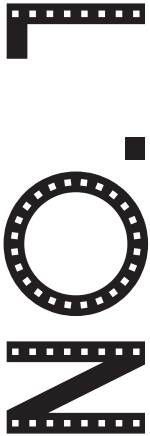


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# Working Papers in Industrial Engineering

## Tensions in Team Creativity: Using the Value Square to Model Team Climate for Creativity

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**HOCHSCHULE DÜSSELDORF (HSD)**

**Tensions in Team Creativity:  
Using the Value Square to  
Model Team Climate for  
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**Working Paper in Industrial Engineering**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper explores the tensions in team creativity. The tensions in team creativity are based on a tension between originality and effectiveness in the standard definition of creativity. To display the tensions in team creativity, the value square ("Wertequadrat") developed by Schulz von Thun (1998) is used which balances a value with its counter-value. The author identifies tensions for cohesion, consensus and conformity. Cohesion is described as a tension between team diversity and team safety, consensus as a tension between constructive controversy and participatory decision-making and conformity as a tension between support for innovation and task orientation. Finally, the connection of individual and team creativity is described as an interplay between solitary and interactive components.*

*Keywords: Innovation, Creativity, Team Climate*

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## 1 Introduction

*“The online music magazine Pitchfork once wrote that I would collaborate with anyone for a bag of Doritos. This wasn’t intended as a compliment – though, to be honest, it’s not that far from the truth“*  
*David Byrne (2013, p. 189), Rock musician (Talking Heads)*

Mercier & Sperber (2018, p. 330ff.) argue that human reason evolved to enable social interaction. Reason is a faculty that contributes more to argumentation than to rational thinking where humans usually are biased and unreliable. A group of people can find better solutions than a single individual by combining their different expertise and perspectives through reasoning. So it is hardly surprising for Sawyer (2008, p. 3ff.) to argue that collaboration drives creativity and innovation, and that the lone genius inventor creating everything by himself is largely a myth.

Indeed, a lot of creative work in companies is performed by teams of employees (Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 301, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 366). Companies usually combine employees from different departments and sometimes people from outside the company (e.g. employees from suppliers or customers, consultants) to solve creative problems. Hence, many creativity techniques and tools were designed with a group or team in mind, e.g. brainstorming, six thinking hats or synectics (Ahmed & Shepherd 2010, p. 64ff., Geschka 2013). Team creativity has been neglected by earlier research concerning creativity, but has recently been added to the focus of attention (Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 295).

Creativity of a person is usually defined as “the generation of a product that is judged to be novel and also to be appropriate, useful, or valuable by a suitably knowledgeable social group” (Sawyer 2012, p. 8). The term group or team creativity can be applied when this “product is created by a group, a work team, or an ensemble” (Sawyer 2012, p. 231). On an organizational level the term creativity can be defined as “the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working together in a complex social system” (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin 1993, p. 293).

All these definitions have in common that they include the two opposing criteria of originality and effectiveness. Runco & Jaeger (2012, p. 92) call this bi-partite definition the “standard definition of creativity”. Following the wave-particle duality in physics, one could postulate an originality-effectiveness duality for creativity (Deckert 2016a). The aim of this paper is to describe the tensions of group creativity resulting from the standard definition of creativity.

Thus, the paper focusses on team climate conducive to group or team creativity as the link between individual and corporate creativity in the work environment. For this, in chapter 2 the input-output model of group creativity and innovation by West and colleagues (Stollberger, West, & Sacramento 2019) is described, and team climate is positioned in the context of individual team members and organizational context. After that, the value square by Schulz von Thun (1998) is introduced which will be used to model the tensions. This method has already been successfully applied to describe tensions in individual creativity (Deckert 2015, 2016a, Deckert & Scherer 2013, 2014, 2017), corporate creativity (Deckert 2016b, 2016c, Deckert & Scherer 2013, 2014, 2017) and creative products (Deckert 2016d, 2017b). It is applied to the factors of group creativity according to West and Sacramento (2012) in chapter 4. The conclusion summarizes the key findings and elaborates on how the tensions in group creativity affect companies.

