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# Careers Boundaries in the Arts in Brazil: An Exploratory Study

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### Abstract

Over the last years the scholarly literature on careers has been enriched by the proposal of new career models which present a rhetoric that asks for the end of career boundaries: individual, hierarchical, organizational and geographical. However, in the real world, many constraints continue to exist. This paper tries to contribute to the understanding of the new boundaries of the 21st century careers. To do so we look at the case of careers in the arts. We review existing literature on careers, present a historical, contextual perspective of artistic careers, and conduct field work in the city of São Paulo based on in-depth interviews with 18 Brazilian artists from nine different occupations in the field of arts, whose data were subjected to qualitative content analysis. Our results show that career boundaries exist even in a sector we could consider as historically boundaryless. We identify and discuss four boundaries of the artistic career, seeking to reflect on the importance of considering the relationship of the individual and the context in which he/she operates in order to understand careers today.

### Keywords

Boundary less Careers, Emerging Career Models, Artistic Careers, Artists, Arts

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The second half of the 18th century was marked by profound changes in the history of music. Until that moment European court musicians were a class barely above that of domestic servants. Their fate depended exclusively on the whims of their masters. But Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was a pioneer who tried a new path. In 1781, he left the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg to try his luck as a self-employed musician and teacher in Vienna. For 10 years, Mozart experienced the joy and sadness of the life of an autonomous professional. To help with the sale of his music, Mozart highlighted the flexibility of his compositions that could be played by ensembles with different formations. Every time he started a new composition or was preparing to perform it in public, questions arose: how should he compose for the new concert audiences? What must he do to please them? Mozart died in 1791 at the age of 35, heavily in debt, a defeated man marked by a feeling of social and professional failure (Elias, 1994).

More than two hundred years later musicians, painters, actors and other professionals from the arts field still confront the same challenge faced by Mozart: the dream of professional autonomy and freedom to create tempered by the need to delight the audience and convince consumers to buy their products, which constrains autonomy and freedom. The challenge these professionals face in their careers is a paradox, an apparently coherent and well-founded idea or proposal that is concealed within it

contradictions (Houaiss, 2007). In fact, the economic, social and cultural transformations that have happened since the 1980s seem to have created professionals from the most varied industries, far beyond the creative industries, with the Mozart paradox. The old boundaries seem to have fallen but new boundaries have arisen.

In this paper we seek to identify and discuss the new boundaries which shape or condition professional career paths (see Bagdadli, Solari, Usai, & Grandori, 2003). We hope to contribute to the development of the burgeoning literature about new career models. Specifically, we align our study with critical developments that spot the lack of contextual perspective of the new career models and argue for the existence of career boundaries (e.g., Dany, 2003; Johns, 2001; Pringle & Mallon, 2003).

To do so we take the case of arts and artists. The arts include sectors in which a considerable proportion of the professionals are self-employed workers. Major organizations, when they are involved, have a merely indirect influence on their careers. The arts therefore constitute an extreme case, supposedly with great learning potential. In fact, in the arts open and flexible forms of career are nothing new (see Haunschild, 2003). As such, we believe that artists have interesting lessons to share with other professionals within conventional sectors of the economy. Moreover, we have investigated the creative industries since 2006. Our main objective was to understand characteristics of these industries, such as organizing processes and competences and management styles. We subsequently began to take a more specific interest in the work of artists, since this occupational category is under-investigated in Brazil, both in the work psychology (Bendassolli) and organizational studies (Wood Jr.). We felt it was important to give more visibility to the work experiences of artists and the difficulties and challenges of their activities in Brazil in an attempt to sensitize policy makers to culture as well as broaden the scope of topics studied by work psychology and management in our country.

The paper is structured into five sections. In the next section we briefly review and comment on the literature about emerging career models. Afterward, we present an historical and contextual perspective of careers in the arts. In the following section we present and justify the method adopted and the techniques and procedures used. In the fourth section we present and discuss our findings. Finally, in the last section, we conclude our work by reflecting on and interpreting the findings in the light of the objective of identifying the boundaries of the artistic career.

## **Background**

### **Emerging Career Models**

The scholarly literature on careers underwent a significant change in the 1990s when it started contrasting the traditional vision of careers (Levinson, 1978; Super, 1957) with new, emerging concepts – for instance: boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996); protean careers (Hall, 1976, 2002, 2004); career craft (Poehnell & Amundson, 2002; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001); portfolio careers (Borgen, Amundson, & Reuter, 2004); and multidirectional careers (Baruch, 2004, 2006). Chart 1 presents a summary of these theoretical developments.

Chart 1. Emerging Models of Career

Emerging models	Main assumptions and characteristics
Boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The careers are no longer confined to the borders of a single organization, employment, occupation, region or realm of knowledge</li> <li>• The new careers require a psychological contract based on unstable relationships and on the identification and the exploitation of opportunities</li> <li>• People can build their career across a range of settings, going beyond their current employer or organization</li> <li>• Individuals should be proficient in three major skills: know-why, know-how and know-whom</li> </ul>
Protean careers (Hall, 1976, 2002, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The careers should consider the inevitability of change</li> <li>• The career success depends on the versatility, adaptability and resiliency of individuals</li> <li>• The identity of the individual works as a source of guidance from which he/she sets its direction and makes decisions</li> </ul>
Career craft (Poehnell & Amundson, 2002; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The career is seen as the work of the individual, the protagonist of his/her own professional destiny</li> <li>• The careers develop like the career of a craftsman, valuing the autonomy, creativity and ability to continually recreate the work itself</li> <li>• The work is seen as flow and movement, activity in which the individual engages with intensity the body and mind</li> </ul>
Portfolio careers (Borgen, Amundson, & Reuter, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A career is seen as the sum of the professional activities that the individual is able to perform</li> <li>• Attaches to the individual the ability to define the use of his/her time, distributing it among different activities</li> <li>• Assumes that the individual is versatile and flexible</li> <li>• Assumes the existence of organizations or organizational arrangements that require or accept professionals with multiple activities and multiple skills</li> </ul>
Multidirectional careers (Baruch, 2004, 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work experiences are not linear, which is the result of the weakening of hierarchical structures and the traditional model of career</li> <li>• Assumes a career development based on trial and error that allows reviewing goals and changing the trajectory</li> </ul>

According to the traditional vision, careers develop over time within an organization, driven by an accumulation of knowledge, experience and achievements. However, economic changes since the 1980s have led companies to reduce their staff, outsource parts of the production and reduce the number of hierarchical levels (see Bagguley, 1991; Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Corbett, 2004). Along parallel lines, the values of entrepreneurship and the idea of taking individual responsibility for one's own career became mainstream (see Du Gay, 1991; Harvey, 1991; Hjorth, 2003). As a consequence, careers underwent deep changes.

