

GOVERNING NETWORK EVOLUTION  
IN THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

José L. Alvarez\*  
Silviya Svejenova\*\*

*RESEARCH PAPER No 435*  
*April, 2001*

\* Professor of General Management, IESE

\*\* Doctoral Candidate, IESE

**Research Division**  
**IESE**  
University of Navarra  
Av. Pearson, 21  
08034 Barcelona - Spain

## **GOVERNING NETWORK EVOLUTION IN THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY**

### **Abstract**

This paper provides a managerial account of network governance by exploring how initially non-powerful agents, driven by the quest for distinctive identity, shape the governance of their networks over time. The research design is that of a longitudinal comparative case study of the trajectories of three renowned, Oscar-winning Spanish filmmakers. It scrutinizes data coming from original interviews, as well as from multiple secondary data sources, in order to illustrate the propositions advanced. The paper's contribution is sought (1) in proposing a micro-level framework for systematic thinking about network governance evolution, distinguishing four dimensions (co-governance, structure, strategy, and pace) and their respective sub-categories; (2) in advancing three peculiar identity profiles with different implications for the evolution of network governance (i.e., a maverick, an integrated professional, and a broker); (3) in bringing together two bodies of literature that have not conversed frequently (i.e., network governance and identity) in a largely overlooked cultural and historical context, that of Spain after the transition to democracy in 1975.

## **GOVERNING NETWORK EVOLUTION IN THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY**

Huge global conglomerates and small companies are increasingly embracing network forms of governance (Laubacher & Malone, 1999; see also Nohria & Ghoshal (1997) on multinational companies as differentiated networks; Galbraith (2000) on informal and formal global networks; Walker, Kogut, & Shan (1997) and Baum, Calabrese, & Silverman (2000) on biotech startups). Researchers from different perspectives on organizations show a remarkable interest in the study of these network forms. Some have tried to distinguish them from other forms of governance (Powell, 1990; Jones, 1993; Ebers, 1997), or have focused on the social mechanisms through which they operate (e.g., Jones, Hesterly, & Borgatti, 1997; Uzzi, 1997; Ring 1997). Others have inquired into the formation processes, looking at their endogenous and/or exogenous dynamics (e.g., Gulati & Garguilo, 1999; Garcia-Pont & Nohria, 2000; Powell, Koput, & Smith-Doerr, 1996), or delineating distinct formation paths (Doz, Olk, & Ring, 2000). Apart from the functionality of networks as governance forms (e.g., learning, legitimacy, status, economic benefits), scholars have increasingly paid attention to networks' costs (Ebers & Grandori, 1997) and dysfunctionality, such as decay (what Burt (2000) calls the tendency for relationships to weaken and disappear), demise and failure (e.g., Ariño & de la Torre, 1998; Podolny & Page, 1998; Human & Provan, 2000).

While various studies have addressed diverse evolutionary issues (e.g., Human & Provan 2000, Doz et al. 2000, Gulati & Garguilo 1999), they have traced networks' evolution rather than the evolution of the governance of these networks, and have predominantly provided macro-insights (at the organizational and inter-organizational levels of analysis). Networks, however, are not a standard organizational solution, and hence, require permanent management attention and action (Ebers & Grandori, 1997). In addition, inter-organizational relations are embodied (and embedded) in interpersonal bonds between managers and employees from different enterprises. Therefore, apart from providing increased understanding of network phenomena, network theory should speak to the concerns of the managers who govern these complex organizational arrangements (Kanter & Eccles, 1992).

This paper provides such a managerial account of network governance by exploring how initially non-powerful agents in a field, driven by the quest for a distinctive identity, shape the governance of their networks over time. Identity is depicted on a micro level, focusing on two parameters – social (represented by the concept of role versatility) and personal (captured by the notion of style). Underlying assumption is that action is capable of influencing social structure (e.g., Padgett & Ansell, 1993; Weick, 1996; Alvarez, 2000), and that the social organization arises from identity formation out of control efforts (White, 1992).

The study is situated within the context of a unique inter-organizational field, the Spanish film industry in the last 25 years and, similar to Greenfeld (1989), it uses art to add to the understanding of social reality. The film industry is a frequent empirical site for addressing network issues. Still, insights come predominantly from the Hollywood pitch (e.g., Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Jones, 1993). When situated elsewhere, studies mostly employ macro approaches (e.g., Ghertman & Hadida (1998) on the French film industry, Sydow & Windeler (1998) on the German television industry, Starkey, Barnatt, & Tempest (2000) on the U.K. television industry). This study opens up new ground by providing a longitudinal, comparative micro account of network governance evolution in the context of the Spanish cinema.

The paper's contribution is sought first in proposing a micro-level framework for systematic thinking about network governance evolution, distinguishing four dimensions (co-governance, structure, strategy, and pace) and their respective sub-categories. Second, it advances three peculiar identity profiles with different implications for the evolution of network governance (i.e., a maverick, an integrated professional, and a broker). "Maverick" and "integrated professional" (Becker, 1982) label two different identities – the former, of an agent who breaks the canons of acceptable practice, and the latter, of an agent who follows them. "Broker" denominates the identity of a social entrepreneur who creams the benefits of bridging the non-redundant contacts in his network (Burt, 1992). Last, the paper brings together two bodies of literature that have not conversed frequently (i.e., network governance and identity) in a largely overlooked cultural and historical context, that of Spain after the transition to democracy in 1975.

The paper is organized in the following way. The next section highlights the research design, and the methods for data collection and analysis. Then, the extant theory on identity and network governance evolution is reviewed selectively along key parameters and dimensions, advanced in our framework. Propositions regarding the link identity-network governance evolution are advanced, and then illustrated with three longitudinal comparative case studies. Finally, we provide some conclusions emphasizing their limitations and managerial implications, and draw attention to some avenues for future research.

## **Methods**

### ***Research Design***

The paper aims at building a middle range theory, situated "in between individualism and cultural holism" (White, 1992: xii). Middle range theories are "intermediate to the minor working hypotheses evolved in abundance during the day-by-day routines of research, and the all inclusive speculations comprising a master conceptual scheme from which it is hoped to derive a very large number of empirically observed uniformities of social behavior" (Merton, 1957).

The paper presents some insights drawn from a longitudinal, comparative case study. Such a design facilitates the comprehension of the dynamics within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). Treating the cases as whole entities, rather than as collections of scores on variables allows contextual understanding of the relations between the parts (Ragin, 1987). We follow design indications from Yin's (1989) noteworthy text, following a middle road between positivist and interpretive traditions. In a positivist way we specify the core constructs a priori (Eisenhardt, 1989). Then, in a more grounded-theory-like

fashion, we improve and enrich the framework by developing “deep cases” (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). We do travel back and forth between theory and empirical evidence, with the explanation appearing in abstract form, that is, constructed in theoretical language.

We focus on the cases of the three most renowned elite Spanish filmmakers, who have received an Oscar award and have been acknowledged in the most important international and local film festivals and events – two film directors (Pedro Almodóvar and Fernando Trueba), and a film producer (Andrés Vicente Gómez). The cases are selected through theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) – as opposed to statistical sampling – to fit three distinctive theoretical categories of identity profiles (i.e., a maverick, an integrated professional, and a broker) with important implications for the network governance evolution. Furthermore, they are critical (deviant) cases for the Spanish cinema because of their exceptional independence and their critical and commercial success, unlike the majority of the local industry.

### ***Data Collection***

The study combines multiple data collection methods, since triangulation through methods’ multiplicity is expected to provide stronger substantiation of the constructs (Eisenhardt, 1989). First, extensive data on the film project networks’ content and results (box office in Spain, most important local and international awards) were collected from the Ministry of Education and Culture for each of the three filmmakers. Being the industry’s regulator, the Ministry keeps extensive information on every film that is made. An open-ended interview with Beatriz de Armas, Deputy-Director of Protection of the ICAA (the Ministry’s Film Institute, which develops and implements the regulation policy) facilitated the access not only to the film project archives, but also to industry analyses and institutional policy documents. Interviewing a film critic-historian, and a film producer, who was expert advisor in the initial stages of the project, captured further contextual peculiarities.

Extensive open-ended interviews were conducted at several points of time between November 1999 and November 2000 with key collaborators involved in the network governance of the three filmmakers (and whenever possible with the filmmakers themselves). These interviews were preceded and followed by multiple telephone conversations for the clarification of details, and were preceded combined with site visits at the filmmakers’ production companies. During the visits the researchers took observational notes. In the case of Almodóvar, one of the authors spent several days in the premises of his company El Deseo, working with the archives. Apart from the extensive amount of press clips and company’s promotional materials that were reviewed, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the daily routines of the team and to interact with it on an informal basis.

