

Surviving a boundaryless creative career: the case of Oscar-nominated film directors, 1967-2014

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Surviving a Boundaryless Creative Career: The Case of Oscar-Nominated Film Directors, 1967-2014

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Abstract

Previous research has examined how mobility and career competencies influence success in boundaryless careers. In this study, we flip the direction of those relationships and we explore how the interplay between success and failure relates to subsequent mobility, career competencies, and career evolution through the life span. Using a biographical design, we conceptualize success and failure as critical moments that influence the unfolding of the boundaryless careers of Oscar-nominated film directors. While the dominant metaphors of boundaryless careers are those of “paths,” “ladders,” “trajectories,” and “plateaus,” our findings suggest a new metaphor: the roller coaster.

Keywords

biography, careers, creativity, filmmaking industry

The conceptualization of career and career development has undergone fundamental transformation in recent decades (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). The shift from stable to more fluid careers marked by less security and greater mobility contours a work reality that displaces the traditional career (Arthur, 2014). While in the traditional model career progression is firm-specific and confined to one or two organizations (Sullivan, 1999), in the “boundaryless career” model individuals pursue a sequence of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of any single employment setting (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Tams & Arthur, 2010). Boundaries are not necessarily dissolving or disappearing, but they are rendered more permeable, encouraging in that way different forms of mobility (Gunz, Evans, & Jalland, 2002). As Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, and Roper (2012) observed, “in practice, ‘boundaryless career’ denotes not a boundary-less career but a boundary-crossing career” (p. 326).

Recently, many authors have identified some limitations in the ways the concepts of boundaries, mobility, and career success have been conceptualized and measured in boundaryless careers research. Career boundaries have been defined in physical (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), organizational (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005), occupational (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003), industrial, geographical (Inkson, 2006), and psychological terms (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006); as opportunities shaped by cognition, biography, and identity (Dowd & Kaplan, 2005; King, Burke, & Pemberton, 2005); and as a range of behavioral and interpersonal characteristics, such as learning and self-awareness, loyalty and risk taking, and others’ perceptions

(Dowd & Kaplan, 2005). Gubler, Arnold, and Coombs (2014a) found empirical support for a five-factor model of boundaryless career orientations, namely, organizational mobility, geographical mobility, occupational mobility, preference for working beyond organizational boundaries, and rejection of career opportunities for personal reasons. However, some authors have criticized the tendency to treat boundaries in broad and general terms at the expense of more nuanced and more precise conceptualizations. Inkson et al. (2012) argued that “the boundaryless career literature is less interested in how particular boundaries are being transcended than it is in the notion that they are being transcended: indeed, it is often vague to the point of neglect about what boundaries are” (p. 323). Furthermore, some rare studies supported the context-specificity of boundaries in some industries (e.g., Bagdadli, Solari, Usai, & Grandori, 2003) and cultures (e.g., Ituma & Simpson, 2009).

Regardless of how boundaries are defined, mobility is a key characteristic of the boundaryless career (Arthur, 2014; Gubler et al., 2014a). Past research has focused on the forms

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that mobility takes (e.g., interorganizational) and mobility strategies (e.g., validation from external networks; Eby et al., 2003; King et al., 2005). In defining boundaryless careers in opposition to traditional careers, past research has worked under some dominant assumptions and methodological approaches. By virtue of its antithetical nature to traditional careers of “upward mobility within a single organization” (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 179), the boundaryless career concept contains an image of the traditional (hierarchical and bureaucratic) organization (e.g., McKinlay, 2002) as the normative construct against which the alternative career is defined (Greenhaus, Callanan, & DiRenzo, 2008). Such a measure of comparison is problematic when organizations are increasingly described as flatter and more networked (Lingo & O’Mahony, 2010; Obstfeld, 2012) and in industries where careers are defined more by professional roles and less by organizational structures (Bechky, 2006; Mainemelis, Kark, & Epitropaki, 2015).

The image of the hierarchical organization also appears to affect the treatment of success in the literature. Inkson (2006) noted that the boundaryless career literature uses a territorial and spatial metaphor to understand boundaries. Consequently, careers are predominantly understood as upwardly mobile journeys (e.g., paths, ladders, trajectories, plateaus). In this respect, an underlying assumption in the literature is that success, objective or/and subjective (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005), is the cumulative outcome state of the boundaryless career journey. In this formulation, success is seen as the dependent variable and most research efforts have focused on identifying its predictors and mediators (Eby et al., 2003; Valcour & Ladge, 2008).

The strong focus of research on career success alone has resulted in sparse knowledge on how a dynamic interchange between success and failure (the ups and downs in other words of a career trajectory) relates to boundaryless careers. Although there is some research that explores obstacles to mobility, attention continues to focus on pinpointing strategies of overcoming challenges and ensuring success (O’Mahony & Bechky, 2006). The possibility of failure as an outcome end-state is rarely addressed explicitly by the current research (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). For example, career competencies have been linked to ways of knowing, such as “*knowing why*,” as this relates to one’s awareness of one’s motivations, values, and identity; “*knowing-how*,” which is contingent upon one’s knowledge, skills, and experience; and “*knowing-whom*,” which entails relationships, networks, and reputation (R. J. DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; Eby et al., 2003). The tendency of the literature to emphasize these career competencies as predictors of success has yielded little knowledge about their relationships with failure. Even within the limited literature on the “pitfalls” of boundaryless careers (Eby, 2001; Sullivan, 1999), negative aspects are viewed as detrimental to the actors’ status, autonomy, rewards, and opportunities for progress. In short, due to the

fact that success as a career outcome has underlined most scientific inquiries in the field (Baruch & Bozionelos, 2011), there has been little real interest in the intersection of successes and failures in boundaryless careers.

Moreover, the tendency toward cross-sectional research designs (Arthur et al., 2005) has promoted a static view of success as an end-state that implicitly remains unchanged over time. The focus on where individuals stand on the failure-success continuum at any single point in time has prevented us from understanding the interplay between success and failure across time, and how the process of succeeding or failing intersects with subsequent mobility (Kovalenko & Mortelmans, 2014). Critiques of the boundaryless career literature’s overemphasis on rationality, self-direction, and agency (Pringle & Mallon, 2003), and the acceptance that careers are the result of a variety of personal and contextual factors (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; King et al., 2005) suggest that we are dealing with a situated and dynamic phenomenon that is better captured through longitudinal, life-course, and biographical research (Arthur et al., 2005; Inkson et al., 2012; Nicholson, 2007). As Stumpf (2014) recently noted,

How do past career success and job mobility affect job embeddedness, subsequent career success, and future mobility within and between organizations and occupations? Each of these constructs is often studied as a dependent variable, yet the relationships among them, over time, are rarely examined. (p. 180)

In this article, we pay equal attention to success and failure in careers, and by flipping the direction of their relationships, we conceptualize success and failure not as endings but as beginnings, as critical moments that influence the unfolding of boundaryless careers over time. *How do critical moments of success and failure relate to subsequent success or/and failure in an overall successful creative career?* Our purpose is to explore this question by also paying close attention to how success and failure relate to subsequent mobility and career competencies.

To explore these issues, we conducted an inductive biographical study on the careers of a sample of acclaimed film directors. Our study is primarily located in the boundaryless careers literature, but responding to recent calls for interdisciplinarity in boundaryless careers research (e.g., Arthur, 2014), we infuse our analysis with additional context-specific insights from research on the filmmaking industry and the creative industries at large. In Table 1, we briefly summarize the main points of divergence between the dominant foci and orientations of past boundaryless careers research and the design elements of our exploratory study.

The boundaryless careers literature has favored, to date, a specific form of boundary: the firm (Inkson, 2006, p. 75). The salience of such a boundary, however, is limited beyond conventional organizational settings. In this article, we focus on an occupation (film direction) that is in-and-of-itself

Table 1. Design Elements and Contributions.

	Past research on boundaryless careers	Present study	
		Design elements	Main contributions
Methodology	Mostly cross-sectional studies	Life span biographical study of acclaimed directorial careers	Empirical insights on the evolution of careers through the life span
Boundaries	Defined in general and broad ways (e.g., geographical, organizational, occupational, psychological)	Identification of two context-specific boundaries in directorial careers: Professional roles and media	Empirical insights that highlight the context-specificity of career boundaries
Mobility	Focus on linear/upward mobility	Focus on role mobility and media mobility in directorial careers	Empirical insights on the important role of lateral and recursive mobility in boundaryless careers
Success/failure	Static focus on success as a career outcome	Focus on the dynamic interplay between success and failure and its implications for subsequent success and failure in directorial careers	Conceptualization of success and failure as critical moments that influence career evolution
	Focus on mobility as a predictor of success	Focus on how success and failure influence subsequent mobility in directorial careers	Conceptualization of success and failure as triggers of subsequent mobility
	Focus on career competencies (e.g., knowing “why,” “how,” and “whom”) as predictors of success	Focus on career competencies as drivers and implications of mobility	Conceptualization of career competencies as interconnected factors that are related more to maintaining a boundaryless career and less to ensuring future success

boundaryless in terms of a stable organizational setting. Filmmaking and other creative industries involve high degrees of mobility due to the impermanent employment pertinent to their project-based nature, the shifting tastes of their markets, the demand for creativity in their products, the uncertain nature of the creative processes they involve, the need to (re)combine the creative inputs of various professionals, and the artists' own needs for personal renewal (R. DeFillippi, Grabher, & Jones, 2007; Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000; Menger, 1999). Directorial careers in filmmaking are by definition “boundaryless” in terms of the physical limits of an organization or a temporary film project (Blair, Culkin, & Randle, 2003; Jones, 1996). In an industry where boundaries are not defined by “employment settings,” what are the salient boundaries? Our article contributes a study about two less general and more context-specific boundaries that film directors frequently cross: various media (e.g., films, television, video, theater) and professional roles (e.g., director, producer, actor; Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Blair et al., 2003; Jones, 1996). Professional roles, in particular, are closely tied to mobility in the filmmaking industry for at least four reasons.

First, far beyond technical competence, roles are both gateways and portable capsules of two key resources in the cultural industries, namely, social and cultural capital (Blair et al., 2003; R. J. DeFillippi & Arthur, 1998; Menger, 1999). Second, roles are arenas where collective bargaining for power is played out. For instance, the power and prestige that directors enjoy today are largely the results of a collective

bargaining that took place in Hollywood in the early 1970s (Baker & Faulkner, 1991; Biskind, 1998). Third, roles signal hierarchical structure (Baker & Faulkner, 1991). For example, Bechky (2006) found that a role hierarchy is clear in the minds of Hollywood professionals, and directors and producers are at the top of it. Finally, in the filmmaking industry, upward mobility is achieved through role transitions in a highly competitive labor market (Baker & Faulkner, 1991). Aspiring filmmakers struggle to enter Hollywood, given that more than 90% of film school graduates never land a filmmaking job (cf. Jones, 1996). Those who land a job usually start as crew members with the aim of eventually becoming a director or producer (Bechky, 2006; Jones, 1996). About 50% of those who work as directors direct only one film every 15 years (Faulkner & Anderson, 1987). Those who continue to work as directors may try to gain critical acclaim, to produce blockbusters, to become more influential, or/and to develop their audiences, but none of these objectives is a question of upward linear mobility.