## 2 Work Group Creativity

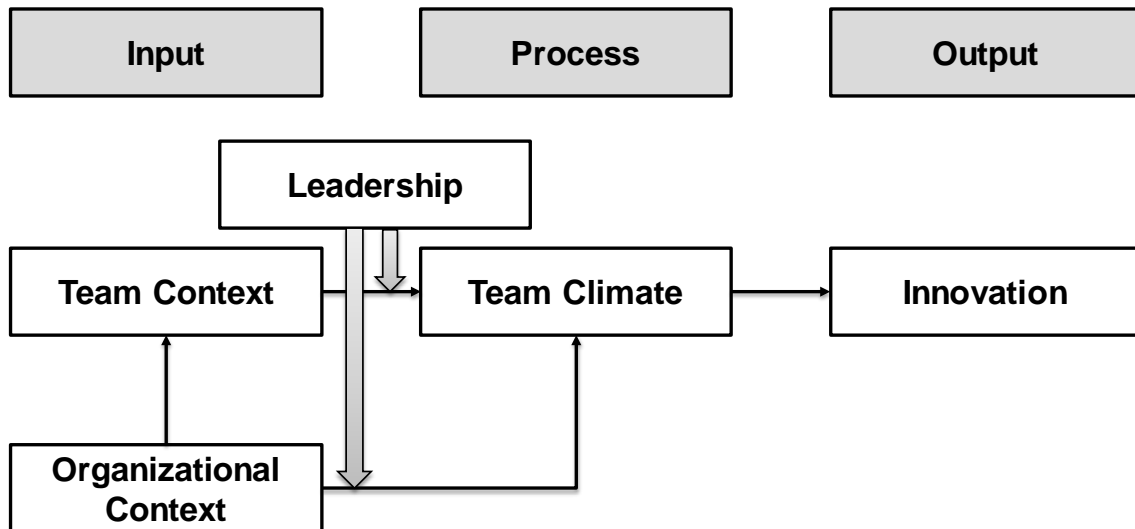
In a strict sense, the terms group and team can be distinguished. While groups can be defined as “collections of individuals focused on a specific goal or task”, teams can be seen as groups that exists over a long period of time in an organizational context (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 328). Since the focus of this paper is not on the duration of a group’s existence, the terms group and team will be used interchangeably.

A main reason for the research in team creativity is that many researchers expect emergent team properties, i.e. collective phenomena beyond the individual characteristics of team members (Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 295). Sawyer (2012, p. 244ff.), for example, observed a phenomenon called “group flow”, which is an extension of the concept of flow in individuals by Csikszentmihalyi (1997, p. 110). Flow is seen as a state of peak experience in creativity and is achieved when the task at hand requires a balance between challenges and skills, has clear goals, provides immediate feedback, and can be done under exclusion of distractions. The flow in creativity leads to a state of deep concentration and an activity, which provides joy for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, p. 110ff.). In group flow Sawyer (2008, p. 43ff., 2012, p. 245) additionally sees factors such as close listening and communication, participative idea generation, familiarity of the group members and a tolerance for failure.

Stollberger, West & Sacramento (2019) developed an input-output-model of group creativity to give an overview over all factors influencing team creativity and innovation. The model comprises team and organizational context as inputs, team climate or processes under process and innovations as output. Furthermore, it includes leadership, which has a moderating role on the influences of team and organizational context (see fig. 1). Team context includes the characteristics of the tasks assigned to the group, the team member characteristics and the group composition as expressed by group diversity and tenure. Organizational context contains factors of organizational culture and climate and external demands. The output comprises the quantity and quality of innovations created by the team (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019).



**Figure 1: Input-Output-Model of Work Group Innovation**



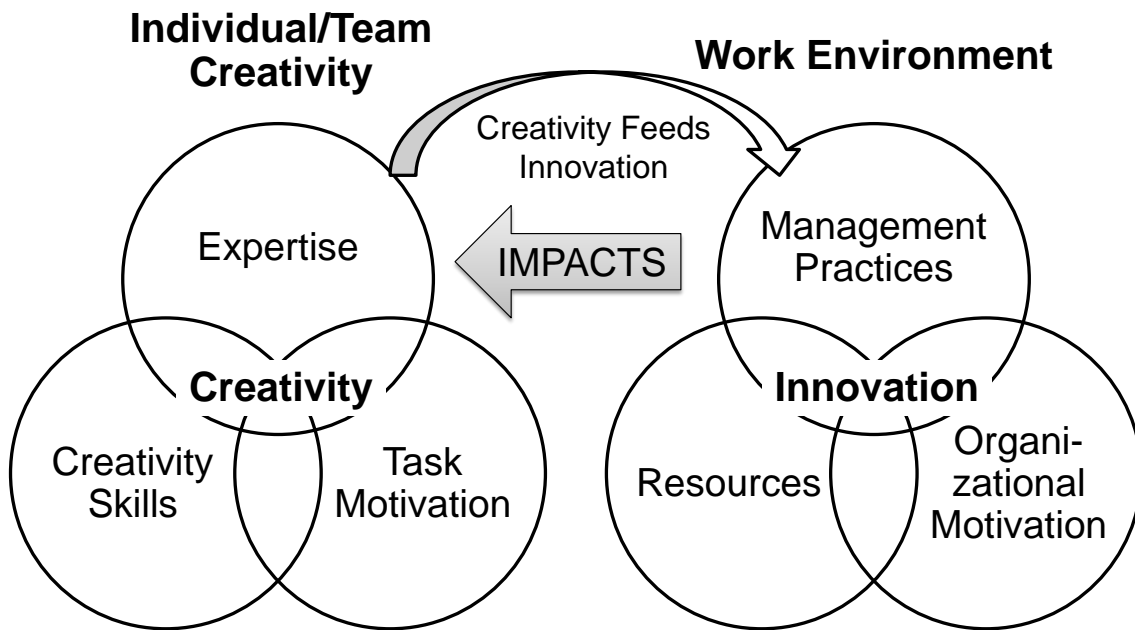
*Source: Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019*