The starting point for the emerging concepts of careers is a weakened tie between individuals and organizations and reduced set time that individuals stay in one particular firm. As a result a career is no longer a matter of gradually rising through the hierarchical ranks, but of undertaking various functions in different companies, and frequently in different countries (Crowley-Henry, 2007). To make such a path viable, professionals need to permanently cultivate their social networks, thereby constructing a positive image in the labor market. As the business media usually puts it, the individual became an entrepreneur of himself/herself, a brand (see Peters, 1999).

Despite being popular, the emerging concepts of careers, and specifically the idea of boundaryless careers, possibly the most popular among them, have their critics (e.g., Dany, 2003; King, Burke, & Pemberton, 2005; Pringle & Mallon, 2003; Sommerlund & Boutaiba, 2007). One of the assumptions of the emerging concepts of career is the existence of a completely skilled and informed individual, making full use of his/her social network and crossing organizational boundaries in his/her search for better working conditions. It just so happens that this ignores, or minimizes, the fact that careers do not constitute an exclusive domain over the individual, but emerge from the interaction between the individual, the organization and the society. Career paths are limited by political, economic, social and cultural conditions, which are located in time and space (see Dany, 2003). This assumption also ignores the need for security and how it opposes risky changes (see Currie, Tempest, & Starkey, 2006). Therefore we argue that careers may still have boundaries, although possibly different from those identified in traditional career models.

### **Careers in the Arts**

In this section we explore careers in the arts: we identify the modern origin of artistic careers and we show their evolution and current situation. We also outline the context of artists' work and discuss the conditions under which their careers develop.

#### **Historical Perspective**

The modern history of the artistic career has its origin in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, a time when artists founded academies in Italy and France. These academies were decisive when it came to establishing painting and sculpture as arts -- different from handicraft and commerce. Such institutions were responsible for educating the artists, for their registration as such, and for controlling their production (Moulin, 1997).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, academies saw their power shaken by the individualistic concepts of the romantics and by a new social image of the artist. While

academic artists continued to mold their career like the employees of state bureaucracy, independent artists started to follow an autonomous career path, creating an art defined by its permanent search for innovativeness. What they valued was not the canonic perfection of the academies, but innovation.

However, self-employment was only feasible when the artists and their work were accepted by the market. Consequently, the artists became entrepreneurs that had to understand and meet the needs of their clients. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mediation between the culture and the market was born, in which the artists sought, by means of constant innovation, to question the existing market and to create a space for themselves, so as to guarantee they would be commercially successful.

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by an approximation between art, technology and mass production, a movement noticeable in music, photography and the cinema. This movement was observed by the theoreticians of the Frankfurt School, who coined the term “cultural industry” (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2002). These philosophers argued that the death of the humanistic arts, the final redoubt of criticism and liberation of the human spirit, had been accompanied by a massification of cultural wealth and their absorption by the universe of capitalist rationalization and its means of standardization and distribution.

In the 1960s, the term cultural industry (singular) gave way to the term cultural industries (plural; Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Meanwhile, analyses highlighted the resistance to the incursion of capital in the arts (Bourdieu, 1998) and the ambiguous effects of the application of technologies, which provoked both massification as well as the appearance of genuine innovation.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in an acknowledgment of the weight of creative activities in the economy, the concept of creative industries became popular. The concept initially appeared in Australia at the beginning of the 1990s, but it was in England that it gained greater momentum (Blythe, 2001). Creative industries were defined as “a range of commercially-driven businesses whose primary resources are creativity and intellectual property, and which are sustained through generating profits” (Heart of the Nation Project Team, 2000, p. 5). The emergence of the creative industries points to an attempt to articulate the domains of art or culture, technology and business (see Hartley, 2005).

Over these two centuries many changes have occurred: some artistic professions have had their relative importance reduced, while others have appeared and gained pre-eminence; production chains have expanded and become international; new technology has been incorporated; arts and commerce have grown closer together and what today we call creative industries have gained economic relevance. However, when we look at the artistic career we note that the Mozart paradox still persists: artists continue looking for self-realization and autonomy of expression, but their achievements and careers are limited by their capacity to successfully market their talents and competences.

### **Careers in the Field of Arts Today**

The artist, or cultural worker, is an individual who dominates artistic competencies, who creates or gives expression to works of art, who is perceived as an artist, who is recognized by his/her peers as such, and who is capable of living on what he/she produces (Moulin, 1997). Predominant among these professionals are casual and

contingent work characterized by instability and a lack of continuity (Menger, 1999). This occurs for several reasons: first, because of variations in demand; second, because of the form of production (which is commonly project-based); third, because of the pressure to innovate, to differentiate and to be unique; and fourth, because of the uncertain nature of the creative process. As a result, short-term working relationships tend to prevail.

On the other hand, this context allows the organizations that operate in these sectors to manage the risks of their undertakings, by sharing them with or transferring them to the artists themselves. It is usual for artists to be involved with various projects and organizations simultaneously, sometimes working under unfavorable and precarious contractual conditions, until they acquire sufficient recognition to influence their own career path (Menger, 1999).

Studies by Throsby (2001b), Menger (1999) and Moulin (1997) portray artistic work as a part time occupation for which formal education is of little relevance. Artists are frequently young professionals that experience high levels of under-employment, part-time employment and unemployment. They commonly face great uncertainty with regard to the financial returns and major salary distortions.

Despite the adverse conditions there is a great supply of professionals in the arts (Menger, 1999). That is so, first, because there is a love for art and the common perception of art as vocation (Kris & Kurz, 1981), or even a calling; second, because the notion that self-realization and the recognition of peers takes precedence over material success – therefore, artistic work represents for many professionals an ideal meeting between doing what one should do and doing what one like to do (Freidson, 1986); third, because in being engaged in creative labor the individual discovers him/herself, forges his/her own destiny and reveals him/herself to him/herself and to others (Moulin, 1997); and fourth, because there is a personal liking for instability and the absence of routine, conditions that stimulate new competences reveal new talents.

The artistic career was always surrounded by a romantic aura (Throsby, 2001a). The artist is frequently represented as someone who lives on the fringes of society, who works out of vocation and for love, who sacrifices his/her personal life and does not accept being subjected to social norms and market rules (Freidson, 1986, 1990; Kris & Kurz, 1981). This image is not always backed up by reality. However, there has always been a conflicting and ambiguous relationship between art and the market. For a long time, the work of artists was maintained and conditioned by patrons (Moulin, 1997). Today, depending on the profession and the country, the relationship between the artist and his/her market may be mediated by companies and agents, but a large degree of autonomy in the management of his/her own career is a recurring aspect. This implies having certain competencies and defining some career strategies, as we shall see below.