Sullivan and Baruch (2009) observed that most of the research on mobility continues to focus on upward mobility and to largely ignore other forms of mobility. Our study contributes new insights on two other forms mobility, namely, lateral and recursive mobility. We decided to focus on acclaimed film directors precisely because they cannot climb upward the filmmaking industry's role hierarchy: They have already reached the top, at least at some point in their careers. To the extent that mobility is present in their career tracks, it is likely to be lateral (working as a director across various

media) and/or recursive (moving forth and back between various roles and/or media). Put another way, the focus of our study is not on what makes some directors more successful than others but, rather, on how the interplay between success and failure relates to mobility and career competencies in overall successful directorial careers. While past research has treated mobility and career competencies as predictors of success, our article contributes an empirically grounded conceptualization of success and failure as triggers of subsequent mobility, and of career competencies as interconnected factors that are related less to ensuring success and more to maintaining a boundaryless career.

Research Context and Method

In the boundaryless career literature, many authors have suggested that contexts shape and are shaped in turn by the actors who interact with them during their working lives (e.g., Inkson et al., 2012; Kovalenko & Mortelmans, 2014; Tams & Arthur, 2010). Similarly, in the creative industries literature, there is substantial agreement that creative careers should be investigated in association with the temporal, spatial, and social-structural characteristics of the contexts with which individuals interact (e.g., Mainemelis et al., 2015; Moedas & Benghozi, 2012; P. Thomson, Jones, & Warhurst, 2007). Even within the seemingly “boundaryless” filmmaking industry, careers are bounded to contextual and historical influences (Jones, 2001). The career of film directors, in particular, offers a vivid illustration of the historical coevolution and reciprocal influences between individuals and the contexts in which their careers are enacted. Although this historical coevolution was not examined in our research, it played a key role in our sampling procedure and should be considered, thus, as the historical contextual background of our study.

Historical Evolution of Directorial Careers in the Filmmaking Industry

The cardinal role that directors play in filmmaking today has been linked to a key historical period in the evolution of Hollywood. Up to the mid 1960s most directors were older men who tended to closely follow the studio's instructions often not even being allowed to watch what they had shot on any given day (Biskind, 1998). In the 1960s, the auteur movement sought to establish cinema as an art (vs. a craft or product) and the director as an artist (vs. a craftsman or machine operator). Positioning itself against historical determinism, the auteur movement posited that it is this “organic unity”—the director's distinctive individual stamp—that distinguishes the artistic value of a film (Bazin, 1957, 1958; Sarris, 1962, 1968). Although the auteur movement never denied the importance of the contributions of other professionals in the production process, it strongly portrayed the

director as the principal artist in filmmaking (Bywater & Sobchack, 1989; Cook & Bernink, 2000; Corrigan, 1991; David, 2000).

A parallel development in Hollywood at that time was that tickets admissions started to decline in the early 1960s and reached an all-time low by the end of the decade (Pokorny & Sedgwick, 2010). By the late 1960s, declining admissions and the surprising box office success in the United States of some novel European films, like Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow Up*, had shaken the studios' confidence in their ability to understand what moviegoers wanted. From the late 1960s until the late 1970s, a period known as the *New Hollywood Era*, the studios opened their doors to a generation of young directors in an attempt to revitalize Hollywood (Biskind, 1998; Waxman, 2005). In 1967, newcomer Mike Nichols directed the highly successful *The Graduate*, and a few years later two other young directors, Francis Ford Coppola and Steven Spielberg, directed the first blockbusters in history, *The Godfather* and *Jaws* (Baker & Faulkner, 1991). The phenomenal box office success of these films, in conjunction with the rising influence of the auteur movement, transformed Hollywood structurally and culturally, shifted power among the professional roles in it (Baker & Faulkner, 1991), and bestowed upon the role of the director supreme power and prestige (Allen & Lincoln, 2004; Hicks & Petrova, 2006).

As studio executives started to look at the blockbuster as the most direct means to high profits (Mezias & Mezias, 2000), some directors “cashed” their box office success by gaining more autonomy and decision-making power (Biskind, 1998). Although filmmaking has always been a collaborative creative endeavor (Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Ferriani, Corrado, & Boschetti, 2005), since the 1970s directors have gained the power to make the single most important contribution to cinematic creativity (Simonton, 2004a; see also Delmestri, Montanari, & Usai, 2005). Power, prestige, and creative freedom, however, came at a cost: Being now recognized as the principal artists in filmmaking, directors' careers became increasingly exposed to the evaluation of their films from audiences, critics, producers, and studio executives.

Because directorial careers and the filmmaking industry were transformed as a result of these historical developments, we decided to keep the historical context “constant” in our study by limiting our sample to film directors of the New Hollywood Era. By “constant” we do not mean that the context itself has remained stable over time, but rather, that our selected directors' careers evolved under the same historical contextual dynamics as time went by.

Sample

We drafted our sample based on two criteria. The first was that the directors began making films between the 1960s and

the late 1970s. This allowed us to examine (a) how their careers evolved under the same historical/contextual circumstances, and (b) how mobility, success, and failure were related to the unfolding of their careers over a long period of time.

The second criterion was that at some point in their careers they received a nomination for an Oscar for Best Direction. In the creative industries, acceptance by the field is the default way for assessing creativity (Amabile, 1996; Anderson, Potočnik, & Zhou, 2014). Past research has used nominations for awards as indicators of professional cinematic success (e.g., Faulkner & Anderson, 1987; Ravid, 1999), especially as it relates to the creativity of films (e.g., Simonton, 2002, 2004a, 2004b). The Director's Guild, the Golden Globes, and the Oscars awards indicate acceptance of a film by three "judgment bodies," respectively, directors, critics, and filmmakers more generally. Because the Oscar is the best indicator and correlates with the other two awards (Simonton, 2004a), we used it as our sampling criterion.

Between 1967 and 2014, 139 directors were nominated for an Oscar for Best Direction (www.oscar.com). We excluded directors who (a) were born between 1906 and 1913 and were established in Hollywood long before the mid 1960s,¹ or (b) started their careers after the 1970s,² or (c) whose careers were significantly invested in non-American film industries.³ This resulted in a sample of 55 directors whose names and nominated films are presented in Appendix A.

Our sampling followed the tradition of studying unique, highly creative people in contexts where control samples are not available, easily identifiable, or directly comparable with the selected group of creative individuals (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Gardner, 1993; Gruber & Wallace, 1999). Evidently, by selecting only highly acclaimed directors, our intention was not to generalize potential findings across all film directors, nor to examine what makes some but not other directors successful. Rather, we wanted to study in depth the dynamics between success and failure over time in the careers of a group of highly acclaimed directors.

Data and Analysis

Our study involved two phases. In the first phase we collected quantitative data on the roles and media the 55 directors worked with during their careers from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) and the Internet Broadway Database. These data gave us a quantitative perspective on the magnitude and frequency of mobility across roles and media in directorial careers. Table 2 shows the summary statistics of role mobility, that is, how many roles the 55 directors enacted throughout their careers *across* five media (feature films, short films, TV, video, and theater). Besides being directors, most people in our sample enacted quite often other roles and many enacted other roles more often than the role of the director. There is considerable variability (evident in the range statistics), but the most frequent roles (other than that

of the director) were producer, writer, and actor. Table 2 also shows the data for media mobility, that is, how many times the directors worked in the five media *regardless* of their role in them. Besides working in the cinema (feature and short films), most directors also worked in television or/and video, and about half worked in theater. Again, there is a great variability, but as a general pattern the directors did more television than cinema and most of them also worked for video. Overall, the quantitative data gave us a concrete sense of how frequent and widespread mobility across roles and across media was in our initial sample of 55 directors.

In the second phase, we explored the motivations and implications of role and media mobility by examining in depth the biographies of 12 directors from our initial sample of 55. The 12 directors were Woody Allen, Robert Altman, Peter Bogdanovich, Francis Ford Coppola, Milos Forman, Stanley Kubrick, Mike Nichols, Alan Parker, Roman Polanski, Sydney Pollack, Martin Scorsese, and Steven Spielberg. These 12 directors were selected because they represented the sources of variability in our initial sample of 55 (see Table 2). Put another way, the 12 directors did not represent the most productive, most nominated, or most award-winning directors among the 55. Rather, among the 12 directors there were important differences in the number of films they directed (from Kubrick's 13 to Allen's 44); the number of nominations they received for Oscar, Guild, and Golden Globe best director awards (from Bogdanovich's four to Spielberg's 29); and the awards they won (from Bogdanovich's, Kubrick's and Parker's none to Forman's and Spielberg's seven). Moreover, some directors directed both blockbusters and flops (e.g., Coppola), while others rarely directed either a blockbuster or a flop (e.g., Allen). Furthermore, the 12 directors' work included nearly all genres (drama, sci-fi, musical, etc.).

For each of the 12 directors, we collected from IMDb data on films directed; year of release; nominations and awards for best direction; and business data (budget and U.S. gross). Where business data were missing from IMDb, we obtained them from Box Office Mojo, but like previous studies (e.g., Sorenson & Waguespack, 2006) we were unable to find business data for many films released before 1980. For each director, we constructed a table with these data, and then used it as a platform for our analysis.⁴ We compared the chronology of the directors' films with the times they worked with other roles and media so as to examine whether those transitions were linear (i.e., making an irreversible career transition from one role or medium to another role or medium) or recursive (i.e., moving back and forth between two or more roles or media). We also looked for critical moments of success and failure in their careers, and then we compared these critical moments with the times the directors worked with other roles or/and media to get a sense about the motivational foundation and direction of those transitions.

A qualitative data "corpus" (Bauer & Aarts, 2000) was created through Internet and library catalog searches on each

Table 2. Mobility, Productivity, and Creativity Descriptive Statistics.

	Full sample (55 directors)			Biography subsample (12 directors)		
	M	Median	Range	M	Median	Range
Role mobility						
Director	50.29	33	5-473	56.67	38	16-223
Actor	27.58	7	0-300	27.50	17.50	2-83
Writer	49.78	9	0-1,421	29.33	16.50	0-81
Producer	78.53	15	0-1,082	105.42	16.50	1-799
Editor	1.95	0	0-18	2.33	1.50	0-8
Sound track	1.71	0	0-27	1.25	0	0-6
Cinematographer	0.65	0	0-8	0.75	0	0-5
Other	20.71	3	0-728	9.33	5.50	1-28
Media mobility						
Feature films	54.60	39	12-191	89.58	80	28-191
Short films	8.53	4	0-46	15.75	13.50	3-46
Television	202.15	100	2-1,080	254.17	223.50	14-1,080
Video	15.13	7	0-160	30.92	15.50	2-160
Theater	2.58	0	0-30	3.75	1	0-30
Directorial productivity						
Feature films directed	17.98	16	2-44	22.17	19	13-44
Directorial creativity						
Oscar nominations	2.33	2	1-8	4.25	4	1-8
Oscar awards	0.51	0	0-2	0.83	1	0-2
Directors Guild nominations	2.33	2	0-11	4.42	3.50	1-11
Directors Guild awards	0.55	0	0-3	0.83	0.50	0-3
Golden Globe nominations	2.45	2	0-11	4.75	4	2-11
Golden Globe awards	0.53	0	0-4	1.08	1	0-3

Data sources. Cinema data from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb). Theater data from the Internet Broadway Database.

