the focus on constructing luxury buildings increased the rents, leaving the poor to seek lodging elsewhere. At the same time, the reconstruction of the city center also attracted the commercial and industrial classes to buy new smart apartments, as well as increased the potential for commerce, extravagance, and the pursuit of pleasure, along with an increased obsession for clothes and decoration (Roe, 2007). The journalist Louis Lazare, a vocal critic of the urban renewal, argued that the city was becoming segregated by wealth, separating the working-class from the bourgeois residential areas, as well as by the industrial production areas from districts dedicated to finance and middle-class consumption (Gould, 1995). But this segregation did not happen over night, which resulted in that “The city was in a state of flux. There was a new sense of bustle and movement, and, for the first time, a mix

of people of all classes in the streets, which smelled unmistakably of Paris: a mingling of leeks and lilacs” (Roe, 2007:7). Undoubtedly, Paris of 1870 was a city beginning to emerge from the remodeling initiative of Haussmann – a city still adjusting to its changes (DeJean, 2014). A grand speech presented by a character in a play, put on by playwright Victorien Sardou, offer some insight into the feelings felt by many residents as the city was transforming:

It is the old Paris that is lost, the real Paris! A city which was narrow, unhealthy, insufficient, but picturesque, varied, charming, full of memories. We had our favourite walks a step or two away, and our favourite sights, all happily grouped together! We had our little outings with our own folk: how nice it was! ... Going for a stroll was not something that tired you out, it was a delight. It gave birth to that eminently Parisian compromise between laziness and activity known as *flânerie*! Nowadays, for the least excursion, there are miles to go! A muddy thoroughfare which women cross without grace, since it no longer has the elasticity of the old paving stones to support them! An eternal sidewalk going on and on forever! A tree, a bench, a kiosk! ... A tree, a bench, a kiosk! ... A tree, a bench ... And on top of all that, the sun! the dust! the mess! the dirt! A crowd of people of all shapes and sizes, cosmopolitans jabbering away in every language, decked out in every conceivable colour. Nothing left of the things which once constituted our own little world, a world apart; a world of expertise, judgement and refinement, an elite of wit and good taste. – What is it we are losing, by God? Everything! This is not Athens any longer, it is Babylon! It is not the capital of France, but of Europe! (Clark, 1986:42)

This printed speech also gives us insight as how Paris more and more was becoming a city of diversity and of modernity. Indeed, Schneider (1969) sees how Paris during the 1970s was busy, lively, and throbbing despite the Franco-Prussian War and its aftermath, from which France was recovering fast:

The process of conversion from a preindustrial, semiprovincial capital into a modern megalopolis, inaugurated under Napoleon III, continued. [...] In street after street, standardized apartment buildings of the kind introduced by Baron Haussmann were going up. Industry and the proletariat grew apace: the near future held the promise of material progress and the threat of social crisis. (Schneider, 1969:133)

It was the happier side of the city that bourgeois liberals chose to see, where the high spots of fashion, for example the Bois Longchamp, the Café de Bade, and Café Tortoni, had not changed and still exerted a “magnetic attraction” (Ibid.).

### **5.2.3. Paris and its Surroundings: A Source of Creative Stimulation**

Paris fascinated the Impressionist and was often used as a source of inspiration (Bellony-Rewald, 1976). Manet, for example, was compelled by how the streets were changing as a result of Haussmann's initiative. He was fascinated by the people whom Haussmann had not quite been able to force out; like the tramps and the rag pickers still poking about in the remains of the medieval city that was disappearing in front of their eyes (Roe, 2007). Also, at the time there were some 5,000 registered and a further 30,000 unregistered prostitutes in Paris, serving a large proportion of the male middle class in so called *maisons closes* – furnished rooms where middle class men could come, drink tea, relax, and adjourn into a inner chamber where a courtesan would be waiting. Drawing inspiration from this, Manet painted his very controversial *Olympia*, depicting a waiting courtesan in one of these *maisons closes*. It outraged the public as it was far too familiar, and thus, uncomfortable (Ibid.).

Similarly, Renoir was enchanted by the city, which, according to him, was no less charming than a hill by a river or a field of poppies as it offered him “...the added attraction of gay animation, of that easygoing, colorful, and radiant life which he liked to share and to record” (Rewald, 1961:280). Paris provided him with all the things that he loved and excited his eyes – buildings, water, trees, elegant and charming women, children, graceful girls, and sunshine – all finding their way onto his canvases.

It was in Paris, while living in the Batignolles quarter, Sisley painted his first cityscape called *View of Montmartre* – a view of Montmartre seen from the Cite des Fleurs (Ibid.); and it was in Paris, behind the scenes of the Opera, Degas found inspiration in a series of new subjects, such as musicians, ballet dancers, and little rats, that allowed for the pictorial exploration he had always dreamt of. When it was

destroyed in a fire 1873, Degas was deeply affected as the fire had deprived him of his favorite objects to study. However, he soon found new subjects to paint in the dancing classes that were installed in new, temporary, quarters (Ibid.).

It was not just Paris that had a deep creative influence on the Impressionists, but also its surrounding forests, rivers, and villages, which had become easier to travel to due to the infrastructural developments. For example, the river *Seine* was very special for the Impressionists as:

In its slow, winding course of the sea, the Seine was inexhaustibly fascinating to these young devotees of light and movement. It not only mirrored the changing scenery, but lent itself to a whole range of amusements, from boating to dancing in one of the popular café-restaurants along its banks. (Bellony-Rewald, 1976:91).

Villages such as Bennecourt, Bougival, and Argenteuil were situated beside the river Seine and conveniently near to Paris, thus serving as excellent locations for the Impressionist to temporarily reside (Ibid.). But it was not just the Seine that captivated the Impressionists.

Even though outdoor painting was an activity that was not approved by the Academy members who saw "...the studio as the only place a painter could acquire the concentration and discipline to produce the clean lines and Platonic forms they considered real art" (Farrell, 2001:33), unorthodox landscape painters had for some thirty years (prior the arrival of the Impressionists) used the *Fontainebleau forest* as a refuge – a place that would serve as a perfect location for the young painters to challenge the rules that had been handed down to them in search of a more truthful image of the world (Bellony-Rewald, 1976). The forest itself lies about forty miles south of Paris and forms a natural sanctuary, 62,000 acres big. It was considered a mystical place with tales of monsters residing there. But, by 1849, a railway line was built, making the previously long journey to get there only about ninety minutes long, for the mere cost of 5 francs 65. Due to this, some of the forest's mysticism was lost. This development did however have a positive impact on the artists as it made it easier for them to go there (Ibid.)