The team processes include the factors of team climate influencing team creativity as identified first by West (1990) and later extended by West & Sacramento (2012, p. 369) which are development of shared objectives, participation, team conflict, support for innovation, reflexivity and safety. This model of team climate is regarded to be of high scientific quality as well as usefulness (Mathisen & Einarsen 2004, p. 136). Team climate and organizational climate are aggregations of individual perceptions of the team respectively organization members (Patterson et al. 2005, p. 380, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 362f.). The main aim of organizational climate is “to understand how employees experience their organizations” (Patterson et al. 2005, p. 379). In this sense, the aim of group or team climate is to understand how employees experience their work groups or teams.

The topic of team climate for creativity can be seen as a link between individual creativity and corporate creativity. The Componential Theory of Organizational Creativity by Amabile and colleagues (Amabile et al. 1996, Amabile 1997) combines individual and organizational creativity (see fig. 2). The model was chosen since it is judged to be the most widely validated model concerning organizational climate for creativity (Mathisen & Einarsen 2004, p. 136, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 364). Individual creativity is composed of expertise, creativity skills and task motivation (Amabile 1997, p. 52ff.). In an earlier version, the model of organizational creativity comprised five categories (Amabile et al. 1996, p. 1159), but these five categories were later re-arranged into the three components organizational motivation, resources and management practices (Amabile 1997,

p. 52ff.). The work environment impacts individual creativity by influencing the components of individual creativity, and individual creativity fosters the innovation activities in a work environment (Amabile 1996, p. 83ff., Amabile 1997, p. 52ff.).

**Figure 2: Componential Theory of Organizational Creativity**



Source: Amabile 1997, p. 53

The impact of organizational climate on corporate creativity can be described by tensions concerning corporate tradition and corporate change for organizational motivation, skills and challenges for work assignment, management by control and management by loss of control for work control as well as organizational efficiency and organizational slack for resources (Deckert 2016b, 2016c, 2017a). Team composition includes the creativity of the individual team members. Individual creativity contains the tensions of expert knowledge and mindfulness for expertise, need for precision and tolerance of ambiguity for creative thinking as well as immersion and detachment for task motivation (Deckert 2015, 2016a). The output of team creativity are creative products. Creative products incorporate tensions concerning typical and challenging design, compatibility and unconventionality as well as simplicity and completeness (Deckert 2016d, 2017b). This paper focusses on the factors of team climate as described by West and colleagues (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012).

### 3 The Value Square

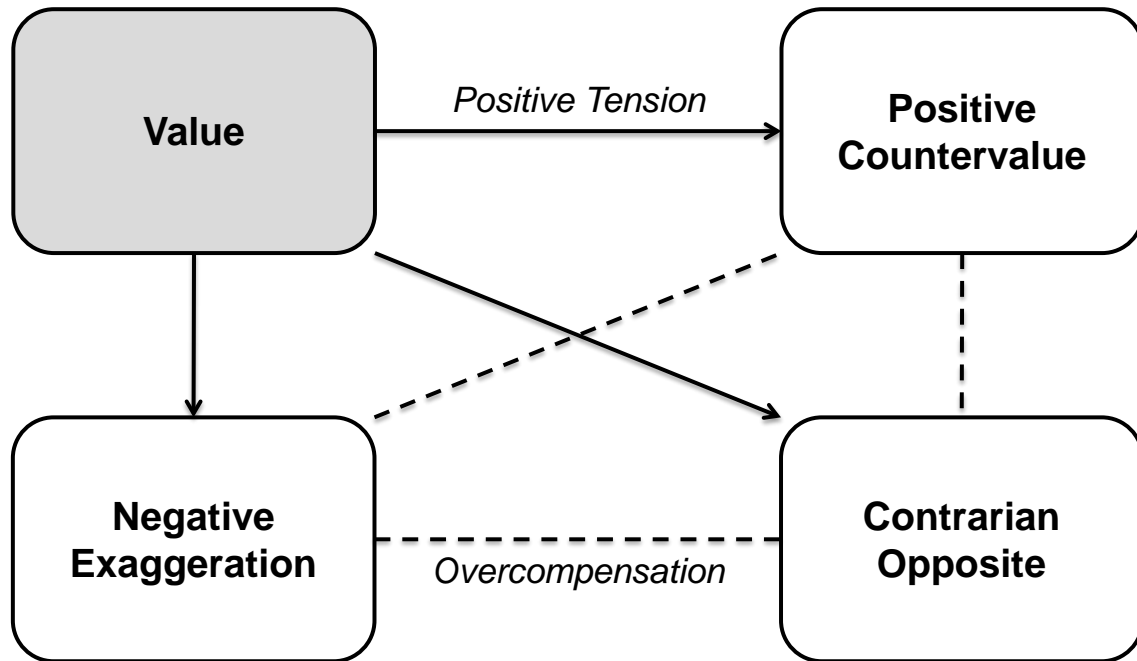
The central idea of the value square is that each positive value has a positive counter-value and that the two positive values need to be balanced. This essentially means that there can be too much of a value, a phenomenon called the too-much-of-a-good-thing effect (TMGT effect) by Pierce & Aguinis (2011, p. 313). The TMGT effect supposes that “beneficial antecedents (e.g. predictor variables) reach inflection points after which their relations with desired outcomes (i.e., criterion variables) cease to be linear and positive. Exceeding these inflection points is always undesirable because it leads either to waste (no additional benefit) or, worse, to undesirable outcomes (e.g., decreased individual or organizational performance)” (Pierce & Aguinis, 2011, p. 315). With regard to creativity, the notion that too much of a good value can be counterproductive is called the “creativity and innovation maximization fallacy” by Anderson, Potocnik & Zhou (2014, p. 1319) which says that “all creativity and innovation is good; and the more, the better”.

