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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

The value of ethnic identity for creative entrepreneurs: Essays on legitimacy, innovation and identity in the creative industries

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Annelies Thoelen

Promoter: Prof. Dr Patrizia Zanoni

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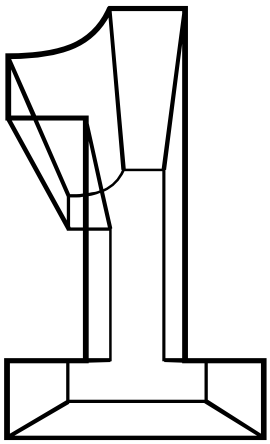


PROLOGUE

Batard – Stromae – √(Racine Carrée) – 2013

Stromae is the artist name of Paul van Haver (°Brussels, 12/03/1985) a Belgian/Rwandan musician, performer and DJ. Although his breakthrough came too late for this research, his extremely relevant case urged me to include his words.

Ni l'un ni l'autre,
Je suis, j'étais, et resterai moi

T'es de droite ou t'es de gauche?
T'es beauf ou bobo de Paris?
Soit t'es l'un ou soit t'es l'autre
T'es un homme ou bien tu péris
Cultrice ou patéticienne
Féministe ou la ferme
Soit t'es macho, soit homo
Mais t'es phobe ou sexuel
Mécréant ou terroriste
T'es veuch ou bien t'es barbu
Conspirationniste, Illuminati
Mythomaniste ou vendu?
Rien du tout, ou tout tout de suite
Du tout au tout, indécis
Han, tu changes d'avis imbécile?
Mais t'es Hutu ou Tutsi?
Flamand ou Wallon?
Bras ballants ou bras longs?
Finalement t'es raciste?
Mais t'es blanc ou bien t'es marron, eh?

Ni l'un, ni l'autre
Bâtard, tu es,
Tu l'étais et tu le restes

Ni l'un ni l'autre,
Je suis, j'étais, et resterai moi

Han, pardon, Monsieur ne prend pas parti
Monsieur n'est même pas raciste,
Vu que Monsieur n'a pas de racines
D'ailleurs Monsieur a un ami noir,
Et même un ami aryen
Monsieur est mieux que tout ça,
D'ailleurs tout ça, bah ça n'sert à rien
Mieux vaut ne rien faire que de faire mal
Les mains dans la merde ou bien dans les annales
Trou du cul ou bien nombril du monde
Monsieur se la pète plus haut que son trou de balle
Surtout pas de coup de gueule, faut être calme, eh?
Faut être doux, faut être câlin,
Faut être dans le coup, faut être branchouille,
Pour être bien vu partout, eh?

Ni l'un, ni l'autre
Bâtard, tu es,
Tu l'étais et tu le restes

Ni l'un ni l'autre,
Je suis, j'étais, et resterai moi

Not the one, nor the other,
I am, I was and I'll remain myself

You're Right-wing or you're Left-wing?
You're redneck or bobo from Paris?
Either you’re the one or you’re the other
You're a human or at least mortal
Culture lover or narrow-minded
Feminist or shut up
Either you're macho or homo
But you're phobic or sexual
Pagan or terrorist
You're long-haired or else you're bearded
Conspirator, Enlightened
Mythomaniac or whistleblower?
Nothing at all or all immediately
All in all undecided
What, you changed your mind idiot?
But you're Hutu or Tutsi?
Fleming or Walloon?
Dangling arms or long arms?
Finally you're racist?
But you're white or else brown, eh?

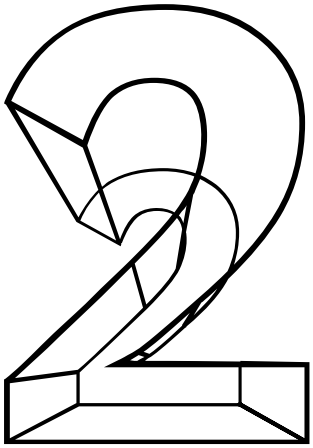
Not the one, nor the other
Hybrid, you are,
You were it and you’ll remain it

Not the one, nor the other,
I am, I was and I'll remain myself

Ho, sorry, this sir doesn't choose sides
This sir is not even a racist,
As this sir does not have roots
Anyway Mr. has a black friend,
And even an Aryan friend
This sir is better than all that
As all that, well, is useless anyway
It's better to do nothing than to do wrong
Hands in the shit or else in the annals
Asshole or navel of the world
This gentleman farts higher than his asshole
Above all not raise hell, have to be quiet, eh?
You have to be kind, you have to be cuddly
You have to be hot, you have to be hip,
They must be able to admire you everywhere, eh?

Not the one, nor the other
Hybrid, you are,
You were it and you’ll remain it

Not the one, nor the other,
I am, I was and I'll remain myself



INTRODUCTION

> *"I'm an artist of Turkish descent, but that doesn't mean my work is always talking about Turkey. As if I could only make art about integration, immigration and diversity. The subsidy commission often pointed towards that direction, but luckily that is changing. There are many other things in society or in the arts by which I'm inspired. […] Some might think of that as atypical due to my origins. But the language of love, of life and of happiness is not only the domain of Belgians. Don't understand me wrong, I don't avoid diversity as a subject, […] as long as it does not have to be accompanied by eating couscous and fries"*
>
> Mesut Arslan in 'De Standaard' 26/10/2013

This dissertation aims at developing a deeper understanding of self-employed creatives with ethnic minority backgrounds. By doing so it contributes to advancing research in the streams on ethnic minority entrepreneurs, creative entrepreneurship, and diversity in the creative industries. Self-employed ethnic minority creatives stand at the crossroads of globalization and the rise of the knowledge economy. Studying their case evokes pressing questions on their position vis-à-vis cultural repertoires and symbols, ruling value regimes, immaterial resources, legitimacy, and their related chances in a Western business environment. This dissertation therefore intends to gain, through an interdisciplinary perspective, insights in the specific processes that are at stake when working as a self-employed creative with foreign roots. We draw on literature from economic and sociological streams, yet also supplemented this with insights from cultural studies, literature, communication and art history. In particular, this research focused on the central research question: *How do self-employed ethnic minority creatives deploy, as agents, their identity as a discursive resource for their work?*