In 1963, Monet and Bazille traveled to Chailly, a village on the edge of the

*Fontainebleau*, to spend their Easter holidays (Rewald, 1961; Bellony-Rewald, 1976). They also went there to do some studies of trees out-of-doors as the woods were famous for their enormous oaks and picturesque rocks; and, being city-dwellers, they were deeply struck by the authenticity and beauty of the forest (Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Rewald, 1961). Bazille, for example, found it “excellent” and was enthusiastic about the scenery that differed so from his native South of France, writing to his family: “Some parts of the forest are truly admirable. We can’t imagine oak-trees like that in Montpellier” (Bellony-Rewald, 1976:39). While Bazille soon had to return to Paris to continue his medical studies Monet stayed a little longer. He was detained by the work he had begun and by the beautiful weather, and wrote to his cousin and tutor Toulmouche: “I found here a thousand charming things which I couldn’t resist” (Rewald, 1961:93).

One year later, Monet returned to the *Fontainebleau*, this time in the company of not just Bazille, but also of Renoir and Sisley. As it seems to have been the first time Renoir and Sisley had any real contact with nature they turned to Monet for guidance. However, soon “...they also were to receive the advice of older men, the actual ‘masters of Barbizon,’<sup>4</sup> with whom they were brought in touch through chance encounters in the woods” (Ibid.:93). As it were, while painting in the woods a man approached Renoir and said: “It’s not badly drawn, but why the devil do you paint so black?” (Ibid.:96). The man was the Narcisse Virgilio Diaz, a Barbizon painter who advised the young artists (after they had been introduced to him by Renoir) to paint with brighter colors. Diaz in turn presented the young group of artists to Millet and Corot who, although not as willingly as Diaz, gave them some advice (Ibid.). Corot, for example, advised them to always go over in the studio what they had painted outside during the day; but above all, as he told Pissarro, study values “...for that is the basis of everything, and in whatever way one may feel and express oneself, one cannot do good painting without it” (Ibid.:101).

The Barbizon painters, although differing individually in methods and concepts, “...all had in common a complete devotion to nature and a desire to be

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<sup>4</sup> Barbizon was a small village on the borders of the woods that gave name to a group of painters (Bellony-Rewald, 1976).

faithful to their observations” (Ibid.:94) – an approach that resulted in paintings which deeply impressed the group (especially those by Millet, Corot, and Courbet) (Ibid.). Looking back, the event of going to the Fontainebleau seems to have had a great symbolic value for Monet and his friends, as it would mark the time and place of when and where they rebelled against the academic practice (Champa et al., 1999).

### **5.3. Micro Level Places: The Private Studios, the Louvre, and the Cafés**

As mentioned, during the 19th century Paris was overrun by thousands of art students. All of the students (with few exceptions) wanted one thing – to be enrolled at the *École des Beaux-Arts*. Gaining an education at the *École* – a rigorous, disciplined, and classical education – offered the best chance of later having their works exhibited at the Salon, in turn laying the path to becoming a professional painter wide open. However, due to the difficulty of gaining admission to the *École* (only admitting unmarried and thus truly dedicated students willing to sacrifice everything for their art), many students had to settle for the next best option: learning their skills at the private studios of, at times, famous and influential painters (Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Roe, 2007). Previous members of the Academy, whose reputation had declined, ran most of these private studios, making teaching for a monthly fee a way for them to earn a living. Students, in turn, saw these studios, and the experience they offered, as preparatory until the next time they applied for a place at the *École* (Roe, 2007). The private studios proliferated throughout the city, from Montparnasse to Montmartre, in alleys and small upstairs rooms (Ibid.). In reference to the Impressionist, two studios had a major impact on their education and formation: *Académie Suisse*, and Charles Gleyre’s studio.



### 5.3.1. The Académie Suisse and the Studio of Charles Gleyre

The Académie Suisse, run by the former model Charles Suisse, was one of so-called “free studios” – studios that did not require any entrance examinations and had no distinctions to confer upon its members (Blunden et al., 1980). In these studios artists were able to work for a modest fee from live models without any supervision (Rewald, 1989). The studio was loosely affiliated to the Academy and located at the rue des Orfevres, in an old and sordid building (Rewald, 1961). There, Courbet once had worked, as well as other successful painters such as Corot and Delacroix, but it was a far cry from the splendor of the École (Roe, 2007; Rewald, 1961).

By 1860 Claude Monet was studying every day at the Académie Suisse after arriving in Paris in 1858. At the time he was a young man who hated school, resenting being trapped inside buildings and being told what to do. As the Académie Suisse offered no formal supervision or instruction, and therefore did not have compulsory attendance or examinations, it suited Monet perfectly (Roe, 2007).

At the studio, another soon to be famous painter also used to drop in – namely Camille Pissarro. Indeed, during the evenings Pissarro frequently visited the Académie Suisse to sketch from live models. Soon he befriended Monet in whom he immediately discovered a kindred soul (Rewald, 1989:16). In 1861 Pissarro heard of an artist who was mocked by all the others – a strange, clumsy, and paranoid man with a unique way of painting. His name was Paul Cézanne and he only came in during the mornings, explaining why Pissarro had not yet met him (Roe, 2007).

It was due to the free atmosphere at the Académie Suisse, which brought many visitors from the world of art, that made Cézanne able to pursue his goal to become a professional painter – but not in the way one might think. Among those visiting the Académie Suisse was Édouard Manet's friend Antoine Guillemet, who liked Cézanne's work well enough to contact Cézanne's father Louis-Auguste (a wealthy hat manufacturer who did not appreciate his son's wish to become a painter) to ensure him that his son indeed had talent. This led to Louis-Auguste paying a visit to Paris to arrange his son's affairs, even providing him with a small stipend on the condition that he should eventually enroll at the École (Blunden et al., 1980).

However, it is not certain if Cézanne ever tried to enroll at the École, as he already had great contempt towards the establishment. But, at the Académie Suisse he found the company and models he liked (Ibid.). After a tip received from another student, Pissarro made a special daytime visit to the Académie Suisse to get a glimpse of Cézanne and soon they were friends (Roe, 2007). Cézanne would never forget the encouragement offered by Pissarro during his first years as an alien in Paris (Rewald, 1989).