The value square (“Wertequadrat”) was developed by Helwig (1967) to describe different characters and was later used by Schulz von Thun (1998) to show dialectical structures in the intervention into communication. The value square not only shows the balance of positive value and positive countervalue. It also shows the negative exaggerations into which the two values can degenerate. A positive value degenerates into its negative exaggeration if it is overemphasized and out of balance with its complementing counter-value (Helwig 1967, p. 65 ff., Schulz von Thun 1998, p. 38 ff.). Schulz von Thun (1998, p. 40, own translation) writes that “in the value square the notion of an optimum ledger has been abandoned and replaced by the notion of a dynamic balance.”

The value square is constructed by first displaying the balance of a positive value and its positive countervalue at the top of the square (see fig. 2). This upper line represents the positive tension of the two complementing values. By moving vertically downwards from one of the positive values on the upper line, one arrives at the negative exaggeration of this value. By moving along the diagonal from one of the two positive values, one arrives at the contrarian opposite. The lower line represents the overcompensation of the negative values. By moving from negative exaggeration to contrarian opposite, one goes from one negative extreme to the other negative extreme (Helwig 1967, p. 65ff., Schulz von Thun 1998, p. 38ff.). A positive developmental path typically leads from a negative exaggeration along the diagonal to the opposite positive value on the upper line. In this way, the trap of overcompensation is avoided. So the value square can be a help to

identify positive developmental paths depending on one's current position (Schulz von Thun 1998, p. 47).

**Figure 3: Value Square**



Source: Schulz von Thun 1998, p.41 (own translation)

#### 4 Factors of Team Climate for Creativity

According to West & Sacramento (2012, p. 367) the main team climate factors for innovation are:

- Clarifying and ensuring commitment to group vision,
- Participative safety and trust,
- Task orientation,
- Support for innovation,
- Participation in decision-making,
- Managing conflict and minority influence constructively and
- Reflexivity

The first four factors are from the four-factor model of team climate for innovation developed by West (1990) and measured by the Team Climate Inventory (TCI) by Anderson & West (1998) mentioned above. The other three factors have been included by West & Sacramento (2012), as these variables also have been shown to influence team creativity and innovation. In this analysis, I also include the variable team diversity from the area of team context, as it has a relation to team safety (see chapter 4.1).

For some authors, a clear vision and shared goals for a group are a *conditio sine qua non* for group creativity (Sawyer 2012, p. 245, Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 367). In general, two types of goals can be distinguished: Performance goals ask for high productivity and should show a negative relation to creativity. Creativity goals ask for high creativity and should have a positive impact. Some studies, indeed, show these results, but sometimes the results are mixed. So, it seems that it is goal commitment rather than goal clarity, which is conducive to creativity, but more research is needed to establish the connection (Oldham & Baer 2012, p. 391ff). Nevertheless, a shared vision is a relevant component in corporate creativity (Amabile 1997, p. 52ff., Robinson & Stern 1998, p. 125). Therefore, the company vision needs to be broken down to the team level, and an appropriate team vision needs to be established as a prerequisite for a team to be creative within an organizational context. As Mercier & Sperber (2018, p. 334) note: "Group discussion is typically beneficial when participants have different ideas and a common goal".

The other factors of team climate have been grouped by the positive tensions existing between these factors as described in scientific literature. In this way, three main positive tensions could be identified:

- A tension between team diversity and team safety concerning the cohesion of the team,
- A tension between constructive controversy and participatory decision-making concerning the consensus of a team, and
- A tension between task orientation and support for innovation concerning the conformity of chosen approaches.