More specifically, in this dissertation we focus on the pressing relationship between the structure of the creative industries on the one hand, in which 'significant others' from ethnic majority origins attribute value to creative products, and on the other individual ethnic minority creatives, who as agents embedded in these structures, pro-actively claim creativity, value and legitimacy for their products. Agency is a central concept in this dissertation, and specifically accounts for the capability of humans to be reflexive about their context and surrounding power structures, and to act upon them for 'making a difference' (Giddens 1982). Our focus lies on the discursive strategies of these agents, or the way they engage with or resist the overarching powers of the creative industries in speech, and their acts of deploying their ethnic minority identities as discursive resources in this relationship. Conceiving agents as embedded in structures, we however never lose both the enabling and constraining powers of these structures out of sight (Brown and Coupland 2005; Brown 2006; Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009). In line with this structurationalist view namely (Giddens 1984), we account for the influence the ethnic majority dominated structure has on creative work, and its powers in triggering and enabling the discursive strategies of ethnic minority creatives.

From the start of this research, the activities of creatives with ethnic minority backgrounds in Belgium gradually increased in visibility, press attention and success, such as the stories of the internationally renowned Stromae (a musician with Rwandan roots), Haider Ackermann (a fashion designer with Colombian roots) and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (a choreographer with Moroccan roots). We can say that nowadays ethnic minority creatives are more visible, than at the start of this study in 2009. For this dissertation, we studied 26 cases of these creative individuals with foreign roots, by collecting in-depth interview data and gathering relevant mass media texts on their lives and work.

Ethnic minority creative entrepreneurship

Ethnic minority creatives are situated in an ambiguous situation – resulting from their minority position – that we take as the central point of this dissertation. Self-employed creatives' ethnicity namely both hampers and facilitates creative activities, resulting in a contradictory position. Ethnicity can be a major asset for differentiation and creativity (Florida 2002; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005), yet also entails the possibility for being exoticized and excluded (Ogbor 2000; Basu and Werbner 2001). Brandellero (2011) touched before on this ambiguous situation, by exploring how ethnicity shapes the opportunity structures for migrants in the creative industries.

On the one hand, ethnic minority creatives are embedded in the creative industries, a sector dominated by 'significant others' of (almost exclusively) majority origins (Werbner 1999; Muhr 2010; Florida 2002). 'Significant others' are e.g. peers, critics, patrons, journalists, curators, clients, teachers and experts, who ascribe value to some creative work while denying it to other (Becker 1982; Khaire and Wadhwani 2010; Anand and Jones 2008; Brandellero and Kloosterman 2010; Hirsch 1972). The prevalence of ethnic majority significant others means that ethnic majority norms and powerful Western standards concerning quality, aesthetics and entrepreneurship are defining the creative sector (Brandellero 2011). As a consequence, ethnic minority creatives run the risk of being perceived and represented as 'exotic' (Said 1978) or as the 'other' (see also: Ogbor 2000; Muhr 2010), in terms of difference, inferiority, inequality and unfamiliarity.

This is because their specific situation is colored by their socially constructed minority identity – either made by ascription of the actors themselves (Barth 1969; Jenkins 1997) or attributed to them by others (Jenkins 1997). Ethnicity in this case serves as a discursive structure meaning 'a powerful ordering force' (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, 2011). To counteract this disadvantage and act upon the unwanted symbolic and material effects of the overarching discursive structures such as the possible exclusion of the work by the 'significant others', ethnic minority creatives craft explanatory entrepreneurial narratives,

identity stories and persuasive arguments for the creation of recognition, value, legitimacy and respect. Yet, this situation entails the possibility of encountering important obstacles for discursively claiming value for their work (see also: Bassett-Jones 2005), and might lead to possible misjudgment and incomprehension (Brandellero 2011).

On the other hand, the situation of ethnic minority creatives is specific due to the possibility – offered by the context of the creative industries – to at the same time experience positive effects of an ethnic minority background. For instance, ethnic minority creatives are seen to be able to differentiate themselves using their identities, and to tell a unique story (Brandellero 2011; De Clercq and Voronov 2009). Difference is namely positively valued in the creative industries, as it is commonly associated with highly valuable features such as authenticity (e.g. Peterson 1997, 2005), creativity (e.g. Florida 2002, 2005b, 2005a; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005; Mavrommatis 2006) and aesthetic innovation (e.g. Brandellero and Kloosterman 2010; NESTA 2006; Brandellero 2011).

To conclude, this contradictory position creates for ethnic minority creatives a situation in which their ethnic identity can be either a liability or a very valuable asset for creative work. Again this advocates for a focus on the agentic strategies of creatives in relation to the structures of the creative industries, to explore the way in which creatives use their discursive power to construct their identity positively, in ways that enable them to highlight its value. Next to the construction of ethnic minority identity in negative and often stigmatizing ways (Prasad 2006; Said 1978; Tekin 2010), the case of ethnic minority creative entrepreneurs thus also shows the potential positive effect of diversity for creativity, differentiation and innovation.

Overview of the literature

Due to a lack of literature on the topic of creative entrepreneurs with ethnic minority origins in specific, a broad overview of the literature was needed to map the context of our cases. Therefore, we took up an interdisciplinary perspective looking for relevant disciplines to study our topic, and mostly combined theories from economic (mostly institutional theory, SME's, organization studies, management and business identity studies) and sociological literature. Yet we also added insights from cultural studies, literature, communication and art history. Across these disciplines we looked for relevant studies exploring creative entrepreneurs with ethnic minority origins, or similar topics. This brought us to figure 1, mapping the most relevant themes for this dissertation, and guiding our literature research from the beginning.