Note. Under role mobility, the entry "Other" is the sum of the following role categories: Art director, production designer, costume designer, composer, art department, animation department, sound department, music department, camera and electrical department, special effects, and miscellaneous crew. Under media mobility, the media "Television" includes TV episode, TV documentary, TV movie, TV special, TV series, TV special documentary, TV mini-series, TV documentary short, TV mini-series documentary, TV series documentary, TV short, TV special short. The media "Video" includes video movie, video documentary, video short, video documentary short, and music video documentary.

director, as well as using search engines such as Lexus Nexus and IMDb. Key sources took the form of biographies, edited volumes of interview collections, audio and textual interviews, academic articles, press releases, and news items, and we honed in on the biographical information therein. Because the documentary data that we collected was somewhat heterogeneous in nature, and also because the directors' own accounts are subject to various biases, especially in filmmaking where reputation is key (R. J. DeFillippi & Arthur, 1998), our analytical strategy here was twofold. First, we contrasted and compared the views of the directors with those of their colleagues, critics, and biographers, and with the quantitative data on the evolution of their careers. Second, where such analysis was not possible, we employed a principle from narrative analysis and looked at the ways in which directors "impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives" (Riessman, 1993, p. 2). This allowed us to check how directors perceive what we, as researchers, identify as critical career moments. Triangulating

this information we prepared a written biography for each of the 12 directors and then we proceeded with within- and between-director comparisons.

Following these external and internal validity checks on the biographical information collected, we proceeded with an initial exploration of the data looking for successes, failures, and other critical moments. First, we look at three objective indicators of success and failure: *productivity* (number of feature films made), *creativity* (nominations and awards), and *financial performance* (return on budget [ROB] and magnitude of profits or losses). Second, we looked at the directors' *subjective interpretation* of these successes and failures. Third, we examined discrepancies among the different indicators, such as highly profitable films that were denigrated by critics, low-productivity/high-creativity time periods, discrepancies between the objective indicators and the directors' views on success and failure, and so forth. Fourth, benefiting from the long time frame of our biographical data (1967-2014), we identified successes and failures

Table 3. Summary of Qualitative Thematic Analysis of Biographical Data.

Organizing theme	Themes	Issues
Critical moments	Distributed across career trajectory	Interspersion of success and failure across directors' career
	Directors' stance toward critical moments	Dismissive, stoic, taking failure personally, pragmatism Filmmaking and the creative process are ambiguous and unpredictable Successful films endow status
Role and media mobility	Mobility following critical moments	Failure: Experimenting with other roles or media Success: Opening of doors to work in other media or to consolidate roles
	Drivers of mobility	Maintaining career alternatives Acquiring insider knowledge Calibrating social networks Renewing creative energy Protecting creative freedom

that played a critical role in subsequent career evolution. We identified a number of issues and, using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998), we further organized these issues into four themes and organizing themes, as shown in Table 3. Our final analysis focused on making sense of the issues and themes in terms of two organizing themes: critical moments and role mobility.

Findings

Patterns of Productivity, Creativity, and Financial Performance

To explore the temporal interplay between success and failure, we examined first the evolution of our directors' productivity and creativity over time. Because past research has shown that significant creative achievements often appear in 10-year cycles (Simonton, 2000), we plotted the 12 directors' productivity and creativity data in 10-year periods to explore potential sources of variability. We used the year each director directed his first feature film as the beginning of his first decade. By 2014 (the last year in our data collection) all but one of the directors had completed four decades and most were active in their fifth decade. We included in this comparative chronological analysis films made during an incomplete fifth decade. In Appendix B, we provide short profiles of the 12 directors' productivity and creativity patterns.

In terms of productivity (i.e., number of feature films directed), the 12 directors formed four distinct patterns, shown in Figure 1. Forman's, Kubrick's, Parker's and Pollack's productivity peaked in the first decade of their career and thereafter declined gradually but steadily. Allen, Altman, and Spielberg showed their productivity peaking in a midstage of their careers, between the second and fourth decades. This pattern is most clearly evident in Altman, who

left behind him five decades of work. The third group of directors—Bogdanovich, Coppola, Nichols, and Polanski—followed an interesting, oscillating pattern, with high productivity in the first decade; a sharp drop in the second decade; a partial (Bogdanovich, Polanski), complete (Nichols), or even higher recovery (Coppola) of productivity in the third decade; and another decline in the fourth decade. Last but not least, although we include Martin Scorsese in the second graph, we note that his productivity pattern was unique as he was the only director with a steady, linear productivity pattern: five movies per decade across four decades (and three movies in his fifth but still incomplete decade). Therefore, although small, our sample of 12 directors encompassed four distinct productivity patterns across 40 or 50 years of career.

In terms of creativity (i.e., number of Oscar, Directors' Guild, and Golden Globe Best Director nominations received), the 12 directors formed three distinct patterns, shown in Figure 2. The first group's nominations peaked within a single decade, which was the first for Bogdanovich and the second for Coppola and Kubrick. Although the latter two received nominations also in the third decade, we write later that their second decade appears to have been by far the most creative one. The second group received nominations in three, four, or five continuous decades: the first, second, and third for Parker and Pollack; the second, third, and fourth for Forman; the first, second, third, and fourth for Nichols; and the second, third, fourth, and fifth for Allen and Spielberg. Scorsese was the only director who received nominations in all five decades. Although some directors in this group appear to have had a creativity peak in a single decade (e.g., the first for Nichols and the second for Allen and Spielberg), their creativity stretched across more decades in comparison with the directors in the first group. The third group as well received nominations in three different decades, but their

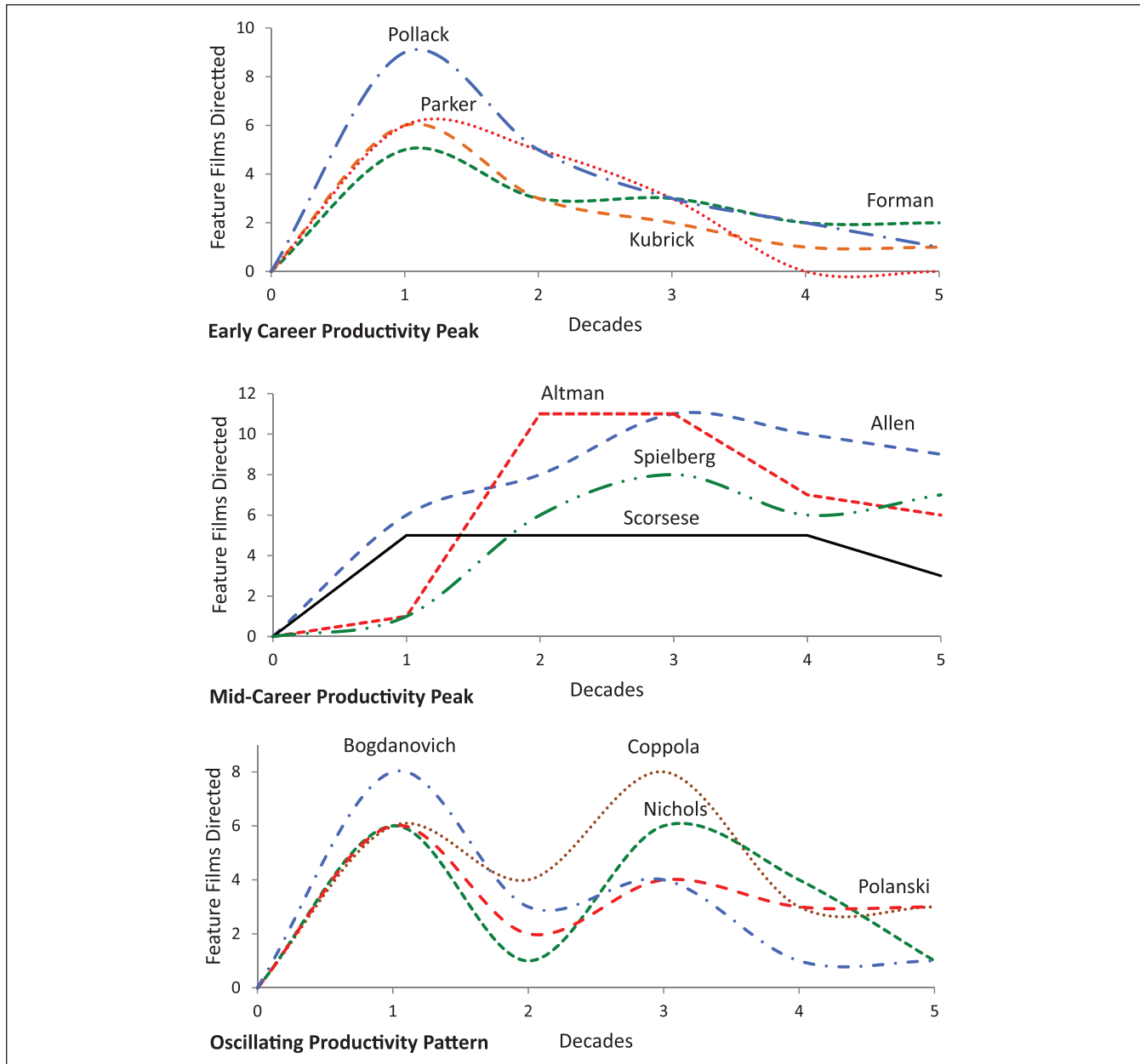


Figure 1. Directorial cinematic productivity per decade.

Data source: Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

pattern was an oscillating one, involving nominations in discontinuous decades (Altman, Polanski).

Because past research has shown that awards contribute additional information about cinematic creativity than nominations alone (Simonton, 2004a), we also plotted the best director awards won by the 12 directors (shown in Appendix B). Their awards ranged from 0 (Bogdanovich, Kubrick, Parker) to 7 (Forman, Spielberg); from five directors who won awards only in one, single decade of their careers (Nichols in the first, Coppola and Allen in the second, Pollack in the third, Altman in the fifth) to three directors

who won awards in two decades (Polanski, Scorsese, Spielberg) and one director who won awards in three decades (Forman); and from a director who won his first and last award as early as in his second year in Hollywood (Nichols) to a director who won his first and last award as late as forty-six years after making his first movie (Altman). Clearly, there was substantial variability about creativity as well in our sample. Overall, the productivity and creativity patterns shown in Appendix B resemble the trajectory of a roller-coaster ride rather than the trajectory of steady or upward progression.