In conducting their careers, artists may use different strategies. The first strategy is to manage a portfolio of activities (Templer & Cawsey, 1999), therefore seeking to diversify activities (Menger, 1999; Moulin, 1997; Throsby, 2001a; Wassall & Alper, 1992). In doing so, the artists attempt to maintain a certain degree of coherence, while at the same time they seek to reduce risks and maximize their gains. The second strategy is to associate with another professional who is not necessarily an artist (see Alvarez & Svejenova, 2002). The third strategy is to build alliances in order to guarantee a certain level of stability. The fourth strategy is to innovate (see Moulin, 1997). As we shall see



later, our results confirm the use of these and other career strategies by the artists interviewed.

## **Method**

We adopted a qualitative investigation design, as characterized by the following aspects. First, we espouse the idea that career is a complex psycho-social phenomenon, in which there are different interacting levels (e.g., the personal, social and economic). In the existing literature of careers, two other levels frequently cited are the objective and the subjective (Hughes, 1937; Inkson, 2007), or the structural and agency levels (Evetts, 1992). Therefore, a second key aspect of our investigation is the assumption that the career, even though it forms part of self (subjective career), it depends equally on its context of development.

A third aspect of our methodological design, and one that is common to most qualitative research (Patton, 2002; Stake, 2010), is its emphasis on the lived experience of the people with regard to the topic being investigated – in this case, the way in which each participant interprets the critical incidents related to his/her career, whether in its subjective or objective forms. According to this assumption, we developed a guide consisting of general topics to help us (as a memory aide) during the interview process and to encourage interviewees to share with us their experiences as artists. The guide displaying these topics is presented in the following section (see Chart 3). Finally, with respect to data analysis, we decided to treat the interview content with a qualitative content analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011; Patton, 2002; Stake, 2010). This enabled us to identify emerging themes and organize them into categories (see Chart 4) in order to make connections between artists' career experiences (obtained through interviews) and theoretical aspects regarding career considered in this study (see Chart 1).

Having set out the central aspects of our methodological design we now detail the procedures adopted in choosing the participants and the data collection and analysis processes.

## **Participants**

Those participating in this research were 18 artists from 9 sectors of the creative industries. To choose the sectors we took the concept of creative center that has been proposed by Throsby (2001a, 2001b), which resulted in nine sectors: computer and video games, crafts, cinema, dance, design, literature, music, painting and theater. The artists were identified using Internet search engines, personal contacts and indications by other artists (known as the snowball technique; see Patton, 2002). The participants needed to meet the prerequisites established by Throsby (2001b): to have the creative work as their main occupation and be recognized by their public or by their peer group. Chart 2 shows the profile of the interviewees.

Chart 2. Profile of the Interviewees

Sector	Sex	Age (yrs)	Time in the area (yrs)	Occupation	Work regime	Interview code
Video games	M	34	05	Animation artist	Self-employed	E17
	M	43	15	Animation artist	Self-employed	E18
Crafts	F	49	10	Potter	Self-employed	E16
	F	57	28	Potter	Self-employed	E15
Cinema	M	68	44	Producer	Entrepreneur	E11
	M	45	06	Producer	Employee	E12
Dance	F	31	21	Ballet dancer	Entrepreneur	E14
	F	49	31	Ballet dancer	Entrepreneur	E13
Design	M	34	14	Illustrator	Employee	E10
	M	40	20	Illustrator	Employee	E09
Literature	M	35	10	Writer	Self-employed	E08
	M	44	14	Writer	Self-employed	E07
Music	M	50	18	Musician	Self-employed	E06
	M	63	40	Musician	Self-employed	E05
Painting	M	52	10	Painter	Self-employed	E04
	M	43	25	Painter	Self-employed	E03
Theater	F	33	20	Director and actress	Self-employed	E02
	F	52	25	Director	Self-employed	E01

All the artists lived and worked in São Paulo, Brazil. São Paulo is the fifth most populous city in the world and Brazil's main economic center. The city has a rich and diversified cultural agenda, sustained by an ample structure of museums, art galleries, music halls, cinemas, theaters, festivals and other events. São Paulo cultural life started with the artistic avant-garde movements of the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has become more dynamic over the last 10 years due to federal laws for fostering culture. Local artists seem to work under similar conditions to those described in the literature mentioned in the previous section.

### Gathering Data

We obtained our data from semi-structured individual interviews with the 18 participating artists. Each interview lasted, on average, between one and three hours. Researchers initially introduced themselves and the institutions involved in this study, clearly describing the research purpose, and explaining that our expectation was to contribute to the artistic field by giving academic visibility to the experience of professionals in the area – for example, through an article or report with the findings. However, it was also explained that although this was our expectation, the researchers could not guarantee any changes in the actual situation of participants. Interviewees were instructed that participation was voluntary and that, subject to agreement, interviews would be recorded to facilitate reliability of subsequent analysis. Participants were also assured of complete anonymity, confidentiality and careful treatment of interview content. After providing all the information, we asked if the participant was willing to be interviewed and then his/her oral consent was requested. On completion of the interviews and transcription, records were sent to each participant for adjustment and correction. Analysis formally began following approval of transcribed versions.

As mentioned, we conducted the interviews in line with a guide, which lists a set of orienting topics or subject areas within which we feel free to build a conversation and explore, probe, and ask questions that could elucidate the issues under investigation. The axes of this guide are the experiences of artists regarding their career development, which alternates between two dimensions: subjective, related to personal expectations, desires, plans, projects, personal identity, meaning of work; and objective, referring to characteristics of the art context, such as labor market, creative activity, relationship networks, difficulties and challenges.

Chart 3 shows the content of our guide. We adapted the structure suggested by Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011), by dividing the interview into four significant moments. The first addresses rapport, including the ethical issues previously mentioned. Next, the interview began, with general opening topics/questions, from which participants shared their stories freely in accordance with the flow of their own narrative. This moment of interviewing was particularly rich, in that participants addressed central elements concerning the subjective and objective aspects of their career development.

Interviewers also used some specific questions in order to gain in-depth insights into certain issues related to the objectives of the research, examples of which are shown in Chart 3. The final phase of interviewing contained questions on interviewees' future expectations and their artistic market. Interviewers then asked whether participants wished to add anything before ending the interview. It is important to mention that we made notes (memos) throughout the interview referring to insights or significant points revealed by subjects in order to assist analysis and increase the reliability and trust in our later interpretations.