Shortly after befriending Pissarro, Monet was called into the army for two years. Upon returning 1862 his father ordered him to study under a teacher if he was to continue to receive financial support (Farrell, 2001; Champa et al., 1990). He thus went to his cousin and mentor Toulmouche for advice and showed him a still life of a kidney and a small dish of butter. Toulmouche admitted, "It's good, but it's tricky! You must go to Gleyre. Gleyre is the master of all of us. He'll teach you to do a picture" (Rewald, 1961:70) and, since Charles Gleyre also had a reputation of being liberal and supporting diverse styles, Monet applied to his studio (Farrell, 2001; Champa et al., 1990). Gleyre's reputation had diminished after Napoleon's overthrow, but he was still a respected teacher (Roe, 2007). His studio provided the students with the traditional basics: a place in which to draw from professional models and to receive occasional criticism from the master (when he was present). But, it was also a place for practicing amateur theatricals when he was not around (Champa et al., 1990). However, despite the informal atmosphere in his studio it was considered more academic than that of Académie Suisse's (Roe, 2007).

Located at rue Notre Dame des Champs, between the boulevard Montparnasse and the boulevard Raspail, it was a lively and popular studio hosting thirty to forty students (Ibid.). Here, Monet almost immediately was accepted into an already formed group of friends comprised by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley, and Frédéric Bazille. Together they formed a group of "chums" who kept themselves apart from the other students at Gleyre – a group that eventually would constitute the core of Impressionism (Farrell, 2001; Rewald, 1961).

Bazille was a tall and dignified young man and the son of upper-middle-class parents who supported his artistic interest on the condition that he continued to study

at medical school (Farrell, 2001). He was the one who provided the group with much needed financial resources (especially Monet) during the yearly stages of their careers, as their paintings were yet to provide them with any real income. Indeed, "Richer than his friends, he helped them as much as he could, giving them shelter, buying their canvases, even placing his scanty medical experience at their service..." (Schneider, 1969:85).

Bazille saw himself as a beginner and truly admired Gleyre, relishing the occasional praise offered by him. Monet, on the other hand, seems to have felt that he was superior to the other students and did not actually need the formal education offered by Gleyre (Champa et al., 1999). Within this collaborative circle they eventually paired up, Monet with Bazille and Renoir with Sisley (Farrell, 2001). Until 1870, when war broke out between France and Prussia (a war that ended Bazille's life), Monet and Bazille struggled together, painted side by side, and posed for one another to forge their artistic identities (Champa et al., 1999). Also, "During their seven-year friendship, they shared a succession of Paris studios, which functioned variously as showrooms for their paintings, meeting places for sympathetic colleagues, and laboratories for their explorations of painting" (Ibid.:11). As it were, the groups' confidence in Gleyre's methods had gradually waned and they had instead started to go to the Louvre to study the masters (Rewald, 1961). Looking back, Renoir stated that Gleyre had been "of no help to his pupils," but at least deserved credit for "leaving them pretty much to their own devices" (Ibid.:73).

### **5.3.2. Manet and Degas Meet**

Éduard Manet was from a rich family. His father Auguste was a judge and owned 150 acres of land in Gennevilliers, north of Paris. His mother, Eugénie, had ties to the Swedish royal family with Charles XIY, King of Sweden, being her godfather (Schneider, 1969). Early, Manet's father told him that he was to become a lawyer, but Manet was never a good student and was reported being easily distracted, slightly frivolous, and not very studious by his headmaster (Ibid.). Indeed, Manet hated school and announced 1848, to his father's rage, that he wanted to become a painter

and not a lawyer. A year after his announcement his father unwillingly accepted his son's wish and suggested that he should sign up at the *École* (where Auguste had friends who would make things easy). But, once again Manet defied his father and instead opted to study under Thomas Couture in his studio in 1850, at the age of 18 (Ibid.).

His schooling under Couture lasted for nine years – years filled with friction between Manet and his teacher. Their relationship ended with the first ever painting Manet sent to the Salon, *The Absinthe Drinker* (1858-1859), as Couture sarcastically told Manet “The only drunkard is you.” whereupon Manet in anger broke off all relations with him. The painting was never exhibited at the Salon, although Delacroix voted for its admission (Ibid.).

As it were, Manet started painting without any tutoring in his own studio. But also at the Louvre, where artists had congregated for centuries to study and copy the huge amount of paintings it exhibited (Champa et al., 1999; Roe, 2007; Rewald, 1961). Indeed, the Louvre offered a healthy counterbalance to the teachings at the *École* for many painters of Manet's generation. It was a place where they were “...free to choose their own masters, could erase the traces of their one-sided education and find in the works of the past a guidance congenial to their own longings” (Rewald, 1961:75). One day, studying at the Louvre, Manet met Edgar Degas. Just as Manet, Degas had by 1863 become just as disillusioned with the *École* and the Salon and was now painting on his own (Roe, 2007). Manet, at this time more adventurous and better known, found his peer in Degas, both socially and artistically. Soon he invited Degas to join him and a group of bohemian friends who used to meet in the cafés of Les Batignolles – a nondescript district (now renamed Avenue de Clichy) between the popular Montmartre and the fashionable Parc Monceau (Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Schneider, 1969).

### **5.3.3. Café Guerbois and Café Nouvelle Athènes**

The group of friends that Manet used to meet at the cafés on Grande Rue des Batignolles, was the one comprised by Monet, Bazille, Renoir, and Sisley. As it were,

two of Monet's paintings had hung alongside Manet's *Olympia* during the 1865 Salon, resulting in several attendees being confused by the similarities of the two names. Before knowing what was happening, Manet was receiving compliments for Monet's work and was not amused (Farrell, 2001). However, after a while Manet decided to investigate who Monet was and sent him an invitation to meet at the Café de Bade, located at Rue des Batignolles. Monet brought with him Bazille, Renoir, and Sisley, and Manet later introduced them to Degas (Roe, 2007).

Though the young painters still had not found an artistic common ground, they soon found a common meeting place – the Café Guerbois, also a café on Rue des Batignolles. It was a large, barnlike café, located close to Manet's studio and home, decorated in a contemporary style (i.e. Empire) with marble-topped tables, gilded mirrors, and island hat-stand (Blunden et al., 1980; Schneider, 1969).

Next door the lively restaurant of Père Lathuille exerted a magnetic attraction on the wenches and blades of the neighborhood: across the street was an art-supply store. All this was more than enough incentive for the young writers and painters to set up headquarters around the marble-top tables of the Guerbois. (Schneider, 1969: 81)

Here, in the first room of the café, Manet had two tables permanently reserved for him and his friends, and the group met there every Thursday from five o'clock (Blunden et al., 1980). To these gatherings Cézanne and his childhood friend Émile Zola (an author who had recently become a Salon reviewer) sometimes paid a visit. Zola was intrigued by the group of friends at the Guerbois and shortly thereafter visited Manet's studio – a visit that had a deep impression on Zola in regards to the man Manet and his talent. Subsequently he wrote an article devoted to Manet, going so far as predicting that "M. Manet's place in the Louvre is marked out, like that of Courbet, like that of any artist of original and strong temperament" (Rewald, 1961:143f). In his next article, he also gave high praise to Monet, describing him as "...a delicate and strong interpreter, who knows how to convey each detail without falling into dryness" (Ibid.:144). Zola became the mouthpiece of the group of friends in the press and their ardent defender (Ibid.). Cézanne, however, was not too fond of these gatherings, as he did not like the animated atmosphere at the café nor the people

there. "All those people are salauds ... They are as well-dressed as notaries", Cézanne exclaimed, referring to Manet in particular (Blunden et al., 1990:73). Despite this, when Cézanne occasionally did turn up at the café, in his filthy blue trousers, he would find his good friend Pissarro there, willing to talk to him (Roe, 2007).