#### **4.1 Tension Concerning Cohesion**

The tension concerning cohesion describes in how far a team develops a shared identity and contains the two factors team diversity and team safety (see fig. 4). Team diversity consists of functional or task-oriented diversity, demographic or relation-oriented diversity and cultural diversity. While functional diversity concerns the knowledge of the team members and refers to their professional backgrounds, demographic diversity includes factors such as gender, age and social status (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 334ff., Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy 2016, p. 60, Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 297f., Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019). Cultural diversity can be defined as “the extent to which team members differ in nationality, subculture, ethnicity, native language, geographic location, or origin” (Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy 2016, p. 59).

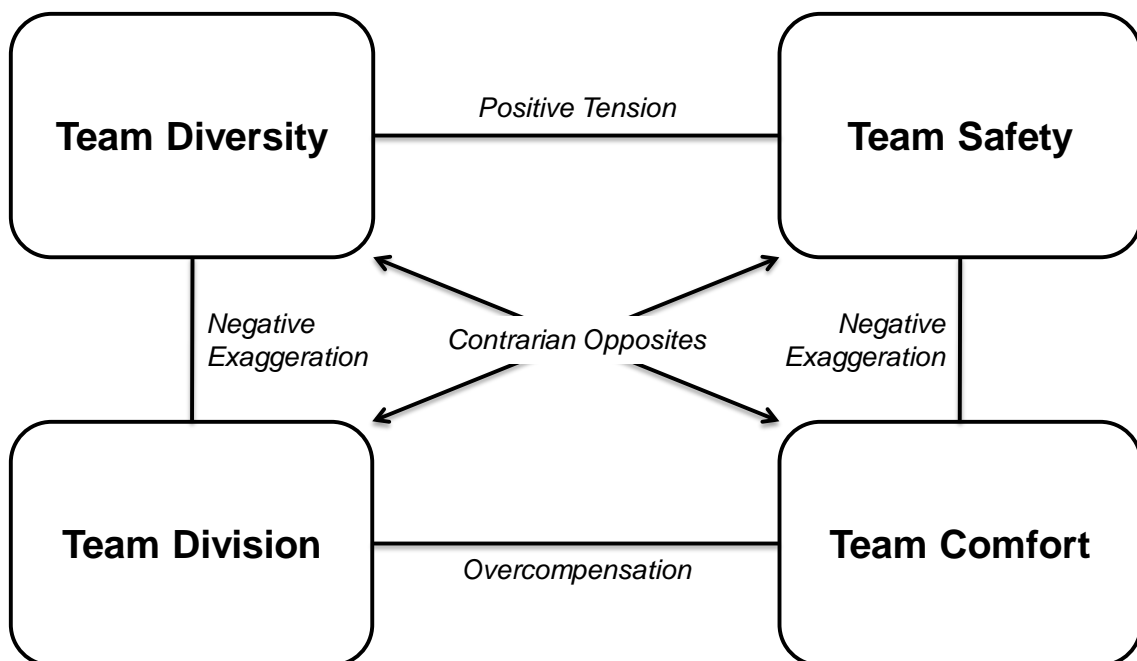
Functional and cultural diversity are related to slightly enhanced team creativity because of the multifunctional and multicultural perspectives the team can offer, but only if the offered perspectives are relevant for then task. For demographic factors like gender and age no such effect could be demonstrated (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 334ff., Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy 2016, p. 59ff., Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 297f., Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019).

However, team diversity may turn into team division when the differing perspectives clash. To overcome this a certain degree of shared understanding, processes of social cohesion and a safe communication climate are needed (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 334ff., Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy 2016, p. 60f., Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 302, Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019). As a conclusion, team diversity needs to be balanced with the feeling of participatory safety within the group. Participatory safety is defined by West & Sacramento (2012, p. 367) as the “sense of

psychological or psychosocial safety which group members feel in the presence of their fellow group members, particularly during whole group interactions” and includes concepts of group affective tone, safety climate and conflict acceptance.

One moderating effect in this regard seems to be group tenure. In this perspective, the balance can be seen as a goal of team development. As Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy (2016, p. 65) note: “Cultural differences among team members may inhibit interactions and communication in the early phases of team development”. However, over time increased familiarity and trust can lead to team safety. Overall, Stollberger, West & Sacramento (2019) come to the conclusion that the “resolution of these positions may lie not in issues of tenure, diversity and safety per se, but in the balance between these factors. [...] Where long tenure leads to high safety this will lead to creativity and implementation, all other things being equal, since it will be safer to take risks and to continually introduce diverse perspectives”. Too much cohesion, however, might negatively affect creativity due to an avoidance of conflict (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 341) – a state which is called team comfort in this paper.