*Chart 3. Guiding Topics of the Semi-structured Interviews Carried Out with Artists*

Significant moments	Topics
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewer presentation; explanation of the purpose of the research; mutual expectations</li> <li>• Ethical issues (confidentiality, anonymity and respect)</li> <li>• Interview procedure (guide topics allowing flexibility; recording/verbatim transcript)</li> <li>• Get acquainted with the interviewee</li> </ul>
General opening questions (interviewees were encouraged to develop a personal narrative on these large topics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal history in the sector (when and why they decided to become an artist)</li> <li>• Opinion of the Brazilian artistic sector in general, and the interviewee's own area</li> <li>• Main career events (critical incidents or most decisive and noteworthy career moments)</li> <li>• Positive and negative aspects of the artistic career, according to interviewee experience</li> </ul>

Specific questions (only asked when the interviewee does not spontaneously provide these answers in previous questions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with other artists (professional networks)</li> <li>• Strategies for dealing with adversity in the artistic activity</li> <li>• Questions related to professional identity (self-concept, self-perceived characteristics such as values, skills)</li> <li>• Relationship with art itself (concept of art, understanding of the art-work relationship)</li> </ul>
Closing questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations for the future (regarding career, the Brazilian artistic sector)</li> <li>• Additional information subjects wish to share, considering conclusion of the interview and issues addressed</li> <li>• Acknowledgement and adjustments for subsequent submission of transcribed interviews to be checked and approved by interviewees</li> </ul>

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## **Data Analysis**

We developed a qualitative content analysis, in which the main procedure consisted of reducing the data to core meaning categories and organizing them (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Patton, 2002). We initially scanned all the material in order to become familiar with its content. In this process we recorded our first impressions, considering the objectives of our study. Then, we started to analyze each interview in-depth and to compare them, which led to the first themes emerging. In doing this the criterion we adopted was identification of themes related to the central objectives of this study: an analysis of the interaction process between the individual and their context, in order to reflect on the boundaries of the artistic career.

In addition the themes were identified as they revealed patterns of meaning. As Patton (2002) says, patterns “usually refer to a descriptive finding” (p. 453), assuming the form of a statement of the type “almost all participants reported, evaluated, perceived.” We understand that a pattern, in addition to referring to a shared and recurring meaning in the experience of the various participants, comprises a core that organizes what these participants say with regard to the theme being investigated (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

The final step consisted of categorizing the themes identified in the previous stage. This process involved creating an organizing structure for the group of themes, being guided by a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the material, always staying close to the original content and being careful to contextualize them. We chose a two-level categorization: on the first level we created major analytical categories, which according to Patton (2002), function like “sensitizing concepts” or “categories that the analyst brings to the data” (p. 456). The analyst uses such concepts to organize his data, “but not to the point of straining or forcing the analysis” (p. 457). On the second level we created thematic sub-categories, within which we brought together the patterns and themes that emerged from the data. Finally, verbatim sentences taken from the interviews were used to support our description of the findings (see Chart 4).

In order to ensure the quality and consistency of the analysis process, we adopted some general procedures. First, interviews were transcribed in their entirety and sent to participants for adjustments and final approval. Similarly, records of the interviews

(memos) resulting from the *in vivo* impressions of researchers were used as a guide throughout analysis. Second, we conducted a researcher triangulation (Denzin, 1977), both in performing interviews and data analysis. With respect to the later, researchers adopted the practice of audit trails (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), initially aimed at clarifying, comparing and discussing the themes identified by each one (individually) during the in-depth content analysis. We then sought to refine the list of themes, establishing convergences and discussing divergences. In the final phase, new audit trails were developed in order to create a categorization system for the final list of themes. Possible divergences were carefully analyzed considering the raw material and other records produced throughout the investigation. The comprehensive version of the categorization structure obtained is depicted in Chart 4.

We then present our findings. We chose to combine presentation of the results and discussion, because we understand that this helps make the “voices” of the researchers and our interviewees interact better, although the style adopted is primarily descriptive. Interpretations that depend on a greater level of abstraction will be presented in the conclusion section.

### Findings and Discussion

Following the analysis procedure described above, we organized the data into three major analytical categories, each of them with their respective thematic sub-categories, all emerging from the raw data. Chart 4 shows the categories and this section is developed in the sequence proposed there. Each sentence extracted from the interviews to illustrate the sub-categories is followed by its respective code, which can be checked in Chart 2.

#### Professional Identity (1): Vanguard and Creation

The first aspect of artistic identity observed in the interviews is the idea of the artist as a communicator and at the forefront of things. Both the women from the theater who were interviewed, for example, were critical of what they call the problem of mass production in the culture world, which according to them is motivated by economic reasons: to sell more of the same. In their view, the artist should be a communicator, generating creative objects, the objective of which is not merely economic, but aesthetic and for transforming the lives of people. The concept of creation and art seems to be at the heart of this representation.

*Chart 4.* Analytical Categories and Thematic Sub-categories that Organize the Data Coming from the Interviews

Category	Description	Thematic sub-categories
Professional identity	Brings together information about elements associated with the subjective career; with identity construction aspects in the art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vanguard and creation</li> <li>• Affective</li> </ul>

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	world; and with the bounds of the individual with their work	identification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amateur and professional relationship</li> </ul>
Sociability	Has to do with the role of interpersonal relationships within the artistic career environment. Here is discussed the importance of professional relationship networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship networks</li> </ul>
Career environment	Includes themes on the self-career and context relationship (professional market in the creative industries). The content of this category allows us to explore the contextual aspects of the artistic career, the tensions that exist in the process of maintaining this career and the strategies employed by artists to adapt to this environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Art-business relationship</li> <li>• Career strategies</li> </ul>

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Some topics extracted from the interviews suggest a representation of art as being something that breaks away from the *status quo*, fueling a way of transforming people via a painting, a play, or a piece of music. Art is an experience of a meeting of the feelings of the artist with his/her public, and a transcendence activity. For the artist, art represents the possibility of inventing, of exercising their creativity and feeling that he/she is the author who is responsible for a *oeuvre*. The following extracts illustrate this idea of art as creation and of the artist as communicator.

