

# **“The Path with the Heart”: Creating the Authentic Career<sup>1</sup>**

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## Abstract

This study contributes to the stream of boundaryless career research by detailing a theory of authenticity-driven career creation. The perspective developed here is grounded in an in-depth case study of the trajectory of a creative individual who has followed a very personal career path, remaining true to his creative calling. With authenticity work I denote the set of actions and interactions, which the creative individual undertakes to achieve a distinctive and true-to-self identity and image over time and across audiences. The study reveals that authenticity work is in the duality of identity expression and image manufacturing. Furthermore, it has some elements that are consistent over time and others that keep changing. I identify four stages through which authenticity plays a role in career creation: exploring aspects of multifaceted identity and image; narrowing down and focusing the identity expression and image manufacturing; enhancing one's control over the creative and business aspects of the artwork, and finally, a quest for professionalism. These stages are labelled exploration, focus, independence, and professionalism, respectively. They are embedded in a structural context that enables and constrains authenticity work. The resolution of the constraints by the creative individuals pushes their careers forward.

Keywords: careers, authenticity, creative individual, identity expression, image manufacturing, audience

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“Experience has taught me that the more honest and personal my work is, the more successful I am.” Pedro Almodóvar.<sup>2</sup>

## **Introduction**

The idea of human agency – the ability of actors to formulate projects for the future and to carry them out (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) – has regained vitality in recent research on careers. Traditionally focused on the link with the worlds of occupations and organizations, career studies have shifted their attention to boundaryless and protean career arrangements (Hall, 1976; DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994; Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Baker and Aldrich, 1996; Jones, 1996; Mirvis and Hall, 1996; Hall, Zhu, and Yan, 2002). Individuals are increasingly considered the owners and agents of their trajectories, capable of enacting their professional lives in weak situations that are ambiguous and provide few salient guides for action (Weick, 1996; Álvarez, 2000). In such cases, the career contract is not with an organization, it is with the self (Hall, Zhu, and Yan, 2002).

The interest in the self as an originating agent is not new. It has been central to both historical and contemporary expressions of symbolic interactionism, which have advocated an “active, creative, and agentive view of the self” (Gecas, 1982: 18). Notions, such as effectance or competence motivation, self-efficacy, or instrumentality, among others, have depicted individuals as perceiving or experiencing themselves as causal agents of their environment (Gecas, 1982).

Identity as self-efficacy and authenticity has been considered an important dimension in constructing boundaryless careers (Baker and Aldrich, 1996) and one of the strategies individuals use to adapt to new jobs in career transitions (Ibarra, 1999). Agency and authenticity are especially valuable for the shaping of meaningful careers in art (White and White, 1965; Storr, 1985; White, 1992). Peterson’s (1997)

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<sup>2</sup> In Mata (2003: 38)

study of the creation of country music has provided the most systematic account so far of authenticity in a creative industry. With his attention to the fabrication of authenticity, its negotiation and social construction, and the influence of several ‘milieus’, such as careers, market, industry structure, among others, Peterson’s (1997) work on authenticity is related to the production of culture perspective. Tracing the consolidation of the production perspective, Peterson and Anand (2004) have extended the idea of ‘milieus’ and introduced six facets of production (technology, law and regulation, industry structure, organization structure, occupational career, and market) that are interdependent; a major change in one of the facets can set off the entire production system in motion and eventually lead to its restructuring.

With its focus on ‘milieus’ (Peterson, 1997) and production facets (Peterson and Anand, 2004), the perspective has emphasized that symbolic elements in creative industries are shaped by the systems of production in which they are embedded. However it has failed to acknowledge the agency of exceptional individuals. In this sense, the research opportunities for developing the perspective lie not only in the domain of the macro- or societal-level analysis, as Peterson and Anand (2004) have suggested, but also in the provision of a micro-foundation that is able to bring together action and structure.

In this study I attempt to complement the production of culture perspective (Peterson, 1997; Peterson and Anand, 2004) with micro-level analysis by examining the role of authenticity in the creation of a creative career. On the basis of an in-depth case study of a renowned Spanish film-maker, I develop a process model of an authenticity-driven creative career. The model consists of four stages: exploration, focus, independence, and professionalism, similar to Jones (1996) who also identified four stages of a career in the creative industries. These stages are bridged by authenticity work, which is manifested in the duality of identity expression and image manufacturing. To put the actions and interaction of the creative professional into context,

accounts of structural conditions are outlined for each of the stages. The research suggests that a creative professional can achieve a meaningful career through authenticity work that brings about both continuity and change.

The study's primary aim is to contribute to the stream of boundaryless career research by shedding light on how creative professionals achieve meaningful careers on the basis of authenticity work. In this sense, it is seen to extend the work of Baker and Aldrich (1996) who have acknowledged the importance of authenticity and self-efficacy in shaping a boundaryless career but have not examined the process by which that shaping takes place. Furthermore, it is expected to shed light on what Ibarra (1999) has labelled 'true-to-self' strategies in the adaptation to new professional roles, for which the concern with authenticity is dominant. While Ibarra (1999) focuses on the periods of transition, this study looks at the pattern of the career in its entirety. Finally it also seeks to complement the model of Jones (1996) of the four career stages in creative industries: beginning, crafting, navigating, and maintaining the career. While Jones (1996) focuses on aspects of careers in project networks, the model detailed in this paper seeks to comprehend how authenticity work shapes the career trajectory.

Given the interest in authenticity-driven career creativity, and that authenticity is considered an element of identity, I begin with a review of the relevant literature on individual identity. Next I outline the research methodology. Then I delineate the context of the Spanish film industry and the evolution of the career of the filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar. The paper concludes with a process model of an authenticity-based career creation. Directions for future research and implications are provided.

## **Individual Identity**

Identity is the content and organization of the self-concept, ‘that vast domain of meanings attached to the self’ (Gecas, 1982: 10). In stable societies this content is ‘to a great extent assigned, rather than selected or adopted’ (Howard, 2000: 367). The social psychological literature on identity is replete with somewhat overlapping and related notions, such as self-concept, self-image, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-presentation, to mention but a few. Two main streams of researchers in the Symbolic Interactionist tradition – processual and structural interactionists – have sought to clarify this complexity (Gecas, 1982; Howard, 2000). The former group has defined identity as negotiated and constructed in interaction, i.e. a situated, emergent identity, while the latter has considered it in terms of roles, i.e. a role identity.

Goffman’s work, representative of the processual interactionism, has dealt with the dynamics of self-presentation and has paved the way to the importance of image as a conveyor of an identity. In the opening of his book *The Presentation of Self*, Goffman (1959) has quoted Santayana saying that: “Words and images are like shells, no less integral part of nature than are the substances they cover, but better addressed to the eye and more open to observation” (p. 7). The words of Santayana emphasize the importance of the (re)presentation of identity along with its essence (substance). Thus individual identity can be viewed as consisting of a private self, ‘the way the person really is’, and a public self that is manifested or presented to others as well as formed in the attribution of traits and qualities to the individual by others (Baumeister, 1986a, p. v.).