Extensive secondary data included local and international press clips on the Spanish film industry in general, and on the three filmmakers in particular. It also incorporated transcripts of speeches or memos on film making issues by the three agents, as well as published collections of interviews with reputable Spanish cinematographers, screenwriters, and art directors, commenting, among other things, on their relations and work with Trueba, Almodóvar and Gómez. To those were added accounts of the professional trajectories of the three film makers in the Dictionary of Spanish Cinema, edited by the Spanish Film Academy, in special TV programs featuring Almodóvar and Trueba, and extensively interviewing them and their close collaborators and friends. Table 1 highlights the multiple methods used for the collection of data on each of the cases.

**Table 1. Comparative Representation of Data Sources for the Three Cases**

Sources of information	Pedro Almodóvar	Fernando Trueba	Andrés Vicente Gómez
Site visits (to the offices of the independent production companies of the three film makers)	“El Deseo” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 7 visits</li> <li>– archival work</li> <li>– informal interaction</li> <li>– observational notes</li> </ul>	“Fernando Trueba P.C.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1 visit</li> <li>– observational notes</li> </ul>	“Lolafilms” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1 visit</li> <li>– observational notes</li> </ul>
Interviews with key collaborators in the network governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 9 interviews (half-taped, half – notes taken)</li> <li>– various telephone conversations for clarification of details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 interviews (one of them over the phone -taped)</li> <li>– various telephone conversations for clarification of details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1 interview (notes taken)</li> <li>– various telephone conversations for clarification of details</li> </ul>
TV programs featuring the filmmakers; speeches and round tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– TV programs’ tapes on Almodóvar, his speeches when receiving awards at local/international ceremonies (1999-2000)</li> <li>– notes from a round table and colloquium with Almodóvar’s participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a TV program tape featuring Trueba</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– transcripts of Gómez’s speech on the role of the producer</li> <li>– 1998 Cannes Film Festival’s presentation of Gómez among the 12 best producers</li> </ul>
Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) Electronic database	Information on the participants in each of the feature films made by the three filmmakers in the last 25 years, the box office in Spain and the awards obtained		
MEC Central Archive	Folders containing detailed information for each of the films made: e.g., co-production and other contracts, film budgets, memos of the film directors with description of the film projects, and the artistic and technical decisions involved in them, etc.		
Local and international press clips; books	Various sources from various years		

### ***Data Analysis***

Recently, even first rank economists acknowledge that “[i]f one settles for information that is heterogeneous and largely qualitative, but nonetheless abundant, a great deal can be learned on the economic organization and behavior” of creative industries (Caves, 2000: vii). We approached the multiple data sources in a positivist-like fashion (Eisenhardt, 1989), using a pre-conceived framework derived from the literature. Using within-case and between-cases analyses, we then modified and developed the initial framework in a more grounded-theory like fashion (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), travelling back and forth between theory and data.

To advance the theory out of the “staggering volume of data” (Eisenhardt, 1989) we first transcribed the interviews, as well as video materials relevant to the research question of this paper. Then we combined the transcribed data with other secondary sources and came out with detailed case study write-ups for each of the three sites. Then we performed within-case analyses on each filmmaker’s quest for identity and his networks governance evolution, illustrating each of the constructs in our initial framework and exploring the links among (some of) them.

Next we looked for cross-case patterns, delineating both similarities and differences along the propositions advanced. To link the abundant qualitative data to our propositions, we used “pattern-matching” of sequences or time-series of events – comparing and relating pieces of information from the three cases to the theoretical arguments (Campbell, 1975). Pattern-matching is a tactic addressing the issue of internal validity, which is about “establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships” (Yin, 1989). Tying the emergent theory to existing literature enhances the internal validity, generalizability, and theoretical level of theory-building from case-study research (Eisenhardt, 1989).

### **The quest for identity: Nature, process, and parameters**

In this paper we explore how agents govern their networks in the quest for identity. Identity is the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role (Schein, quoted in Ibarra, 1999). Still, “identity is never a priori, nor a finished product; it is only the ever problematic process of access to an image of totality” (Bhabha, quoted in Howard (2000)). It provides energy to action (White, 1992: 4), while simultaneously continuing to discover and reshape itself in action (Howard, 2000: 9).

Different perspectives explore identity issues, emphasizing their individual or collective nature. Howard (2000) reviews the social psychological underpinnings of identities, focusing on social cognition and symbolic interactionism. Cerulo (1997) explores perspectives on collective identities, such as social constructionism, postmodernism, and identity politics. Strategy scholars also increasingly deal with identity issues because they speak to the very definition of an entity, and convey its distinctiveness and oneness (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000: 13).

Sociology has been abundant in attempts to trace the genesis of distinctive (group) identities through the building of networks (e.g., Greenfeld, 1989; White & White, 1993). Still, sociologists have focused mainly on the way artists embedded in a collective have managed to introduce change in the institutional system. The peculiarity and added value of this study lies precisely in bringing the account a layer down – from the group to the actor, who designs and manages in a purposive way the networks.

In this study we adopt a micro approach to the nature of identity, focusing on two identity parameters – social (depicted by the concept of role versatility), and personal (captured by the notion of style). *Role versatility* refers to the variety of activities performed by an artist simultaneously and/or successively to preserve agility and to increase control over valuable resources. The creative person’s working time and earnings are divided among the creative activity itself, art-related work (e.g., teaching activities and management tasks in artistic organizations), and non-art work (Menger, 1999).

*Style* is about the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others. In cultural production it captures the made coherence and the claimed de-coupling from social formations (White, 1992), as well as the different agent’s proficiency and/or different traits of his or her work (Caves, 2000). A style of a film director could be idiosyncratic (e.g., a relatively limited range of recurrent genre(s), topics, characters, favorite locations, colors and light) or universal (e.g., genre agility, varied characters and topics, different geographical locations and language). A style of a producer is idiosyncratic when he or she specializes in

particular genres and/or quality of films. An example in this sense is Ciby 2000, the French film production company set up in 1991 by the construction magnate Francis Bouygues, which until its exit from the business in the late 1990s signed production deals only with the finest cinéastes (Dale, 1997). A producer has a universal style when he or she diversifies the portfolio of projects by incorporating both A and B (with different quality) films (Caves, 2000), or films from a broad range of genres. Table 2 summarizes different perspectives and contributions on the nature, process, and parameters of identity.

**Table 2. Identity: Nature, Process, and Parameters**

Identity	Reference source
<p><b>Definition:</b></p> <p>The relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences (Schein, quoted in Ibarra, 1999)</p>	<p><b>The nature of identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Micro</i> perspectives (social cognition, symbolic interactionism) with emphasis on individual’s attributes, roles and social groups’ belonging (Howard, 2000)</li> <li>– <i>Macro</i> perspectives (social constructionism, postmodernism, identity politics) with focus on the collective (e.g., racial, national) identity (Cerulo, 1997)</li> </ul> <p><b>The process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Micro</i> processes (Howard, 2000). Identity continuously discovers/shapes itself in action [e.g., self-presentation (Goffman, 1959), signaling (Jones, forthcoming)]</li> <li>– <i>Macro</i> processes (Cerulo, 1997). Ruling cultural scripts and centers of power, and coordinated actions of collectives to differentiate themselves, mold identity</li> <li>– <i>Identity bricolage</i> (Carruthers &amp; Uzzi, 2000). The reconfiguration of economic roles and identities to engender new modes of exchange, allocation, valuation</li> </ul>
Identity	Reference source
<p><b>Role versatility:</b> the different activities (roles) performed by an artist</p>	<p>Types of activities in an artist’s role versatility set (Menger, 1999)</p> <p>Combinatorial patterns of occupational roles in film making as adaptation or imitation strategy for accessing resources (Baker &amp; Faulkner, 1991)</p>
<p><b>Style:</b> the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others</p>	<p>Differentiation in creative industries (Caves, 2000):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Horizontal – differences in traits, moods, styles of an artist, and/or his artwork</li> <li>– Vertical – different plateaus of artists’ proficiency, different quality of artwork</li> </ul> <p>Style as integrating behavior across disparate network populations and discernible as package, which combines signals with social pattern (White, 1992)</p> <p>Aesthetic style as determinant of the individual’s approach to the medium, genre, and problem solving techniques (Jones, forthcoming).</p>



The quest for identity, we hypothesize, is linked to the process of network governance. On the one hand, it is the network governor who makes or controls the most important network governance choices, hence governing the network evolution. This paper investigates the relative explanatory value of this micro-level factor (the quest for identity) for the differences in network governance evolution. On the other hand, however, the link between identity and network governance is not unidirectional. The interaction with a pool of professionals (in the artistic labor market) and (more tightly) with the participants in the project networks, activated from the professional pool, provides feedback and further moulds the identity. The paper does not explore this feedback loop, though it acknowledges its importance in the avenues for future research through the notions of drift and cross-influence.