But these men were not the only famous artists drawn to the café that also saw visitors such as Duranty, the Goncourt brothers, Scholderer, Whistler, Stevens, Baudelaire, Cabaner, Castagnary, Nadar, Daudet, Gambetta, and Gautier, to name a few (Blunden et al., 1980; Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Schneider, 1969). At the Guerbois the artists would meet over a glass of beer and socialize when it had become too dark to work in the studios.

Their discussions touched on all the problems that preoccupied the new generation, refractory to artistic and even social conventions. The abuses of the Emperor or the inefficiency of his Director of Fine Arts and the capricious judgments of the Salon juries were debated with the same eagerness as the latest articles by Zola, as the masters of the past and the fame of certain contemporaries, the importance of the recent "discovery" of Japanese prints, the role of shadows or the use of bright colors. (Rewald, 1989:18)

To be sure, at the Guerbois they never grew tired of debating the merits of great masters such as Delacroix and Ingres; the state control over the arts; the control exercised by the Salon and by its outdated and prejudicial juries; the police censorship of journalism and literature; and painting techniques (Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Blunden et al., 1980; Roe, 2007). In regards to painting techniques, Japanese prints was, as mentioned, one of the subjects of interest to the artists – a (for them) new style that they had been able to study during the 1867 World's Fair (Rewald, 1961). Out of the group of painters, Degas showed the greatest interest in it, being impressed by how their principal subjects were often placed off-center, their subtle use of line, their daring foreshortenings, and their decorative qualities (Ibid.). Monet and Pissarro also admired the technical accomplishments in Japanese prints, especially the shadows applied in them. At the Guerbois, the subject of shadows was thus a

frequent topic of discussion, as it constituted one of the painters' main problems. Manet, for example, argued that, for him:

...light appeared with such unity that a single tone was sufficient to convey it and that it was preferable, even though apparently crude, to move abruptly from light to shadow than to accumulate things which the eye doesn't see and which not only weaken the strength of the light but enfeeble the color scheme of the shadows, which it is important to concentrate on. (Ibid.:209)

But the other painters in the group who had already worked out-of-doors, objected to Manet's manner of dividing a subject into merely lighted and shadowed areas, as their experience with nature had thought them otherwise (Ibid.). Other discussions were however more radical, as when Pissarro once suggested that they ought to “burn down the Louvre” to get rid of all the past traditions and create art more closely linked to the present time – an idea born out of the discussions regarding whether the heritage of the past was considered harmful for the artists who wanted to build an artistic world of their own (Rewald, 1989; Rewald, 1961). Luckily the Louvre was not burned to the ground, but the discussions held at the café were indeed heated at times as opinions from artists of various backgrounds were exchanged. To be sure, the artists' views differed greatly, making sure tempers frayed. For example, Manet was, despite his background, an ardent republican, while Pissarro's socialism bordered on anarchy (Roe, 2007). Furthermore, Manet did not appreciate discussion or contradiction of his views, sometimes leading to violent arguments. One time such a discussion even resulted in a duel between Manet and the journalist Duranty, with Zola acting as second for the painter. Although Duranty was slightly wounded during the duel, the two became the best of friends that same evening (Rewald, 1961). But the hefty discussions and arguments at the Café Guerbois were to have fruitful results, as from them the art form soon to go by the name of Impressionism developed (Blunden et al., 1980). Monet recalls:

Nothing could be more interesting, than these causeries with their perpetual clash of opinions. They kept our wits sharpened, they encouraged us with stores of enthusiasm

that for weeks and weeks kept us up, until the final shaping of the idea was accomplished. From them we emerged with a firmer will, with our thoughts clearer and more distinct. (Rewald, 1961:197)

Indeed, there is no doubt that the young painters left the café gatherings with an encouraging feeling, with their ideas clarified by the discussions and their willpower strengthened, as they felt sustained by their friends (Rewald, 1989). Especially Monet, who needed the Café Guerbois to overcome his feeling of isolation, which emerged during his retreats in the country (Rewald, 1961). There, Monet and the other painters

...found directions for their efforts as well as stimulating comradeships. And comradeship is invaluable since courage and will-power are not always enough in the tracing of new roads. To feel oneself in harmony with others, to be convinced of participating in a 'movement' gives added strength. (Rewald, 1961:30)

This was crucial as the Salon jury, at some point, rejected most of them. Thus, the solidarity to one another was one of the key things making them stick together in the face of almost universal hostility. As Manet put it in a letter to his friend Fantini-Latour:

I Believe, that if we would stick together and, above all, not lose courage, it would be possible to react against this mediocre world, whose only strength lies in its unity. (Schneider, 1969:88)

Although being widely divergent in character and conceptions, the friends at the café nevertheless constituted a group. Their strong belief in each other and of the works they created made them confident that they would conquer the latent hostility of the public, if only they were able to exhibit their paintings. And, since it was the Salon jury that prevented them from approaching the public with their art, discussions at the café started to evolve around the idea of exhibiting outside the Salon (Rewald, 1961). Although their first attempt were abandoned in 1867 due to lack of funds, their goal of staging a exhibition on their own would be achieved in 1874, but by then they had



switched the Café Guerbois for another stronghold – the *Nouvelle Athènes*.