According to Goffman (1959), “the performed self was seen as some kind of image, usually creditable, which the individual on stage and in character effectively attempts to induce others to hold in regard to him” (p. 244). Such image is an outcome of “something of a collaborative manufacturing” (Goffman, 1959: 245). In this sense, identity is continuously changing. It is “never a priori, nor a finished

product; ... only the ever problematic process of access to an image of totality” (Bhabha, 1994, quoted in Howard, 2000: 367). It provides energy to action and, simultaneously, continues to discover and reshape itself in action (White, 1992; Howard, 2000).

Identity is ‘created’ through language as well as other representations, for example photographs (see Guthey and Jackson, this issue). Its construction and negotiation can take place directly, or discursively, using different media (Howard, 2000; Fine, 1996; Chen and Meindl, 1991). To explore the full range of ‘being’, post-modern identity scholars following the tradition of Derrida, Foucault, or Lyotard, among others, have embarked on the deconstruction of identity categories and rhetoric, questioning models that equate discourse with truth (Cerulo, 1997) and criticizing views of the self as striving for agency and authenticity (Baker and Aldrich, 1996). While I acknowledge that a post-modern perspective can bring novel insights on identity, in this study I assume a modern view of the self, in which identity as authenticity and self-efficacy is a means of shaping a meaningful boundaryless career (Baker and Aldrich, 1996).

### *Authenticity*

Authenticity is important in understanding strategies for experimentation with possible selves (Ibarra, 1999) and patterns of boundaryless careers (Baker and Aldrich, 1996). Research referring to authenticity has emphasized one or more of the following interconnected characteristics: acting in one’s own authority, being truthful to one’s self, achieving congruence between feelings and communication, as well as being distinctive and coherent. Based on the work of renowned philosophers, Tedeschi (1986) affirms that a key aspect of authenticity is the freedom of action. Thrilling (1972) talks about the connection with the Greek term *authenteo* that means ‘to have full power over’. The emphasis on power, authority, and self-doing is also related to responsibility (Tedeschi, 1986) and conveys an

idea of authenticity as agency. In this sense, authenticity is about making choices. Furthermore, it is about choices that are coherent with the past (Bovens, 1999) or with an envisioned future about who people would like to become (Ibarra, 1999). As Bovens summarized it: “The authentic person does not turn her back on the past, but searches for a way to integrate her present with her earlier self” (Bovens, 1999: 228). Such continuity is important for learning and adaptation (Weick, 1996). A combination of tradition and change is also essential in the maintenance of an exclusive brand, as Beverland’s (this issue) study of luxury wines suggests. Beverland argues that in the case of luxury wines, while the house style is retained over time, there is also openness to new ideas and influences.

In addition to integration and coherence, authenticity is also about being truthful to one’s self (Peterson, 1997) and to others by providing “congruence between what one feels and what one communicates in public behaviour about one’s character or competence” (McIntosh, in Ibarra, 1999: 778). A definition that interweaves the features of freedom, truthfulness and congruence posits that “An authentic person is one who takes responsibility for freely chosen actions that represent some internal standards – of self, potentialities, or principles” (Tedeschi, 1986: 7). Hence, in career terms, it can be hypothesized that an authenticity-seeking individual is one willing to take initiative and responsibility for his or her career and able to achieve congruence between past and future, as well as between the private and public domains of one’s self.

Several authors have discussed connections between authenticity and careers. Baker and Aldrich (1996), for example, have considered authenticity as shaping one of the dimensions of boundaryless careers. Ibarra (1999) has found authenticity as a (true-to-self) strategy for the adaptation to new roles in career transitions. Authenticity is also implicitly present in Boyatzis and Kolb’s (2000) depiction of the development mode of an individual’s adaptation and growth. While these studies have acknowledged the importance of authenticity for

careers, they have not specified the process by which authenticity-driven careers are shaped over time. Preoccupation with authenticity is especially pronounced in the creative industries (White, 1992; Peterson, 1997; Caves, 2000). Hence to detail a process model of authenticity-triggered career creation this paper relies on a critical case from the artistic domain. The research methodology of the study is outlined below.

## **Research Methodology**

The perspective developed here is grounded in an in-depth case study of the trajectory of the Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar. It is a critical case (Yin, 1994) of a creative individual who has followed a very personal career path, remaining true to his creative calling. The study design was inductive and open-ended in order to allow themes to emerge from the data (Ibarra, 1999). The data revealed that creative career is shaped through authenticity work as the duality of identity expression and image manufacturing,<sup>3</sup> as well as of continuity and change. However it was not until several iterations between the data and the extant literature had taken place that the significance of these themes became clear.

## ***Data Collection***

Data on the case of Pedro Almodóvar came from a variety of sources. Part of it was obtained between 1999 and 2001 during visits to the premises of the director's film production company, which involved semi-structured interviews with key collaborators, using the press archive (the earliest document I accessed dated from 1984) and informal interactions with the team. After each visit I took observation notes. I also spent time at the Film Archive of the Spanish Ministry of

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<sup>3</sup> I am thankful to an anonymous *Journal of Management Studies* reviewer for suggesting these labels.



Education and Culture in Madrid, where files with original documents from Pedro Almodóvar's films were kept. These had been submitted to the Ministry prior to the filming of each movie as required by the industry regulator. In addition, at the beginning of the study in 1999 I started a personal press archive, collecting relevant articles and interviews from the local and international press. Finally, I watched TV programmes and attended a round table in which Almodóvar participated and during which I took extensive notes. Appendix 1 provides a list of data sources, which helped me develop a holistic understanding of the case and unravel themes and categories relevant to the study of authenticity-driven careers.

I collected data both in Spanish and English. To preserve the original meaning and context of the data as far as possible, I chose to work initially with the documents in their original language. Translations from Spanish into English of relevant quotes and insights took place at the stage of open coding when phenomena had to be labelled with concepts, arranged into categories with characteristics and dimensions, and subsequently linked to form a coherent model.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis was an inductive, iterative process of grounded theory development, which followed techniques and procedures, suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998). I also followed Whetten's (1989, 2002) indicators of what constitutes a good theory. After the general themes of authenticity work as identity expression and image manufacturing had emerged, I continued with the microanalysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), delving into the data for categories, their characteristics and dimensions.

General categories, such as 'authenticity work' and 'structural conditions', for example, emerged and were refined in a subsequent travelling back and forth between data and theory. In addition they

were further divided into sub-categories. For example, the category, which I labelled ‘authenticity work’ after Peterson (1997, p. 223, p. 267) was fragmented into two sub-categories: continuity and change. Each of the sub-categories, in turn, was distinguished along the ‘identity expression’ and ‘image manufacturing’ dimensions. The inclusion of the ‘structural conditions’ category followed Strauss (1992) and allowed the role of context, in which the attainment of authenticity of the director had taken place, to be accounted for. It was distinguished in terms of historical and industry-specific conditions, the organization of film production and the constraints to authenticity. While I acknowledge that structure can provide both opportunities and constraints to a filmmaker, in this paper I focus mostly on the attempts at overcoming constraints as a trigger to an authentic career. Delmestri, Montanai, and Usai (this issue) examine the enabling role of structures by studying relational patterns that are conducive to success in project-based cultural industries. Álvarez and Svejnova (2002) and Álvarez et al. (2005) provide further accounts of structures as enablers of idiosyncratic filmmakers.