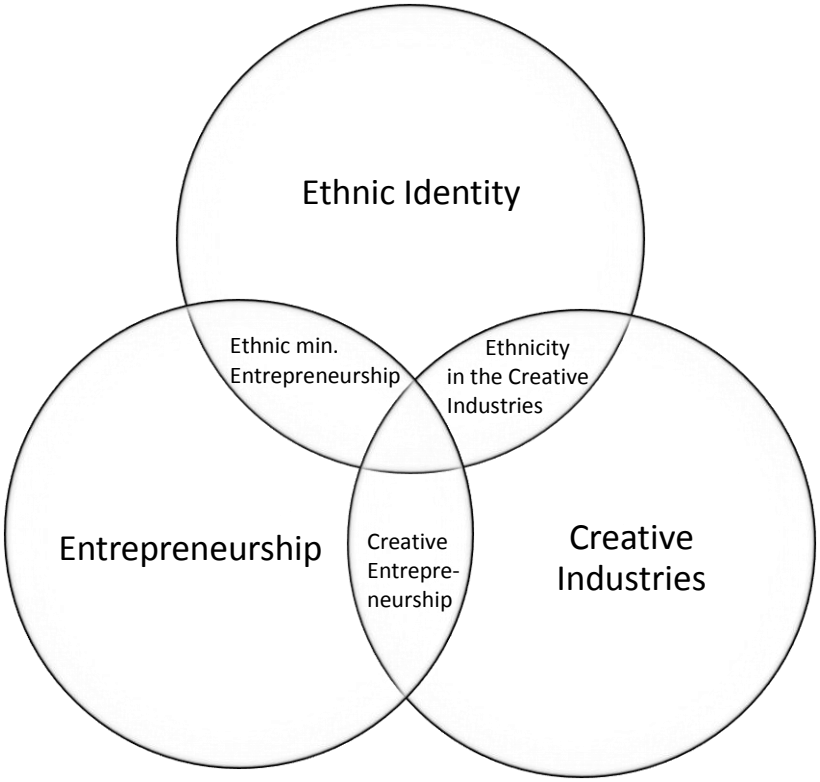


Figure 1: Diagram of used literature for mapping creative entrepreneurs with ethnic minority origins

(Ethnic minority) Entrepreneurship

Although one might expect the disciplines of general entrepreneurship and ethnic minority entrepreneurship to be close, they take up very different viewpoints and methodologies. Entrepreneurship studies often follow the Schumpeterian tradition (Schumpeter 1934, 1939, 1949), taking up a rather depersonalized macro approach to entrepreneurship (Albornoz 2003; Aldrich 2005, 455; Hagedoorn 1996). This has been attributed to its strong focus on newness and innovation: e.g. the introduction of new goods and production methods, opening new markets and obtaining new resources (e.g. Aldrich and Martinez 2001; Aldrich 2005; Hisrich and Drnovsek 2002; Hougaard 2005; Shane and Venkataraman 2000; Wennekers and Thurik 1999).

Some smaller sub-streams however do focus on individual entrepreneurs, for example when studying individual entrepreneurial identity constructions or motivations (e.g. Cohen and Musson 2000; Down and Reveley 2004; Gartner 1988; Jones and Spicer 2009; Lewis and Llewellyn 2004; Reveley and Down 2009), or entrepreneurial personality characteristics (e.g. Brockhaus 1980; Chell 2008; McClelland 1987). Conceiving entrepreneurs as agents, they highlight their strong personalities as (white) individuals in charge of their personal and business successes (Nicholson and Anderson 2005; Ogbor 2000), they are attributed the image of potent, creative and independent actors who are reflexively overcoming entrepreneurial difficulties "through the introduction of novelty and innovation" (Schumpeter 1949).

However this mostly results in vague and general characteristics applicable to the complete group of entrepreneurs, which hardly accounts for heterogeneity amongst them. Although some of the studies in the entrepreneurship stream are thus focusing on entrepreneurs themselves, and attribute to them agentic powers, by doing so they often construct a depersonalized and stereotypical image of entrepreneurship.

The stream of ethnic minority entrepreneurship (for reviews see: Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Kloosterman and Rath 2003; Ram and Jones 2008; Rettab 2001; Volery 2007; Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990; Rath and Kloosterman 2000), is situated at the cross-road of migration studies (e.g. Engelen 2001; Kloosterman and Rath 2001; Ram and Deakins 1996; Rath and Kloosterman 2000), social geography (e.g. Kloosterman, Van der Leun, and Rath 1999; Ram et al. 2002; Scott 2006; Teixeira 1998), sociology (e.g. Aldrich and Waldinger 1990; Bonacich 1973; Boyd 1998; Kontos 2003) and small business studies (e.g. Basu and Altinay 2002; Chaganti and Greene 2002; Nwankwo 2005; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010). A more detailed overview of the topics that are researched in this stream of literature is given in chapter 5.

In this stream of literature, the agency of the individual is almost never taken up, and the focus is on structural characteristics of both the environment (e.g. Bertens and De Vries 2008; Deakins, Majmudar, and Paddison 1997; Godwyn 2008; Ram and Smallbone 2003) and the ethnic group (e.g. Light 1972; Model 1985; Van Scheers and Radipere 2008) who are sometimes enabling, but more often seen as constraining ethnic entrepreneurial action. Due to this overwhelming 'structural disadvantage' view (Brettell and Alstatt 2007), the focus on individual entrepreneurs as individuals with power is almost completely absent from the ethnic minority entrepreneurship stream, let alone they would be portrayed as 'heroic' (Ogbor 2000), innovative or creative. This thus also produces stereotypical and deterministic portrays of ethnic minority entrepreneurs, as they are always seen as representatives of the whole ethnic community to which they belong and/or as mere victims of the powerful structures in which they are embedded. This stream of literature therefore obscures completely the entrepreneurs' own creative perspectives, actions and agency (for a critique see: Essers and Benschop 2007).