As it were, Café Guerbois increasingly grew in popularity, becoming a popular place for wedding parties and other celebrations. The artists who met there were not fond of this development, as they could barely here themselves speak anymore (Roe, 2007). Thus, Guerbois was superseded by another café – the Nouvelle Athènes – as the artists' meeting place (Ibid.). It was located in the Place Pigalle and became known as the Café of the Intransigents, after the Impressionists had chosen it as their meeting place at the time of their first group exhibition in 1874 (Blunden et al., 1980). The writer George Moore recalls:

With what strange, almost unnatural clearness do I see and hear – hear the white face of that *café*, the white nose of that block of houses, stretching up to the Place, between two streets ... I can hear the glass door of the *café* grate on the sand as I open it. I can recall the smell of every hour. In the morning that of eggs frizzling in butter, the pungent cigarette, coffee and bad cognac; at five o'clock the fragrant odour of absinthe; and soon after the steaming soup ascends from the kitchen; and as the evening advances, the mingled smells of cigarettes, coffee, and weak beer. A partition, rising a few feet or more over the hats, separates the glass front from the main body of the *café*. The usual marble tables are there, and it is there we sat and aestheticized till two o'clock in the morning. (Moore, 1917:86)

Here the artist once again gathered around small marble tables and discussed painting, writing, politics, and the merits of realism; and here, just as in the Café Guerbois, Manet reserved two tables for him and his friends (Roe, 2007:116). Georges Rivière emphasizes the café's importance, as he sees how

The habitués of the Nouvelle Athenes, as they were in 1874 and later, formed the first sympathetic public that the Impressionists had met; from there was launched the propaganda that was to provide them with a phalanx of partisans. (Blunden et al., 1980:169)

## 6. Analysis

In this chapter I will answer the research questions of this study by applying the analytical tools, provided in the theoretical chapter, on the presented data on France, Paris and the Impressionists. By answering the questions I aim to show that creative collaboration emerges within the boundaries of several places positioned on different levels abstract and physical levels, with each of them affecting creativity in different ways. Thus, it is only when we combine the different ways that each of these places contribute to creative collaboration, that we are able to make any conclusions in regards to the impact *place* has had on the creative outcome of a collaboration.

### 6.1. How Did France and its Inherent Political Structure Contribute to the Emergence of the Impressionists During the Latter Half of the 19th Century?

A given nation and its ruling state always plays a part in the making of art works, as it has monopoly on making the laws of production and distribution of art within its borders (Becker, 2008). Moreover, the state also has interests in regards to the arts – interests that as such can greatly affect the creative activities of artists (Ibid.). Using these theoretical assumptions as a background I aim to analyze how the interests of the French state affected the artists that worked and lived within the borders of France. By doing so I will ultimately be able to answer my first research question.

The state of France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw art as means of acquiring legitimation, power, and becoming one of Europe's leading powers. Art was regarded as an essential symbolic exposition of power and the French state did as such have a great interest in the production of it – an interest that favored some, but far from all, artists residing within its borders. Becker (2008) sees how the state can nurture its interests by directly intervening in the activities of the artists, either by openly supporting artistic work it approves, or discourage, suppress, or censor work that it

considers inimical to its interests. Indeed, the French state was able to directly intervene in the creative production of art mainly through the state funded and controlled Académie des Beaux-Arts (the Academy), a section of the Institut de France, that was put in place to censor and nurture French art (see White & White, 1993; Roe, 2007; Rewald, 1961, 1989).

Through the Academy the state could control and support to artists by funding training institutions and exhibition spaces. The Academy (i.e. the state) controlled the education of artists through the state funded *École des Beaux-Arts*, at which members of the Academy taught new generations of artists the favored traditional methods (Bellony-Rewald, 1976). The artists that graduated from the *École* was further supported by the state in various ways by offering them state commissions, purchasing their works, and awarding them Salon prize medals accompanied with cash (Galenson & Jensen, 2002). The Salons were large-scale art exhibitions with mass popular appeal and international significance. They were so-called mega-events (Roche, 2000) of their time (arranged by the Academy and funded by the state) that attracted rich Frenchmen, artists and foreign buyers (Higonnet, 2005). At the time, the Salon was the only legitimate arena for the artists to exhibit their work if they were to succeed as artists in France. As such, the state was able to control which artists that was to be successful, and which that was not – resulting in what Becker (2008) terms ‘censorship by support’. Indeed, the French state did not directly forbid artist to produce whatever work they wished, but since it controlled the only legitimate place to exhibit the artists had to “...take into account as a constraint what the government will and won’t support” (Becker, 2008:184).

Despite the harsh artistic environment the state provided the artists in France, the Academy, the *École*, and the Salon constituted an art system that increased artistic production and raised the artistic standards in the country, in turn attracting cosmopolitan elites and thousands of artists from all over the world (White & White, 1993) – with the Impressionists being no exceptions. Certainly, it was the art system that put the future Impressionists in proximity of each other as it constituted the only way to succeed as an artist in France at the time. But, since none of the Impressionists graduated from the *École*, they did not receive any support from the state. Moreover,

they were frequently rejected (although with some exemptions) by the Salon jury due to how they were not “molded” into artists that produced their works according to the traditional methods that the state favored. As such, they were neither supported by the state, nor able to show their works to the public at the only legitimate exhibition at the time – something that needless to say frustrated the future Impressionists and made them search for other ways to succeed.

The analysis of the French state's interest in the production of arts allows me to answer research question number one: How did France and its inherent political structure contribute to the emergence of the Impressionists during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

The interest the French state had in regards to the arts caused them to intervene in the production and distribution of art works within the borders of France. The state funded and controlled Académie des Beaux-Arts, École des Beaux-Arts, and Salon constituted an art system that offered the only way to succeed as an artist in France at the time – contributing to the emergence of the Impressionists by putting them in proximity of each other (due to how they all wanted to be successful painters).

But through the art system the state was also able to support artists that painted according to the favored traditional methods, and suppress those who did not. Since none of the Impressionists graduated from the École (and thus did not paint according to the traditional methods), they were suppressed by often being rejected to exhibit their works at the Salons. This also contributed to their emergence as they had to find other ways to succeed as painters outside of the art system put in place by the state – something that eventually would result in the arrangement of their first independent exhibition.

The answers provided for the first research question furthermore emphasize the importance of acknowledging the impact macro level places and their inherent place properties (the state) can have on creative collaboration.

## 6.2. How Did the Physical, Social, and Socioeconomic Environment in (and around) Paris During the Latter Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Contribute to the Emergence of the Impressionist?

The Paris in which the Impressionists lived during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century possessed all three ingredients that jointly contribute to an increased chance of urban creativity. The reconstruction of the city center included the demolition of the inner city wall (making the former suburbs Auteuil, Belleville, and Montmartre more integrated) and the construction of more standardized apartment buildings (Roe, 2007). This, in combination with the large population that the city held, allowed for more chances of human interaction and communication to occur. Indeed, people were densely *concentrated* at certain locations – most notably in the city center – but also in the annexed districts such as La Villette, Vaugirard, and Grenelle, which provided innumerable places of sociability for the thousands of less affluent woman and men who had been pushed out from the city center (Gould, 1995).