**Figure 4: Tension Concerning Cohesion**



Source: Own illustration

For multicultural teams the topic of communication is of high importance for team safety, since people from different cultures differ in their communication style. According to

Meyer (2014, p. 29ff.) two different styles can be distinguished: Low-context communication is precise, simple and clear and explicitly addresses all issues. High-context communication is sophisticated, nuanced and layered and has a high percentage of implicit content. This can lead to misunderstandings in the communication between team members from high-context and low-context countries, as they choose different levels of expression. However, misunderstandings between team members from two different high-context countries are even more frequent, as they think they understand each other but they interpret messages differently due to their different cultural context. In conclusion Meyer (2014, p. 55) claims that multicultural teams need to establish rules for low-context communication. Additionally Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy (2016, p. 65) advise to initially focus on common areas of interest of the team members to establish team safety. After that, there is a higher receptiveness for different perspectives of team members from different cultural backgrounds.

The dilemma between team diversity and safety can also be described as a tension between individual identity and team identity. If team members keep their unique identities, they are better able to share their unique perspectives adding to the originality of generated ideas. However, strong individual identities are a challenge for the group identity with its values and norms possibly inhibiting the functioning of the group (Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy, p. 62). Harford (2016, p. 51ff.) sees a tradeoff between cohesion and openness of a team. Openness can be achieved by team diversity, since team members from diverse backgrounds bring diverse perspectives and outside contacts to the team. The problem he sees is that “diversity in teams is challenging, and people constantly prefer safety over diversity”. So even if diverse teams are sometimes more creative, they are often judged by their team members as less so because of the challenging work with diverse team colleagues.

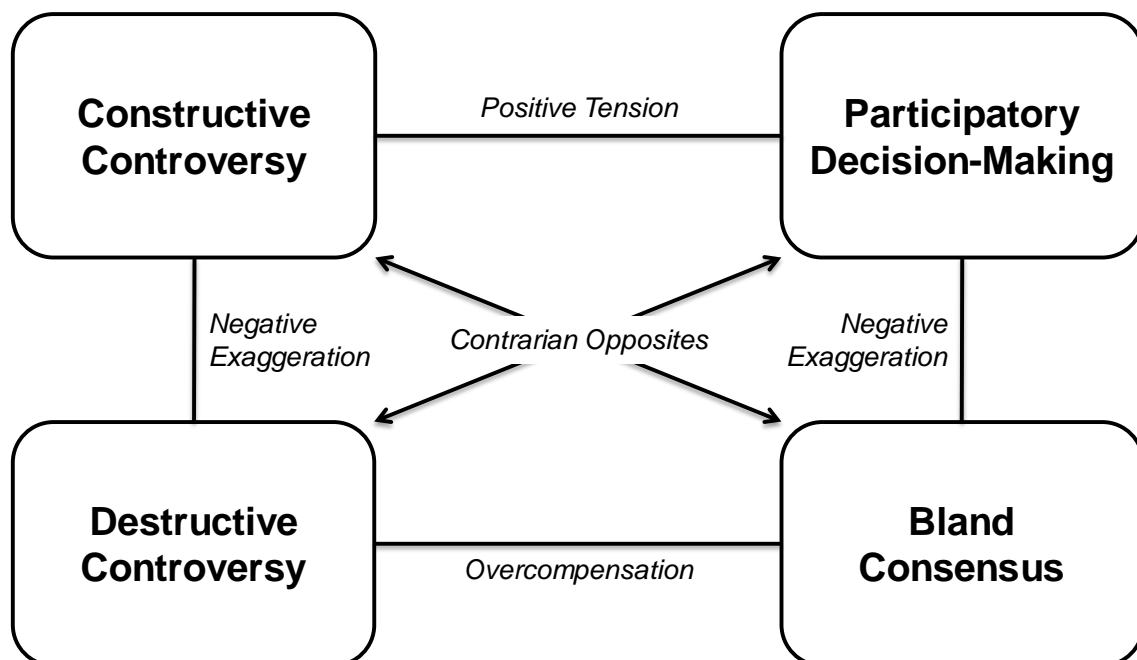
#### **4.2 Tensions Concerning Consensus**

The tension concerning consensus includes the ways in which a team disagrees, i.e. handles conflicts, and agrees, i.e. comes to a decision. The balance is between constructive controversy and participatory decision-making (see fig. 5). Conflict in a team can enhance creativity, but eventually it depends on the type and intensity of conflict. Usually, two different types of conflict can be distinguished: Task conflict involves disagreement about the related task of the team, while relationship conflict is about interpersonal disagreement. It is acknowledged that relationship conflict has a negative impact on team creativity (Oldham & Baer 2012, p. 399ff., Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p.



339f., Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy 2016, p. 66f., Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 307ff., Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 370f.). Task conflict can have a positive effect as it stimulates debate and a full exploration of all opinions (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 370f.). However, this effect of task conflict only materializes if the conflict is of low intensity as otherwise it might degenerate into relationship conflict. Furthermore, task conflict especially stimulates creativity if the task is complex and technical (Oldham & Baer 2012, p. 401, Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 340, Reiter-Palmon, Wigert & de Vreede 2012, p. 309) and the processing of the conflict is collaborative rather than avoiding or competing (Paulus, van der Zee & Kenworthy 2016, p. 67).