To capture the creation of the filmmaker’s career through authenticity work, part of the theory development focused on the identification of relevant career stages. The stages had to exhibit variation in authenticity work (i.e. change). Furthermore, elements that remained stable over time (i.e. continuity) were also unravelled. The fractured and labelled data were then subjected to reassembly through axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) in order to form an explanation.

Finally, selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) was used to integrate and refine the emerging theory. In addition to the ‘what’ of the model (e.g. its categories and sub-categories), issues such as who, when, where, why, and how, as suggested by Whetten (1989), were addressed as far as the data and extant theory allowed. I stopped analyzing the data and searching for further empirical and theoretical sources when I felt that the conceptual categories and sub-categories

were sufficiently grounded in evidence, links between them were explained, and theoretical saturation had occurred.

By using a range of data sources, I sought triangulation of evidence (Eisenhardt, 1989). For example, wherever possible I compared the director's claims before a film was made (e.g. in the film project descriptions submitted by Almodóvar to the Ministry of Education and Culture) with claims made by him in interviews after the film had been screened. No major differences were found between the director's pre-filming and post-screening discourse.

I present the results of the case study below. First, I provide a brief summary of the peculiarity of the Spanish film industry and, in order to reveal its distinctiveness, compare it with Hollywood along a range of dimensions. The context description is followed by a concise account of Almodóvar's career, which provides evidence of the role authenticity played in shaping it.

## **A Case Study of an Authenticity-Triggered Creative Career**

### ***The Spanish Film Industry***

Almodóvar's career was shaped in a particular historical and industry context. In 1977, when he had just embarked on feature-film making, the censorship of film content exercised by the dictatorship regime in Spain was officially abolished with a Royal Decree. After decades of restrictions on artistic creation, the Decree guaranteed freedom of expression to all filmmakers. In the 1980s the film industry regulator introduced several changes in the subsidy policies. Subsidies to Spanish filmmakers were offered along different priority lines over time. Initially, support was given mostly on the basis of artistic merits. In 1983, the Regulator introduced advanced subsidies to film producers upon submission of script and budget. The policy

contributed to the fragmentation of the production sector as film directors found an opportunity to claim resources for their films by establishing their own production companies and becoming producers. Most of those companies remained one-film enterprises, which failed to develop a steady production.

Today, the Spanish film industry is still highly fragmented, despite the efforts to direct the subsidy policies towards an emphasis on the commercial and artistic viability of the film projects. The industry consists of a large number of small production companies. Very little consolidation of film production and capital in powerful, studio-like organizations has taken place. Independent filmmakers still thrive on small budgets, usually subsidized by national or European Union initiatives, and draw talent from a relatively small, non-unionized pool of professionals. Large advertising budgets and massive campaigns remain an exception rather than a norm in a struggling industry. Table 1 provides a comparison between the Spanish film industry and Hollywood to reveal important differences.

**Table 1**  
**A Comparison of the Spanish and Hollywood Film Industry**

Dimension	Defining Characteristics	
	Hollywood	Spain
Industry structure	Consolidated (small number of large studios; independent producers)	Fragmented (large number of small producers)
Regulation	No	Yes (Subsidies)
Film budgets	Large (especially for studio films)	Small (much smaller than budgets of low-cost Hollywood independent films)
Talent pool	Big	Small
Intermediaries (agents, deal makers etc.)	Well-developed	Under-developed
Power in film projects	Studios Unions Stars	Film directors (who usually are also scriptwriters and/or producers)
A dominant metaphor of	‘Mass production’	‘Craft’

### *Almodóvar's Career*

From the very beginning of his trajectory – as an amateur creator – Almodóvar's novel, provocative and initially technically impure style not only aroused controversy among film critics but also attracted the attention of the audience. Pedro's international recognition came with the Oscar-nomination and the box-office success of his film *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1987). His worldwide fame of an auteur was confirmed with the Cannes best director prize and the two Oscar awards he received – for best foreign film for *All about My Mother* (1999) and original script for *Talk to Her* (2002) – among an avalanche of other local and international prizes. The director has given the following reasons for his career success: “When I look at the careers of the most important European directors of my generation..., I find that I'm different from them in that my career path is completely personal and home-grown” (Almodóvar, in Fernandez, 2000). He has also acknowledged that “Experience has taught me that the more honest and personal my work is, the more successful I am” (Almodóvar, in Mata, 2003: 38). Almodóvar accounts point out to the importance of being ‘honest’ and ‘personal’, or – in other words – ‘true to oneself’, authentic.

Careers are retrospective rationalizations of patterns that serve a purpose (Weick, 1996). In this study, the purpose is to unravel the role of authenticity in shaping a career. From the perspective of change in authenticity work, the data allowed four stages in Almodóvar's career to be distinguished. Stage 1 (1973-1980) included his amateur years as a versatile creator until his feature film debut. Stage 2 (1981-1985) captured his efforts to focus on cinema and become a professional director whose films were produced by different companies. Stage 3 (1986-1990) was characterized by the establishment of his own production company to enhance control over his movies, the achievement of international success and a subsequent saturation. Finally Stage 4 (1991-) encompassed years of renewal and

professional maturity. Below I provide a brief discussion of each of the four career stages. Table 2 summarizes the main findings for each stage under the headings of authenticity work, structural conditions, and resolution of constraints. Resolution of constraints provides the link between the stages, suggesting that the removal of limitations to authenticity triggers the career of the director. The labels given to the four stages are part of the conceptual work of the study and aim to capture the essential characteristics of authenticity work in each stage.

**Table 2**

Categories	Stage 1 (1973-1980) <b>EXPLORATION</b>	Stage 2 (1981-1985) <b>FOCUS</b>	Stage 3 (1986-1990) <b>INDEPENDENCE</b>	Stage 4 (1991-) <b>PROFESSIONALISM</b>
<b>Authenticity work: Stage-specific (Change)</b>	Composes songs/sings in a duet; Acts with independent theatre troupe; Creates comics - underground magazines; Makes short films and two feature films: writes their scripts, creates the decors, acts, films, chooses the music, organises their exhibition in bars, galleries, private film schools, etc; Clerk in the national telephone company.	Leaves behind the position at the national telephone company; Focuses on feature filmmaking; Consolidates artistic roles (writer-director); Seeks producers for his films (initially with great difficulty).	Establishes a film production company El Deseo (Desire) with his brother Agustín; Seeks financing for his films (initially with great difficulty); Starts editing the film simultaneously with its filming.	Continues writing and directing his films, placing an emphasis on improving professionalism; Explores novel themes and actors; Films sequentially; Slows down the pace of film making to pay better attention to all details related to the aesthetics of the film.
	<b>Identity expression (need/medium)</b>			
	Tell a story, which is understood/Different creative media (theatre, cinema, music, etc.)	Tell a story he feels like telling/Cinema	Tell a story he feels like telling and in the way he wants to tell it/Cinema	Tell a story he feels like telling, in the way he wants to tell it and with utmost professionalism/Cinema
	<b>Image manufacturing (image/audience)</b>			
<b>Authenticity work: Across stages (Continuity)</b>	Underground multifaceted creator/Mostly friends.	Underground, commercially successful film director/Local Spanish audience	Independent, internationally acclaimed and commercially successful film maker/Local and international audience	Resilient, mature auteur with worldwide recognition and commercial success/Worldwide audience
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Identity expression:</b> Gets involved in different aesthetic aspects of his films, from the beginning to the end: a recognisable ‘signature’ over time; Interweaves topics and characters across his films; Rehearses with actors, colours, objects, etc. for consistency.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Image manufacturing:</b> Considers promotion as a continuation, aesthetic complement, part of the explanation of the film; Prepares press dossiers, production notes, self-interviews that shed light on his films; Actively participates in film promotion activities.</p>				