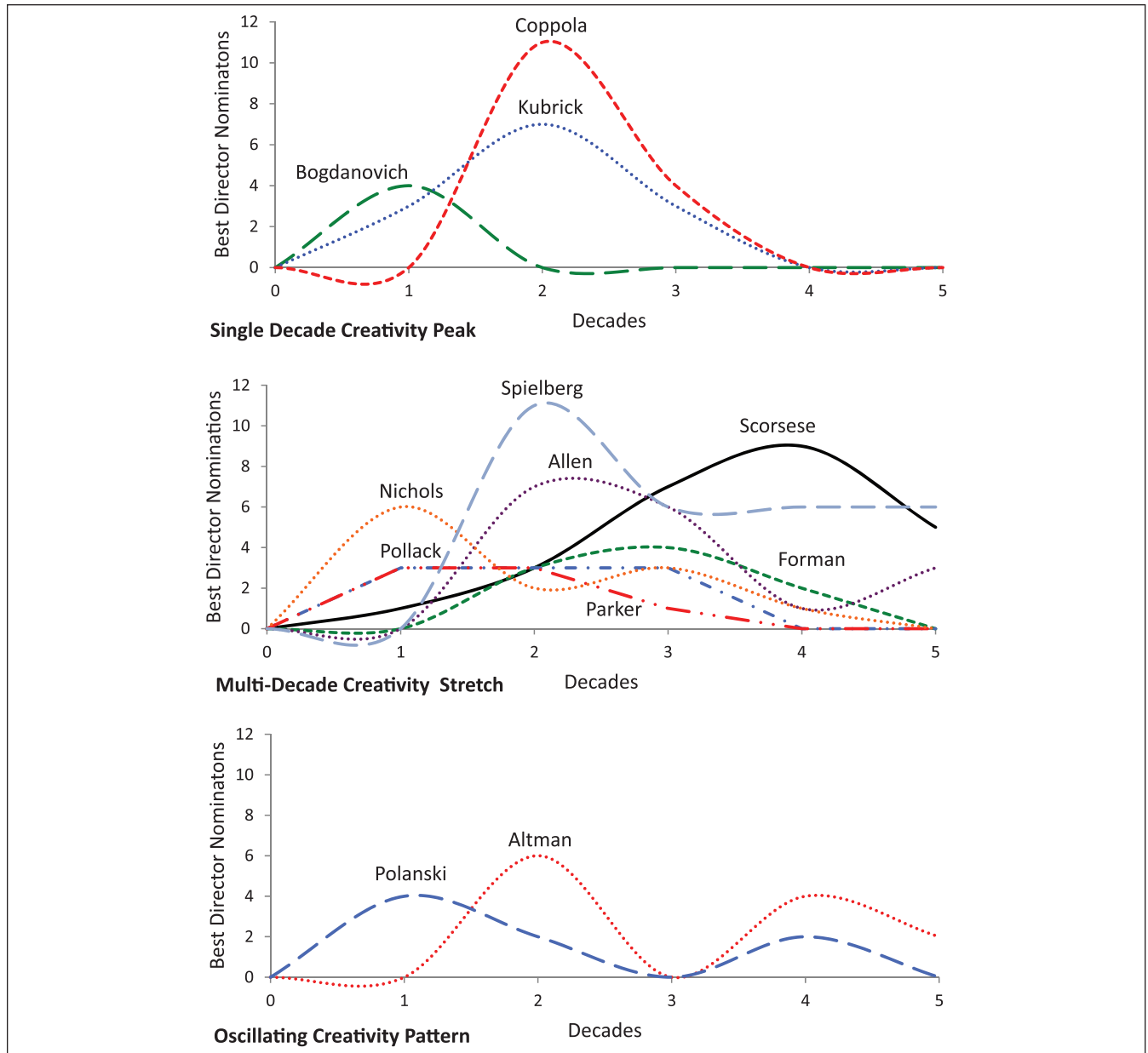


Figure 2. Directorial cinematic creativity per decade: Best director award nominations.

Data source. Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

Note. Oscars, Directors' Guild, and Golden Globes Best Director nominations.

Due to missing financial data, we were not able to create a similar chronological comparison for financial performance. Instead, we used the available data to get a general sense of financial success and failure in our sample. From the 270 films made by our directors, we found budget and U.S. gross data for 160 films, which we used to calculate the films' ROB. As shown in Figure 3, the ROB of these 160 films ranged from -99.57% to $1,438\%$. The 12 directors made films that ranged from blockbusters (e.g., in 1982 Spielberg's *ET* grossed US\$360 million on a US\$10.5 million budget) to disasters (e.g., in 1982 Coppola's *One From*

the Heart grossed US\$389,000 on a US\$27 million budget). Best director nominated films and best director award-winning films have performed better on the average than non-nominated ones; however, there were some nominated films (e.g., Allen's 1994 *Bullets Over Broadway*) and some award-winning films (e.g., Forman's 1996 *The People vs. Larry Flynt*) with a negative ROB.

The overall pattern shown in Figure 3 is consistent with past extensive analyses of the financial performance of thousands of films. Pokorny and Sedgwick (2010) found that since the 1930s the financial performance of U.S. films has

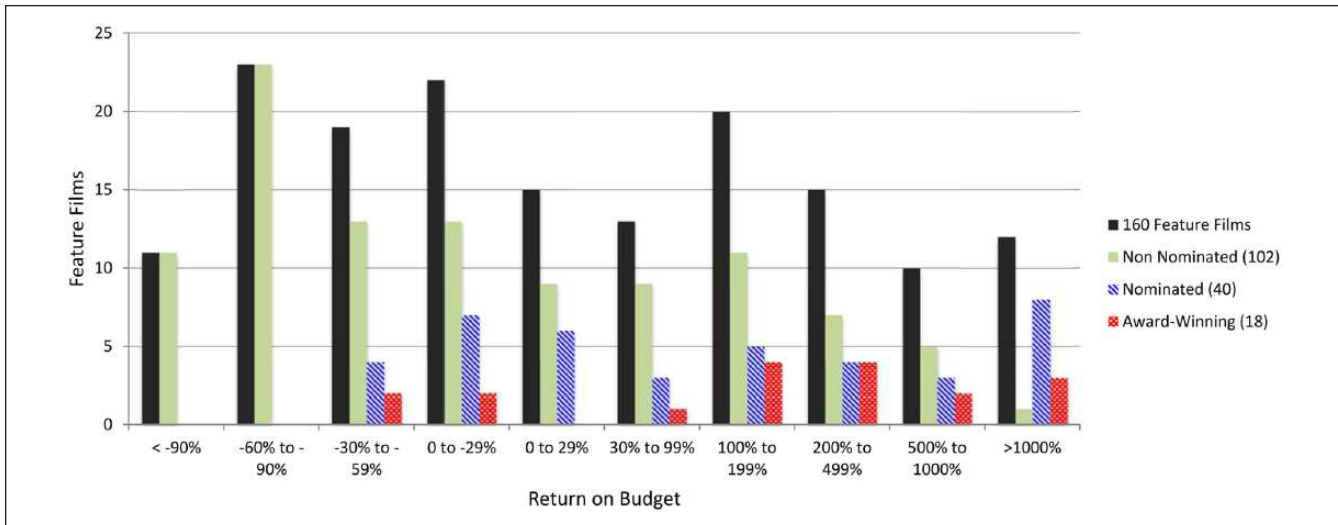


Figure 3. Financial performance of 160 feature films.

Data sources. Internet Movie Database (IMDb) and Box Office Mojo.

Note. Return on budget was calculated as $[(U.S. \text{ Gross} - \text{Budget}) / \text{Budget}] \times 100$. The 12 directors made a total of 270 feature films, of which 200 were not nominated for a best director award; 52 were nominated for a best director award but did not win it; and 18 received a best director award. The subset of those films included in the above figure represents, respectively, 59% of films made, 51% of non-nominated films, 77% of nominated (but not winning) films, and 100% of award-winning films.

remained unpredictable and volatile, and Ravid (1999) and De Vany and Walls (2004) found that the presence of star directors and actors in a film does not reduce the inherent uncertainty about its financial performance. In an analysis of 175 randomly selected films released between 1991 and 1993, Ravid (1999) found that their budgets ranged from US\$1 million to US\$70 million ($M = \text{US}\$15.67$ million, $SD = 13.90$ million), and their domestic revenues (U.S. gross) ranged from US\$6,000 to over US\$162 million ($M = \text{US}\$22.09$ million, $SD = 32.795$). Ravid (1999) concluded that “*this variability is perhaps the most significant feature of the sample and of the industry as a whole*” (p. 473). The films of the 12 highly acclaimed directors in our study were not excluded in any way from this industry-level variability. Between 1991 and 1993, the same period as in Ravid’s (1999) study, our 12 directors made a total of 17 movies, whose budgets ranged from US\$7 million to US\$70 million ($M = \text{US}\$31.46$ million, $SD = 19.20$ million), whose domestic revenues (U.S. gross) ranged from US\$1 million to US\$357 million ($M = \text{US}\$61.18$ million, $SD = 87.217$), and whose ROB ranged from -93% to 467% .

Because we were not able to obtain box office data for all 260 films made by the 12 directors, we thought to be conservative and assumed only that, while it is possible that the ROB data of the 160 films shown in Figure 3 outperforms the industry’s average, our directors themselves encounter a rich variety of positive, neutral, and negative financial results throughout their careers. Our conservative interpretation of the ROB data shown in Figure 3 is that, although the 12 directors are highly acclaimed, the financial performance of

the films that they made during their careers fits reasonably well our roller-coaster metaphor.

Qualitative Analysis of Successes and Failures

The patterns shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 highlight how variable and nonlinear our directors’ careers have been. Although interesting in and of themselves, these quantitative patterns are difficult to further interpret lacking more nuanced information, especially in those cases where there are discrepancies among different indicators of success or failure. This was the value of the biographical analysis that we present in the remainder of the article. Put another way, the juxtaposition of productivity, creativity, and financial patterns pointed us to windows of opportunity (e.g., emerging questions and observations) for entering our biographical data, and the analysis of the latter enabled us to return and interpret meaningfully those patterns.

For example, early on we queried why Coppola’s and Kubrick’s creativity peaked in their second and least productive decade when they directed, respectively, four and three films. Turning to their biographies, we found that during their second decade they were not idle but worked very hard to make their masterpieces (*The Godfather I and II*, *The Conversation*, and *Apocalypse Now* for Coppola, and *Dr Strangelove*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and *A Clockwork Orange* for Kubrick). Coppola, in fact, spent a good part of that decade in a jungle in the Philippines, fighting to finish *Apocalypse Now* in the midst of a civil war. We also asked whether the huge artistic and financial success that Coppola

enjoyed during his second decade was directly responsible for his highly productive third decade—which would be a case of a director who, now established and successful, walks comfortably through the studios' open doors. In sharp contrast, his biography revealed that his third decade began with a massive financial flop that led him to later direct many films he did not want to make to pay back his debts—an observation that alerted us to dig further into critical moments where past success directly or indirectly triggered subsequent failures. Similarly, when we asked what had happened to Altman and Nichols in their low-creativity or low-productivity years, their biographies revealed that both of them were often productive and creative away from Hollywood, in theater and television—a fact that led us to further inquire about mobility across media and roles in times of trouble. Prior to presenting our findings about mobility, we discuss how the directors' themselves related to those critical moments in their careers. Our qualitative analysis is summarized in Table 3.

Critical Moments

An overarching pattern in our data is that “peak” and “low” moments are interspersed throughout the directors' careers. Their careers thus cannot be conceptualized linearly as starting low and leading toward a career climax. Rather, they can best be described as involving cycles of success and failure, either in critical acclaim and/or the box office. As Bogdanovich noted,

I've already been through enough and seen enough other careers to know that in show business, careers go up and down. It's the nature of the business . . . I've had my share of personal and business challenges and obstacles. (in Gritten, 2002)

Bogdanovich's comment about filmmaking careers going up and down, in conjunction with the fluctuating productivity, creativity, and box office patterns shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3, led us to adopt the roller coaster as a metaphor for the careers of the 12 directors. In Table 3, we summarize how the directors reflected on those critical moments in their career journeys.

Starting with failure, we found that their responses varied considerably. Polanski used strong and stoic vocabulary such as “stamina” and “struggle” in response to failure, and also talked about “*never [losing] faith in ability as a director*” (in Cronin, 2005, p. 59). Spielberg's reaction to failure was to take criticisms personally and temporarily retreat from the scene (in Kermodé, 2007). Failing to find financial support for his films, Coppola invested his own money, went into debt, and mortgaged his house for his oeuvre (G. D. Phillips, 2004). Pollack's response to failure was to ensure that his immediately next project was not one that meant all that much to him creatively to give himself the time and space to build up his self-confidence before tackling a project of great

magnitude and meaning to him (Gallagher, 1982). Altman's biographer Patrick McGilligan described him as being “*ennobled by failure and oppressed by success*” (McGilligan, 1989, p. 316), while producer Robert Evans noted of Bogdanovich's successful first decade: “*Success went straight to Peter's head. But it left his head and went to his feet pretty quick—they were in cement*” (in “Peter Bogdanovich Returns to Filmmaking,” 2002). Bogdanovich himself noted that “*Nobody prepares you for success. One is always prepared for failure, because you fail before you succeed, usually*” (in Esler, 2005).