### **Governing the network evolution: Critical dimensions**

Despite the structural constraints, people play an active role in shaping their social networks to achieve their goals (Ibarra, 1995). In the previous section we advanced one possible micro-factor (the quest for identity by non-powerful agents) that may impact the way networks are governed over time. Governance is about the authorities, roles, structures, processes, and relationships that run an enterprise, and is consistently non-routine and dealing with ambiguous problems and trade-offs (Walton, 1998). Network governance in particular has been depicted as a dynamic, patterned process of organizing among semi-autonomous entities (Jones et al., 1997). It is largely based on trust (Gulati, 1995; Uzzi, 1996, 1997; Ring, 1997; Podolny & Page, 1998), on unilateral decision control and residual risk bearing combined with periodical joint decision making by the transaction partners (Ebers, 1997), and may involve institutionalized knowledge-sharing routines (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000). Experience in network governance over time could be a source of strategic advantage (Anand & Khanna, 2000).

Our managerial focus and the interest in tracing the micro links between networks and identity justify the dimensions along which we scrutinize the network governance evolution. We look at dimensions which agents in search of identity have the interest and the power to affect. Furthermore, depending on the identity profile pursued (i.e., maverick, integrated, or entrepreneurial), the agents will choose different facets of each of these dimensions. Network governance features along which the cases converge could be due, we hypothesize, to the common context, business, and role structure in which they unfold.

This study proposes four inter-related dimensions along which micro aspects of network governance evolution could be traced. These dimensions are (1) co-governance (a more egalitarian definition of the network governor, celebrating both the visionary and his talented and dedicated deputy); (2) structure (the permanent organizational arrangement, which administers the project networks); (3) strategy (the approach to a project network's composition with respect to previously assembled networks), and (4) pace (the rhythm at which new projects develop). Table 3 offers a referenced definition of these dimensions and their within-dimensional variety.

Table 3. Dimensions of Network Governance Evolution

Dimension (definition)	Within-dimension typology	Reference source
<b>Co-governance</b>	A visionary/ A trusted and devoted implementor	Symbiotic careers (Alvarez & Svejenova, forthcoming): a trusted altergo, committed to the career of a visionary  Co-leadership (Heenan & Bennis, 1999): “celebrates those who do the real work”, the truly exceptional deputies  Different attitudes and skills between artists and managers (Storr, 1985; Pedler et al., 1986; Sibillin, 2001)
<b>Structure:</b> a permanent organizational arrangement, which governs the project network(s)	Initial network of support – Core/peripheral – Local/ international  Subsequent structural arrangements – Own/of others – One/several – Structural differentiation – Instrumental/ affective bonds in the team	Impact of biotech startups’ alliance network composition at founding on their early performance (Baum et al., 2000)  A triggering entity (Doz et al., 2000): critical in R&D consortia, in cases when interdependencies are difficult to recognize  Artists’ independent companies serve them to retain ownership rights and rents over their artwork (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1999)  Artists’ independent companies reduce structural constraints on creativity and increase control over one’s artistic output (Alvarez & Svejenova, forthcoming)  Talent agency as a broker that “packages” the creative inputs for a film project (Bielby & Bielby, 1999)
<b>Strategy:</b> refers to the project network composition with respect to previously assembled networks	Composition of project networks – Reception – Alteration	<i>A collectivist</i> (highly exclusive and stable over time) versus an <i>individualist</i> (highly inclusive and involving a large number of firms that work together only rarely) strategy (Jones et al., 1998)  Network reproduction (social capital theory) is a better predictor of cooperation over time than networks’ alteration (structural hole theory) by entrepreneurs (Walker et al., 2000)  “Brokers” who derive differentiation advantages from the ability to reassemble a successful production team in a fluid environment (Starkey et al., 2000)
<b>Pace:</b> the rate at which new projects are developed	– One project at a time – Several projects at a time – No pace	Pace is an important, yet overlooked dimension in the study of network evolution (Doz et al., 2000)  Time pacing is an active strategy of deciding on a calendar of launching new products (Brown & Eusenhardt, 1998)

**Co-governance.** It provides a more egalitarian understanding of the authority, who controls the networks, focusing both on the charismatic leader and her exceptional deputy (Heenan & Bennis, 1999). The co-governing could be embedded in symbiotic careers. Symbiotic career is a career trajectory, sustained by a stable, affect- and trust-based couple (e.g., an artist and his trustee), which shares highly differentiated tasks, which are usually incompatible for carrying out by a single person (Alvarez & Svejenova, forthcoming). Trust embedded in such strong, frequent personal relationships nested in wider networks is referred to as thick (Putnam, 2000) or relational (Rousseau et al. 1998) trust. Under conditions of

uncertainty and complexity, requiring mutual adjustment, characteristic for the film industry, sustained effective coordinated action is only possible where there is mutual confidence and trust (Thompson, quoted in McAllister, 1995).

**Proposition 1a:** *Given the uncertainty and complexity characteristic of a creative industry, and the need for effective coordinated action between art and business, trust-based co-governance of independent companies and project networks would be ubiquitous.*

Psychological accounts of artistic and business activities in art show important differences. For example, a creative person prefers complexity, asymmetry, and incompleteness, rejects facile solutions, waiting to arrive alone at a more satisfying synthesis (Storr, 1985). This may contradict the scheduled and budgeted logic of business. Further, an artist need not be methodological and systematic, and often seeks to bend or break the rules (Cummings & Oldham, 1997), which could contradict the repetitive and routine nature of deal making and production.

Analytical, problem-solving, and decision/judgement-making skills, balanced learning habits and skills, command of basic facts, pro-activity (i.e. a tendency to respond purposefully to events), are all qualities possessed by successful managers (Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1986). They are not necessarily compatible with the creative personality, which is better portrayed by words such as independence, originality, impulsiveness, and expansiveness (Storr, 1985). Bernard Arnault, the CEO of the LVMH luxury goods empire, provides a nice summary of the artistic-business tension: “The creator is an artist and cannot follow the same path as a businessman. When a creator invents, it is not a unified or rational process. But the management side is very rational, organized and results-oriented. So the two sides sometimes clash. It is from this type of contradiction that you create real progress, real invention and, finally, real success” (Sibillin, 2001). Individual brands in LVMH preserve their authenticity and autonomy by being co-run by an entrepreneur/manager and a designer/creator.

**Proposition 1b:** *Given the differences in artistic and business activities in required skills, attitudes, and predisposition, co-governors would likely maintain role differentiation (between artistic and business roles).*

**Structure.** We could distinguish several structural patterns in a network context. First, there usually is a permanent structure for network governance (e.g., independent production company), which outlives the temporal project networks it assembles and manages, and retains professional knowledge and relational expertise. Second, professionals in a creative industry operate in a net of professional contacts, out of which the project networks are selectively activated (e.g., Hulbert, Haines, & Beggs, 2000). Last, it is the project network, as a coalescence of professionals and resources over a short period of time until the completion of the project (e.g., Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Baker & Faulkner, 1991; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1998). In this study, under the dimension called “structure”, we scrutinize exclusively the peculiarities of the permanent organizational arrangement that designs, assembles, and manages temporary networks.

We also distinguish between initial and subsequent permanent support structures. The network through which an agent enters the industry is an important source of knowledge, visibility, legitimacy, or freedom (see Baum et al. (2000) on the impact of the startups’ alliance network composition at founding on their early performance). Once the actors have made their claim for professional inclusion in the industry, they may substitute their

independent permanent structures for those that have initially facilitated them. Having an independent production company in a creative industry is a way to reduce structural constraints on creativity and to increase control over one's artistic output, retaining ownership rights and rents over artwork (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1999; Alvarez & Svejenova, forthcoming). Permanent structures, however, may differ in their degree of specialization and integration of activities from the industry's value chain.