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Structural conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Historical conditions:</b> ‘La movida’ (the movement) - a period of cultural liberation and effervescence after the death of dictator Franco.</p> <p><b>Organisation of film production:</b> Amateur; Individually or with the help of friends; A cooperative for his 1<sup>st</sup> feature film (16 mm); No technical team; Precarious resources for filmmaking. Uneven pace; the making a film is dependent on resources becoming available (e.g. friends’ contribution, own salary). Films: Various short films (Super 8) (since 1973); Feature film (Super 8) (1978); <i>Pepi, Luci, Bom...</i> (1980): 1<sup>st</sup> feature film (16 mm)</p> <p><b>Constraints to authenticity:</b><sup>4</sup> Limitations to a steady pace in film making due to lack of resources, technical team, knowledge in filmmaking.</p>	<p><b>Historical conditions:</b> ‘La movida’ (the movement) - a period of cultural liberation and effervescence after the death of dictator Franco.</p> <p><b>Organisation of film production:</b> Professional; Different production companies; Project-based production team; Modest resources for filmmaking. Even pace; 1 film per year. Films: <i>Labyrinth of Passion</i> (1982); <i>Dark Habits</i> (1983); <i>What I’ve Done to Deserve This?</i> (1984); <i>Matador</i> (1985).</p> <p><b>Constraints to authenticity:</b> Tensions (differing visions) between the director and his producers on the movies to be made.</p>	<p><b>Industry conditions:</b> the law ‘Miró’ which since 1983 starts providing advanced subsidies to filmmakers; leads to a wave of foundings of production companies by film directors.</p> <p><b>Organisation of film production:</b> Professional; Own production company; Project-based production team; Co-producer - Lauren films; Normal resources for filmmaking. Even pace; 1 film per year. Films: <i>The Law of Desire</i> (1986); <i>Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown</i> (1987); <i>Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down!</i> (1989); <i>High Heels</i> (1990)</p> <p><b>Constraints to authenticity:</b> Lack of production expertise. International acclaim, which leads to saturation and need for increasing professionalism.</p>	<p><b>Organisation of film production:</b> Professional; Own production company; Permanent production team; No-strings’ financial co-producer - Ciby 2000 (1990-1997); Abundant resources for filmmaking. Even (slower) pace; 1 film every 2-3 years. Films: <i>Kika</i> (1993); <i>The Flower of My Secret</i> (1995); <i>Live Flesh</i> (1997); <i>All about My Mother</i> (1999); <i>Talk to Her</i> (2002); <i>Bad Education</i> (2004); [8 productions of other directors: 1 (1993), 2 (1996), 2 (2001), 2 (2003), 1 (2004)]</p> <p><b>Constraints to authenticity:</b> Distortions in interaction due to achievement of success, fame.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Constraint resolution</b></p>	<p>(In Stage 2): Seeks production companies to get access to resources and technical professionals for his movies and learns how to make films by doing it.</p>	<p>(In Stage 3): Establishes own production company and starts producing his films.</p>	<p>(During Stage 3): collaborating with a co-producer Lauren Films while gaining production expertise; (in Stage 4): to increase professionalism decreases pace of filmmaking, shapes a permanent team, explores novel themes.</p>	<p>(During Stage 4): continued exploration of new territories in film making.</p>



<sup>4</sup> Structural conditions as enablers of creativity have been discussed elsewhere (see Álvarez and Svejnova, 2002; Álvarez *et al.*, 2005). In this paper I focus on the constraints posed by structure on authenticity and the way their resolution pushes the career forward.

***Stage 1 Exploration.*** This was a “marginal, underground period”, in which the director “personally funded and controlled every aspect of the shoe-string-budgeted, generally short films and which culminated in ... his feature film debut” (Arroyo, 1991: 10). Almodóvar initiated his career as a versatile creator who was eager to express his creative ideas in a wide range of media, from underground magazines and music performances to theatre and cinema. He was an outsider to the cinema field who had embarked on making short films on Super 8 format. He not only conceived the stories and filmed them, but also provided music and comments to accompany the images in order to overcome the sound limitations of the Super 8 format, etc. He was also in charge of the diffusion and screening of his films, organizing their viewing in friends’ homes, bars, discothèques, or art galleries, etc. Those improvised events were considered happenings and soon earned the amateur director the image of an underground, versatile creator and a flagship of ‘la movida’, the period of cultural explosion in Madrid that had followed the death of the Spanish dictator Franco. In Almodóvar’s initial attempts at film making one can encounter both his need for artistic expression and his conviction of his personal responsibility in making his work known to others.

By the end of this stage, he had been persuaded by close friends to follow his dream and make a feature film that (simply) tells a story, which is understood by the spectator (Almodóvar, in Strauss, 2001, p. 20, p. 26). For his feature film debut the director counted with the precarious resources of his salary as a clerk in the Spanish national telephone company and sporadic contributions by friends. Film production was organized as a cooperative. At the time, Almodóvar could not afford to have any technical professionals. Actors worked in as unpaid volunteers. Financing, producing and acting were all frenetic. In a later recollection of that time, the director admitted that working with scant resources had helped him experience creative freedom: ‘The absence of financial resources provides a freedom of creation, which is much more difficult, and at times even impossible, to achieve when relying upon normal budget for the filming’

(Almodóvar, in Strauss, 2001: 26-27). The result was an extremely novel, risky and singular movie, which provided visibility to the director's entry into the world of the cinema. The sporadic access to scant resources eventually became an obstacle to achieving a steady string of professionally made film projects. To overcome those constraints, Almodóvar chose to narrow down his creative scope and focus on filmmaking, proactively seeking support from production companies.

***Stage 2 Focus.*** Almodóvar's feature film debut became a 'cultural icon' of the social transition to democracy (Sánchez and Angulo, 2000). It was screened in 1980 in a movie theatre and included in the programme at San Sebastián, the most prestigious film festival in Spain, which gave it exposure to spectators at large and made the director known to the critics. Despite the visibility, and to a certain extent, the notoriety of the refreshing and transgressive film, it took a long time for the director to convince local producers to invest in his next movie. The director concentrated his energy on feature film making and left his permanent employment at the telephone company. The four feature films he made in the second stage had modest budgets secured by the producers mostly through the subsidy system. They were expressions of defiant ideas of the film director who for the first time could afford the support of technical professionals in their making. The films appealed to the Spanish audience and did relatively well in box office for the standards of the local industry. The press at the time recognized the success of the director: "[Almodóvar] is a film director who achieves something difficult for the profession: working in a continuous and constant way. Having not studied at film school or belonged to the [film] critics ... he manages to film, at least at the moment, at a rate of one film a year. The answer to that puzzle is nothing else but his box-office success" (Harguindey, 1984). This quote suggests at least two important issues. One is that in 1984 the director is already considered 'professional', which means inclusion in the world of the cinema. The other is that his distinctiveness at the

time is not only in the peculiarity of his films but also in their commercial success.