Moreover, Paris during this time was a meso level place of *diversity*. The modernization of the city attracted the commercial industrial classes, the bourgeois, artists, and cosmopolitans from all over the world – making it the ‘capital of Europe’ (Clark, 1986) – while at the same time hosting a large number of less affluent individuals yet to be pushed out to the city’s peripheries. Certainly, Paris was a city crowded by a mix of people of all classes (Roe, 2007).

Finally, Paris in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an *instable* city. Undoubtedly because of the Franco-Prussian war, but also because of the major reconstruction of the city that converted it from the preindustrial and semi-provincial capital it previously was into a modern megalopolis segregated by wealth (Schneider, 1969; Gould, 1995).

In sum, the Paris in which the Impressionists lived possessed each of the three ingredients that Hospers (2003) argues increase the chance of urban creativity. As such, the city provided them with a creative context that enabled them to break from

the traditional and ingrown patterns of thinking that ruled the art world at the time. However, this only answers parts of the research question, adding to the importance of analyzing the impact specific resources had on the Impressionists.

*Human resources* include people with certain skills, experience, and expertise within a field present at the place – people that may provide others with knowledge as well as attract other like-minded individuals to the place (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). But what human resources did Paris possess that benefited the emergence of the Impressionists? First off, the vast array of famous painters residing and working in the city provided a “pull effect” for other artists to go there in search of knowledge – with the Impressionists being among those artists. However, as a more direct example of how human resources contributed to the Impressionists creative endeavors, their relationship with the 'masters of Barbizon' serves well. Some of the painters of the Barbizon, in particular Diaz and Corot, offered the young painters advice of various sorts (Rewald, 1961). Diaz suggested that they ought to paint with brighter colors, while Corot advised them to always go over in the studio what they had painted outside during the day; but above all, as he told Pissarro, study values “...for that is the basis of everything, and in whatever way one may feel and express oneself, one cannot do good painting without it” (Ibid.:101). Undoubtedly, several other examples of how human resources contributed to the emergence of the Impressionists can be found in the literature of the group, like how the art-dealer Durand-Ruel helped them transfer their works to the American market (see White & White, 1993; Roe, 2007), but adding them all would simply make this study too big of a project.

*Material resources* refer to tangible artifacts such as money, equipment, supplies, training facilities, office spaces, and property that a place can provide a movement (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Paris during the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century hosted a great amount of private studios available for the Impressionists to practice painting. But, since these private studios are in this study regarded as micro level places, their importance will be further emphasized when answering the last research question. Still, the Impressionists needed money to gain access to these private studios, as well as to pay for housing, travel and painting equipment. Paris provided the group with

little of such sorts since their paintings were disliked by the public and therefore did not sell very well. The parents of some of the young Impressionists therefore helped them financially since they could not yet make a living on their art. However, when the financial aid provided by their parents eventually dried up, they turned to Bazille (who was from an upper-middle-class family) for money (Schneider, 1969).

*Moral resources* tend to originate outside of a movement and include solidarity support, sympathetic support, legitimacy, and celebrity (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). The Impressionists received very little support, both solidarity and sympathetic, from the Paris community. On the contrary, they were rather disliked by the public due to how they rejected to incorporate the traditional pictorial perspectives, framing devices, and conventional subjects (Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Roe, 2007) – something that agrees with the theoretical assumption that “rebellious” movements have moral disadvantages in comparison with movements that closely mimic institutionally legitimate features (see Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). However, as will be further emphasized in relation to research question number three, the lack of moral resources strengthened the bonds between the Impressionist members as they had to provide each other with the moral support needed to continue their creative endeavors in the face of almost universal hostility (Schneider, 1969). As such, moral resources (or the lack thereof) had a great impact on the Impressionists, providing them with an internal strength that spurred them to continue their creative activities.

The reconstruction of Paris included both the erection of public buildings such as the Opera and public town halls, as well as infrastructural developments in and around the capital (Gould, 1995; DeJean, 2014; King, 2006). The reconstruction thus provided the Impressionists with appropriable *social-organizational resources* – resources created for non-movement purposes that still are available for movement members to use in various ways (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). But how did the Impressionists use these appropriable social-organizational resources? First off, the newly constructed buildings and streets offered the Impressionists creative stimulus (Bellony-Rewald, 1976). For example, Manet was compelled by how the streets were changing as a result of Haussmann's initiative – fascinated by the people whom

Hausmann had not quite been able to force out (Roe, 2007); Renoir was enchanted by the city, which, according to him, was no less charming than a hill by a river or a field of poppies (Rewald, 1961); and Degas found a series subjects, such as musicians, ballet dancers, and little rats, that inspired him at the Opera (Ibid.). Secondly, the improvement of the infrastructure in an around Paris, most notably the railways, enabled the Impressionists to gain access to other kinds of resources (Bellony-Rewald, 1976) – especially various *locational resources*.

Locational resources refer to “...properties inherent to the location that can be enjoyed as a resource for virtually any group in the area without having to be actively mobilized” (Corte, 2013:39). As for locational resources that enabled the creative activity of the Impressionists, the Seine, the Fontainebleau forest, and the climate in and around Paris serve as good examples. The Seine and its slow winding course fascinated the Impressionists as they were devoted to light and movement. It mirrored the changing scenery and lent itself to a number of activities such as boating and dancing in some of the popular café-restaurants along its banks (Bellony-Rewald, 1976) – activities that found their ways onto the canvases of the Impressionists (see paintings such as *Argenteuil Seen from the Small Arm of the Seine* by Monet, 1872, *The Banks of the Seine at Argenteuil* by Manet, 1874, and *Dance in the Garden Moulin La Gallet* by Renoir, 1876). The Fontainebleau forest had, in comparison to the Seine, a similar creative impact on the Impressionists. They were deeply struck by the beauty and authenticity of the forest, its enormous oaks and picturesque rocks (Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Rewald, 1961). As such, just as the Seine, the Fontainebleau forest found itself providing the scenery for a vast number of Impressionist paintings (see paintings such as *The Bodmer Oak, Fontainebleau Forest* by Monet, 1865; *Forest of Fontainebleau* by Bazille, 1865; and *A Young Man in the Forest of Fontainebleau* by Renoir, 1886). Lastly, as Corte (2013) notes in reference to Farrell’s (2001) study on the Impressionists, “...it is safe to further infer that the Impressionists’ style, which emerged from painting outdoor scenes, would not have developed in the same way had they been unable to enjoy the locational resource of Paris’ relatively temperate weather” (Corte, 2013:42). Indeed, the climate in and around Paris made it possible to for the Impressionist to paint out of doors during



long periods of time, in turn allowing them to develop their distinct style and technique.

The conducted analysis of the collected data now allows me to answer the second research question: How did the physical, social, and socioeconomic environment in (and around) Paris during the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist?