**Proposition 2a:** *Non-powerful agents in the quest for identity would tend to establish independent companies to govern the networks for the making of their projects according to their liking.*

Artists who pursue identities deviant from the legitimate patterns in the field may face unwillingness or inability of the industry's infrastructure to service the collaborative needs of their artwork (Becker, 1982). Attempts to break the canons of acceptable practice are found costly in economic, cognitive, and social terms, with reduced legitimacy and hence, penalties, such as reduced access to resources derived from legitimacy (Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Zuckerman, 1999; Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2000, Human & Provan, 2000). Still, actors ensconced in certain identities and in need of control (White, 1992) may try to break these structural constraints and build their own teams of collaboration. Teams based on close, affective, and binding relationships – expressive bonds, which at the same time are instrumental (Ibarra, 1993) – would serve as “systems for making decisions, mobilizing resources, concealing or transmitting information, and performing other functions closely allied with work behavior and interaction”.

**Proposition 2b:** *The farther an agent's identity is from the legitimate identities in a field, the more likely he is to assemble a team with affective ties in his independent company.*

**Strategy.** It refers to the project network's composition with respect to previously assembled networks. A new project network could reassemble clusters of cohesive ties (Starkey et al., 2000), or alter the network's content by bridging previously disconnected subgroups (Walker et al., 1997; Frank & Yasumoto, 1998). The ability to reconvene a successful production team in a fluid environment where the majority of workers are essentially “nomadic” is a source of differential advantage and could secure continuity and understanding of the complex creative style of the core agent around whose vision the network is assembled.

**Proposition 3a:** *An agent with idiosyncratic style would predominantly reconvene cohesive clusters of professionals in successive project networks to enhance understanding and to secure continuity of his stylistic peculiarity.*

**Proposition 3b:** *An agent with universal style would predominantly alter project networks' content depending on the type of project at hand.*

**Pace.** The pace at which project networks are assembled is a relevant, yet overlooked dimension in the study of network evolution (e.g., Doz et al., 2000). Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) conceptualize time pacing as an active strategy of deciding on a calendar of launching of new products (or film projects in our case). They juxtapose it to the reactive strategy of event pacing, where the company waits for the environment to decide for it the appropriateness of one action over another. The issue of pace is especially relevant for a creative industry with uncertainty of matching between the artistic and business subsystems. The ability to maintain a steady pace of project development (independence) could be a way for distinction building.

**Proposition 4a:** *A steady pace of project networks' development would be ubiquitous among agents in quest of identity.*

Additional distinction could result from the rate of pacing. The assembly and management of one versus several projects at a time would require different network governance mechanisms. In the case of one project at a time, a permanent structure based on thick trust could secure tight control over the artwork for its entrepreneur. If several projects are developed simultaneously, however, a highly specialized formal structure will be more effective. Further, the quest for identity (e.g., a style giving primacy to original script over one based on an existing literary work; a strategy of reconvening certain professionals) may further accelerate or slow down the pace. Many unexpected events could also affect the pace at which a project develops (see the documentary “Hearts of Darkness – A Filmmaker’s Apocalypse” on the painful and long journey of UCLA, Hollywood “boy wonder” – Francis Ford Coppola – in the making of the disaster-laden Vietnam epic production, “Apocalypse Now”).

**Proposition 4b:** *An agent’s choices regarding the structure (the degree of differentiation of the triggering entity) and the strategy (repetition versus alteration of consecutive networks) would influence the pace at which she is able to assemble the project networks.*

## Overview of the Context

Network governance is historically and culturally embedded (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994). Hence, the cases we scrutinize can be understood only in relation to their context – the Spanish film industry after the transition to democracy. This section briefly describes this context. In 1977, two years after General Franco’s death, film censorship was officially banned by Royal Decree, giving Spanish filmmakers freedom of expression. In January 1984 another Royal Decree introduced the policy of advance subsidies, which provided financing for producers of quality experimental films during the development stage. Aimed at aiding an impoverished, though not non-existent industry, the decree further weakened the production sector since many directors registered their own production companies in order to claim subsidies. The mortality rate among these companies was extremely high – only a few outlived the projects for which they were initially set up.

The new wave of directors whose careers were launched in the post-Franco era tended towards idiosyncrasy rather than to the collective labels (and collective identities) characteristic of the past. Yet only a few of them gained the freedom to make the projects of their choice and managed to shape a distinctive identity. Among the film directors of the 1980s, two are particularly associated with the definitive break with the past and with artistic singularity – Pedro Almodóvar and Fernando Trueba (both of whom are featured in this study). Trueba has approached the field as an “integrated professional” (Becker, 1982), backed up by the field’s infrastructure and respecting its professional norms. In contrast, Almodóvar has been recognized as a “maverick” (Becker, 1982), working at odds with the canons of accepted practice and largely neglected by the field’s establishment.

In a weak industry, another way to become a powerful and distinctive player is by working on a larger scale than the rest of the industry (bridging resources, contacts, and expertise for the making of several projects at a time). Representative of this way of gaining independence and centrality in the field’s elite is the third case in our study, that of the film producer Andrés Vicente Gómez, who acts as a broker, bringing together local, European, and Hollywood professional and financial networks.

The three cases featured in the paper rose to prominence in the field in the late 1980s. In the 1990s, the trend to singularity flourished, with the irruption of several very gifted novice film directors, who broke with the traditional genres and with the “auteur” complex, and started making films with clear audience appeal. This has challenged Almodóvar and Trueba’s centrality in the elite, yet both of them are willing to give a helping hand to these novice directors, offering them the comfort and expertise of their production structures (this is also true for Gómez) in their initiation in the field.

Hence, a major exogenous shock in the context of an institutional field provides a window of opportunity for gifted and ambitious non-powerful agents in the quest for identity to rise up to centrality in the field’s elite and to become free to make the projects of their choice. We are interested in actors with entrepreneurial personality who resist external attempts to control their behavior (Amabile, 1996) and seek ownership rights to the fruits of their artistic behavior (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1999). In such situations of uncertainty, these agents confront “weak situations” (Weick, 1996), which give few guidelines for action; yet, on the other hand, structures are softer and can be molded more easily by the actors (Alvarez, 2000).

### **The cases**

The propositions advanced in the theoretical section of the paper are contrasted with the cases of three reputable Spanish film makers (Almodóvar, Trueba, and Gómez), all of whom rose to centrality and power in the industry’s elite in the mid-1980s. They entered the field long before their professional consolidation, governing the evolution of their project networks in the quest for identity.

Almodóvar pursues a maverick identity (Becker, 1982) and develops an idiosyncratic style in terms of cinematographic language and toolkit. He is self-trained, and his familiarity with the art and craft of filmmaking comes from learning by doing and experimentation, unhindered by film academicism. The novel style and aesthetic standards, initially severely criticized or ignored by the establishment, are now highly acclaimed signs of his distinctive artistic personality. The quest for professionalism as a style (White, 1992) has driven Almodóvar to reshape his role versatility set. Initially dispersed (making short films, playing in a spoof pop-rock group, writing for underground magazines, acting in an amateur theatrical troupe, and working as a clerk in the Spanish telecom company), his role versatility set has focused mostly on script writing (predominantly, original scripts without a co-author) and directing.

Trueba’s identity as an integrated professional who respects the cinema’s canons and has the technical abilities, social skills, and conceptual apparatus to make it easier to make art (Becker, 1982) is apparent in the universality of his style, which encompasses different genres (comedy, historical drama, thriller, documentary), topics, locations and language. He usually co-authors the scripts of his movies and bases them mostly on existing literary materials. In addition, his role versatility set has become broader over time, opening up to diverse activities (running a publishing company for film scripts, making TV series, editing a film magazine, writing a film dictionary, etc.). Apart from being a director and scriptwriter, he is also a producer, alternating between directing his own movies and producing those of other film directors.

Gómez entered filmmaking through international, core, professional players, which has given him exposure to professional networks with a large scale and scope of operations, and different rules of the game than apply in Spain. He started up an independent film production company in Spain in the early 1970s, trying to develop a universal style. His consolidation as a producer came in the mid-1980s, when he came into contact with several elite Spanish film directors and began to develop long-term professional, and later personal, relationships with them. In the 1990s his quest to become the number one producer in Spain led him to produce at a rate of 10 films per year (an extraordinary pace for what, in Spain, was such a weak industry) and to produce films both in Spanish and in English. His role versatility set indicates his desire to become a broker and acquire a universal style. His core role as a film producer is complemented by his role as director of the Media Business School (initially an EU initiative backed by the MEDIA Program, focused on training producers) and as a founding member of an elite Paris-based European producers' think tank. This role versatility allows him to bridge sectors of the geographically dispersed Spanish, European, and American networks.

Table 4 depicts the three cases in a summary form, comparing them along the identity parameters and the network governance dimensions advanced in the theoretical section of the paper.