Despite the commercial success, however, at that stage of his career the director had disagreements with the producers of the films. He acknowledged that the films he had wanted to make had differed from those the producers had been willing to support and produce. Those constraints to authenticity, along with the opportunities provided at the time by the subsidy system in Spain, forced the director to seize control over his filmmaking. That took place during the filming of *Matador* (1985) when Pedro and his brother Agustín registered their production company, El Deseo (Desire), and became independent producers.

***Stage 3 Independence.*** While Almodóvar learned the intricacies of the profession in the process of filmmaking, he gained artistic and economic control over his work with the establishment of own production company. His brother became director of the company and executive producer of Pedro's movies. The decision to work with his sibling was motivated by the belief that only somebody very close and trusted could understand and service Pedro's creativity in a committed and unrestricted way (Álvarez and Svejenova, 2002).

Almodóvar's first two films as an independent producer were co-produced by El Deseo and an established Spanish production and distribution company. Along with funding and distribution, that partnership provided an opportunity for learning the production process. The second of the co-produced features – *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1987) – brought international visibility and recognition to Almodóvar and became the highest grossing foreign film in North America. It also initiated an effort to professionalize the presentation of the director and his work internationally. At the beginning of the 1990s, Almodóvar had already been included in the ranks of the international filmmakers. The

description of the director in the international dictionary of films and filmmakers (Thomas, 1991) argued that “Almodóvar’s signature, and a unique contribution to the movies, is the synthesis of the melodramatic mode with a clash of quotations” (Arroyo, in Thomas, 1991). In the 1980s, both the artwork (the films) and the efforts at (self-)presentation (the manufacturing of a public ‘persona’, at that time, mostly through the press and the press dossiers that the director prepared) were essential for achieving distinctiveness. As a result, “The films and Almodóvar’s creation of a carefully cultivated persona in the press have meshed into ‘Almodóvar’, a singular trademark. ‘Almodóvar’ makes the man and the movies interchangeable even as it overshadows both” (Arroyo, in Thomas, 1991: 11). This quote hints at what the critic perceived as purposive efforts at image manufacturing as well as the confluence of the image of the director and his artwork in an overall image that characterizes him.

The last two features that I included in this stage – *Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down* (1989) and *High Heels* (1990) – while very personal, did not match the audience and critical acclaim of the director’s 1987 box-office hit. In some countries (e.g. France, Italy) they were better received than in others (e.g. US, Germany). The director explained that one of the reasons for that less favourable welcome in the US was due to the impression his usual viewers, the ‘modern’ audience, had got of him becoming main stream. According to the director, working with more financial resources had made his films less underground but not more mainstream. Previously his films had been reviewed by the independent press, which had provided generous reviews. By increasing the number of theatres in which the films had been shown, he entered in the domain of the critics in the large volume newspapers who, according to him, were very conservative and therefore more critical to his movies (Almodóvar, in Strauss, 2001). Talking about the post-Oscar nomination period of the late 1980s, the director and his collaborators acknowledged certain saturation from the success and the need for novel ideas and mastery of the cinematographic form of

expression. The next stage in the director's career was driven by this quest for professionalism and renewal.

***Stage 4 Professionalism.*** During the 1990s, the film director became concerned with perfecting his movies, as hinted at by the editor of all his films, José Salcedo (Fernández, 2000). Furthermore, in an interview the press director of *El Deseo* explained that the slowing down of the pace in filmmaking (working on a film project for 2-3 years, rather than completing it in a year, as the director had done previously) had to do with his quest for professionalism and deeper involvement in various aesthetic aspects of his films. At the end of the 1980s, the brothers could afford to expand and differentiate their production team beyond what was customary for most Spanish film production companies, which tended to have only a producer and a secretary. They formed a permanent team, which became the director's 'second family' (Almodóvar, in Francia, 2000), and a 'second skin' to protect him and to connect him with the outer world (Millás, 2004).

The ways of connecting with the outer world, especially in the manufacturing of the image of each of the director's films, evolved at the end of the 1990s. In addition to engagement with the audience through posters and press dossiers, which had been characteristic of the director in the 1980s, his accounts of the gestation and symbolism of his movies started appearing on the director's official website and included novel discourse strategies, such as the self-interviews. In the self-interviews, the director played the roles of both the interviewer and the interviewee, asking difficult questions on how and why a movie was conceived and developed over time. Furthermore, the director continued to be personally engaged (as he was in his amateur years) in the promotion of his films, this time walking the red carpets at international festivals and film markets. It is also important to highlight that with no-string financing, a committed permanent team and his own production company the director has been able to film

sequentially. Sequential filming has the advantage that “You reach the end following the logic of the action and the knowledge that I keep acquiring of the characters” (Almodóvar, in Strauss, 2001: 82). It is expensive and, because of that, rare way of filming that allows the director both to remain true to his own vision and to adapt it in the course of the natural evolution of the film and its characters.

A reason for the recognition the director receives during this stage is his continuous zeal for evolution and professionalism. As Almodóvar affirms in the following interview: “I have the feeling that my success is due to a cumulative effect. ... I think this spate of awards is due to the fact that people have seen my films coming out one after another. They’ve seen a definite development, and they’ve thought to themselves, ‘Hey, this guy is serious, he obviously wants to keep evolving and changing and maturing.’” (Almodóvar, in Fernandez, 2000: 8).

***Change in authenticity work.*** The four stages depict differences in authenticity work. For example, the director pursues changing images, from a versatile creator to a focused, independent commercially successful and increasingly professional filmmaker. Furthermore, his needs and ambitions for identity expression have evolved. As a debuting filmmaker he aspired to have the opportunity – through the amateur use of cinematographic language – to tell a story that is understood by the spectator. Later, he wanted to tell a story he felt like telling, learning and experimenting with the technical possibilities of the cinematographic medium. Then he not only sought an opportunity to tell his personal stories in the cinema but also wanted to tell them in his own way, unrestricted by competing and conflicting visions of the producers. Finally, his ambition involved telling the story not only in a very personal but also in a very professional way.

*Audiences.* These changing needs for identity expression and image manufacturing were shaped in interactions with a changing audience. Initially, Almodóvar's films were screened in non-cinematographic venues, such as bars, galleries, homes, and watched by friends and acquaintances. In the second stage, the director reached the Spanish audience in general and in the third stage he had already made the step abroad, harvesting success in North America, among other places. In the 1990s, his films kept expanding their reach worldwide. As the number of languages spoken by his audience kept increasing, the director started putting efforts into preserving the authenticity of his films by exercising control over aspects such as the voices that were used to dub his characters in countries that did not allow the use of subtitles. Hence, through his involvement in the tailoring of the expression of his identity and the image projected to each of these audiences, he sought to remain true to his artwork.