Entrepreneurship in the creative industries

Attention for the creative industries is increasing, as they are gradually acknowledged for their potential contribution to the knowledge economy in terms of innovation and creativity (Aage and Belussi 2008; Colapinto and Porlezza 2011; Crane 1997; Gwee 2009; Oakley 2009; Potts 2009; Pratt and Jeffcutt 2009). The creative industries cover a variety of activities including: advertising, architecture, arts &

antiques markets, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, computer games and radio & TV (DCMS 2001; Flew and Cunningham 2010). They are studied in many academic disciplines, such as geography, sociology, economics, media and communication studies and social geography (Gibson and Kong 2005; O'Connor 2007). Also local, national and international governments are monitoring evolutions in the creative industries (e.g. DCMS 2001; De Voldere and Maenhout 2007; EU 2010; Maenhout et al. 2006; MayorOfLondon 2003; NESTA 2006; Rutten et al. 2004; Van der Herten and Jolling 2005), showing their growth in terms of increasing numbers of entrepreneurs and turnover (see e.g. also table 2, page 20).

The discipline studying the creative industries is quite young. The first studies date back to the beginning of this century; often the mapping report of the DCMS (2001) together with Richard Florida's (2002) theory on the 'creative class' are being regarded as forming the base of the first debates (Gibson and Kong 2005). Some critical thinkers however pointed earlier in the twentieth century to the existence of mass culture production systems (e.g. Adorno 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno 1976), to the influence of class-based taste on cultural consumption (Bourdieu 1984, 1993) and explored the market potential of popular culture (e.g. DiMaggio 1977; Hirsch 1972; Peterson and Berger 1971). These first studies, trying to map out the overarching structures within the creative industries, are widely acknowledged for their insights in the creative macro context and are frequently referred to in research.

Therefore, over the short period of less than 15 years, creative industries research has mainly explored the specific characteristics of the creative sector as a whole (cf. Caves 2000; Florida 2002; Henry 2007b; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Howkins 2001; Scott 2000; Throsby 2000; Towse 2003). The creative industries namely are classified as a specific system with industry laws that are different from the general economic logic (for reviews see: DeFillippi, Grabher, and Jones 2007; Eikhof and Haunschild 2007)[i]. The uniqueness of the 'rules' in this sector – such as the larger concern for the creation of symbolic value than of economic value (Cowen and Tabarrok 2000; Frey 2008), the temporary projects and collaborations characterized by short-term or freelance contracts that are shaping a more 'flexible' employment system (Blair 2001; Carnoy, Castells, and Benner 1997; Haunschild 2004; Menger 1999), and the inter-organizational careers that make creatives very dependent on their reputation and on-the-job training (Delmestri, Montanari, and Usai 2005; Faulkner and Anderson 1987; Haunschild 2004; Jones 2002; Menger 1999; Özbilgin and Tatli 2009) – results in studies that mainly stay on the level of exploring the overarching enabling and constraining structures, rather than the actors within it.

Creative entrepreneurs in specific were first studied by DiMaggio (1982), and are understood as individuals who are able to accumulate and manipulate cultural capital in an entrepreneurial context

(Bourdieu 1984, 1993). Creative entrepreneurship is nowadays studied from a variety of disciplines such as innovation management (Eikhof and Haunschild 2006; Strandgaard Pedersen et al. 2006), SME's (Baines and Robson 2001; Hotho and Champion 2011; Wilson and Stokes 2005), entrepreneurship (Guillet de Monthoux 2009; Aggestam 2007; de Bruin 2007; Rae 2007; Ó Cinnéide and Henry 2007), creativity (Wilson 2009; Fritsch and Rusakova 2010) and organization studies (Thompson, Jones, and Warhurst 2007; Tschang 2007), and makes up an important part of the creative industries research stream. These studies however, remain as a whole rather descriptive. Also the studies focusing on the specific constraining or enabling context for creative entrepreneurship outnumber by far the attention given to the agentic actions of creative entrepreneurs themselves. In what follows, we go over the most prevalent specificities of creative entrepreneurship that have gained so far the attention of scholars of this discipline. These enabling and constraining characteristics within the creative entrepreneurship stream all stem from the powers of the macro-structures in which these entrepreneurs are embedded.

First, uncertainty, and its effects on creative entrepreneurship, is a trending topic in the literature (Caves 2000). Creative entrepreneurs namely deal with great uncertainties and risks, due to the fact that cultural taste and the ability to make artistic judgments is mainly developed or triggered via the consumption of the creative products themselves (Becker 1982; Henry 2007b; Bielby and Bielby 1994). This implies that a certain cultural taste is not preceded by a new product, but is constituted by it, causing uncertainties in demand and an unpredictable output for entrepreneurs producing it (Beeftink et al. 2012; Caves 2000; van Andel and Vandenbempt 2012). Research taking up this topic however almost always explores this uncertainty itself, leaving out the actions creative entrepreneurs take to overcome it.

Furthermore, literature on creative entrepreneurship studies the effects of the long value chain, which is seen as typical for the sector. Creative entrepreneurs often stand as cultural producers in the beginning of the chain and experience a hard task in getting through it to the audience (Abadie, Friedewald, and Weber 2010; Bakhshi and McVittie 2009; Negus 2002; Reinecke and Ansari 2012). When studying this, the literature attributes great attention to the different phases of the value chain that creative entrepreneurs have to pass, and the role of the controlling 'gatekeepers' (e.g. theatre production organizations, record labels, movie producers, publishers, game developing companies, etc.) who only select potentially successful and promising creative products to proceed. Large macro concepts, such as the 'volatility' of the creative industries as a whole – which makes businesses vulnerable to the expert assessments of gatekeepers (Anand and Jones 2008; Becker 1982; Khaire and Wadhwani 2010)[ii] – and the 'resources' creative entrepreneurs need to minimize its related exclusionary effects – such as reputation (Delmestri, Montanari, and Usai 2005; Rindova, Petkova, and Kotha 2007), networks (Aage and Belussi 2008; Jones 2002) and legitimacy (Baumann 2007; Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; O'Connor

2004; Scardaville 2009) – therefore gain quite some attention in this stream of literature. Yet never is researched how creative entrepreneurs themselves agentically are constructing these resources, are resisting the structure of the value chain, or how they are strategically reacting to the excluding powers of the gatekeepers. It seems that the overwhelming attention for the macro structures themselves obscures the agentic actions of creative entrepreneurs in relation to them.