One of the most frequent observations in our study was that, despite the presence of variability in their responses to failure, the 12 directors agreed that filmmaking is an inherently ambiguous and uncertain creative process making it difficult to anticipate success from the outset. For example, commenting on his experience across a number of films—hits and flops—Parker noted (in Barnes & Noble, 2008),

I've done films that have been very successful, and I've done films that haven't made ten cents but the truth is you put the same amount of effort and commitment into all of them. Whether they're successful or not is really out of your hands.

This consistent finding in our study supports previous scholarly calls to incorporate chance events in career theory. Chance events are “unplanned, accidental, or otherwise situational, unpredictable, or unintentional events or encounters that have an impact on career development and behavior” (Rojewski, 1999, p. 269). Bright, Pryor, Chan, and Rijanto (2009) found that individuals are more likely to pay greater attention to chance events that are beyond their control and highly influential in terms of career impact. Lending support to this argument, we found that the 12 directors were highly aware of the inherent uncertainty of filmmaking. Reflecting on his own hits and flops, Pollack stressed that an exciting aspect of filmmaking is the fact that making any attempt to a priori determine how well (or not) a film will do is simply futile:

No, they were not at all failures in my mind . . . I mean, in *Random Hearts* I badly misjudged the audience's ability to accept Harrison Ford in a role other than what they really want to see him in . . . When Harrison is in an action picture he's so good and that's what we want to see. We don't want to see him in pain, and in misery, and suffering. The very reasons sometimes that you make a film are the reasons for its failure. I mean I wanted Harrison in a different role . . . That's what is exciting about it, though. I don't have the faintest idea. I didn't have the faintest idea *Tootsie* would be a hit, or *Out Of Africa* would be a hit, or *The Firm* would be a hit. You don't know. You just don't know. (in Wattenberg, 2000)

Pollack's comment about the risks the director takes in trying to bring novel elements into the filmmaking process also illustrates the self-directed and value-driven protean

career orientation (Grimland, Vigoda-Gadot, & Baruch, 2012; Hall, 2004), which was dominant in all 12 directors. This is not surprising, considering that directorial careers cannot be psychologically owned or managed by any organization but by the directors themselves. Waters, Briscoe, Hall, and Wang (2014) found that, during periods of failure and transition, individuals with a protean orientation are more likely to maintain self-esteem and seek personal and career growth. Similarly, in our study we found that the 12 directors' self-directed and value-driven orientation helped them stay afloat artistically and psychologically during moments of failure, uncertainty, and adversity.

A second point of convergence was the directors' awareness of what external criteria of success mean to their careers. Parker suggested, "*Awards stink. Especially when other people win them and you don't*" (in Parkinson, 2003). In an interview where he expressed frustration for not having yet won an Oscar, Scorsese (who over the years has repeatedly expressed his deep respect for director John Ford) noted "*Hollywood's highest honor is the Oscar, and you can't just say it isn't given accurately—John Ford had six*" (in Maslin, 1991). Jones (1996) noted that being associated with commercially successful films defines one's status within the industry. In our study, we found that all 12 directors recognized the value of awards and box office success, despite some of them choosing to shun or challenge the establishment. When Woody Allen won his Oscar, he did not go to the ceremony but showed up instead in his *jazz band's* gathering (Amabile, 1996). Bogdanovich responded to the box office success of his film *Mask* by suing Universal for cutting two scenes and Bruce Springsteen's songs from the film (Erbert, 2002).

Our 12 directors were driven by values such as creative freedom, artistic integrity, nonconformity, and authenticity, but at the same time, they were aware that their chances of living by and creating according to those values could increase or decrease as a result of critical acclaim or box office results. For example, after his first Hollywood film (*Taking Off*) flopped in 1971, Forman went into depression and spent most of his time in a hotel room. In 1975, he got a second chance and directed *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, which became a big success:

. . . If *Cuckoo's Nest* had flopped, I would have changed professions. I would have had to. Who would offer me another job if I made two flops in a row? Before we started, every major studio turned down the project . . . all I heard was, "My God, who wants to see this depressing story all taking place in hospital rooms of a mental institution?" I was proud I made the film, for whatever personal, private reasons, but I was scared that it would not find an audience. (in Riley, 2007)

More recently, the now multiaward winning and renowned Forman explained why it took him 7 years to make another film after his 1999 movie *Man on the Moon*:

Between the *Man on the Moon* and now, three projects I had and worked on—each for a year-and-a-half, maybe two—collapsed! I was not idle. I was busy, but no fruit . . . Well, you are only as good as your latest film. And if the latest film doesn't do commercially as expected, they think you lost it, and you have to prove them again and again . . . Well, that's life. (in Chud.com, 2007)

In summary, as shown in Table 3, although the directors' responses to success and failure varied considerably, there was substantial agreement among them that filmmaking is an inherently ambiguous and uncertain creative process, and that external criteria of success and failure play an important role in the unfolding of their careers. We discuss next how mobility was associated with such critical career moments.

Drivers and Implications of Mobility

While past research has conceptualized mobility as a predictor of success, we found that critical moments of success and failure trigger subsequent mobility. As shown in Table 3 across our sample of 12 directors, mobility across roles and media was a "standard" response to critical moments, albeit for different reasons. The failure of a film often led the directors to work with other roles or media. The success of film often opened doors to them to work in other media or consolidate roles (e.g., director and writer) in their next film (see also Baker & Faulkner, 1991). Sometimes, their transition to other roles or media was not driven by success or failure but by their own intrinsic needs for self-expression and experimentation.

After several readings of the biographies, we organized our findings about the drivers and implications of mobility into five categories: *maintaining career alternatives*, *acquiring insider knowledge*, *calibrating social networks*, *renewing creative energy*, and *protecting creative freedom*. We then compared and contrasted these findings with previous research. While past research has linked these drivers to career competencies (i.e., knowing "why," "how," and "whom") that predict career success, we found that they are related less and less directly to ensuring success, and more and more directly to simply surviving a boundaryless career.

Maintaining career alternatives. Working with other roles and/or media provided the directors in our sample with a vital source of stability in a fickle industry where ambiguity about the product is high and diversification of career risk is key (Menger, 1999). Early on in their career, this was often a means of finding a way into the system and meeting people. Later, the 12 directors did various things to stay afloat economically, artistically, and/or psychologically. Bogdanovich has always been able to work as an actor, journalist, or film critic when his films flopped (Yule, 1992). Forman has had a stable job as a professor of film at Columbia University.

Altman started from television and was always able to work in television in times of trouble. The case of Mike Nichols' illustrates the point further. Nichols' passport to Hollywood was his earlier work as a theatrical director. His first two films were highly successful, but years later Nichols experienced a period of failure, which included the poor critical and commercial reception of two films (*The Day of the Dolphins* and *The Fortune*) and his walking out of two other films due to disputes (*The Last Tycoon* and *The Man Who Looked Like Bogie*). Nichols' life was also complicated at the time by divorce and struggles with depression. In the next 8 years, Nichols dealt with these setbacks by directing in the theater once again where he had enormous success. He also moved into television, where he executive produced the innovative series *The Family* for ABC. After 8 years, Nichols returned to directing feature films with *Silkwood*, which was nominated for Oscar and Golden Globe best director awards. *Silkwood* was the only film he made in his second decade. Overall, maintaining career alternatives was a standard driver of the lateral and recursive mobility of the 12 directors throughout their careers.

Acquiring insider knowledge. Domain knowledge plays an important role in creative professions (Amabile, 1996). In the case of directors, domain knowledge goes well beyond the technical competencies of filmmaking. It also involves the ability to elicit and integrate the diverse creative efforts of composers, writers, actors, and so forth (Coget, Haag, & Gibson, 2011; Jones, 1996; Mainemelis et al., 2015; Perretti & Negro, 2007). By enacting diverse roles, our directors claimed to be in a better position to understand them, which contributed in turn to their ability to effectively manage and integrate the efforts of diverse filmmaking professionals. For example, Pollack's work as an actor helped him elicit, as a director, Oscar-nominated performances from 12 different actors (D. Thomson, 2005). Forman echoes the point:

I don't feel comfortable in front of the camera! . . . But on the other hand, I would recommend to anyone who has ambition to become a film director that they should go, from time to time, in front of the camera—just to learn how it feels to stand in front of the camera. If you are never in front of the camera, you'll go crazy: "What I want them to do is so simple! How can they not do it!?" Well, go in front of the camera, and you'll see. It's not that easy. (in Chud.com, 2007)

Forman's comment illustrates that enacting other roles does not necessarily make a director an expert in these roles; however, it does lead him or her to a more encompassing mental map of the filmmaking process. This is consistent with learning theories that posit that directly experiencing reality from various angles calibrates adaptive flexibility (Dane, 2010; Mainemelis, Boyatzis, & Kolb, 2002; Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006). Experientially accessing filmmaking from different points of view strengthens the director's repertoire

of adaptive behaviors as they relate to the polymorphous creative challenges of filmmaking.

Furthermore, while previous studies have found that good interpersonal skills are critical for career success in the film industry (Jones, 1996), many of our directors are reputed as being difficult people to work with. It appears, however, that the crew's appreciation of the depth and breadth of their director's filmmaking insight helps them deal with the director's idiosyncratic traits. Kubrick, for example, was rarely described as an easy person to work with, but he was also rarely described as someone with anything less than a superb insight into filmmaking. His work as a photographer, cinematographer, writer, and editor calibrated his ability to envision filmmaking from varied angles and to integrate the creative inputs of his crews. Jan Harlan, Kubrick's wife's brother and the producer of many of his films noted,

It was that kind of process of personally taking possession of not only the people, the technology, the art, the craft of making movies, he embodied the whole thing. He invited actors, cinematographers, production designers to come to his family and collaborate with him, which for some people was difficult. After I worked with Stanley in 2001, I swore that I would not work for anybody else again. 'Cause Stanley was a hell of a task master. (Harlan, 2001)

Overall, acquiring insider knowledge about various aspects of filmmaking was another driver of the lateral and recursive mobility of the 12 directors in our sample.

Calibrating social networks: Bridging and bonding networks. The significance of social networks is a recurring theme in the careers literature (e.g., Bosley, Arnold, & Cohen, 2009), the creativity literature (e.g., Baer, 2010), and in the filmmaking discourse (e.g., Blair et al., 2003; Ferriani et al., 2005; Jones, 1996; Simonton, 2002). These networks played bridging and bonding (Putnam, 2000) roles in the careers of the 12 directors that we studied.