**Table 4. Governing Network Evolution in the Quest for Identity:  
Comparative Summary for Three Elite Spanish Filmmakers (1975-2000)**

Identity profiles	Maverick (Pedro Almodóvar)	Integrated professional (Fernando Trueba)	Broker (Andrés Vicente Gómez)
<b>Identity parameters</b>			
Role versatility: focus	From broad to narrow	Increasingly broad	Increasingly broad
Role versatility: core role (s)	Film director Scriptwriter	Film director Scriptwriter Producer	Producer
Style	Idiosyncratic	Universal	Universal
<b>Dimensions of network governance evolution</b>			
Co-governor/ Role differentiation	his brother Agustín/ art and business	his wife Cristina/ art and business	a deputy/ strategic and day-to-day issues
Permanent structure for networks governance (chronology sequence)	First producer (external): local, amateur, non-central  Subsequent producers (external): local, professional  Independent company (own): – growing team (from 2 to 10) – thick trust, affection – relatively differentiated tasks – control over the entire value chain of filmmaking  Co-production: from more active to financial co-producers	First producer (external): local, professional, central  Independent company (own): – small team (3-4 people) – thick trust and affection – low differentiation of tasks – control over local financing and production  Co-production: permanent broker for foreign financing and distribution (Gómez)	First producer (external): international, professional, central  Independent company (own): – from one to several companies to channel different projects and diversity risks The biggest of his companies: – big team (approx. 50 people) – high differentiation of tasks – integrates from development to distribution – participation of industrial conglomerate (70%)
Strategy	Reconvenes (alters seldom)	Mix: reconvenes and alters	Mix: reconvenes and alters
Pace	Steady – one film / year (1980s) – one film / 2 years (1990s) – predominantly own films	Steady – one film / year, – balance between own films and production for others	Initially unsteady until consolidation as film producer – increasing pace up to ten projects per year (in 2000)

## Discussion

### *The Maverick*

The maverick breaks the conventions which constrain his creativity (Becker, 1982), and hence faces difficulties in gaining recognition from the field's establishment and enjoying the resources to which legitimacy gives access (Becker, 1982; Baker & Faulkner, 1991; see also Zuckerman (1999) on the social penalties of defying classification). Mavericks may also meet with resistance from audiences, which makes it hard for them to make a living from their art (White & White, 1993). Yet, if properly backed by governance structures and strategies, deviance can lead such actors to a central position in the field (e.g., Padgett & Ansell, 1993).

Pedro Almodóvar is a “maverick director” (Dale, 1997), “the last European auteur in a world dominated by Hollywood” (Smith, 1999). His novel, provocative and, initially, technically impure style arouses controversy among professionals and film critics, yet it attracted audiences from the very beginning. Pedro's international recognition (for his Oscar-nominated, box-office hit “Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” (1987)) came less than a decade after his initiation in the film industry and long before his full-fledged acceptance by the Spanish Film Academy (seven Goya awards for his Oscar-winning movie “All About My Mother” (2000)), two decades after his first movie was shown.

The project network put together for Pedro's first film replicated his social circle (friends were erratically involved in the financing, production, and acting). The result was an extremely novel, risky, and singular movie, noticed (not without polemics) by professionals and audience. The visibility this gave Almodóvar enabled him to win over local production companies to trigger the project networks for his next four films (making one film per year), which appealed to audiences and did relatively well for the local industry.

Unhindered by the canons of an academic training in film making, Almodóvar became a distinctive artist, driven by his creativity, experimenting, and “learning by doing” the intricacies of the profession. He gained full control over his deviant art work only after setting up his own production company, *El Deseo*, with his brother Agustín, and reproducing his film project networks (in sync with Becker's (1982) claim that mavericks have to build their own art worlds). The partnering with his brother (who became the director of the company and executive producer of Pedro's movies) was motivated by the belief that only somebody very close and trusted could understand and service, in a committed and unrestricted way, Pedro's ideas from their germ.

*El Deseo*'s first two films were co-produced with an established Spanish production and distribution company, using its financial and distribution resources, and learning in the process. The second of the co-produced features (“Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown”) –the zenith of the rising-up-to-elite phase of Almodóvar's trajectory– brought him international visibility and recognition, and marked a change in his project governance approach. He became more professionally mature, working at a pace of one project every two years in order to carefully prepare all aspects of his movies. At the end of the 1980s, the brothers could afford to expand and differentiate their production structure beyond what was usual for most Spanish production companies, which tended to have only a producer and a secretary. The in-house team (which had been working in the company for more than ten years by now) became the permanent structural mechanism which governed the project networks for Pedro's films through a replication strategy (repetition of key cast and crew). Pedro perceived the team as his “second family” (Francia, 2000), a cohesive nucleus which allowed the continuity of his singularity and gave him full control over his artwork.



Several changes marked Pedro's network governance evolution in the 1990s. First, two of his core and frequent actors left him, demonstrating that an art world's reproduction strategy is not sustainable in the long run in an unchanged fashion (Becker, 1982). Second, El Deseo co-produced a series of films with the French production company Ciby 2000, obtaining attractive financing to work with complete freedom on Pedro's projects. Third, El Deseo used its network of contacts and its financial and production resources and expertise to produce (selectively and infrequently) novice film directors when the company's infrastructure was not busy with one of Pedro's films.

Trust and affection breed commitment to the maverick and his peculiar style, and give him the freedom to pursue his creative whims unrestricted (see Lawler & Yoon (1996, 1998) and Lawler & Thye (1999) on the parameters of relational cohesion). Outside the boundaries of his collaborative network, however, his discretion and his distinctive stamp are difficult to sustain. Almodóvar's artwork is deeply rooted in his Spanish collaborative network and in Spanish culture, hence his reluctance to respond favorably to Hollywood's courtship (where bonds of friendship are replaced by professional networks, unionized rules, and organization charts). His singularity and freedom are sustainable only when embedded in his local collaborative network.

### *The Integrated Professional*

The integrated professional has the "technical abilities, social skills, and conceptual apparatus necessary to make it easy to make art" that is recognizable and understandable to others without being trivial (Becker, 1982). Fernando Trueba has been an integrated professional since the pre-professional phase of his film trajectory, when he embraced the conventions of the field, both in his university training in filmmaking (which he never completed) and in his work as a professional film critic. Unlike Almodóvar, his first film's project network was engineered professionally by an established film director and yielded a novel yet not risky movie, with a wide appeal to both audience and critics. Trueba could not rely unconditionally on the industry's infrastructure, which, after the huge commercial success of his first feature, refused to make his rather personal second movie. In response, he formed his own production company. His wife became his executive producer. A few years later he began to work on repeated occasions with the producer and distributor Gómez. The friendship that developed out of this collaboration allowed Trueba to make movies that were both commercial and highly personal, without restrictions, since Gómez trusted his artistic talent, as well as his own and his team's production expertise.

Trueba's universal style and his affinity to both film direction and production led to a broad role versatility set, and a steady pace of one film project network per year. He has directed his own films and produced those of other directors, made feature films and TV programs, is editor of a film magazine, and publishes film scripts and books with interviews.

The 1993 Oscar for best foreign film for "Belle Époque" (directed by Trueba and produced by Gómez) consolidated him internationally as a distinctive elite film director, and enabled him to pursue his dream of filming in the US a Hollywood-style comedy with Hollywood name talent. Gómez provided a budget that was big for Spain, yet modest for filming in the US. This, together with the peculiarities of the highly professionalized and highly unionized Hollywood system, confronted Trueba's production team (led by his wife as executive producer and her sister as line producer), which governs each film project network, with enormous difficulties. Trueba's recent filmography is in line with his quest for universality, and expands his style to the documentary genre, with a film on a favorite topic of his –Latin jazz.

An integrated professional's freedom is broader than that of a maverick in the sense that universality of style and obedience to conventions make it easier for an agent to find support for his projects. Universality may increase freedom, yet it may diminish distinctiveness.

### *The Broker*

Brokerage is normally done by the big studios, who secure financing and distribution, picking up creative content (Dale, 1997), or obtaining it through talent agencies, which package talent and other film professionals for specific projects (Bielby & Bielby, 1999). Brokerage activities allow markets to clear in a business context surrounded by ambiguity, risk, and uncertainty (Bielby & Bielby, 1999: 66), with the power of brokers residing in their positional capacity to connect otherwise disconnected (or at least relationally constrained) groups (Burt, 1992). For a rich ethnographic explanation of brokering in a small region (at IDEO, the largest product design consulting firm in the United States), followed by a general discussion about brokering in other settings, see Hargadon & Sutton (1997).