I believe that doing art doesn't mean pleasing the multitudes, because it's a way of looking [at things] and it's impossible to have a way of looking [at things] that corresponds to the way everybody looks, except when you produce for the masses. But producing for the masses is not my proposal because anyone who lives in the theater is not interested in this approval. Art for me is taking a leap in the dark, betting on an idea without knowing if there's going to be an audience for it or not. I also think that the function of art is to communicate. When you think about pleasing people you restrict this leap in the dark and consequently your creativity. [E2]

Art also brings you closer to God, whatever god you believe in, because it transforms you into a creator. You have the power of creation. This has other implications, because you create affection for it, as if you had a son. [E16]

## Professional Identity (2): Affective Identification

Some emblematic metaphors were used by the interviewees to illustrate their tie to the arts: “it’s in the blood”; “it’s an organic need”; and “creating is like being pregnant, needing to get [your ideas] out”. These interviewees did not know how to explain why they chose the career of an artist, or why they are simply artists. Most reported that they entered the world of arts very early, whether due to a family influence, as when the parents were already involved with art or stimulated their children’s aesthetic intelligence from an early age, or whether by the progressive migration from a hobby linked to art to a professional artistic activity *per se*.

“Being someone passionate about what they do.” We came across this description in most of the interviews and in its context it suggested an affective attachment to the career, a link with work of a vocational nature, in the sense attributed to this term by Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997). For artists, one of the aspects most positively associated with their work is the possibility of getting pleasure from carrying it out, in the sense of an activity that is coherent with one’s own self. In this sense work in the arts is close to the concept of flow, as proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1991). The following extracts are representative of the sensitivity of the artists on this point.

For us from the theater work is pleasure, because it’s a life with a lot of sacrifice. So for you to keep yourself in it, you need to be very involved. It’s a very hard career; there are lots of times when you wonder whether this is really what you want. Rehearsing for me is a joy, but it’s also hard work. You sometimes go mad but all this movement forms part of your pleasure. It’s difficult to differentiate pleasure, leisure and work. I think it’s very pleasurable work, but it demands a lot of commitment and involvement. [E2]

When I’m painting you could hit me over the head with a sledge-hammer and I wouldn’t feel it. I work extremely hard. It’s only my head that works. I see my hand moving but I don’t feel anything. So much so that I discovered a little while ago that I have fibromyalgia from painting so much at an easel. [E3]

Only people who are passionate about the area continue. You can’t leave it. It gets right inside you; a type of vice. But you have to turn it into a good and positive vice, because you’ve chosen to follow this career. It’s a romantic thing. [E13]

## Professional Identity (3): Amateur and Professional

The third facet of artistic identity is the self-categorization of the artist as a professional. Among the arguments used by interviewees for justifying this form of self-categorization are: the concern of the artist with the quality of their work, the criteria and strictness they use, their dedication in terms of training, education or practice, how

competent they are in manipulating materials or ideas, the existence of a working methodology, meaning a relatively standardized and disciplined sequence of activities, their seriousness, because the work is devised after taking into account a market, timescales and standards, and the fact of being remunerated for the work done.

We understand that the question of professionalism vs. amateurism refers to another issue (work vs. hobby), because the amateur does not necessarily seek to obtain some use value from his activity. Furthermore, the amateur does not always have a working system, as an office demands, or a specific education. A hobby is an informal activity, carried out without any predetermined objective (Stebbins, 1992). Unlike a hobby, work can be defined as a set of activities directed at the production of potential use values, based on some type of professional knowledge which occurs in a particular place and is structured by processes and routines. In addition, work involves the (disciplined) professional use of specific tools and technologies.

In a market in which there are tenuous boundaries separating professionals and amateurs, defending oneself as a professional seems to be an important career strategy, because it indicates to the market that the artist in question is capable of meeting certain quality and deadline standards. Professionalism can be understood also as an indicator of trust and credibility. The following extracts illustrate the reflections of some interviewees on the hobby-work, professional-amateur relationship in the artistic career.

What's the difference between work and a hobby? None at all. Unless, perhaps by social definition, it's that work is remunerated and a hobby isn't. Because if my hobby was photography then it's a hobby for me. But for the photographer it's work. There's another thing. The pleasure you get from doing a particular activity. You might say that this is a determining factor for defining hobby work. [E4]

[There are people] who say: 'Yes, you live happily, because you work when you want to, do what you like doing and don't have a boss!' But in reality it's nothing like that at all. It's a difficult life and it's not enough just to like and love what you do; you have to be professional, be responsible, meet deadlines, be competent and always be well-informed. [E10]

[...] I think that because of my choices I have this image of seriousness; of not doing any old work, of not accepting any invitation. I think that people see me as a professional who prizes quality and who wants to be paid for this. [E05]

### **Sociability: Relationship Networks**

It can often seem as though the artist is a solitary professional. Associated with being represented as a "genius" (Kris & Kurz, 1981), the artist is seen as a person with a special talent and, thanks to this, less dependent on other people when it comes to doing their work. However, our interviewees emphasize the role of relationship networks in the process of developing their activities, although this varies according to the cultural sector.



The importance of networks is first seen in the entry of projects. As the career of most of the artists here interviewed revolves around projects, the network functions as a field for visibility, via which new work reaches the artist. This seems particularly critical in the case of music, theater, design, multimedia art and cinema. In these cases contact with people from the network is fundamental for professional activity when it comes to commissioning a new play, requesting a new series of drawings, a commercial for television or a documentary or show.

Another example of the role of networks is given by a writer. He mentions that, as far as he is concerned, the network not only serves as a facilitator from the commercial viewpoint, but also as an arena in which to grow and learn. He usually sends his manuscripts to a group of carefully selected people for critiques and comments to help improve his work. The network functions as a quality standard that fixes the criteria of good work. This same interviewee mentions a characteristic of the artistic universe formed by literature, which is “everyone going around in groups, following a trend, the current of the time” (E8). In other words, artists sharing the same style or literary current would tend to value these networks. The artist below seems to go in this same direction.

I like working in a group, because I like talking about my ideas and listening to other people. My creative process includes debate and conversation. I like to show people my projects and debate them, even with those who are not from the medium. All of a sudden another opinion throws light on something that I was not seeing before. But this is not a practice and certainly not a trend. It's a very private way [of doing things].  
[E11]

In the case of cinema, or audio-visual arts, the network also functions like a trust criterion. One of our interviewees, a director and producer, mentions that due to the risks involved in an audio-visual production, it is preferable to work with people with whom in the past one has already produced good quality material. He describes the Brazilian audio-visual market as being very close, in such a way that belonging to certain networks guarantees inclusion, a strengthening of professional working ties and access to privileged information.

### **Career Environment (1): Recognition**

Recognition for the artists we interviewed occurs when the public values their work, finds some utility in it and rewards it financially and/or symbolically. Almost all interviewees mention that they feel undervalued by the public, or more generically, by the Brazilian artistic market. They mention the lack of a cultural history of valuing the arts in Brazil and the little help provided by government – two of those interviewed question, for example, the effectiveness of current federal laws in the sector. The following words illustrate their sensitivity in regard to this.