Early on, they often helped the directors launch their career thus playing a bridging role. Diaz de Chumaceiro (2004) found that many acclaimed opera singers launched their careers serendipitously thanks to an interaction between chance encounters and the singers' social networks. Grimland et al. (2012: 1087) found that "being in the right place at the right time," "personal encouragement," and "professional or personal connection which led to information about jobs, informal recommendations, and job offers" were the most frequently reported positive chance events. We observed similar interactions between chance encounters and social networks in our sample. After working at various advertising agencies and progressing to writing copy, Parker landed at Collet, Dickinson, and Pearce where he met producer David Puttnam, and it was the latter's invitation to write a script that brought Parker to filmmaking. Later on, networks provide the directors with a source of diverse inputs to the

creative process (Baer, 2010; Perry-Smith, 2006, 2014) and also strengthened their reputations. For example, after making his second film (*Targets*), Bogdanovich turned back to journalism and struck up a life-long friendship with the legendary director Orson Welles while interviewing him on the set of Mike Nichols's *Catch-22*. Three years later, when Bogdanovich directed *The Last Picture Show*, the press hailed him as the "new Orson Welles" (Appelo, 1990). Welles remained a source of advice, support, and inspiration throughout Bogdanovich's career (Yule, 1992). The relationship between Bogdanovich and Welles offers a vivid example of a mutual mentorship relationship in a developmental network (Dobrow, Chandler, Murphy, & Kram, 2012; Higgins, Dobrow, & Roloff, 2010)

At other times, these networks are used to bypass obstacles and rally support for a film as was the case when Nichols appealed to Jacqueline Kennedy to influence the Catholic League of Decency in giving *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, a potentially controversial film, its blessing. Also, at other times, social ties in other media helped directors find work after a film has flopped, until they were able to later return to Hollywood and filmmaking, such as Altman's lasting social ties in television (McGilligan, 1989). Like previous research (e.g., Simonton, 2002, 2004b), we also found that a few social ties persist in time. Although the 12 directors moved a lot between roles and media, they maintained a small group of people with whom they worked time and again in a "symbiotic" way (Alvarez & Svejenova, 2002; Svejenova, Mazza, & Planellas, 2007) creating bonding social networks. Perretti and Negro (2007) found that while newcomers play a key role in the creativity of films, a core of familiar group members brings predictability and supports innovation. While the recombination of creative personnel is common in film projects, our directors worked time and again with a few trusted people. Coppola worked throughout his career with production designer Dean Tavoularis and cinematographer Gordon Willis, Forman worked for 26 years with producer Michael Hausman, Allen worked regularly with cinematographers Sven Nyquist, Gordon Willis, and Carlo DiPalma, producer Jean Doumanian, and actors Mia Farrow, Diane Keaton, Dianne Weist, Judy Davis, and Alan Alda.

These trusted relationships also provided emotional support and advice in times of trouble. When Spielberg had retreated to Hawaii after the flop of *1941*, Lucas went to meet him and challenged him to prove to the world that he was not a runaway director: Lucas asked him to direct a film he had in mind called *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg in Kermodé, 2007). Similarly, when his 1977 film *New York, New York* flopped, drug-addicted Scorsese went into an angry depression. During that time he was put on lithium and his wife divorced him. He recovered largely thanks to his friend Robert De Niro who kept on bugging him to read a book about the boxer Jake LaMotta. In 1980 Scorsese kicked his drug habit and turned the book into the acclaimed *Raging*

Bull starring De Niro in an Oscar-winning acting performance (Biskind, 1998; Macaulay, 2004). While the directors' careers entail a great deal of mobility across studios, film, roles, and media, these closely knit networks provided them with a sense of continuity and belongingness. These relationships often functioned as "interpreters, sources of feedback, and sources of support and permission of change and learning" (Boyatzis, 2007, p. 525).

Equally important is that some directors valued those relationships beyond instrumental reasons. When Coppola was having serious financial difficulties in the 1980s, Lucas (who had plenty of money to lend following his *Star Wars* success) offered him an interest-free loan. Coppola refused because he did not want to trade on their friendship:

My friendship with George is such that . . . he would help me in other ways. George is a friend, not in a money-lending way, but more in the way of driving me a lift to the airport if I needed one. (in G. D. Phillips, 2004: 192)

Coppola eventually mortgaged all of his property and estates, and was not even able to pay his phone bills at home so that his service was disconnected.

In summary, calibrating social networks was another driver of lateral and recursive mobility in the 12 directorial careers. Social networks provided a linking role to directors (e.g., making acquaintances, furthering their careers) at the same time as providing them with a sense of belonging, helped them recover from failure, and helped them make the movies they wanted.

Creative renewal. Filmmaking was not the only way the directors engage in the creative process. Nichols did a lot of theater direction, Coppola a lot of script writing, Pollack and Bogdanovich acted regularly. Even during the times that he directed huge blockbusters and received nominations and awards, Spielberg produced video games and TV animation series. Allen still tours the world with his jazz band. Parker has designed and published cartoons throughout his career. From the public's perspective, a director's identity tends to be determined by his or her films. From the director's perspective, his or her artistic identity is much broader, more mobile, and spanning a variety of contexts and capabilities. The 12 directors possessed a relatively high degree of psychological mobility, the capacity to envisage themselves seeking personal development outside any given employment context (Gunz, Evans, & Jalland, 2000; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). As such, their careers are not located in Hollywood alone but are also constructed through engagement with other milieus that provide further outlets for creative expression. What is also apparent in our data is that directors turn to these different contexts at different times not only to maintain career alternatives but also to rejuvenate their creative energy through new learning and developmental opportunities.

Past research has linked creativity to cross-pollinating knowledge and experiences across work contexts (e.g., Higgins, 2005; Simonton, 1999). In our study, working with various roles or milieus exposed directors to different ideas and contexts, which often stimulated their creative thinking when they returned to directing films. Allen's involvement with jazz informed his writing for and direction of *Bananas* as well as his work on the sound tracks of many of his films. Between 1993 and 2001 Bogdanovich directed about half a dozen TV movies. His television work helped him to direct his next film, *The Cat's Meow*, on a tight shooting schedule:

If I hadn't done them, I don't think I'd have been able to do this one with such speed . . . Doing television reminded me that one can do good work quickly. It's no coincidence that Hitchcock shot *Psycho* with a television crew, because he knew he wanted to go fast. (in Gritten, 2001)

Enacting different roles or working in different milieus (e.g., theater or TV) alongside film, may also act as a way of regenerating directors' creative energy. This has been described as a healthy artistic reflex against the depletion and degradation of one's personal creative energy due to lack of variability and experimentation (e.g., Essex & Mainemelis, 2002; Jones, 1996; Mainemelis, 2001; Strubler & Evangelista, 2009). Engaging with other forms of creative process often helped the directors in our sample regenerate their creative energy. Pollack noted,

I do like the idea that I can be creative as a producer. It's not my baby, the way it is as a director. I'm not going to get the credit for it. Nor am I going to get the blame. That's a relief. I can have a day-to-day sense of creativity without taking the load. (in D. Thomson, 2005)

In summary, lateral and recursive mobility were triggered not only by successes, failures, or other critical moments, but also by the directors' intrinsic needs for creative renewal.

Protecting creative freedom. A macro reading of the biographies revealed a well-known narrative about the division and tensions between directors and producers. Parker and Polanski, respectively, have said,

It's not so much about genres, as about a fusion of possibilities for me to be creative, and to try and make it happen. I've always said we're like guerrillas on bicycles: you steal your art away from Hollywood. You give them what they want, and I do what I want. (in Parkinson, 2003)

Quite quickly I realized that the studios are run by a bunch of agents and lawyers who don't have much to do with the artistic side of things. The gulf between these people and the artists is constantly widening and their relationships can be so fraught that you wonder if some filmmakers haven't purposely tried to bankrupt their producers. Michael Cimino poured money down the drain—nearly \$50 million in all—during the making of

Heaven's Gate. It was as if he was doing it out of revenge and wanted to punish everyone. (in Cronin, 2005, p. 106)

This narrative is in line with the observation that in creative industries people often cater to the same employers against whom they rebel (Barley & Kunda, 2004; Mainemelis, 2010; Mainemelis & Epitropaki, 2013). Although we found plenty of evidence about tensions between the directors and the studios in the filmmaking process, the data we present in Table 2 tell a different story about the "division" between directors and producers. About half of the 55 directors worked as producers about as much or even more than they worked as directors, and most from the other half were not strangers to working as producers. From the 12 directors that we studied in greater depth, six produced at least every second film they directed and three others produced many of their films. Nine directors also managed their own production companies (Altman, Bogdanovich, Coppola, Kubrick, Nichols, Polanski, Pollack, Scorsese, and Spielberg). The roles of the director and the producer may mean different things to different audiences (academics, artists, studios) but they do not refer to two distinct "species" of people. Like Alvarez, Mazza, Pedersen, and Svejenova (2005), we found that Hollywood directors talk about their work as producers as an attempt to protect their creative freedom. Spielberg stated the following about his production company:

Amblin insulates me from Hollywood, and that's why I love it. I don't have to play the musical studios game. I don't have to go to people. They come to me. What makes me a good businessman is that I always make other people pay for my movies. I never spend my own money. (in Baxter, 1997, p. 282)

Similarly, directors often consolidated the director and writer roles, in that way increasing their influence in the filmmaking process (Baker & Faulkner, 1991). We also found other forms of mobility that aimed at strengthening creative freedom. For example, in 1975 Coppola bought a vineyard with the money he had made from the *Godfather*. In 1997 he reported that wine production was a way for him to finance the movies he wanted to make (Sragow, 1997/2004).

Although mobility helped the directors protect their creative freedom, creative freedom itself was not related to success in any direct way. In fact, sometimes it was a precursor to a monumental failure. The directors turned the big success of a film into an instrument for making next the movies they wanted, to consolidate roles in them, to get bigger budgets, to take greater artistic risks, and to staff their crews with the people they wanted. The magnitude of the expectations the directors had now had to live up to—from studios, producers, critics, and audiences—put their careers into a lot of trouble when these films flopped. Spielberg was the only director in our sample who, after the first 15 years of his career, was able to work with large budgets and to usually produce good financial results, blockbusters, and nominations. Allen was the

only director who usually worked with relatively small budgets and made films that were rarely either blockbusters or lost large sums of money. Most of the other directors tended to “exchange” the success of their films with making greater demands on the studios, a fact that sooner or later, led them to critical failure. Coppola went from the success of the *Godfather I* (1972) and *II* (1974) to making his cherished *The Conversation* (1974) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and then to making *One from the Heart* (1982), a big flop that jeopardized his career for a decade. After the critical and box office success of his two first films, *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966) and *The Graduate* (1967), Mike Nichols referred to his third film project, *Catch-22* (1970), as his “green awning film”:

Mike Nichols once jokingly referred to *Catch-22* (1970) as his “green awning” film. After a major success, the studios would let you make a film about people walking under a green awning. The logic being if it were a hit, they had bet on a sure thing. If it were a flop, Mr. Auteur would go back to being a hired hand and deliver bums on seats with his next picture. (in Hill, 2003)

In 1975, 5 years after shooting *Catch-22*, Nichols not merely lost the creative freedom to make “green awning films” but, shaken by a cycle of failures, dropped out of filmmaking for 8 years. His return with the Oscar-nominated *Silkwood* (1983) and his subsequent flops (e.g., *What Planet Are You From?* in 2000) and hits (e.g., *Closer* in 2004) added additional “high” and “low” points to a 40-year long roller-coaster career journey. Overall, we found that protecting one’s creative freedom was another driver of lateral and recursive mobility in our sample; however, creative freedom itself was not a reliable indicator of future success.