***Continuity in authenticity work.*** In terms of identity expression, the continuity is manifested in different aesthetic aspects of Almodóvar's films, which in turn form part of the manufacturing of a recognizable 'signature' or image over time. For example, the director interweaves topics and characters across his films, rehearses with actors, voices (in dubbing), colours, objects, etc. to achieve consistency of expression: "Almodóvar's oeuvre makes a good argument for the auteur theory. One can trace to his first films themes and strategies that he would explore in different forms, with varying degrees of success, but with increasing technical expertise, throughout the rest of his career. Almodóvar's films posit the absolute autonomy of the individual" (Arroyo, 1991). Regarding continuity in image manufacturing, it is important to note that the director considers promotion as a continuation, an aesthetic complement and part of the explanation of his films. He prepares different means (e.g. press dossiers, production notes, self-interviews) to shed light on the gestation and subtleties of his movies, and actively participates in the film promotion activities. In the accounts of the director, he does that because: "I have the



impression that I have to explain my films. This reflects nothing but my own fear. The texts I have written on my films say important things, but in a way that is not intended to be direct, that aims at connecting the film with other elements” (Almodóvar, in Strauss, 2001: 24).

**Context.** In interviews with his closest collaborators and articles in the press, Almodóvar’s artwork was characterized as deeply rooted in the Spanish culture and his Spanish collaborative network. Outside these boundaries, however, collaborators and the press agree it will be difficult to sustain his distinctive identity and image. In Hollywood, the power is usually not with the film director but with the film studios, stars, and even the unions. Such a shift in power, Almodóvar himself acknowledged, could hamper his ‘way’ of working through sequential filming, filming at all hours, having a final say on the script and final cut of the film, deciding on posters, campaigns, and distributors. Hence Almodóvar’s reluctance to respond favourably to offers from Hollywood, where professional networks, chains of agents and organizational charts could limit his freedom.

### **Creating a Creative Career: The Path of Authenticity**

Peterson (1997) has affirmed that “Maintaining the sense of authenticity takes work” (p. 223). With authenticity work I denote the set of actions and interactions, which a creative individual undertakes to achieve a distinctive and true-to-self identity and image over time and across audiences. The inductive study of the career of the Spanish filmmaker revealed that authenticity work is in the duality of identity expression and image manufacturing. (Other authors have found different dualities inherent in authenticity. For example, Delmestri, Montanari, and Usai (this issue) talk about parallel cycles of a manufactured and an innovative dimension of authenticity. Jones and Smith (this issue) examine two divergent strands – creative and

national authenticity.) Furthermore, authenticity work has some elements that are consistent over time and others that keep changing. In this respect, authenticity is a renewable resource (Peterson, 1997), which is part of an ongoing process of differentiation (Moeran, this issue). Thus, a creative career is shaped in the combination of continuity and change in the artist's private and public selves, i.e. "the identity can change, but it changes in a way that maintains its connection with earlier stages of identity" (Hall, Zhu, and Yan, 2002: 160).

To explain how a creative career is shaped through authenticity work, I propose a process model. The four elements that comprise the model denote authenticity work with a different emphasis: exploration, focus, independence, and professionalism. They are embedded in a structural context that enables or constrains authenticity work. The resolution of the constraints pushes the career forward.

### ***The Model***

'The path with the heart' describes a career trajectory driven by one's vision, central values and most loved talents and potentialities (Shepard, in Hall et al., 2002). Cinema is 'the path with the heart' for Pedro Almodóvar. In the words of the director, "I'm sure that if I hadn't had this medium [cinema] in which to express myself and find a sense to my life, I'd have been utterly wretched" (Almodóvar, in Mata, 2003: 39). As retrospective sense-making, career patterns are purpose-dependent (Weick, 1996). There are different ways to describe a creative career. For example, Jones (1996) in her study of the US film industry sought to unravel career stages and competencies in project networks. She identified four stages, which the creative professionals follow: (1) beginning a career; (2) crafting the career; (3) navigating the career; and (4) maintaining the career. Jones's (1996) model is useful in understanding Almodóvar's trajectory. As suggested by the model, the director has obtained access to the

industry, learned the technical skills, built up a reputation and contacts, etc. By seeking to understand how authenticity work shapes a creative career, however, other aspects of the director's career become noticeable and a different pattern can be discerned. Below I provide a conceptualization of these elements.

**Exploration.** Authenticity work at this stage is manifested in exploration of a range of roles (for further discussion on role versatility, see Menger (1999)) or possible selves (Ibarra, 1999). By trying out different forms of artistic (and non-artistic) expression, the creative individual is able to experience, compare, and identify those that are the most satisfactory for the expression of his or her vision and talent. Complex, multivalent identities are a source of agility because they allow individuals freedom to be accepted in other valued roles (Zuckerman et al., 2003). However, it can also be costly because they allow individuals freedom to be accepted in other valued roles (Zuckerman et al., 2003). However, it can also be costly because an individual may have to interact with multiple audiences and engage in difficult role transitions (Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate, 2001). Thus, there are clear trade-offs in assuming a simple versus a complex identity. For example, at the apprentice stage it is important to get one's work known (Caves, 2000). This, however, is much more difficult when identity efforts are spread across various identity domains and audiences. In that case, the creator might want to narrow down, simplify and focus his identity.

**Focus.** At this stage the creative individual focuses on a particular role identity and embarks on its in-depth exploration by developing a signature style. Leonard-Barton (1995) defines a signature skill as “an ability by which a person prefers to identify himself or herself professionally. Signature evokes the idiosyncratic nature of the skill – a personally defining characteristic, as much a part of someone's identity as the way the individual signs his or her name” (p. 62). In the

case of an artist, having a signature suggests distinctiveness, which is one of the elements of ‘authenticity’ (Peterson, 1997).

Professionals are found to enjoy the privileges of a collective identity (Rao et al., 2003), such as legitimacy and the ability to claim valuable resources. In this respect, a role identity is a resource in itself (Baker and Faulkner, 1991; Callero, 1994; Álvarez et al., 2005). Adopting the role of a film director, for example, allows an individual to seek financing and the support of production companies. A narrow identity is also easier to signal by the individual who enacts it. It helps to gain entry and recognition in a field or arena. However, it can also limit the actor’s freedom of action (Zuckerman et al., 2003). To overcome the limitations to autonomy, the creative individual might concentrate on enhancing control over his/her artwork.

***Independence.*** Members of professions value not only collective identity but also individual autonomy, as revealed by the study of the revolt of elite French chefs against the norms of the classical cuisine (Rao et al., 2003). In the quest for autonomy “... insiders with expertise can attack existing logics and social identities because these inhibit autonomy, creativity, and freedom, and they can proffer new logics and identities on the grounds that these expand individual autonomy and, by implication, enlarge professional control” (Rao et al., 2003: 805).

White (1992) argued that “Every identity continually seeks control to maintain itself and in that struggle breaks, as well as establishes, ties with other such identities” (p. 67). Establishing one’s own company or team is one of the mechanisms that creative individuals use to enhance their control over the aesthetic and economic aspects of their projects (Svejenova, 2002; Álvarez et al., 2005). Having one’s own company is used to enhance control not only over artwork but also over authenticity work in general, since it yields freedom in both artistic expression and image manufacturing. Gaining control, however, is not sufficient if an artist seeks recognition and wants to play the politics of

status in a field. In a study of the occupation rhetoric of chefs, for example, Fine (1996) suggested that “the rhetoric of professionalism is a status marker” (p. 96), a way of “aligning one’s work with an elite status” (p. 97).