I think there's a lack of recognition. It's sad that you do a piece of work and no one values it. It's sad because you ask yourself if people don't like your work, or if you don't have any talent, or if you're in the wrong

career, etc. In addition to asking yourself what the value of your work is. [E16]

The profession of cartoonist is not much valued in Brazil, although it's work that involves all the arts. The cartoonist has to think up the script, develop the story, make the drawings, do the final artwork and color or animate it. The whole process is practically all done by the cartoonist. There's work done by cartoonists that is a veritable work of art, but it's not valued. [E18]

Recognition, in the case of artistic identity, seems to perform a different role from the one observed in more traditional careers, in particular because of the difficulty of defining who the artist is. In an organization the employee is recognized because of his/her function, which is duly formalized in a position and an organizational structure. And what about the artist whose work regime is above all autonomous? In this sense, we can put forward the hypothesis that there is an interdependent relationship between professionalism and recognition. An example of this is given by a painter, who is asked about the difference between him as a professional and as a person who sits in a public square, painting portraits of passers-by who pay him an amount that is at times symbolic. Another interviewee, a ceramist is asked why a person might prefer to pay little for a piece of industrialized porcelain, made in its hundreds and often in simple molds, rather than paying a little more for a piece made by an artist, who uses creativity, technique, talent and time to produce a singular and technically superior item. In the response below, there is an implicit complaint about the problem of a lack of professional recognition of her/his own work.

It is an essentially industrial process [mass production of handcrafted items]. If it's a person "producing" it they can make various items without knowing what they're doing; just operating the process, a very mechanical activity. When it's time to decorate it they work with a transfer, which is something very standardized and requiring no creativity. Now, it takes many hours for an artist to complete an item. It's very hard work that demands concentration from the artist and the decoration is done with a brush, worked on specially... and one item never comes out like another. There's singularity involved. These are things made in different ways; when you understand this, you start valuing hand-made items. There's a lot of subjectivity when it comes to classifying one as art and the other as non-art. [E6]

In addition to complaining about a lack of recognition there is another idea in the above extract: the lack of recognition by the public. The interviewee mentions that there is a problem with the educational background of the public. In her opinion, anyone who knows artistic work, the way it was produced, its singularity, will agree to pay more for it, instead of acquiring an industrialized item. We know that a collector does not normally spare any effort when it comes to acquiring an item that for other people might have no

value. But a collector knows the art market and for this reason knows how to value both it and the artist, while this does not necessarily hold true for the general public.

### **Career Environment (2): Art-Business Relationship**

Previously, when we presented the affective identification sub-category we suggested that the link of the artist with his or her work is by nature vocational, with a strong affective tone. This does not mean, however, an absence of difficulties and suffering. In undertaking their activity, artists come up against excessively short deadlines, strict hours to fulfill, conflicts with suppliers, peers and subordinates, financial instability and the question of recognition. The following words give a few examples of the less positive side of the artistic activity.

Painting gives me pleasure, but not always. There are times when I don't want to paint, but I have to. Then it's a pain. For example, this happened a little while ago. I had an exhibition of original works for the beginning of May. In November last year I started painting. In January I calculated I had four months to finish the work. I bought the material and I began to paint. I just sat painting. My belly grew; I got fat. There were days when I didn't feel like keeping painting, except that because of my timetable I had to, if not I wouldn't have enough paintings that were needed for the exhibition. [E4]

Earning money is a very difficult aspect. The life of the artist is one of tremendous financial instability. You run into debt and don't have the luxury of consuming some things. You have to make sacrifices. [E13]

In addition to these comments revealing the tensions between pleasure and obligation that are apparently inherent in the artistic activity, they also suggest to us even deeper tensions related to the art-business pairing. For example, one interviewee, who was a professional ballerina and today is a ballet teacher and choreographer, pointed out the difficulty she faces every time she has to handle some work request that is motivated mainly by financial gain. Other interviewees follow this same direction, as suggested in the words below.

There were a lot of lessons I agreed to do just because of the money. I'm not going to tell you that I worked all my life with audiences that pleased me, because it's not true. I like teaching dance and teaching what I know, which can bring me a good gains. And choreography; if I could I'd spend the whole year choreographing. Today, with my studio I'm beginning creation work, which is something I like very much. Sometimes I'm hired to choreograph for schools with children who are 5, 4 and even just 3 years old and I have to compose a "made to order" piece of work. I think that's a big pain. Because the mothers are difficult and the principals are worse. When the principal hires you she demands you do what she wants. She gives you no autonomy. This is something I've submitted to because

of a lack of money. And that bothers me enormously. It frustrates me because I'm doing it just to earn money without being able to place my mark on anything and disagreeing with everything that happens. I despair about not having money to pay my bills and because of this I accept any work. [E13]

[Work] It's doing a project you don't like and only doing it for the money. Work is something you do without necessarily liking it and sometimes without agreeing with it. Now, making art that you like, that's fun. [E18]

I've had nine books published. To continue publishing I don't want to be part of the big scheme. In the beginning I even wanted to, but not today. I don't want to sell my freedom for money. [E7]

Another aspect that emerges from the interviews and is associated with what we are calling the art-business pairing is the difficulty some artists have of reconciling pleasure and the obligations inherent to the professionalism of the activity. For example, an artist who is not in the mood to paint or write but who has assumed a commitment will have to work despite these feelings [E4; E13]. Obviously this mismatch between wishing to do something and the obligation to do it is observed in many other occupations, but in the case of the artist this seems to be particularly critical, in view of the close relationship between their psychological state and their performance, as can be deduced from the previous comments, when we discussed the affective identification of the artist and their work. In other words, it seems fundamental for the artist to work most of the time feeling pleasure and affective involvement, in such a way that the long-lasting absence of this state may be interpreted as being particularly frustrating. The following words illustrate our observations.

You are half-automatic [when your work is strictly commercially-driven]. The biggest pleasure is doing what I want to do. But sometimes it's necessary to accept other forms of work to survive. The art market in Brazil is very complicated. There are people who invest in young talent and there are others who invest in up-and-coming talent. You need to be in this environment. The artist who lives from his art is more on the production side. [E3]

I believe there are two types of illustrator, in my opinion. There's the illustrator who does everything and the illustrator who is a creator. [...] It would be very frustrating if the illustrator-creator worked for a long time on something that wasn't his. That's why I don't spend much time drawing for editors, unless I need some freelance work or I want to 'recycle' myself. When I'm working on my material I distance myself from things and I just look after this. I get huge satisfaction from my characters because it's something that comes from within me. I externalize my inspiration. [E10]

There were times when it was not a pleasure, but I had to paint out of obligation. When I do it out of obligation my emotional involvement is different. [E4]

Partly in response to these difficulties our interviewees have developed various career strategies, which we comment on below in the last section of the presentation of our findings.