Discussion

For the general public, individuals like Coppola, Nichols, Spielberg, and Scorsese are among the most successful directors of Hollywood. Our study suggests that they are not only successful, not only directors, and not only Hollywood. Despite the great variability in their stories, throughout their careers they all experienced iterative cycles of success and failure, be it in critical acclaim and/or at the box office; they all enacted various roles other than that of the director; and they all worked in contexts and media other than Hollywood and feature films. We found that many of those transitions were recursive, rather than linear, which suggests that their careers are not fixed in any single organization, short-term project, professional role, or medium. We also found that mobility is linked to and has implications for maintaining career alternatives, acquiring insider domain knowledge, calibrating social networks, renewing one’s creative energy, and protecting one’s creative freedom without any of these

drivers alone reliably increasing chances of success. Below we discuss the contributions and implications of our study.

The Interplay Between Success and Failure

The tendency of past research to focus on where individuals stand on the failure-success continuum at any single point in time tells us little about the interplay between success and failure across time. Our study shows that in Hollywood and in any industry where the final product is marked by the unpredictability of the creative process, success in any given film project is ephemeral, volatile, and not a reliable indicator of success in future film projects. In fact, a big success (be it in the box office and/or critical claim) may set up the directors to later fail. The implication is that cross-sectional studies that assess success at a fixed point in time may lead to a severely distorted view of boundaryless careers. Like Arthur et al. (2005), we believe that a more fruitful avenue is to take a biographical, longitudinal approach (Chamberlayne, Bornat, & Apitzsch, 2004; Nicholson, 2007) and examine how careers unfold over longer periods of time, while paying attention to how they are marked by both successes and failures. Our study demonstrates that even an “elitist” sample, such as highly acclaimed film directors, receive their fair share of failure throughout their careers, albeit in varying degrees.

We found that the directors’ stance toward external criteria of success varied, generating different feelings and different behavioral responses. We also found, however, that all directors were aware that these external measures of success affect their careers and their subjective well-being. Some authors have described the directors in our study as “mavericks” who reject conventional criteria of success (e.g., Biskind, 1998). In contrast, we found that they do pay attention to such external criteria to be able make the movies they want to make. Thus, instead of ignoring the role of environmental structures and focusing on self-directed individuals alone (Pringle & Mallon, 2003), as is often the tendency in the boundaryless career literature (Inkson et al., 2012), it makes more sense to view such careers as being embedded in a dynamic interrelationship between individuals and their environments over time (Tams & Arthur, 2010).

The Influence of Success and Failure on Subsequent Mobility

The tendency of the extant literature to focus on success as an outcome state has prevented us from exploring how success and failure influence mobility. In our study, through creating a temporally sensitive career profile for the directors, we captured the interplay between success and failure and its

relations with mobility and career progression. We found that both success and failure are associated with mobility (albeit for different reasons), and that mobility seems to be also driven by the directors' own needs for renewal and self-expression regardless of success and failure. Furthermore, we also found that mobility is not always linked to upward career transitions but, following a period of career experimentation, it entails frequent lateral and recursive transitions to other roles and media. While becoming a director is a question of climbing up the filmmaking industry's artistic role hierarchy, the career of an acclaimed director is more of a wanderer's roller-coaster journey across various roles and media.

Our study builds a case for treating success and failure not as endings but as beginnings, as critical moments that influence the unfolding of boundaryless careers. An Oscar-winning blockbuster or a financial flop denigrated by the critics can exert such a great influence on careers that we may as well conceptualize success and failure as boundaries that mark the evolution of careers. If we define boundaries in general terms (e.g., physical space, geographical location, employment settings) or even in more context-specific terms (e.g., media and roles), then careers in the filmmaking industry are clearly boundaryless. Even such boundaryless careers, however, are bounded by the history and social structures of the labor market in which they unfold, by role hierarchies, by the uncertainty and unpredictability of the creative processes they involve, and by the individual's own fair share of success and failure.

The Maintenance Role of Career Competencies

The tendency of the extant literature to emphasize career competencies as predictors of success has yielded little knowledge on their relationships with failure. If success can be explained through career competencies at a given point in an individual's career, how can we then explain failure at a later point? Do individuals' career competencies weaken over time, or do these competencies play a different role other than predicting success? We found no evidence of a progressive decline of the directors' ability to maintain career alternatives, acquire insider knowledge, maintain social networks, renew their creative energy, and protect their creative freedom. On the contrary, some of these seem to strengthen with the passage of time, but even a cumulative effect does not appear to predict success. The five elements that we identified appear to be related more to staying in the picture and recovering from failure and less to ensuring success, be in the box office or in critical acclaim. They could be best described, thus, not as predictors of success but as interconnected factors that play an important role in directors' efforts to survive a boundaryless career.

Our study supports previous claims that career competencies may be necessary but not sufficient to ensure success (Fugate et al., 2004; O'Mahony & Bechky, 2006), and that the strong voluntarist view of social relations that underlies the boundaryless career paradigm (Pringle & Mallon, 2003) evokes unrealistic images of unmitigated agency (Weick, 1996) and underplays the role of social structures, cultural dynamics (Inkson et al., 2012; King et al., 2005), and especially chance (Nicholson, 2007). If we take success to mean that one manages to become and work as a director, we cannot ignore the shifting sociocultural dynamics that elevated the role of the director to the top of Hollywood's artistic role hierarchy (Baker & Faulkner, 1991). If we take success to mean that a film generates critical acclaim and financial profits, we cannot ignore the strong influence of the unpredictability of the creative process in filmmaking and the cultural industries more generally. Maintaining career alternatives, knowing the domain, having a rich social network, renewing oneself creatively, and protecting creative freedom do play a role in maintaining one's career, but they do not appear to be reliable predictors of success.

Alternative Explanations

In summary, as shown in Table 1, while past research has treated mobility and career competencies as predictors of success, we suggest that critical moments of success and failure trigger subsequent mobility, and that career competencies are interconnected factors that are related more to recovering from failure and to maintaining a boundaryless career, and less to ensuring future success. An alternative explanation is that mobility and factors like insider knowledge, social networks, and creative freedom create the general conditions for success but are not sufficiently responsible for it. For example, one could argue that while lack of mobility deprives individuals from maintaining career alternatives in times of trouble, too much mobility is equally problematic for it leads them to spread their career too thin. Or, that while mobility exposes individuals to diverse domain knowledge, the acquisition of such knowledge is mediated by a person's openness and ability to learn (Dane, 2010; Kolb, 1984). Or, that the relationship between social networks and success is moderated by the director's ability to manage bonding (core) and bridging (peripheral) social ties. In doing so, he or she gains the power-related benefits of network centrality, while also benefiting from the innovations that usually occur at the periphery (Cattani & Ferriani, 2008; D. Phillips, 2011).

Our qualitative study does not account for such curvilinear, mediating, or moderating factors. Note, however, that even if such factors could explain when career competencies predict success, we would probably need to revisit designating them as "competencies." In other words, that would imply a director

who is aware of the career competencies that predict success, of the optimal or tipping-point levels of mobility, of the intricate relationships of mobility and career competencies with moderators or mediators, and one who is also capable of enacting these career competencies and mobility patterns at the right time and in the right degree. Such a person would truly deserve to be described as having wisely *planned* his or her career. The problem is that we found no evidence of such *planned* behavior in our study. The careers that we study involved a good deal of serendipity, taking chances, first experimenting and later reflecting, as well as some professional and personal incidents that deviate a lot from “rational human behavior.”

Our conclusions are largely in line with scholarly calls to infuse the extant career literature with a stronger focus on the role and impact of chance events (e.g., Bosley et al., 2009). Bright, Pryor, and Harpham (2005) argued that

given their apparent ubiquity, dismissing chance events as merely error, will continue the tradition of providing accounts of career behavior so far removed from the actual career development experience of individuals and their counselors, that such accounts will remain fundamentally irrelevant to both. (p. 574)

Our study lends support to chance events approaches to boundaryless careers, especially those approaches that juxtapose chance encounters, social networks, and protean orientations (e.g., Grimland et al., 2012). In her study of international acclaimed opera singers, Diaz De Cumanciero (2004) observed that while in science serendipity refers to the accidental discovery of the unsought for, in the performing arts it is the artist who is discovered by audiences and critics and acclaimed as a new star by the media:

In all prominent opera careers, an exceptional vocal instrument combined with hard work, persistence, belief in self, and optimism, are key elements for high levels of success. Invariably, chance events can facilitate breakthroughs and career advancement in this highly competitive field. Historic data suggest that chance options no longer can be ignored in career development of opera singers . . . (p. 19)

Our study supports the same conclusion in the highly competitive and inherently uncertain context of filmmaking careers.

Limitations and Research Directions

Given that our study was exploratory, we clearly need future studies to deductively test and extend our findings. Moreover, given that we focused on the careers of successful directors, future research can compare the careers of acclaimed and less acclaimed directors. Another promising

direction for research is the relationship between early career moments of success and failure and those critical moments of establishing oneself in the filmmaking industry (see, for example, Stumpf, 2014). What types of early career success are critical in paving the way for a successful directorial career? What specific types of success and failure lead to particular career patterns? Such a comparison would provide rich insights into the similarities and differences in the ways acclaimed and less acclaimed directors craft and employ their career competencies to secure a place in the filmmaking industry. It would also address questions of how the career paths of less acclaimed directors compare with those of acclaimed ones and how the two groups differ or are similar in terms of their mobility throughout their careers.

Our initial sample of 55 directors was exclusively male largely because only four female film directors have been nominated for an Oscar for best direction, to date, and none of them fit our sampling criteria of location and age. Considering that women appear to have different career preferences than men, especially in terms of relational orientation, authenticity, balance, and challenge (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005), future research should investigate the mobility patterns and career evolution of female film directors. In addition, given that our sample consisted of directors of the New Hollywood Era, and also considering that the aesthetic and cinematic preferences of society have evolved ever since, future research could examine how our findings compare with the careers of directors who started their careers in later historical periods. Last but not least, while our study contributes an investigation about mobility across two boundaries (roles and media) that are less general and more specific (although not exclusive) to the filmmaking industry, we note earlier that the 12 directors also worked with various genres, so it would be interesting to examine in the future the patterns and implications of genre transitions. For example, in a recent case study analysis of Kathryn Bigelow, a member of the 1980s generation of filmmakers and the only woman who has won the Oscar for Best Direction to date, Epitropaki and Mainemelis (in press) describe her as a “genre-bender,” a paradoxical and ambidextrous creative leader who challenges conventions about genre, gender, and leadership.

In conclusion, while past research has focused on success as a career outcome, our article offers a more balanced conceptualization of success and failure as critical moments that influence the subsequent unfolding of careers. We believe that the findings of our study and the questions that we discuss above would potentially be interesting not only for researchers working in the fields of boundaryless careers and creative industries but also for film students as well as industry practitioners struggling to make their way to film industry.

Appendix A

Full Sample Directors and Filmography Nominated for Oscar for Best Direction 1967-2014.