A film producer becomes prominent in the industry's elite if he is able to link otherwise non-redundant contacts between film investors, artistic and technical professionals, production infrastructure, and distribution networks, exploiting both information and control advantages (Burt, 1992). In an atomized film industry, such as in Spain, with very few viable production structures, a producer capable of making several films per year, securing film budgets far above the industry average, and making both local and international projects, is definitely elite and distinctive.

This is the case of Gómez, one of the most important Spanish film producers, who set out to make his production company, Lolafilms, 70% owned by Telefónica, the Spanish telecoms company, the biggest film-making machine in Spain and Latin America, capable of producing 50 films in 5 years, 40% of which were filmed directly in English.

Gómez's film trajectory began in the trenches of international film production. This immersed him in a world (and its underlying professional networks, rules, and relational expertise) that was unknown to the obscure, weak and, at that time, censored Spanish film industry of the 1960s. The professional knowledge and expertise he accumulated, and the invaluable contacts he made, allowed him to found his first production company. The company made one or two films a year, without any great artistic or commercial success. At the same time he worked for two years in another boundary-spanning position (as the manager for international co-productions for one of the biggest Spanish producers of the time) This further boosted his international contacts and expertise.

It was not until the mid-1980s that the quest for identity and distinction in film production crystallized in Gómez, as he began to produce a steady stream of gifted film directors, both established figures and novices, through two of his companies, integrating production and distribution. To diversify risks he produced both A and B movies (Caves, 2000). In relational terms, he maintained a bifurcated strategy, in which he gave full artistic and production discretion to film directors whom he trusted, while controlling and guiding the rest, usually novice directors, in film development and production.

While speed of project network assembly is important for a person's consolidation as a powerful producer, role versatility is another key dimension, since it allows the producer to expand his network efficiently and effectively (Burt, 1992). Gómez has increased the range

and non-redundancy of his network through various art-related activities (e.g., he is a founding member of the elite Paris-based film producers' think-tank; and he is founder and director of the EU film training center in Spain). At the same time, he has not lost his focus on his core role in executive film production and distribution.

Between 1994 and 1996, as head of production for what was at the time the only Spanish major-like company, he further enhanced his brokerage abilities and succeeded in channeling film projects through his independent company at a steady pace. Later, he orchestrated the entry of the national telecom (Spain's largest multinational) into his company, Lolafilms, with 70% of the capital. In addition, he maintained his other companies as instruments for risk diversification and for channeling projects which do not fit the interests and objectives imposed by this major investor.

In 1993 he received the Oscar for best foreign film for "Belle Époque", yet the peak of his professional acknowledgement was the 1998 Cannes film festival tribute to him and 11 other reputable film producers for supporting the creativity of film directors.

The freedom of the broker resides, on the one hand, in the possibility he has to make film projects that are very different in style and quality, at a steady pace, producing several films simultaneously. On the other hand, he is free to undertake ambitious projects (usually associated with the bridging of local and international financial, artistic, and production networks) since he has the contacts and is capable of securing the necessary financing. Finally, by employing a bifurcated strategy, in which he relieves his production structure of direct involvement in the making of the films of directors he trusts personally and professionally, he is able to concentrate its energies on supervising and assisting novice directors and developing new projects.

### **Concluding remarks**

This paper provides insights on the evolution of network governance by using a level of analysis lower than the predominant organizational and inter-organizational levels. It explores the impact of the quest for identity by initially non-powerful agents on network governance dimensions, to which macro-level analyses have been less sensitive. After a major exogenous shock in the field's context, as was Spain's transition to democracy following the death of the dictator Franco in 1975, there was a window of opportunity for agents willing and able to shape collaborative structures according to their interests.

The quest for maverick, integrated, or broker identity leads in all three cases to the equifinal outcomes of the agent's inclusion in the industry's elite, and his recognition by critics (all three filmmakers are Oscar winners) and audience (i.e., high box office in the local industry). In terms of similarities, all three set up their independent production entities in order to be able to govern their projects unhindered (confirming Proposition 2a). These entities, however, have different degrees of structural differentiation. Gómez, who pursues the identity of "number one" producer in Spain, has the backing of a highly specialized structure of approximately 50 people, which integrates activities from film development to distribution; he also has an office in London. Furthermore, he works through several companies, rather than just through one, using structures as instruments for diversification of his project portfolio.

Trueba's company is small and almost non-differentiated, since as an integrated professional he could easily find support from existing art worlds. Being a maverick, Almodóvar cannot count on such support and has had to develop a differentiated production structure of ten people, bound by both expressive and instrumental ties, in the service of his idiosyncrasy (Proposition 2b illustrated).

The independent production companies of the three agents are run by co-governors (Proposition 1a illustrated), where the agent and his deputy are bound by trust (in all three cases) and affection (in the cases of the two film directors). Further, the different skills, attitudes, and predispositions require co-leaders to maintain differentiation of roles along the art-business divide (Proposition 1b is confirmed clearly in the case of Almodóvar, who concentrates exclusively on artistic activities, while his brother deals with the business issues). In the case of Trueba, the result is inconclusive because of his tendency to combine the roles of director and scriptwriter with that of producer. In the case of Gómez, the role differentiation between the co-governors is based on strategic activities (performed by Gómez) versus day-to-day management of operations (done by his deputy).

The distinctive identity pursued by the three filmmakers leads to differences in the strategy for the networks' composition. Almodóvar, whose style is extremely idiosyncratic, tends to reconvene cohesive clusters of professionals, thus allowing his collaborators to better understand his style and secure continuity of his artwork (confirming Proposition 3a). Compared with Almodóvar, both Trueba and Gómez, influenced by their universality, tend to alter their project networks' composition, Gómez much more so than Trueba, due to his core role of producer (confirming Proposition 3b). Still, the repetition-alteration divide is not all that clear. Both Trueba and Gómez tend to reconvene certain parts of their network (mostly the people they trust and/or like), while Almodóvar sometimes replaces frequent collaborators in his projects due to a severing of relations, their unavailability due to their work in other projects, or simply, the peculiarities of the story at hand. More careful research is needed to disentangle not only the degree of repetition or alteration, but also the conditions, which may influence the choice of one strategy over the other.

As to the pace of network governance evolution, the three cases demonstrate that agents who pursue distinctiveness in the field have to feed the system with artwork on a regular basis (confirming Proposition 4a). What is difficult to know, however, is what determines whether the pace will be fast (several projects at a time) or slow (one project at a time). The answer to this question is context-specific. It will depend on the industry in which the trajectories of the filmmakers unfold (in the underdeveloped Spanish film industry, both one film per year and ten films per year signal a viable, fast-paced production structure). Making one film per year (or every two years), when it is the film director himself who organizes the production, while maintaining stylistic idiosyncrasy, is fast (especially if the script is original, since a script takes between 6 and 8 months to develop, according to industry experts). Whether a structure is able to handle more than one project per year will also depend on how developed and specialized it is. Only once in Almodóvar's whole trajectory has his team handled three projects in one year (1995), and they all agreed that this was stretching their physical and organizational resources and capabilities to the very limit. Since then, they have gone back to the rate of one Almodóvar film every two years, with sporadic productions for other directors while Pedro develops his next project. Further, a preference for reconvening certain professionals may delay project completion if those professionals are working on other projects, due to the "nomadic" nature of filmmaking. Hence, while our cases' insights make Proposition 4b sound appealing to common sense, further research is needed to distinguish the factors that influence the pace of network governance from possible spurious effects.

The issues dealt with in this paper have implications beyond the immediate context of the Spanish filmmaking industry. They relate to the broader concerns of entrepreneurs who wish to develop a distinctive identity in their respective industry, or to make the products or projects of their choice unhindered. Working through temporary organizations may give them the necessary agility and flexibility to adapt their business to changes in the environment. Still, they should be aware that the pursuit of a particular identity (in sync or at odds with the legitimate patterns in the industry) will impact their network governance choices over time.

In order to govern networks according to his personal preferences and ideas, a visionary entrepreneur may want to have a trusted and committed co-governor –a “copreneur” (Marshack, 1998) or a “co-leader” (Heenan & Bennis, 1999)– to relieve him from extremely important tasks that are essential for the business but for which he lacks the time or the skills. In addition to having a co-governor with role differentiation, the entrepreneur may be able to boost the performance of his project-based undertakings if he has an independent company to assemble and manage the projects. The availability of a permanent structure will allow him to retain knowledge generated through temporary organizations and freelance contributors, and develop relational expertise, which is considered a competitive advantage in a networked environment.