### **Career Environment (3): Career Strategies**

Career strategies are actions by which the professional deals with the adversities of the environment in which he or she operates and prepares himself or herself for future events. Due to the instability inherent in the artistic sector (Caves, 2000; Menger, 1999; Moulin, 1997; Throsby, 2001a; 2001b; Towse, 2010), these strategies play a very important role in the adaptation of artists and in consolidating their careers. Let us see some of the examples that emerged from the interviews.

The first strategy we identified is that of the double career. This means that the artist works on several fronts at the same time. When these fronts are art-related the artist works in various converging activities, for example, being an artist and giving lessons, talks and workshops, all related to his or her main art activity. But the fronts may not have a strict art-relationship, as occurs with one of our interviewees, who is both a musician and at the same time a lawyer. All the other artists whom we interviewed have a double career in the former sense.

Associated with financial instability and also with the uncertainty inherent in the sector we find the career diversification strategy. The term used by cartoonists is “portfolio diversification.” In their case, as demand varies a lot, it is risky to restrict themselves to a single style of drawing. In career literature, this is called portfolio-career (Templer & Cawsey, 1999; see Chart 1). This is a strategy by which the person specializes in more than one area of competence. So the artist can perform in different aspects (classical and contemporary dance, for example); serve different audiences (children and adults); work for public and private initiative, and so on and so forth.

As you don't work in a company, the more you diversify your raft of activities the more opportunities you'll have in your career. This is the way to survive. In this career nothing is very cut and dried, because the very nature of the profession is a bit uncertain. So when you are facing a directing project you concentrate your energies there. When a movie appears your life becomes the movie. Of course the work I do with companies demands regularity; if not, it's impossible. But we're moved by projects. (...) People need to be multivalent, to keep their options open and diversify. I think that because of the chameleon-like capacity the actor must have the more you know the world the better. [E2]

The term used by the above interviewee, “chameleon-like capacity”, refers to another metaphor encountered in the career management area: the protean career (Hall, 2002; see Chart 1). Like in the myth, in which Proteus changes his face depending on the

circumstance, so the artist adapts to their audience. This is a characteristic of the sector and the artist must be prepared for it, although not without some reluctance, as the same interviewee concludes.

This is the type of career that always has you looking for new projects. It's a career that demands that you renew yourself and move a lot. On the other hand this is extremely tiring. There comes a time when every actor thinks: "I'd like to have a regular job!" But we have a personality that is trained for this routine. That's why I like this improbability a lot. Although every artist needs a "safe haven" to deal with the uncertainty of the career. So, he has to have a store, or give lessons, or be a civil servant. Because in Brazil it's very difficult for you to live from art. You depend a lot on projects or incentives from the [culture] support laws, etc. [E2]

Another strategy we found, particularly among musicians and writers, is the importance of being published or launched by a major recording company or publishing house. From the point of view of recognition, having a work published by a publishing house produces an important effect of "fixing" the artist in the market. Institutionally, these publishing houses or recording companies warrant the quality and identity of the artist. If this is not possible, as occurs with one of our interviewees who is a writer, the strategy is to go down alternative routes: publish your own books and publicize and sell them on the Internet.

[So] I started publishing independently. I enjoyed this alternative experience and I noticed that there was no need to be handled by a publishing group to continue with my career. Following this I was no longer interested in contacting publishers. I published my own books via a publisher I set up to be independent. I don't want to tie myself to any publishing house, at least not for the time being. There's a difference between you being the owner of your own work and the publisher [being]. When you pass the copyright to the publisher they do what they want; the book is published just the way they want, at the price they want and you earn at most 10% of the list price. I believe that shortly the same thing will happen with publishing houses that happened to recording companies. Writers are going to be able to produce, publicize and sell on their own; all by the Internet. If a publisher is interested in my work they can choose a book. I'm not going to give them the rights to all my books, because I'm not interested in doing so. [E7]

Something similar happens when the artist appears on a TV network or in a newspaper, as occurred with one of our interviewees, who is a musician. When he was interviewed on an important public TV channel, work offers multiplied. Winning prizes is another strategy. One of our interviewees, who is one of the major names among Brazilian artists, pointed out that his career took off when he won a prize at Cannes.

In short, other strategies used by our interviewees include: taking part in exhibitions; exhibiting in museum stores; associating with a *marchand* or artistic

representative; focusing on the international market; writing stories for newspapers; concentrating on large urban cultural centers; using advertising; producing free newspapers with educational content for schools, taking advantage of this to gain personal exposure; working in new segments in the market; opening a dance school; reducing the number of canvases produced (in the case of painters) to raise the price and not create an image that you are producing a lot for commercial reasons; starting in a career as an entrepreneur; forming partnerships with the city administration or governments to work on social projects; and having relatives or close family members involved with the market and who can, therefore, open doors. All these strategies illustrate the negotiations and interactions that occur between the artist and their context and more importantly for this study, they show the boundaries of this career, as we shall analyze below in our conclusions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study presents some limitations that may give rise to opportunities for future studies. The first limitation refers to the possibility of generalization. Because of its historical and contextual characteristics, careers in the arts constitute an extreme case. In the broad domain of creative industries, sectors from the middle and outer circles of Throsby's model (2001a, 2001b) – i.e., editing, radio, newspapers and magazines, cinema, TV, architecture, advertising and tourism – and other service activities, such as education, consultancy and engineering – have common features with sectors of the inner circle that we researched: organization by projects, a relevant presence of self-employed work and the relevance of social networks. So, they probably have some common characteristics also with regard to careers. However, broadly speaking, a generalization of the results of this study should be considered with reservation and specific studies should be carried out to evaluate similarities and differences.

Another limitation refers to the heterogeneity that exists among different sectors in the artistic field. Throughout this text we have tried to highlight similarities. However, we also observed differences. In short, we identified at least two important differences: between individual-centered production sectors (painting and writing, for example) and group-centered production (theater and cinema, for example), and between traditional sectors (crafts) and modern sectors (video games). Future investigations should explore also such differences.

### **Conclusions**

At the beginning of this article we observed a criticism that can be made of emerging career models is that they seem to minimize the importance of contextual factors in the understanding of careers, attributing greater responsibility for their success or failure on individual agency. Our proposal in the research that gave rise to this article was to reflect on the career development process in a sector in which traditionally we can find several of the characteristics that are today attributed to globalized markets by the proponents of emerging career models. In fact in the artistic sector, working arrangements based on projects and individual entrepreneurship have existed for a long time, meaning that the discussion about the “fall of boundaries” seems to apply mainly to

careers in more traditional sectors of the economy, where there is a history of great corporations and stricter regulations. Even so, this work was inspired by the idea that the artistic sector could be an interesting *locus* of investigation for sustaining our main argument that, despite having been transformed over the last few decades, careers are still conditioned by boundaries.