The Paris in which the Impressionists lived was concentrated, diverse, and instable – three ingredients that enhance the chance of urban creativity. Thus, the city provided them with a context that allowed them to break from the traditional and ingrown patterns of thinking that ruled the art world at the time. Moreover, Paris and its physical and social environment provided (and withheld) the group with human, material, moral, socio-organizational, and locational resources that enabled the group to develop artistically, continue with their creative endeavors, bond, and develop their distinctive style and technique. The impact Paris had on the Impressionists does in turn show how meso level places can affect the emergence of creative collaborations.

### **6.3. How Did the Cafés, Artistic Studios, and Museums Located in Paris During the Latter Half of the 19th Century Contribute to the Emergence of the Impressionist?**

Cafés and studios are, according to Oberlin and Gieryn (2015), material affordances: "...physical environments that enable the production of distinctive art works, in large measure by bringing to convergence the intersecting lives of school members" (Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015:28). They are micro level places that enhance the chance of unexpected interaction among artist and can be used by groups as gathering places where they can talk and scheme, as well as share ideas and techniques amongst each other. Using these theoretical assumptions as background I now aim to analyze the impact the private studios and cafés had on the emergence of the Impressionists.

The Académie Suisse was a so-called free studio where artists were able to

work for a modest fee from live models without any supervision (Blunden et al., 1980; Rewald, 1989). The free atmosphere at the studio attracted artists from all over France (and the world for that matter) (Blunden et al., 1980), in turn providing them with a place that enhanced the chance for unexpected interaction to occur. Among the artist attracted to the free atmosphere at the Académie Suisse were Monet, Pissarro, and Cézanne. At the Académie Suisse, Monet (who by 1860 studied at there every day) got in contact with Pissarro, and they were soon friends (Rewald, 1989). There, shortly after Monet was called into the army, Pissarro in turn met Cézanne and the two were to develop a strong friendship (Roe, 2007). The Académie Suisse did as such enable some of the future Impressionists to meet for the first time, much because of how it provided them with a place for unexpected interaction to occur, but also because of how its free atmosphere attracted likeminded painters that inevitably would have much in common.

The private studio of Charles Gleyre also provided its students with an informal atmosphere, but it was still more academic than that of Académie Suisse's (Champa et al., 1999; Roe, 2007). However, similarly to the Académie Suisse, it also was a micro level place that enabled some of the future Impressionists to meet for the first time. Indeed, it was at Charles Gleyre's studio where the artists that eventually would constitute the core of the Impressionists befriended each other: Monet (who had returned from the army), Renoir, Sisley, and Bazille. But in contrast to the Académie Suisse, the studio of Charles Gleyre also provided the young artists with some formal education (to the discontent of especially Monet) that undoubtedly aided their artistic development. Moreover, and maybe more importantly, it was while attending the studio of Charles Gleyre that the group eventually grew tired of the more traditional methods and started looking elsewhere for inspiration (Rewald, 1961).

In sum, the Académie Suisse and the studio of Charles Gleyre both provided a free atmosphere that attracted painters likely to have much in common, with the future Impressionists being no exception. The studios thus contributed to the emergence of the Impressionist by being micro level places where many of the members first came in contact with each other. Moreover, the studio of Charles Gleyre also contributed to their emergence by being the place where the group

eventually grew tired of the more traditional methods and started looking elsewhere for inspiration – something that in turn would have a significant impact on their style and technique.

Sayers (2009) sees how cafés can be places where members of groups or organizations meet to strengthen their relationships and articulate common goals, as well as places for ‘idea work’ to be done – something that indeed proved to be the case in regards to the impact the Café Guerbois and the café Nouvelle Athènes had on the emergence of the Impressionists.

The Café Guerbois was favorably located next door to the lively restaurant Père Lathuille and faced an art-supply store located across the street – providing enough incentive for the future Impressionists (along with many other artists) to make it their gathering place (Schneider, 1969). It was at the Café Guerbois that the group first came in contact with the journalist Zola through his childhood friend Cézanne. Zola was to become an important friend of the group – functioning as their mouthpiece to the public and defending them in the press (Rewald, 1961).

The café was however not just a micro level place for the future Impressionists to form alliances with individuals that could help them in their quest of being successful painters, but also a place for them to discuss various matter that also contributed to their emergence. Indeed, the café, existing outside of the formal institutions and organizational forms (Törnqvist, 2004), enabled them to talk freely about their discontent regarding the states control over the arts, the Salon and its outdated and prejudicial juries, and the police censorship of journalism and literature (Rewald, 1989; Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Blunden et al. 1980; Roe, 2007) – making it an arena to air their frustration toward the establishment.

The Café Guerbois also constituted a place where the future Impressionists was able to discuss techniques, new artistic discoveries, and exchange ideas. For example, their discussions relating to the (at the time) newly discovered style of Japanese prints provided them with valuable creative stimulus, especially in regards to the different views the group members held concerning the use and application of shadows in art (Rewald, 1961).

Furthermore, Café Guerbois and the café Nouvelle Athènes served as places for the group to plan their first independent exhibition. Although their first attempt was abandoned in 1867 (while still using Café Guerbois as their main gathering place) due to the lack of funds, their second attempt (planned at the Nouvelle Athènes) was to have fruitful results, as they eventually were able to arrange their career decisive exhibition in 1874 (Rewald, 1961; Roe, 2007).

Finally, with cafés being places that enable a relaxation of the hierarchical status positions among its visitors (Sayers, 2009), Café Guerbois was able to strengthen the social ties between the future Impressionists in spite of their differing socio-economical backgrounds and political views. Surely, their discussions were truly heated at times, but there is no doubt that the young painters left the café gatherings with an encouraging feeling, with their ideas clarified by the discussions and their willpower strengthened, as they felt sustained by their friends (Rewald, 1989). Indeed, although being widely divergent in character and conceptions, the friends at the café nevertheless constituted a group (Rewald, 1961). It provided them with a place to convey their strong belief in each other and of the works they created – a vital aspect that provided them with the confidence needed to pursue their creative goals.