**Figure 5: Tension Concerning Consensus**



*Source: Own illustration*

Thus, there should be constructive controversy in a team, which should be task-related, to stimulate debate. However, this conflict must not degenerate into destructive controversy, which is chiefly about interpersonal issues or personal victory. To balance constructive controversy in disagreement, there should be a mechanism for agreement, which can be found in participatory decision-making. Participatory decision-making leads to high levels of interaction, cross-fertilization of ideas, a higher identification with the decisions and less resistance to change (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 370).

However, participatory decision-making has the risk of degenerating into seeking a premature or bland consensus. Especially if the cohesion of a group is relatively high, team members might want to avoid conflict to uphold group harmony (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 340f.). This might lead to the phenomenon of groupthink, as described by Janis (1973). Groupthink denotes a kind of thinking “when concurrence-seeking becomes so dominant in a cohesive group that it tends to override realistic appraisal of alternative courses of action” (Janis 1980, p. 433). It became a popular practical concept leading to many empirical studies into its prerequisites and symptoms (Park 1990). The main reasons behind groupthink are overconfidence and concerns for reputation of its members (Grant 2016, p. 185f.). Groupthink has a negative impact on team creativity through pressure on dissenters, self-censorship and self-appointed mindguards. It tries to avoid deviations from the supposed group consensus and to uphold a shared illusion of team unanimity (Janis 1980, p. 438ff.).

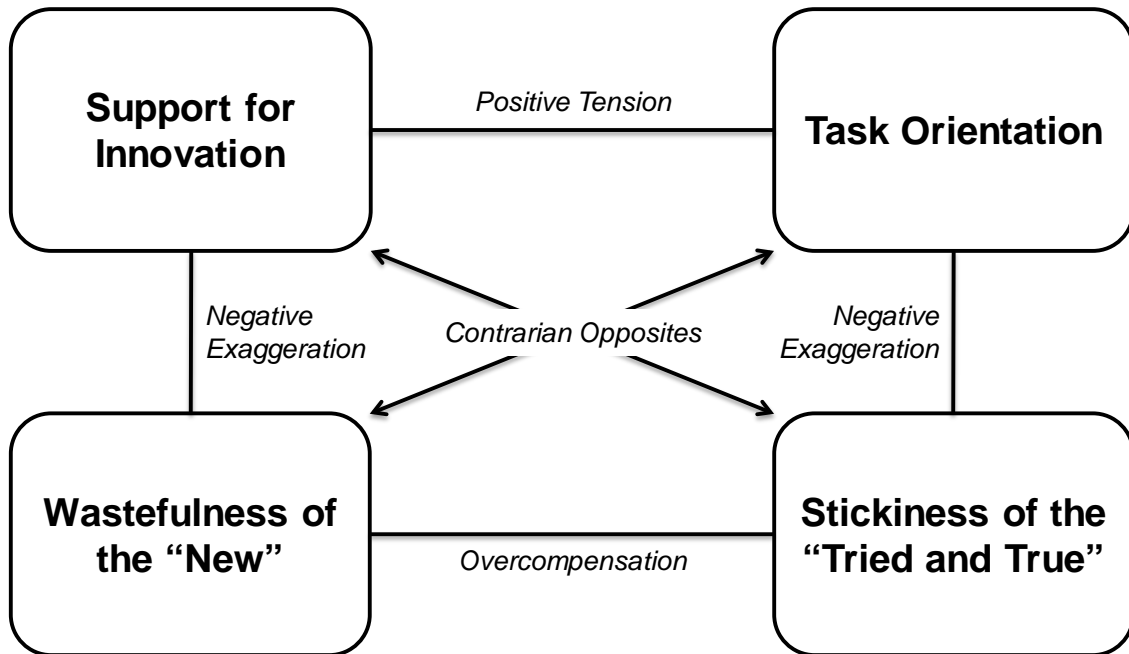
One way to overcome bland consensus and groupthink is to encourage minority dissent, which can lead to increased creativity especially when there is task reflexivity (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 370f.). Reflexivity can be defined as “the extent to which team members collectively reflect upon the team’s objectives, strategies and processes as well as their wider organizations and environments, and adapt them accordingly” (West 1996, p. 559). It includes the activities of reflection, planning and action or adaptation (West & Sacramento 2012, p. 371). In conjunction with minority dissent, task reflexivity seems to counter groupthink by including minority perspectives into the reflection process and adapting accordingly (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019).