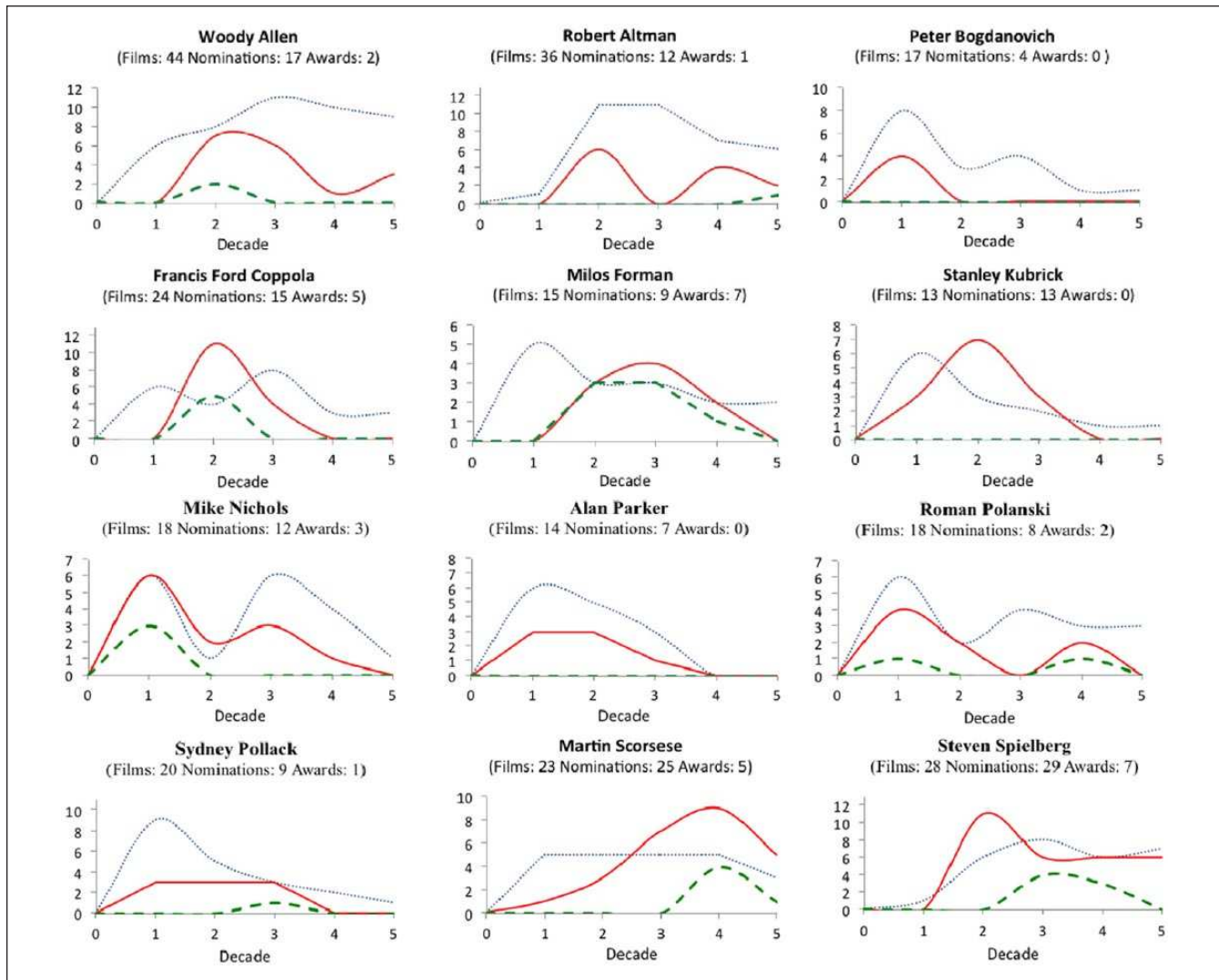
Director	Films nominated for Best Direction (winners in italics)
Woody Allen ^a	<i>Annie Hall</i> (1977), <i>Interiors</i> (1978), <i>Broadway Danny Rose</i> (1984), <i>Hanna and her Sisters</i> (1986), <i>Crimes and Misdemeanors</i> (1989), <i>Bullets over Broadway</i> (1994), <i>Midnight in Paris</i> (2011)
Robert Altman ^a	<i>M*A*S*H</i> (1970), <i>Nashville</i> (1975), <i>The Player</i> (1992), <i>Short Cuts</i> (1993), <i>Gosford Park</i> (2001)
Hal Ashby	<i>Coming Home</i> (1978)
Richard Attenborough	<i>Gandhi</i> (1982)
John Avildsen	<i>Rocky</i> (1976)
Warren Beatty	<i>Heaven Can Wait</i> (1978), <i>Reds</i> (1981)
Robert Benton	<i>Kramer vs. Kramer</i> (1979), <i>Places in the Heart</i> (1984)
Peter Bogdanovich ^a	<i>The Last Picture Show</i> (1971)
John Boorman	<i>Deliverance</i> (1972), <i>Hope and Glory</i> (1987)
James Brooks	<i>Terms of Endearment</i> (1983)
John Cassavetes	<i>A Woman Under Influence</i> (1974)
Michael Cimino	<i>The Deer Hunter</i> (1978)
Francis F. Coppola ^a	<i>The Godfather</i> (1972), <i>The Godfather Part II</i> (1974), <i>Apocalypse Now</i> (1979), <i>The Godfather Part III</i> (1990)
Jonathan Demme	<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i> (1991)
Clint Eastwood	<i>Unforgiven</i> (1992), <i>Mystic River</i> (2003), <i>Million Dollar Baby</i> (2004), <i>Letters from Iwo Jima</i> (2006)
Milos Forman ^a	<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i> (1975), <i>Amadeus</i> (1984), <i>The People vs. Larry Flynt</i> (1996)
Bob Fosse	<i>Cabaret</i> (1972), <i>Lenny</i> (1974), <i>All That Jazz</i> (1979)
Stephen Frears	<i>The Grifters</i> (1990), <i>The Queen</i> (2006)
William Friedkin	<i>The French Connection</i> (1971), <i>The Exorcist</i> (1973)
Taylor Hackford	<i>Ray</i> (2004)
Curtis Hanson	<i>L.A. Confidential</i> (1997)
Anthony Harvey	<i>The Lion in the Winter</i> (1968)
Buck Henry	<i>Heaven Can Wait</i> (1978)
George Roy Hill	<i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i> (1969), <i>The Sting</i> (1973)
Arthur Hiller	<i>Love Story</i> (1970)
Hugh Hudson	<i>Chariots of Fire</i> (1981)
Norman Jewison	<i>In the Heat of the Night</i> (1967), <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> (1971), <i>Moon Struck</i> (1987)
Ronald Joffé	<i>The Killing Fields</i> (1984), <i>The Mission</i> (1986)
James Ivory	<i>A Room with a View</i> (1985), <i>Howards End</i> (1992), <i>The Remains of the Day</i> (1993)
Stanley Kubrick ^a	<i>Dr Strangelove</i> (1964), <i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i> (1968), <i>A Clockwork Orange</i> (1971), <i>Barry Lindon</i> (1975)
Barry Levinson	<i>Rain Man</i> (1988), <i>Bugsy</i> (1991)
George Lucas	<i>American Graffiti</i> (1973), <i>Star Wars</i> (1977)
Sidney Lumet	<i>12 Angry Men</i> (1957), <i>Dog Day Afternoon</i> (1975), <i>Network</i> (1976), <i>The Verdict</i> (1982)
Adrian Lyne	<i>Fatal Attraction</i> (1987)
David Lynch	<i>The Elephant Man</i> (1980), <i>Blue Velvet</i> (1986), <i>Mulholland Dr.</i> (2001)
Terence Mallick	<i>The Thin Red Line</i> (1998), <i>The Tree of Life</i> (2011)
Michael Mann	<i>The Insider</i> (1999)
Mike Nichols ^a	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> (1966), <i>The Graduate</i> (1967), <i>Silkwood</i> (1983), <i>Working Girl</i> (1988)
Alan Pakula	<i>All the President's Men</i> (1976)
Alan Parker ^a	<i>Midnight Express</i> (1978), <i>Mississippi Burning</i> (1988)
Arthur Penn	<i>The Miracle Worker</i> (1962), <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i> (1967), <i>Alice's Restaurant</i> (1969)
Roman Polanski ^a	<i>Chinatown</i> (1974), <i>Tess</i> (1979), <i>The Pianist</i> (2002)
Sydney Pollack ^a	<i>They Shoot Horses, Don't They?</i> (1969), <i>Tootsie</i> (1982), <i>Out of Africa</i> (1985)
Michael Radford	<i>Il Postino</i> (1994)
Robert Redford	<i>Ordinary People</i> (1980), <i>Quiz Show</i> (1994)
Herbert Ross	<i>The Turning Point</i> (1977)
Richard Rush	<i>The Stunt Man</i> (1980)
Ken Russell	<i>Women in Love</i> (1969)
Franklin Schaffner	<i>Patton</i> (1970)
John Schlesinger	<i>Darling</i> (1965), <i>Midnight Cowboy</i> (1969), <i>Sunday Bloody Sunday</i> (1971)
Martin Scorsese ^a	<i>Raging Bull</i> (1980), <i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i> (1988), <i>Goodfellas</i> (1990), <i>Gangs of New York</i> (2002), <i>The Aviator</i> (2004), <i>The Departed</i> (2006), <i>Hugo</i> (2011), <i>The Wolf of Wall Street</i> (2013)
Ridley Scott	<i>Thelma & Louise</i> (1991), <i>Gladiator</i> (2000), <i>Black Hawk Down</i> (2001)
Steven Spielberg ^a	<i>Close Encounters of a Third Kind</i> (1977), <i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> (1981), <i>E. T.</i> (1982), <i>Schindler's List</i> (1993), <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> (1998), <i>Munich</i> (2005), <i>Lincoln</i> (2012)
Oliver Stone	<i>Platoon</i> (1986), <i>Born on the Fourth of July</i> (1989), <i>JFK</i> (1991)
Peter Yates	<i>Breaking Away</i> (1979), <i>The Dresser</i> (1983)

Note. The year shown is the year of the film's release.

^aIndicates a director who was included in the subsample of 12 directors.

Appendix B

Directors' productivity and creativity per decade.



Data source. Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

Note. Blue dotted line indicates feature films directed; full red line indicates best director award nominations (Oscars, Directors' Guild, and Golden Globes); green broken line indicates best director awards (Oscars, Directors' Guild, and Golden Globes).

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Notes

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2. P. T. Anderson, D. Aronofsky, K. Bigelow, K. Branagh, M. Best, D. Boyle, J. Cameron, J. Campion, P. Cattaneo, G. Clooney, E. Cohen, J. Coen, S. Coppola, K. Costner, A. Cuarón, S. Daldry, L. Daniels, A. Egoyan, M. Figgis, D. Fincher, M. Gibson, T. Gilroy, P. Greengrass, P. Haggis, M. Hazanavicius, S. Hicks, T. Hooper, R. Howard, A. G. Inamitu, P. Jackson, S. Jonze, N. Jordan, A. Lee, J. Madden, R. Marshall, F. Meirelles, S.

- McQueen, S. Mendes, B. Miller, A. Minghella, C. Nooman, A. Payne, J. Reitman, T. Robbins, D. O. Russell, J. Schnabel, J. Sheridan, M. N. Shyamalan, J. Singleton, S. Sodenbergh, Q. Tarrantino, G. Van Sant, B. Zeitlin, and R. Zemeckis.
3. P. Almodovar, H. Babenco, R. Benigni, B. Beresfold, I. Bergman, B. Bertolucci, F. Fellini, C. Gavras, L. Hallstrom, M. Haneke, K. Kieslowski, A. Kurosawa, M. Leigh, L. Malle, E. Molinaro, W. Petersen, G. Pontecorvo, J. Troell, F. Truffaut, P. Weir, L. Wertmuller, and F. Zeffirelli.
 4. Because these 12 data tables are voluminous, we do not include them in the article. They are available, however, upon request from the authors.

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