Further, if the identity which the entrepreneur is trying to develop and project is idiosyncratic and at odds with the establishment, he may want to differentiate the independent structure so that it is able to control all the key aspects of the project network governance, and assemble a committed rather than a purely professional team. He may prefer to reconvene professionals who already know his style and preferences, thus economizing on coordination and gaining continuity in the direction of the desired identity. Entrepreneurs who look for inclusion in the industry’s elite may want to endorse their claim by pro-active instead of reactive behavior, developing products or projects at a steady pace instead of waiting for the environment to provide opportunities for innovation. The sustainability of a steady pace and its rate (slow or fast) would require fine-tuning of the structural differentiation choice.

The findings reported in this paper have to be taken with caution due to the nature of the study – a longitudinal, comparative case study of three reputable filmmakers. First, we focus on three successful cases. It will be insightful, we believe, for better understanding the link between identity and network governance evolution, to scrutinize cases of filmmakers who have failed to differentiate themselves (in terms of critical acclaim and audience appeal). Does their network governance evolve in similar or in different ways?

Second, the three cases are renowned public figures whose actions and image are constructed by and through the media. Therefore, the reasons an actor gives discursively for acting in the way he does may diverge from the rationale he employs at the moment of acting (Giddens (1984): 4; see also Goffman (1959) on self-presentation, and Jones (forthcoming) on signaling). This issue is further complicated by the longitudinal nature of the study, capturing a period of 25 years, in which experiences may be forgotten, or rationalized ex-post (Weick, 1969).

Third, though it has admitted the duality of structure as both constraining and enabling for the actors who pursue distinctive identity and recognition (Becker, 1982; White, 1992), this study has focused on the primacy of agents in shaping the structures according to their interests and needs. Below we outline two important ways in which a temporary collaborative network may impact upon the identity of the network governor (i.e., cross-influence and drift), and propose them as two core issues in an agenda which seeks a deeper understanding of the network governance-identity link.

### *Avenues for future research*

**Cross-influence.** It is acknowledged that “art worlds typically have intimate and extensive relations with the worlds from which they try to distinguish themselves. They share sources of supply with those other worlds, recruit personnel from them, adopt ideas that originate in them, and compete with them for audiences and financial support. In some sense, art worlds and worlds of commercial, craft, and folk art are parts of a larger social organization. So, even though everyone involved understands and respects the distinctions which keep them separate, a sociological analysis should take account of how they are not so separate after all” (Becker, 1982: 36).

In order to offer a more complete account of the link between network governance evolution and the quest for identity, future studies should pay attention to the degree and the impact of cross-influence on the development of distinctive style. Network analyses could quantify the degree of sharing of professionals (e.g., cinematographers, artistic directors, leading actors) by filmmakers, while at the same time looking for interview-based data on the concrete experiences through which such cross-influence manifests itself.

The evidence on the sharing of such resources would allow investigation of the relatedness of the exchanges in the field, and the transfer of practices and knowledge from one project network to another. Such cross-fertilization among projects is possible due to the nature of the business. On the one hand, output is produced by temporary arrangements, which constitute a coalescence of careers. On the other hand, the career of a creative professional is a string of project networks, triggered by network governors (e.g., film directors) with differing styles and practices.

A complementary issue to cross-influence is that of lock-in and lock-out effects (Gulati, Nohria, & Zaheer, 2000). The idea here is that ties formed with one actor will place constraints on ties with others. It could be insightful to trace whether professionals who tend to work recurrently with certain directors/producers are excluded because of this from working with other filmmakers. Analyzing network data in terms of who works with whom would not provide sufficient detail. The reasons why somebody is excluded from a project could be established through interviews (or even through survey data). Further, it is interesting to assess the role of the context on the inclusion/exclusion behavior. If the pool of professionals available for project collaboration is huge and constantly renewed, as is the case in Hollywood, excluding certain professionals would still leave a filmmaker with sufficient variety and choice. Filmmakers in smaller, more local industries, however, may face difficulties at the time of practicing boundary work, due to talent scarcity.

**Drift.** Identity could be affected not only by cross-influence and lock-in/lock-out behavior, but also by features emerging from the interaction of network collaborators, or what Becker (1982) calls drift. Drift is “a slight shift –even an accident– in, say, a dancer’s performance, or in the way paint adheres to a canvas. With repetition and exploration, drift becomes a stronger tendency; it is recognized by an art world only when it becomes a change strong enough to cause major reorganization of the canons, conventions, and social patterns of that world” (White & White, 1993: 164). While drift may lead to stylistic alterations, it does not require a change in the project network governance. There is no need for “any troublesome reorganization of their cooperative activities...The people who cooperate to produce work will continue to do so, even though the work they produce is different” (Becker, 1982).

While drift is even more difficult to control for than cross-influence, we do expect it to have an impact on the quest for identity and the evolution of network governance. Since it may give birth to initially unsought, yet beneficial, innovations as an outcome of the collaboration, network governors may want to create a context that is conducive to drift. They may want to retain and further develop the drift into a permanent feature of their style or creative output. For this purpose, the governance of the project network should allow both sufficient freedom for drift to take place and sufficient control to channel the drift in a desirable direction. It should also be capable of detecting valuable drifts and the conditions under which they have taken place. The permanent structure for network governance may need to develop mechanisms for capturing and retaining drift-like innovations for their use in other project networks. Furthermore, a strategy of reconvening professionals at a steady pace may be necessary in order to convert a desired drift into a routine practice.

This paper is only a step in the direction of providing more micro accounts on network governance evolution, which will inform managers' concerns. There is a huge terrain available for scholarly investigation to overcome the paucity of detail on identity and network governance evolution.

## References

- Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton 2000.
- Alvarez, J.L. 2000. Theories of managerial action and their impact on the conceptualization of executive careers. In M. Peiperl & M. Arthur (Eds.), *Conversations in career theory: Insights and trends*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Alvarez, J.L., & Svejenova, S. (forthcoming). Symbiotic careers in movie making: Pedro and Agustín Almodóvar. In M. Peiperl, M. Arthur, R. Goffee, & N. Anand (Eds.), *Career creativity: Explorations in the remaking of work*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Amabile, T.M. 1996. *Creativity in context*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press.
- Anand, B.N., & Khanna, T. Do firms learn to create value? *Strategic Management Journal*, 21 (Special issue): 295-316.
- Ariño, A., & de la Torre, J. 1998. Learning from failure: Towards an evolutionary model of collaborative ventures. *Organization Science*, 9 (3): 306-325.
- Baker, W.E., & Faulkner, R.R. 1991. Role as resource in the Hollywood film industry. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97 (2): 279-309.
- Baum, J.A.C., Calabrese, T., & Silverman, B.S. 2000. Don't go it alone: Alliance networks and startups' performance in Canadian biotechnology. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21: 267-294.
- Becker, H. 1982. *Art worlds*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bielby, W.T., & Bielby, D.D. 1999. Talent agencies and the careers of screenwriters. *American Sociological Review*, 64: 64-85.

- Brown, S. L. & Eisenhardt, K.M. 1998. *Competing on the edge: Strategy as structured chaos*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Burt, R.S. 2000. Decay functions. *Social Networks*, 22: 1-28.
- Burt, R.S. 1992. *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Campbell, D.T. 1975. Degrees of freedom and the case study. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8: 178-193.
- Carruthers, B., & Uzzi, B. 2000. Economic sociology in the new millennium. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29 (3): 486-494.
- Caves, R. 2000. *Creative industries: Contracts between art and commerce*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cerulo, K. 1997. Identity construction: New issues, new directions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23: 385-409.
- Cummings, A., & Oldham, G.R. 1997. Enhancing Creativity: Managing Work Contexts for the High Potential Employee. *California Management Review*, 40 (1): 22-38.
- Dale, M. 1997. *The movie game: The film business in Britain, Europe and America*. London: Martin Dale.
- De la Cruz, M. R. 2000. Así nacieron dos "oscar". *El País Semanal*, September 17: 27-30.
- DeFillippi, R.J., & Arthur, M.B. 1998. Paradox in project-based enterprise: The case of film making. *California Management Review*, 42 (1): 186-191.
- DeFillippi, R.J., & Arthur, M.B. 1999. Paradox revisited: A reply to Phelan and Lewis. *California Management Review*, 40 (2): 125-139.
- Doz, Y.L., Olk, P.M., & Ring, P.S. 2000. Formation processes of R&D consortia: Which path to take? Where does it lead? *Strategic Management Journal*, 21: 239-266.
- Dyer, J.H., & Nobeoka, K. 2000. Creating and managing a high-performance knowledge-sharing network: The Toyota case. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21 (Special issue): 345-367.
- Dyer Jr., W.G., & Wilkins, A.L. 1991. Better stories, not better constructs, to generate better theory: A rejoinder to Eisenhardt. *Academy of Management Review*, 16 (3): 613-619.
- Ebers, M., & Grandori, A. 1997. The forms, costs, and development dynamics of inter-organizational networking. In Ebers, M. (Ed.), *The formation of inter-organizational networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ebers, M. 1997. Explaining inter-organizational network formation. In Ebers, M. (Ed.), *The formation of inter-organizational networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.