A final topic studied in the stream of creative entrepreneurship is the delicate management of the balance between artistic priorities and economic concerns (Dacin, Dacin, and Matear 2010). This balancing is an extremely hard task for all creatives, as on the one hand in the creative industries commercial values are considered to downgrade authenticity and independence, two important values of artistic work (Beverland 2005; Henry 2007a; Peterson 1997, 2005; Rienstra 2004; Wilson and Stokes 2005; Wilson 2009), and as on the other the economic value of creative products is directly dependent on these artistic values (Frey 2008; Harter et al. 2008; Tschang 2007). Although this topic lends itself for an in-depth exploration of the strategies of creative entrepreneurs in preserving this quintessential balance between artistic and economic concerns, it is mostly researched from a macro-level. Most studies for example try to determine the precise influence of one factor (e.g. artistic values) onto the other (e.g. economic values), or try to delineate the exact equilibrium needed as an entrepreneur in the sector, yet hereby ignore that there are actual actions of creative entrepreneurs at the center of maintaining this balance.

Ethnicity in the creative industries

In the context of the creative industries, ethnicity is mostly researched in terms of ethnic minorities' participation, representation and creativity. First, studies show a large lack in the participation grade and consumption levels of products from the creative industries by ethnic minorities (e.g. Hill and Alshaer 2010; van Wel et al. 2006). A second stream of research has directed its attention to the ways in which ethnicity in general, and ethnic minority individuals in specific are portrayed or depicted in cultural products (e.g. Robson 2002), often referring to postcolonial theories such as orientalism and exotism in their analyses (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Triffin 2007; Said 1978). Thirdly, quite some attention has been given to the relation between ethnic diversity and creativity, namely the former is assumed to have a positive effect on the latter (e.g. Florida 2002; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004; Pang 2007), see chapter 3. In sum, topics concerning ethnic diversity are studied widely in relation to a creative context, largely with a macro-level focus. The topic of the creative industries attracts attention from journalist, policy makers, managers, and professionals (e.g. Cleemput and Boucharafat 2010; De Preter 2007; Jans 2004; Kets 2010; Kibbelaar 2007). Possibly that is the reason why participation, representation and creativity are

mostly researched on the level of an entire ethnic population, resulting in a stress on the structural powers and a homogeneous essentializing view of ethnic minority creatives themselves.

Creatives however work quite individually and their creative products reflect their individual – not (only) collective – identities and experiences (Brandellero 2011; Hagoort 2005). As it is important not to lose track of this micro level to understand creative processes, a small stream of research explores – to some extent – the influence ethnic diversity has for individual creatives on a day-to-day basis. For example, the studies of Brandellero (2010, 2011) explore how diverse creatives valorize their diverse cultural capital in the creative industries, particularly focusing on the connection with an urban context. Basu and Werbner (2001) show how black hip hop entrepreneurs use ethnic capital for both networking and creating cultural products. The studies conducted by David Smallbone finally (MayorOfLondon 2003; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010) explore how Asian creatives engage with their urban context (2005) and how their ethnic diversity can be a source of creativity and innovation (2010). These studies show the effects of macro-structures on individual opportunities. They are the only few examples of an ethnic 'creative centered approach', although the accent remains on what these creatives could achieve despite the hampering effects of the powerful structures. This dissertation positions itself in this small and emerging body of research, yet our approach specifically aims at not underplaying the agentic ability of ethnic minority creatives in making a difference and effectively resisting the constrains posed by the structural contexts in which they are embedded.

Theoretical perspective

An agentic perspective

In this dissertation, we conceptualize ethnic minority creatives as agents (Giddens 1982, 1984), rather than as mere manifestations of the discursive and material structures in which they are embedded. We understand agency according to Anthony Giddens' (1982, 1984) structuration theory. Agency is an individual's ability to be reflexive about their situation, and to act, to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs, presenting themselves in social situations, and 'making a difference' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Giddens 1982, 1984; Goffman 1959). This means that the agent deploys a certain kind of power, which is to be seen as a transformative capacity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Giddens 1984).

We are aware of the current debates about the agency-structure relationship in both organization studies and identity studies (e.g. Alvesson 2010; Caldwell 2007; Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Hardy 2001; Heracleous and Hendry 2000). On the one hand structuralist perspectives stress the power of

structures in dominating subjects (e.g. Du Gay and Salaman 1992; Foucault 1972; Townley 1993) and leave only limited space for the resistance capability of individuals (Heracleous and Hendry 2000). On the other hand more instrumental perspectives, following traditional communication studies, focus on language as a manipulative tool for agents to reach managerial goals (e.g. Ford and Ford 1995; Westly and Vredenburg 1996), but on their turn tend to neglect the structures by which these very actions are enabled and constrained (Heracleous and Hendry 2000). Taking stock of these discussions we therefore aim in this study, when conceptualizing agency, at taking up a structurationalist perspective in which the agency-structure relationship is viewed as a mutually constitutive duality, rather than a dualism in which one of both takes the upper hand (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Giddens 1993).

In this perspective agentic actions do not take place in a contextual vacuum (Brown and Coupland 2005), but always have to be understood in a binary and dialectic relationship with a structure (Hardy and Philips 1999; Phillips and Hardy 2002). Agentic individuals namely are not completely free in their actions, because they are bounded by the rules and powers of the same structure they resist by performing them (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Ezzamel, Willmott, and Worthington 2001; Heracleous and Hendry 2000). Yet also, constraints or control from a structure can never be omnipotent (see also: Clegg 1994, 163), as they are constitutive for the possibility of agentic action (Giddens 1984; Heracleous and Hendry 2000). The urge to react against a powerful structure can namely not exist without the structure being in place itself (Alvesson and Willmott 1992). This means that the dialectic relation between agency and structure is a mutually power-laden one, as a structure is not only constraining the individual (imposing power), yet also enabling this individual's agentic resistance (granting power)(Giddens 1984; Fairhurst and Putnam 2004). Structures thus consist of rules and resources that are able to facilitate and shape everyday agency (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004), and on their turn can be reproduced or potentially changed by human action (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Heracleous and Hendry 2000). We thus highlight in this study that ethnic minority creatives are agents, who reflect upon and act against structural powers (Brown et al. 2010) with the effect of constituting, reproducing or potentially changing these structures through their actions (Heracleous and Hendry 2000).