***Professionalism.*** At the stage of professionalism, authenticity work of creative individuals is directed at the mastery of both the art form and the way in which the creator communicates and engages with the relevant audiences. A valued characteristic of professionals in creative industries is their ability to develop a continuous and coherent body of work over time (Caves, 2000). In this respect, the quest for professionalism can also be understood as a quest for continuity. Award ceremonies provide a symbolic medium for acknowledgement of worth and professionalism, and those who receive recognition benefit from greater visibility, further commercial success and career longevity (Anand and Watson, 2004).

At this stage there are certain constraints and threats to authenticity. The very success and fame, which are usually associated with the stage of maturity and professionalism may distort the interaction of the creative professional with the different audiences and make it more difficult for him or her to continue being truthful to their own self. Moreover, it can lead to saturation. One major challenge at this stage is to enhance experimentation and reinvention, whilst at the same time keeping consistency of authenticity work. Exploring novel areas and opening up what has become a narrow, focused professional identity can help bring about the necessary renewal.

Several observations on the dynamic of the model are worth noting. First, in the case I used to develop the grounded theory, the stages of the model followed the order in which I discussed them. However, the model is not conceived as hierarchical and time-dependent, where the creative individual “is expected to progress along the path, rising higher in the sequence of stages” (Boyatzis and Kolb, 2000: 78).

Rather, I hypothesize that depending on individual predispositions or structural conditions, for example, authenticity work required for achieving independence may be performed before, rather than after, the creative individual has focused his or her identity. Furthermore, exploration may not only mark the start of a creative trajectory but also follow a period of professionalism as a way of renewal. Secondly, authenticity work as manifested in the duality of identity expression and image manufacturing is both the drive for change and the thread that provides continuity in the course of shaping a creative career. Identity expression is manifested both in the creative process and its outcome, the works of art. The fabrication of an image is exhibited in self-presentations of the artist with the relevant audiences (e.g. viewers, critics, other artists, distributors), or his or her presentation through intermediaries – those, chosen by the artist (e.g. representatives, own team) or self-appointed (e.g. a critic who writes a film’s review provides an interpretation and judgement of its worth as well as evaluations of the qualities and trajectory of its creator). Thus the audiences, and the way they interact with the creator (directly or indirectly), constitute an essential element of the model.

***Audiences.*** In the words of Fine (1996), “In contrast to labourers, businessmen, and professionals, artists have audiences. People pay to judge their work, expecting to be entertained, aroused, or intrigued. The audience contributes to the art...” (p. 102). An essential element of the model I proposed is that audiences, through interaction with the creator, partake in authenticity work and, consequently, in the creation of a creative career. With its attention to interaction, as well as active agency and self-presentation, the perspective detailed in this study is attuned to symbolic interactionist views. Theories of self-presentation, however, have been vague about who the exact audience is, assuming in the majority of cases that people are meeting for the first time (Baumeister, 1986b). Not all audiences are equally important. Tedeschi (1986), for example, has revealed major differences in self-presentation in front of intimate and impersonal audiences.

The importance of the audience in shaping the creator's career, and the differences in authenticity work depending on the distance between the audience and the creator, is illustrated in the following quote: "In order to get closer to Pedro Almodóvar, one has no option but to adopt the strategy of the onion. In this layered structure formed by the pathway that goes from his persona to his person, the outer layers consist of those who know him only from his movies. ... The inner layer ..., the closest to him, is formed by a constellation of actresses, assistants, friends and relatives who constitute the human universe that accompanies him. Underneath is the core, to which only he has access: his secret territory, his sacred world, his private terrain" (Fernández, 2000: 20). The quote uses the metaphor of the 'onion', which evokes the idea of a layered, hierarchical structure of identity expression and image manufacturing in relation to various audiences, depending on how removed a particular audience is from the most private area of the self.

In the fabrication of an image by a creative professional, various mechanisms and actors play the role of a stage and an audience. One way to differentiate audiences is by the role they play in the film process: critics, distributors, viewers, financial producers, or subsidy committees, among others. For example, tournament rituals such as award ceremonies formalize the prestige distribution among actors (Anand and Watson, 2004). Critics and dealers have the important role of devising interpretations of these manufactured images for viewers or audiences (Caves, 2000). Critics are 'vested stakeholders' in a creative industry field and central players in 'authenticating' artistic expression (see Glynn and Lounsbury, this issue). Dealers seek to articulate the artist's intent, to educate the audience, to provide context for the work and make the best case for its significance (Caves, 2000). Conglomerates screen and tailor talent and products to satisfy consumers' tastes by fabricating a desirable image (Hirsch, 1972; Peterson, 1997; Caves, 2000).

Creative individuals actively manage the reception of new cultural objects through signalling or rhetorical strategies. Jones (2002) argued that signals shaped careers in creative industries. She defined signals as activities and attributes that “convey information to others and as such are a form of strategic action” (p. 209). Rhetoric strategies are “the vocabularies articulated by decision-makers to justify their actions in highly institutionalized contexts” (Bielby and Bielby, 1994, p. 1291). Furthermore, taking Czarniawska’s view of identity as a narrative, an important part of the process of image manufacturing is the continuous process of narration where both the narrator and the audience are involved in formulating and editing various elements (Czarniawska, 1997).

One of the contributions of the model advanced in this paper is that it acknowledges that audiences differ and, with them, given the interactive nature of identity work (Fine, 1996), the expression and communication of the artist’s distinctive identity differ as well.

***Structural context.*** Finally the model also recognizes that while action and interaction are central in the shaping of an authenticity-driven creative career, these are embedded structurally and historically. In this sense, I agree with Moeran (this issue) who suggests that authenticity is a social and historical construct. Location, in its meaning of a *terroir* (Beverland, this issue) or as a manifestation of a national identity (Jones and Smith, this issue) is also an important element of context. In order to understand the creation of the trajectory of a creative professional fully, one has to be attentive to the context in its structural, locational, and historical aspects.

The model proposed in this paper depicts how a creative individual can shape a career driven by the quest for authenticity. It emphasizes the duality of authenticity work as continuity and change in identity expression and image manufacturing. Furthermore, it acknowledges the importance of the audience in the process. Finally, it also



recognizes that while individual creative action is the driver of a meaningful career, it is embedded in a structural context, which makes certain choices viable while constraining others.

## **Conclusion**

This study reveals authenticity as a shaper of meaningful careers in creative industries. I identified four stages through which authenticity plays this role: by the exploration of a complex, multifaceted identity and image; by narrowing down and focusing the identity expression and image manufacturing; by enhancing one's control over the creative and business aspects of the artwork, and finally, by the quest for professionalism.

The study's primary aim is to contribute to the stream of boundaryless career research (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) by shedding light on the process of career creation on the basis of authenticity work. In that respect, it is also seen to extend the work by Baker and Aldrich (1996) who suggested authenticity is important but did not explain how it shapes a boundaryless career over time. By focusing on the agency and careers of creative professionals, rather than on traditional structural accounts of creativity (e.g. Hirsch, 1972; Peterson, 1976; Becker, 1974, 1982; Peterson, 1997; Caves, 2000), it also attempts to fill a void of individual accounts of creative work in sociological and organizational studies of art (Blau, 1988). Finally, it engages with extant formulations of authenticity in a creative industry (Peterson, 1997), seeking to find both common ground and areas of divergence. The following four points summarise the connections of this article with Peterson's (1997) work.