But it was not only material affordances that constituted micro level places with major impact on the Impressionists. Indeed, institutional affordances also played a part in their emergence. Oberlin and Gieryn (2015) see how institutional affordances, such as museums, universities, and galleries, have more of an impact on the eventual success and recognition that a painter may achieve, rather than on the process of painting itself. They attract established art-world gatekeepers and augment the artistic “status” of the city, in turn increasing the chance for new artists to get noticed. The Louvre was (and still is) certainly an example that supports Oberlin and Gieryn’s theoretical assumption. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it undoubtedly contributed to the heightened artistic status of France and Paris as it had for centuries functioned as a “magnet” for artists, including the Impressionists, looking to study and copy the huge amount of paintings it exhibited (Champa et al., 1999; Roe, 2007; Rewald,

1961). But I argue that it also had an impact on the Impressionists similar to that of the private studios and cafés. Indeed, it was while studying at the Louvre Manet met Degas for the first time, proving that it was also a place for unexpected interaction to occur. Furthermore, the Louvre was a place where the Impressionists were "...free to choose their own masters, could erase the traces of their one-sided education and find in the works of the past a guidance congenial to their own longings" (Rewald, 1961:75). As such, it was a place that enabled them to explore new styles and techniques – spurring creative activity.

This analysis now puts me in a position to answer research question number three: How did the cafés, artistic studios, and museums located in Paris during the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist?

The cafés, artistic studios, and museums located in Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the emergence of the Impressionist in a number of ways, all being equally important. They were places that: (1) enabled them to get in contact with each other; (2) contributed to the process that saw them reject the traditional methods and seek creative stimulus elsewhere; (3) enabled them to form alliances with key actors that would help them in their creative endeavors; (4) allowed them to freely discuss their contempt towards the state and the art system; (5) served as a meeting places to discuss techniques, new artistic discoveries, and exchange ideas that would come to influence their distinct style; (6) offered them a location to plan their future creative endeavors; and (7) enabled them to strengthen the social ties amongst each other. In sum, the cafés, artistic studios, and museums of Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the Impressionists' formation, creative activity, distinctive style and technique, articulation of common goals, and cohesiveness. Certainly, if it were not for the cafés, artistic studios, and museums, there would not have been any Impressionists – emphasizing the importance of acknowledging the impact micro level places have on creative collectives.

## 7. Conclusion

In the beginning of the study I pointed out that the answers to *why* and *how* places influence collaborative creativity have been many, much due to the fact that the boundaries of places are both analytically and phenomenologically elastic (Gieryn, 2000).

As such, the majority of studies explaining how place (and its inherent surroundings) influence creative activity have delimited place by, for example, presenting it as: the work place (Amabile, 1977; Hemlin et al., 2008); universities, schools, and other institutions (Farrell, 2013; Frickel & Gross, 2005); islands (Parker & Hackett, 2012); cities (Lee & Rodríguez-Pose, 2014; Farrell, 2001; Corte, 2013; Grandadam et al., 2013; Oberlin & Gieryn, 2015; Sgourev, 2013); and regions (Boix et al., 2014; Marrocu & Paci, 2012). However, these studies have overlooked or failed to clarify that places themselves are located within the boundaries of other places, making them inseparable if one are to understand the effect *place* has had on a creative activity or outcome.

The aim of this study was as such to show that creative collaboration emerges within the boundaries of several places positioned on different levels abstract and physical levels, with each of them affecting creativity in different ways. Thus, it is only when we combine the different ways that each of these places contribute to creative collaboration, that we are able to make any conclusions in regards to the impact *place* has had on the creative outcome of a collaboration. In order to fulfill my aim I divided the concept of place into three abstract and physical levels of place – macro, meso, and micro – and applied the perspective on the historical example of the rise of the Impressionist in Paris, France during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dismemberment of the concept of place allowed me to pose three research questions that, when answered, together would serve as an *example* that supported the aim of the study. These three research questions were:

1. How did France and its inherent political structure contribute to the emergence of the Impressionists during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

2. How did the physical and social environment in (and around) Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist?
3. How did the cafés, artistic studios, and museums located in Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the emergence of the Impressionist?

By the means of qualitative historical document analysis/research I was able to gather data from sources such as biographies (Rewald, 1989; Schneider, 1969) and prosopographies of the Impressionists (Rewald, 1961; Bellony-Rewald, 1976; Blunden et al., 1980; Roe, 2007), a memoir (Moore, 1917[1886]), a study on the Impressionists (Farrell, 2001), a report of the art market in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Galenson & Jensen, 2002) and historical works on France and Paris (White & White, 1993; Clark, 1986; King, 2006; DeJean, 2014; Gould, 1995) that, when combined, provided me with both detailed information regarding the group, as well as with general historical knowledge about France and Paris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century – two aspects that proved to be vital in my documentation and analysis of the example.

Through the application of various theories, each dealing with the impact places can have on collaborative creativity, I was able to analyze the gathered data and, in turn, answer the study's research questions. My findings showed, in sum, that: (1) the political structure in France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the emergence of the Impressionists by putting them in proximity of each other, as well as by giving them no alternative than to find other ways to succeed as painters outside of the art system put in place by the state; (2) the Paris in which the Impressionists lived provided them with a context that spurred them to break from the traditional and ingrown patterns of thinking that ruled the art world at the time, as well as with a number of resources that enabled the group to develop artistically, continue with their creative endeavors, bond, and develop their distinctive style and technique; (3) the cafés, artistic studios, and museums of Paris during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the Impressionists' formation, creative activity, distinctive style and technique, articulation of common goals, and cohesiveness.

Each of my findings showed that places positioned on different abstract and physical levels contributed to emergence of the Impressionists in different, but

equally important, ways. Moreover, by presenting these findings I have achieved the aim of the study by showing how: it is only when we combine the different ways that each of these places contribute to creative collaboration that we are able to make any conclusions in regards to the impact *place* has had on its formation and creative output. This perspective serves as my contribution to the field of creative research; and, with creativity being one of the key factors that drive civilization forward, any contributions that improve our understanding of the phenomenon is important.

## 7.1. Suggestions for Future Research

The impact place has on creativity still holds many questions to be answered. Even though I found that places positioned on different abstract and physical levels affected the emergence of the Impressionists in different ways, does not mean that a given place always has had the same impact on other examples of creative collaboration. No, my findings are, at least for now, only applicable on the Impressionists and are thus not generalizable. But the perspective that I develop, that of looking at places as being positioned on different abstract and physical levels that, when combined, all contribute (in different ways) to the actual creative outcome, could on the other hand be generalizable. As such, future research should test the perspective further, not only on known creative collaborations that existed in the past, but also on contemporary cases of creative collaborations through the use of other methodological tools such as in-depth interviews, surveys, or participant observation. For example, qualitative studies (made within the frame of the provided perspective) using in-depth interviews with members of music bands, poetry groups, or/and screenplay writing groups (to name a few alternatives) as data gathering method could possibly provide further knowledge of how several places positioned on separate abstract and physical levels has affected collaborative creativity in different ways. I also encourage researchers to test the perspective further in order to discover the flaws it most certainly possesses, in turn shedding light upon what needs to be refined and further developed in order to make the perspective stronger.



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