By taking up this view, we break with the 'structural macro focus' tradition of the ethnic minority entrepreneurship stream and the creative entrepreneurship stream, to advance a more balanced understanding of structure and agency. By doing so, we aim at rebalancing the dominant research that takes into account the relationship between structure and agency, but inclines to stress the former. Our view allows us to focus specifically on the experiences of the creative individuals themselves, as well as their discursive strategies towards producing and promoting creative products, and their strategies for navigating in and dealing with the (mostly majority dominated) environment of 'significant others' in the

creative industries. This 'creative centered' approach, which stands in contrast to the 'macro' approaches of most of the reviewed literature, aims at developing a more personal, complex and heterogeneous image than is currently held of creative entrepreneurs.

Some recent studies have started to address more attention to individual entrepreneurial agentic actions, moving away from more 'structural' oriented streams. For example, the study of Essers and Benschop (2007) explored how an ethnic minority background can be reflexively constructed and deployed for individual entrepreneurial experiences. Also Pio (2007) takes up the perspectives of the ethnic minority entrepreneurs themselves, to explore their experiences and coping strategies from their own point of view. Finally some studies in the discipline of creative entrepreneurship studied how creative entrepreneurs construct legitimacy (Wilson and Stokes 2004), network (Aoyama and Izushi 2003; Rindova, Pollock, and Hayward 2006) and perform storytelling (Aage and Belussi 2008).

By adopting the same perspective, we research how self-employed creatives with ethnic minority roots, working in a majority dominated powerful context, deploy their identity – often stigmatized in society at large (Slay and Smith 2011) – as an asset in the creative industries. Our perspective with a focus on the individual action namely allows us to develop an understanding of the opportunities of using one's ethnic minority identity in the creative industries, whereas a macro focus often tends to overly stress the structural disadvantages of creatives.

A social constructionist epistemological approach

This dissertation takes up a social constructionist perspective (Berger and Luckmann 1966), an epistemological approach that sees language as constitutive of reality, rather than reflecting a pre-given reality (Gergen 1999; Hardy and Philips 1999; Hardy 2001). Social constructionism is a product of the linguistic turn of the second part of the twentieth century (Deetz 2003), and is particularly suitable to gain an understanding of the role of language in the constitution and change of social reality (Hardy and Philips 1999; Oswick and Phillips 2012; Putnam and Cooren 2004). We hence account thoroughly in this dissertation for e.g. knowledge, meaning and identity not as preceding language, but rather as constructed by discourse (Berger and Luckmann 1966). This entails we reject a positivist worldview, meaning we abandon the illusion that there exists a single objective reality 'out there' which we can research and describe in a neutral way (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000). Although still rare, studies taking up social constructionist and/or discursive approaches to entrepreneurship recently started to explore the construction of entrepreneurial identities (Essers and Benschop 2007, 2009; Hytti 2003; Steyaert and Hjort 2003).

We will refer in this dissertation several times to 'a discourse', which in contrast to the more moderate meaning of 'discourse' as quite a synonym for language, also refers to a 'grand discourse' (Fairclough 2005; Keenoy and Oswick 2004). We define these grand discourses here as a larger 'system of texts' that brings and object into being (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Hardy and Philips 1999; Hardy 2001; Parker 1992) or a larger 'system of thought' that makes meaning (Ainsworth and Hardy 2004; Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, 2011). As such, a discourse produces and contains a set of culturally and historically situated concepts, ideas, relationships, beliefs and theories through which we understand the world and relate to one another (Hardy and Philips 1999, 3; Hardy 2001), as such acting as a powerful structure. Via our social constructionist and structurationalist perspective, we thus understand these discourses to be both the foundations and resources for, as well as the results of social practice (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Giddens 1984; Heracleous and Hendry 2000).

Understanding ethnicity and ethnic identity as discursive constructions

In line with a social constructionist epistemology, we understand ethnicity as socially constructed through categories of ascription and identification, as defined by Barth (1969) and Jenkins (1997). This means that constructing an ethnic identity is a (self) reflexive and pro-active process (Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas 2008; Alvesson 2010; Cerulo 1997; Ybema et al. 2009), warranting our exploration hereof at the individual level. Yet, as we are aware that constructing an ethnic identity cannot be performed in a vacuum, we always also account for the common and shared structure of discourse that individuals need as identity material to create their identity narratives (Alvesson, 2010).

Identity constructions are a constant process, with only a temporary outcome, and thus allow the constant rewriting of the identity by the individual (Down and Warren 2008; Lindgren and Wåhlin 2001). Understanding identities as such, a temporary outcome of an ongoing process, implies the possibility of constantly changing the construction of one's self-ascribed ethnicity as part of one's identity (Ainsworth and Hardy 2004; Ezzy 1998; Mc Adams 1996; Ybema et al. 2009; Zanoni et al. 2010). This entails that the self-reflective (ethnic, creative) identity narratives, captured in this dissertation are only snap-shots reflecting the particular spatio-temporal and relational context in which they were produced. Acknowledging our own roles as researchers in the production of these texts, a self-reflection on this is given to the reader in the epilogue.

Combining a structurationalist perspective and a non-positivistic epistemology highlighting the constitutive powers of language, in this dissertation we are able to investigate how ethnic identities can be deployed as discursive resources for the discursive strategies of ethnic minority creatives to navigate proactively their ambiguous structural position delineated above.