At this point in the article we believe that to continue with the discussion we need to define “boundary.” As Gunz, Evans, and Jalland (2000) say, the definition of boundary is one of the most problematic definitions in career literature. These authors state, however, that there tends to be a predominant idea that the most important boundaries that exist for careers are organizational. Therefore, when emerging models talk about or presuppose the fall of career boundaries they are probably referring to the weakening of the power of organizations to restrict the mobility of their members. From this there follows a second definition of boundary: something that constrains or retards individual mobility. If we think about the profound transformations in organizational structures over the last few decades (production restructuring, the removal of hierarchical levels, the globalization of production chains, etc.), it seems to make sense that people move more today than they did at a time when only a few large corporations dominated the scene and the labor market.

But despite being still dominant in literature, organizational boundaries do not sum up the set of career boundary possibilities. For example, basing our comments once again on Gunz et al. (2000), we can cite the boundaries of industry itself. In this case we are talking about aspects related to the labor-market phenomenon, such as the phenomenon of labor force supply and demand. In their research these authors analyze the labor market boundaries in the electronic and biotechnology industries, showing that just as in the artistic sector (in the film industry, in particular), there were always boundaries. Therefore, according to these authors, we should never prophesy the extinction of boundaries, but understand the emergence and characteristics of new boundaries in these and other industry sectors. Gunz, Evans, and Jalland also point out the boundaries of function and occupation and the geographical boundaries.

From the previous discussion we can say that boundaries refer to factors that restrain professional mobility. They may be objective by nature, like the phenomenon of supply and demand in the labor market, or subjective, as when the individual places barriers or restrictions on his own mobility (Gunz et al., 2000). An example of the latter type of boundary is the reluctance of the individual to move and his/her risk aversion. In considering the findings of this research we can include in this latter category the *identity* of the artist. But in what way might this identity be a boundary for the artistic career?

Considering our data, we can suppose that the more the artists have an image of themselves as agents responsible for original works of art, through which they can express their creativity and autonomy, the greater the difficulty they are probably going to encounter in adjusting to market pressures, which often demand standardized, mass produced works, with little creative added value. In this sense one of the dilemmas of the artistic career is the tension between *art as creation* and *art as reproduction*, between doing the work for pleasure and out of an obligation, between *employment characteristics*, such as delivery deadlines, specifications on how the work should be done to meet the requirements of the contractor, price for the service, etc., and *vocation characteristics*, such as affective involvement, belief in the transcendence of the work of



art and of the artist, sense of “life mission”, etc. The self-categorization of the artist as pioneer, as “author”, and their strong affective involvement with the activity may be a type of subjective boundary for determining the direction of their career.

In this same subjective boundary perspective, and closely related to the previous boundary, another one we can deduce from our data relates to the view of the artist as a professional. Presenting oneself as a professional requires accepting some demands. First, that the artist is capable of producing a work or offering a service that meets the value standards present in the art market, of which they are part – a piece of music, a painting, a play, and so on, each of them with a specific value standard. Secondly, the artist needs to understand his activity as a job and not as a hobby. This implies investing time and energy in gaining skills, in improving their own style and developing and maintaining professional relationship networks. Therefore, the second boundary of the artistic career comprises elements inherent in the professional activity. Corroborating this statement are the career strategies we identified among the artists interviewed: style diversification, the identification of new market opportunities, the establishment of partnerships, public exposure/publicity: in short, strategies typical of a professional market. It is possible that if the artist does not manage to adapt to these pressures of professionalism, they end up marginalizing themselves both economically and occupationally.

Another artistic career boundary is objective and related to the macro-economic characteristics of this sector. From the interviews carried out we were able to confirm what the literature indicates in regard to the instability that is inherent in this sector. In addition, this is a market in which demand for products (*oeuvres*) and service is uncertain (Caves, 2000). In the sectors investigated no major corporations predominate, which means that it is always the artist who has to deal with those who are potentially interested in their work: the public, government agents, *marchands*, producers, publishing houses and so on. Most of the artists we interviewed are not associated with unions. As a consequence they have to deal directly with market agents and often without the due support. This is also a market with very strict deadlines, strong competition among artists for funds (supply is almost always greater than demand), and above all, a great geographical concentration – São Paulo is the biggest cultural market in Brazil.

Finally, a fourth and final boundary that our data allows us to suggest is associated with the art-business relationship. Objective in nature, this boundary depends on an understanding of the fundamental social and historical aspects that shape the culture field (Towse, 2010). As we suggested previously, what the artist *wants* to do in the cultural field cannot always be dissociated from what he *has* to do in the economic field. Both culture and economics overlap at many points, having an interdependent relationship. For example, a work of art has an aesthetic value and is judged on the basis of a non-instrumental rationality (Habermas, 1985). At the same time this same work of art or cultural service, like a dance show, must be evaluated as a function of economic parameters, for example, how much tickets should cost. This is the basis of what we called at the beginning of this article the Mozart paradox. It takes a form of a tension between, for example, autonomy and heteronomy, innovation and reproduction, pleasure and obligation, desire for personal mobility and the need to fix on a market and specific activities in order to meet the market demand for art goods.

At the end of the paper we might ask: a little more than two hundred years since the death of Mozart, what has changed in terms of the boundaries of the artistic career?

As we have just suggested, the Mozart paradox is still current insofar as boundaries continue to exist in the experience of artists with art and its market. Obviously, the socio-historical and economic context is clearly different: for example, at the time of the German composer there was a great rift between the bourgeois artist marked by talent, creativity, initiative and “rebelliousness”, and the aristocratic artist, whose survival depended on the fit with the nobility of that time and its laws regarding what art was. One could not argue that we currently experience such a clear divide between two – and only two – sets of values. Notwithstanding, what appears to be common to that time and ours is the stress between the individual and society: while the former yearns for autonomy and liberty, the latter limits and constrains. Therefore, an alternative way to define a boundary is to say that it arises from the inevitable negotiations and stresses between the individual and the collective. Whether in the world of arts or in the other contexts of professional life, the paradox will always stand; otherwise, the very notion of career would be meaningless. The challenge, we believe, lies in how to deal with the paradox in such a manner as to keep it from paralyzing the individual. As Mozart also illustrates, the paradox can be a source of creativity and innovation.

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