Firstly, I share Peterson's interest in deliberate strategies for the legitimation of authenticity. However, while Peterson focuses on the role of powerful actors in shaping authenticity, I trace the deliberate quest for authenticity of an actor who initially lacks power and

credibility in the field. I found that the actor's pursuit of authenticity paves the way to his recognition and legitimation. Hence, similar to Baker and Faulkner's (1991) notion of role as a resource, authenticity could be considered a valuable resource in creative industries. Secondly, a common ground of this article and Peterson's (1997) work is the acknowledgement of the manufactured – negotiated and socially constructed – nature of authenticity. What this paper adds to Peterson's production of culture view, is that creative individuals seeking an authentic career have to consider the manufactured nature of authenticity in conjunction with sincere identity expression. Hence, while borrowing Peterson's (1997) notion of 'authenticity work', I consider it as a duality of identity expression and image manufacturing. Thirdly, this study supports Peterson's (1997) conclusion that authenticity is a renewable resource, which leads to emphasizing the importance of examining authenticity work over time, longitudinally. Further, when discussing the renewability of authenticity, I point the attention to another duality, that of continuity and change in authenticity work. Finally, this study differs from Peterson's (1997) work in its concern with pushing forward the understanding of boundaryless careers. In that effort I conceive of authenticity as, paradoxically, both a motor and an anchor for careers in boundaryless contexts. This emphasis on the pursuit of authenticity in the building of a career provides a micro-level view point, which could be seen as complementary to the institutional-level accounts of authenticity developed from a production of culture perspective (Peterson, 1997; Peterson and Anand, 2004).

This study has limitations, which suggest directions for future research. First, I have acknowledged that the creation of a creative career is intertwined with the context in which it unfolds. However I have not pursued the influence of context both on authenticity work and careers. Being context-specific, authenticity work that unfolds in a regulated, fragmented industry is expected to differ from one that takes place in a consolidated environment driven by powerful business interests. Would what have worked for a Spanish filmmaker be viable

in the context of Hollywood, where industry structure, talent pool, intermediaries, and power differ? Álvarez et al. (2004) have compared Almodóvar with Francis Ford Coppola, another idiosyncratic filmmaker who works in the Hollywood cinema field and suggest there are context-specific differences. The documentary *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (Coppola and Hickeloper, 1992), filmed by Coppola's wife Eleanor during the infamous *Apocalypse Now* production is believed to reveal Coppola's struggle with the Hollywood studio system in his desire to make a personal movie. The influence of such context differences needs to be studied further when attempts at generalizing the proposed model of authenticity work are made.

Second, the creation of careers in film and other creative industries takes place in project networks. In this study I recognize the importance of the interaction with different audiences but do not account for the role of interactions of the film director with cast and crew on the set. Such interactions can have an impact on the identity of the director and the shaping of his or her career (White and White, 1965; Farrell, 2001). They can also provide authentic experiences to the actors on the set, as revealed by Jones and Smith (this issue).

Third, this study deals with issues such as identity expression and image manufacturing. These are particularly difficult to disentangle in the domain of creativity. In the words of Millás (2004) in a recent article on Almodóvar, "... it is very difficult to identify where the line between the person and the persona lies because it is a moving frontier" (p. 38).

The shaping of one's private and public self in a distinctive, consistent and truthful way is necessary not only for professionals in creative industries. The new organizational realities have shifted the responsibility and initiative for one's career from the organization to the individual (Mirvis and Hall, 1996). Individuals are expected to be active (and pro-active) agents of their own destinies. The mobility that

characterizes boundaryless careers, however, needs an anchor. Authenticity, understood as a truthful expression and presentation of one's self to various audiences, has the potential of becoming and being such an anchor. Furthermore, it can also be a motor of a meaningful and satisfactory career.

Hence, this study has implications and provides opportunities for further research on the careers of other professionals who work across organizational boundaries and have a strong need for identity expression and the manufacturing of a consistent image with various audiences. These include artists, fashion designers, creatives in advertising, elite chefs, or architects, among others. Furthermore, authenticity-driven careers can be salient trajectories for knowledge workers, such as scientists and academics. Finally, authenticity can be the thread that binds executive careers, as affirmed in the recent call for 'authentic leadership' (George, 2003). Being true to oneself can prove to be a valuable career anchor in a complex, vibrant, and fragmented world.

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## Appendix 1. Data Sources<sup>4</sup>

### Sources in Spanish

(a) Nine semi-structured interviews with closest collaborators of Pedro Almodóvar conducted on the premises of his production company El Deseo between 1999-2001.

(b) Observation notes from visits to El Deseo and informal interactions with members of the team.

(c) Notes from attended Round table with Pedro Almodóvar in the Filmoteca of Barcelona and his film's presentation at a film school (Barcelona, 19th-20th December 2000).

(d) Book with in-depth interviews with the director and essays by him on the aesthetics and processes of production of his feature films: Strauss, F. (2001) *Conversaciones con Pedro Almodóvar*. Barcelona: Ediciones Akal.

(e) "Self-interviews" (interviews in which Almodóvar is both the interviewer and the interviewee) on the movies *Talk to Her* (2002) and *Bad Education* (2004), published in promotional leaflets and/or his website.

(f) Essays with daily accounts of Almodóvar with his impressions of people, places and events during the Oscar campaigns for his films *All about My Mother* (1999) and *Talk to Her* (2002) published by the Spanish newspaper *El País*:

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<sup>4</sup> Some of these sources have been used previously to generate insight or provide an illustration of issues, such as symbiotic careers (Álvarez and Svejnova, 2002), and mechanisms for bridging art and business by maverick filmmakers (Álvarez, Mazza, Strandgaard, and Svejnova, 2005).

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- Almodóvar, P. “Diario de campaña, 2”, *EPS (El País Semanal)*, 27th February 2000, pp. 110-119.
- Almodóvar, P. “‘Jet lag’ y papada: Diario pop americano”, *EPS (El País Semanal)*, 16th February 2003, pp. 36-49.

(g) Project reports with aesthetic and production-related accounts for the films *Matador* (1985) and *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1987) written by Almodóvar and submitted to the Ministry of Education and Culture prior to the commencement of their filming:

- Almodóvar, P. “Algunos comentarios previos a *Matador*”
- Almodóvar, P. “Memoria del proyecto *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*”

(h) Press books of the films *High Heels* (1993), *Live Flesh* (1997) and *All about My Mother* (1999), with text written by Almodóvar.

(i) Footage of his films and television programs featuring the work of the director.

(j) Books

- Holguín, A. (1994) *Pedro Almodóvar*. Madrid: Cátedra.

Sources in English:

(k) International articles on Pedro Almodóvar and his films, published in *Variety*, *Film Maker*, *Vanity Fair*, *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, among others.

(l) Definitions of his work and style in film dictionaries.

(m) Official website of the film director in English:

<<http://www.clubcultura.com/clubcine/clubcineastas/almodovar/eng>>

(n) Álvarez, J. L.; Svejenova, S. (2000) “The Almodovar Brothers’ Film Factory: Unbinding Art Through Tight Relationships”. Case of the Research Department DG- 1331-E. Barcelona: IESE.