Respondent	Gender	Industry	Age	Cultural origins (except Belgian)	Generation	Year of immigration	Highest degree obtained	Ever subsidized	Children
Abdel	m	Advertising	53	Algeria	2nd	1964	Higher education	No	2
Adinda	f	Theatre	40	The Congo	2nd	1957	Secondary educ.	Yes	2
Ali	m	Theatre	34	Morocco	2nd	1960	Secondary educ.	No	1
Alisha	f	(jewelry) Design	36	India	2nd	1969	Higher education	Yes	2
Altan	m	Film/Theatre	36	Turkey	2nd	1965	Lower secondary	No	0
Ammon	m	Architecture	37	Egypt	1st	2008	Higher education	No	0
Charif	m	Architecture	31	Morocco	3rd	1963	Higher education	No	0
Ergin	m	Photography	31	Turkey	2nd	1960	Higher education	No	0
Fayza	f	Fashion	41	Morocco	2nd	1955	Higher education	No	4
Fourad	m	Theatre	42	Tunesia	2nd	1960-1967	Higher education	Yes	2
Hamdi	m	Theatre	39	Turkey	1st	1993	Secondary educ.	Yes	0
Heydar	m	(furniture) Design	48	Iran	1st	1986	Higher education	Yes	2
Iulia	f	Architecture	34	Romania	1st	1999	Higher education	No	0
Johanna	f	Film	34	Poland	3rd	1952	Higher education	Yes	0
Kerem	m	Film	41	Turkey	2nd	1965	Higher education	Yes	0
Khalid	m	(interior) Design	40	Tunesia/Algeria	2nd	1975	Lower secondary	No	1
Malika	f	Graphic design	32	Morocco	2nd	1958-1960	Higher education	No	0
Metin	m	Music	28	Turkey	2nd	1973	Higher education	No	0
Michael	m	Media	51	Hungary	2nd	1956	Higher education	Yes	3
Murad	m	Film	32	Morocco	2nd	1960-1970	Secondary educ.	Yes	0
Najiba	f	Publishing	41	Morocco	2nd	1960-1972	Higher education	Yes	4
Onat	m	Publishing	33	Turkey	2nd	1974	Higher education	No	0
Roger	m	Music	40	The Congo	2nd	1961	Higher education	No	4
Saaim	m	Dance	35	Morocco	2nd	1960-1970	Secondary educ.	Yes	0
Saida	f	(silver) Design	43	Palestine	2nd	1967	Higher education	Yes	2
Tina	f	Journalism	25	Rwanda	2nd	1989	Higher education	No	0

Table 1: Overview of respondents

Methodology

Respondent sampling and data collection

For this dissertation, we collected data of a sample of 26 ethnic minority creatives (see table 1, all names are pseudonyms). Respondents were chosen to take part in the research based on the following criteria. Only creatives born outside North-America and the EU15, or with at least one parent who was, were selected. This definition is commonly used to define ethnic minority groups (OECD 2008; Phalet, Deboosere, and Bastiaenssen 2007). Similar to other continental European countries, in Belgium the largest ethnic minority groups have a Turkish, Maghreb or Eastern European background (Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, and Crul 2003; OECD 2008), which is also reflected in our sample (see table 1). We are aware that this definition seems to contradict with a self-ascribed notion of ethnicity as taken up in this research. Yet we used it for sampling purposes only, and accounted in our data analysis for the identities as constructed in the interviews by the creatives themselves.

Furthermore, only established and self-employed respondents were included. We did so as we were interested in how ethnic minority creatives react upon powerful overarching structures, using agentically the discursive tools at hand. Therefore we selected established respondents, rather than starting ones, to be able to examine possible discursive strategies that have favored positively their professional development. Also, in the creative industries in Belgium, an increasing number of entrepreneurs and turnover is registered. The most recent figures show that about 13,5% of all independent entrepreneurs in Flanders (Guiette et al. 2011) are active in the creative industries, see table 2.

Industry	**# Entrepreneurs**	**# Workers**	**Turnover (mio €)**
Advertising	2020	3190	1520
Architecture	14600	14300	4610
Audiovisual arts	4200	7020	2100
Design	4010	740	416
Fashion	3420	20600	7610
Fine arts	2130	508	191
Gaming	55	101	148
Music	8590	2940	1470
Performing arts	5910	4770	1370
Published media	6960	15740	4470
	51900	69900	23900

Table 2: Number of creative entrepreneurs, fulltime equivalent for creative workers and turnover per creative industry in Flanders (Guiette et al. 2011, 20)

Finally, in our sample of ethnic minority creatives we tried to include respondents from all the creative industries, to not let one sector take the overhand. This approach allowed us to move beyond the sector-specific approach of most current research (Cunningham and Higgs 2009). We were however not able to locate ethnic minority creatives in software based sectors (games, apps, software, …), see table 3.

Advertising	1
Architecture	3
Arts (Fine art, Photography)	1
Design and Crafts	5
Fashion	1
Film	4
Games	0
Journalism	1
Music	2
Performing arts (Theatre, dance)	5
Publishing	2
Radio and TV (Media)	1
Software (Apps, Computer services)	0

Table 3: Overview of respondents per creative sector (as divided in DCMS, 2001 categories)

The respondents were found through snowball sampling, media appearances, and hints of key informants of each creative sector such as Flanders Fashion Institute, Design Flanders, BAM (support point for fine, audiovisual and media arts), etc.

We conducted in-depth interviews with all the respondents, which forms the basis of the data of this research. The interviews consisted both of an open part in which respondents could explain their work and who they are, and a semi-structured part that explored themes such as creative work, personal background, clients, networks, management and finance. Each interview was fully recorded and transcribed verbatim in the original language: English, Dutch or French. We interviewed as many respondents until saturation was reached.

Additionally, the researcher, being an art historian and cultural manager, looked in-depth into the cultural artifacts of each of the respondents, read their books, visited their plays, saw their movies, etc. This information was used as extra contextualization for the analysis, but never features on the foreground. A reflection on the prior knowledge of the author is made in the epilogue. Finally we also collected media texts about our respondent's lives and creative work, yet only those texts that contained a significant amount of the respondent's own words. We mostly did so to contextualize their cases, yet in some instances (such as in chapter 4), we did use this material as additional data for analysis. In total

the research in this dissertation is based upon 580 pages of in-depth interview material (about 375 000 words) and 105 texts from media sources.

Methodological rigor

In contrast to positivistic approaches towards qualitative research, performing a study with a social constructionist view complexifies the findings (for the better), but could also blur the transparency of the followed methodological steps (for the worse). As qualitative research is often branded as a 'craft' (Patton 2002; Zanoni and Van Laer in press), we will elaborate here on the rigoring criteria that do apply to this study, and how they are met in this manuscript.