#### **4.3 Tension Concerning Conformity**

The tension concerning conformity describes in how far teams try out new approaches or use “tried and tested” approaches. It contains support for innovation and task orientation (see fig. 6). According to West & Sacramento (2012, p. 369) support for innovation can be defined as “the expectation, approval, and practical support for attempts to introduce new and improved ways of doing things in the work environment”. Support for innovation in a team is necessary, as there is a general bias against creativity in humans leading to rejection of new and possibly strange ideas (Mueller, Melwani & Goncalo 2011). Support for innovation is linked to effects from the components of work environment. The organizational climate of the company determines in how far the company supports creativity and innovation in general, sets the level of autonomy for teams in their

creative endeavors and provides teams with slack resources to experiment and try out their ideas (Deckert 2016b, 2016c, 2017a).

**Figure 6: Tension Concerning Conformity**



Source: Own illustration

On the other hand, task orientation can be defined as a “shared concern with excellence of quality of task performance in relation to shared vision or outcome” (West & Sacramento 2012, p. 369). This task focus includes task skills such as effective communication and information exchange, task structure and aspects of task reflexivity such as planning (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 342f.). Task orientation reflects the effectiveness of team creativity.

Research shows that support for innovation interacts with task orientation. Support for innovation can only increase creativity if the team strives for excellence in the respective task (Oldham & Baer 2012, p. 402f., West & Sacramento 2012, p. 369). Without task orientation support for innovation degenerates into wastefulness, as new things are tried just because they are new and not with regard to increasing quality. However, task orientation without support for innovation degenerates into the stickiness of the “tried and true”, as only procedures and solutions are used which have been extensively tested and new solutions are avoided for fear of failure.

## 5 Conclusion

*“And right then I play a chord that is so wrong. I don’t even know where it came from – it’s the wrong chord, in the wrong place, and now it’s hanging out there like a piece of rotten fruit. I think, Oh shit. [...] Miles [Davis] pauses for the fraction of a second, and then he plays some notes that somehow, miraculously, make my chord sound right.”*  
Herbie Hancock (2014, p. 1-2), Jazz musician

In this paper, the value square is used to display, describe and analyze the factors of team climate for team creativity. Beginning with the basic tension of originality and effectiveness in the standard definition of creativity this paper identifies related tensions underlying the factors of team creativity. In this way, the factors proposed by West and colleagues (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012) are rearranged into a new narrative.

The factors of team diversity and team safety form a tension of team cohesion. The tension of cohesion describes in how far a team develops a shared identity and in how far team members preserve their individual identities. Team diversity represents the originality side of creativity by providing new insight through multifunctional and multicultural perspectives. Team safety represents the effectiveness side by providing a sense of acceptance and belonging to the group.

Consensus is constructed as a tension between constructive controversy and participatory decision-making. It describes the manner in which disagreement and agreement are handled by the team, and includes conflict management and decision-making practices. Constructive controversy supports originality, as moderate task-related conflict is conducive to creativity. Effectiveness is represented by participatory decision-making as it leads to accepted decisions while simultaneously avoiding bland consensus and groupthink.

Conformity of a team reflects in how far teams try out new or use “tried and tested” approaches and is designed as a tension between support for innovation and task orientation. Support for innovation represents originality, since its approval to introduce new

approaches can overcome the bias against creativity. Task orientation ensures the excellence of quality in task performance, and, thus, leads to effectiveness.

Hence, the three tensions mirror the classic effectiveness-originality duality of creativity. A special position is occupied by team reflexivity in this context. It seems to have an impact on both consensus and conformity. Task reflexivity seems to counter bland consensus and groupthink by including minority dissent into the reflection, planning and adaptation processes of teams (Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019, West & Sacramento 2012, p. 370f.). Furthermore, it also seems to contribute to task orientation of conformity by continuously reflecting on the task and adapting to changing circumstances (Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 342f.). It needs further research to clarify the role of team reflexivity, as it seems to contribute to several tensions and can support originality as well as effectiveness.

The paper is strictly limited to the team level of analysis. As such, team creativity is the link between corporate creativity and individual creativity. It is influenced by and influences the organizational climate concerning creativity and innovation and the creativity of the team members. Furthermore, there are further variables affecting team creativity such as leadership style, task characteristics and external demands (e.g. competition versus collaboration) (Oldham & Baer 2012, Stollberger, West & Sacramento 2019).

Finally, it has to be said that team creativity is no cure-all for creative problem solving. One prerequisite for team creativity is still the individual creativity of its team members, and ideas are, first and foremost, the product a single mind. Of course, the interaction between different persons can lead to ideas of a higher quality. However, an unfavorable combination of factors can depress creativity, e.g. the phenomenon of productivity loss in brainstorming groups (see e.g. Stroebe, Nijstad & Rietzschel 2010). Scientific literature on the topic of team creativity advises – amongst others – to use small teams in interactive sessions and to include solitary sessions in the problem-solving procedure while providing access to ideas of others outside of interactive sessions (e.g. through written notes) (Stroebe, Nijstad & Rietzschel 2010, Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn 2012, p. 334). All in all, Paulus, Dzindolet & Kohn (2012, p. 334) see an effective procedure for creativity in an “oscillations between [...] solitary and interactive sessions”.

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