- Eisenhardt, K.M. 1989. Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 532-550.
- Emirbayer, M., & Goodwin, J. 1994. Network analysis, culture, and the problem of agency. *American Journal of Sociology*, 99: 1411-54.
- Faulkner, R.R., & Anderson, A.B. 1987. Short-term projects and emergent careers: Evidence from Hollywood. *American Journal of Sociology*, 879-909.
- Francia, J.I. 2000. Pedro Almodóvar. *Magazine, La Vanguardia*, 30 January: 26-33.
- Frank, K.A., & Yasumoto, J.Y. 1998. Linking action to social structure within a system: Social capital within and between subgroups. *American Journal of Sociology*, 104 (3): 642-686.
- Galbraith, J.R. 2000. *Designing the Global Corporation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Garcia-Pont, C., & Nohria, N. 2000. Local versus global mimetism: The dynamics of alliance formation in the automobile industry. Working paper, Harvard Business School.
- Ghertman, M., & Hadida, A. 1998. Institutional change, strategic assets and firm performance: A neo-institutional and resource-based study of renewable competitive advantage in the American and French film industry (1985-1998). A working paper, HEC School of Management, France.
- Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. 1967. *Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goffman, E. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday.
- Greenfeld, L. 1989. *Different Worlds: A Sociological Study of Taste, Choice and Success in Art*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Gulati, R. 1995. Does familiarity breed trust? The implications of repeated ties for contractual choice in alliances. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38: 85-112.
- Gulati, R., & Gargiulo, M. 1999. Where do interorganizational networks come from? *American Journal of Sociology*, 5: 1439-93.
- Gulati, R., Nohria, N., & Zaheer, A. 2000. Strategic networks. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21 (Special issue): 203-215.
- Hargadon, A. & Sutton, R.I. 1997. Technology brokering and innovation in a product development firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42: 716-749.
- Heenan, D.A. & Bennis, W. 1999. *Co-leaders: The Power of Great Partnerships*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Howard, J. 2000. Social psychology of identities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 367-93.

- Hulbert, J.S., Haines, V.A., & Beggs, J.J. 2000. Core networks and tie activation: What kinds of routine networks allocate resources in nonroutine situations? *American Sociological Review*, 65: 598-618.
- Human, S.E., & Provan, K.G. 2000. Legitimacy building in the evolution of small-firm multilateral networks: A comparative study of success and demise. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45: 327-365.
- Ibarra, H. 1999. Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44 (4): 764-791.
- Ibarra, H. 1995. Race, opportunity and diversity of social circles in managerial networks. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (3): 673-703.
- Ibarra, H. 1993. Personal networks of women and minorities in management: A conceptual framework. *Academy of Management Review*, 18 (1): 56-87.
- Jones, C. (forthcoming). Signaling expertise: How signals shape career trajectories and labor market segmentation in creative industries. In M. Peiperl, M. Arthur, R. Goffee, and N. Anand (Eds.), *Career creativity: Explorations in the remaking of work*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, C. 1993. Toward Understanding and Theory of Network Organizations. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. David Eccles School of Business, The University of Utah.
- Jones, C., Hesterly, W.S., & Borgatti, S.P. 1997. A general theory of network governance: Exchange conditions and social mechanisms. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(4): 911-945.
- Jones, C., Hesterly, W.S., K. Fladmoe-Lindquist, & S.P. Borgatti 1998. Professional service constellations: How strategies and capabilities influence collaborative stability and change. *Organization Science*, 9(3): 396-410.
- Kanter, R.M. & Eccles, R.G. 1992. Making network research relevant to practice. In N. Nohria & R. Eccles (Eds.), *Networks and Organizations: Structure, Form, and Action*, pp. 521-527. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Laubacher, R.J. & T.W. Malone 1999. Two scenarios for 21st century organizations: Shifting networks of small firms or all-encompassing "virtual countries"? Working paper 21C WP #001, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Lawler, E.J., & Yoon, J. 1996. Commitment in exchange relations: Test of a theory of relational cohesion. *American Sociological Review*, 61: 89-108.
- Lawler, E.J., & Yoon, J. 1998. Network structure and emotion in exchange relations. *American Sociological Review*, 63: 871-894.
- Lawler, E.J., & Thye, S.R. 1999. Bringing emotions into social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25: 217-44.
- Marshack, K. 1998. *Entrepreneurial couples*. Palo Alto, California: Davis-Black Publishing.

- McAllister, D.J. 1995. Affect- and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (1): 24-59.
- Menger, P.M. 1999. Artistic labor markets and careers. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25: 541-574.
- Merton, R. 1957. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press
- Nash, D. 1970 [1955]. The American composer's career. In M. Albrecht, J. Barnett, & M. Griff (Eds.), *The Sociology of Art and Literature*, 256-65. London, UK: Duckworth.
- Nohria, N. & Ghoshal, S. 1997. *The Differentiated Network*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Padgett, J. & Ansell, C. 1993. Robust action and the rise of the Medici, 1400-1434. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98: 1259-1319.
- Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J., & Boydell, T. 1986. *A Manager's Guide to Self-Development*, New York [etc.]: McGraw-Hill.
- Phillips, N., Lawrence, T.B., & Hardy, C. 2000. Inter-organizational collaboration and the dynamics of institutional fields. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37 (1): 23-43.
- Podolny, J., & Page, K.L. 1998. Network forms of organization. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24: 57-76.
- Powell, W.W. 1990. Neither market nor hierarchy: Network forms of organization. In Cummings, L.L. & B.M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 12. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, pp. 295-336.
- Powell, W.W., Koput, K., & Smith-Doerr, L. 1996. Interorganizational collaboration and the locus of innovation: Networks of learning in biotechnology. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41: 116-145.
- Putnam, R.D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ragin, C.C. 1987. *The Comparative Method: Moving beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ring, P.S. 1997. Processes facilitating reliance on trust in inter-organizational networks. In Ebers, M. (Ed.), *The formation of inter-organizational networks*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rousseau, D.M., Sitkin, S.B., Burt, R.S., & Camerer, C. 1998. Not so different after all: A cross-disciplinary view of trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3): 405-421.
- Sibillin, A. 2001. Cover story – “Bernard Arnault. Capitaliste du jour”, *EuroBusiness*, 2(8): 56-66.
- Smith, P.J. 1999. Is this man the last auteur in Europe? *The Independent*, 22 August.

- Starkey, K., Barnatt, C., & Tempest, S. 2000. Beyond networks and hierarchies: Latent organizations in the U.K. television industry. *Organization Science*, 11(3): 299-305.
- Storr, A. 1985. *The Dynamics of Creation*. New York: Atheneum.
- Strauss, A.L., & Corbin, J. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Sydow, J., & Windeler, A. 1998. Organizing and evaluating interfirm networks: A structurationist perspective on network processes. *Organization Science*, 9 (3): 265-284.
- Uzzi, B. 1996. The sources and consequences of embeddedness for the economic performance of organizations: The network effect. *American Sociological Review*, 61: 674-698.
- Uzzi, B. 1997. Social structure and competition in interfirm networks: The paradox of embeddedness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42: 35-67.
- Walker, G., Kogut, B., & Shan, W. 1997. Social capital, structural holes and the formation of an industry network. *Organization Science*, 8: 109-125.
- Walton, A.E. 1998. The process of governance. In Nadler, D.A., Spencer, J.L., & Associates, *Executive Teams*, pp. 193-239. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Weick, K. 1996. Enactment and the boundaryless career: Organizing as we work. In M.B. Arthur, & D.M. Rousseau (Eds.), *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Weick, K. 1969. *The Social Psychology of Organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wessley.
- White, H. 1992. *Identity and control. A structural theory of social action*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- White, H.C., & White, C.A. 1993. *Canvases and careers: Institutional change in the French painting world*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Yin, R.K. 1989. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Zuckerman, E. W. 1999. The categorical imperative: Securities analysts and the illegitimacy discount. *American Journal of Sociology*, 104 (5): 1398-1438.