Analyzing literature on rigor in qualitative studies (e.g. Corley and Gioia 2011; Gibbert and Ruigrok 2010; Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki 2008; Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2012; Patton 2002; Richardson 2000b; Suddaby 2006; Tracy 2010; Zanoni and Van Laer in press), we found many criteria to be proposed. A lot of them however, although applicable to qualitative research, were not applicable to research that understands reality as being socially constructed. Concepts such as validity (correct causal relations, operationalization of variables and generalizability of the findings over a larger population) and reliability (the possibility for subsequent researchers to arrive at the same insights), namely understand reality to be objective, fixed and measurable (see e.g. Gibbert and Ruigrok 2010; Gibbert, Ruigrok, and Wicki 2008). Some rigoring criteria found in the literature however, like self-reflexivity, coherence and consistency, complexity and nuance, and transparency do also apply to qualitative research with a social constructionist approach, and will be reviewed here to enlarge the transparency and contributions of this study.

The first and major category for defining the rigor of a study of this kind is the quality of the self-reflexivity present in the study (Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009; Essers and Benschop 2007; Essers 2009; Hytti 2003; Patton 2002; Richardson 2000b; Tracy 2010). As we understand reality to be socially constructed namely, this means that the researcher is strongly present in the data, and could even be seen to be a co-creator of the narratives under study. A thorough understanding of the assumptions, biases, prior knowledge and salient experiences of this researcher are therefore quintessential in understanding the quality of the study, and should be made explicit (Suddaby 2006). As this is by far the most important criterion for the quality of social constructionist studies, we have devoted a whole chapter in the epilogue to the self-reflexion of the researcher.

The second most important criterion for assessing the rigor of our study is the 'meaningful coherence' in the content, and the consistency and consequence in set-up of the study (Suddaby 2006; Tracy 2010). This latter means the level of interconnectedness between the research questions, research

design, data collection and data analysis with the epistemological views, theoretical framework and goals of the study (Suddaby 2006; Tracy 2010). For this study this would mean that all the choices that are made, and all the research actions that are taking would fit the social constructionist perspective, and aid us in our contribution of ethnic minority creatives as agents. In the whole study therefore, we dedicated attention to bringing coherent stories that made consequent choices and explained why these were taken. For example when reading the findings sections of each chapter, where we never claim to find a fixed objective truth or fixed causal relationships, yet show some possible ways in which 'meaning' can be constructed by our respondents. Another example of this could be that all our research questions are formulated as 'how' questions, in order to ensure a qualitative study, looking into social constructions, would be able to answer them. Finally, also this passage on methodological rigoring shows our perspective is taken up consistently, as we only have taken up categories that can be met by a study like ours, disregarding more 'positivistic' criteria or rigor such as e.g. triangulation (working with multiple sources towards an 'objective reality').

Furthermore, complexity is a criterion where many qualitative studies show their worth, as they consist of more in-depth data than their quantitative counterparts. Complexity is an important criterion as it is able to bring nuance and novel insights. This is reached in this study via on the one hand crystallization (causing multi-vocality in data and theory, and multi-dimensional conclusions), and on the other hand via 'giving voice' to my respondents. Concerning crystallization (Ellingson 2008), we account here for the findings of this study to be multi-dimensional, which enhances its complexity and nuance. By working towards our conclusions, we namely adhered to the principle that in a social constructionist worldview, things get bigger, not smaller, when we get to see the full picture (Gonzalez 2000). In the practice of crystallization followed here (Ellingson 2008), researchers are encouraged to gather multiple types of data and employ various methods and numerous theoretical frameworks, not to reach closer to a singular valid truth, but to create a more complex and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon (Tracy 2010). A crystal namely entails an infinite variety of shapes, multi-dimensionalities and angles of approach, and is able to reflect things external to it, and alter and refract our initial image of these (Richardson 2000a). Just as a crystal casts of light in different directions, making the light more complex in shape, we have used our multi-theory and multi-data approach in this dissertation for creating a nuanced and complex view. We namely insist that no 'monologically authoritative' account of our data is possible (Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009) due to the social construction of reality. Therefore we layered our used theories and methodological approaches (see table 4), looking at the subject each time from different angles, to reach a fuller understanding. Furthermore we also included discursive data from

multiple sources such as our in-depth interviews, newspapers, magazines, TV-shows, radio programs, websites, documentaries, etc.

Complexity and nuance are also reached in this study by giving the respondents 'voice' (Essers and Benschop 2007) through lengthy interview excerpts, that were translated into English as close to the original as possible. In each chapter, but especially through the narrative approach of chapter 5, we took the opportunity to 'show' the stories of our respondents to the reader, rather than to 'tell' them ourselves (Tracy 2010). This has the implication of also showing inconsistencies and contradictions in the stories of our respondents, which adds to the complexity and nuance of the study (Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009). The concept of 'giving voice' in a social constructionist study is relative and not unproblematic, as I as a researcher co-created and chose the excerpts. I will reflect on the interplay between my respondents' voices and my own voice in the epilogue.

Transparency finally, refers to the honesty involved in the research process. In a qualitative study, transparency occurs in the providence of clear chains of evidence (Suddaby 2006). This means a qualitative study should talk about how the research was done, and when and where the data were gathered (Tracy 2010). Transparency namely helps the readers to be engaged with the topic under study, and aids them in reaching their own conclusions about the scene (Tracy 2010). This makes them able to assess the quality of the data gathering and analysis of the study as a whole. In each of our three papers, we have made sure to provide in the method section a formal description of the research steps, analysis and decisions, in order for the reader to follow our trail, to assure it was logical and clearly delineated (Patton 2002). To be extra clear to the reader we have also, as for example in chapter 3, included a description on a track of analysis that we abandoned later on in the research process (see also: Suddaby 2006). Furthermore, we have made sure to always include accounts on how the researcher got into the context, her interactions with the actors, the concrete details on the interview process (time, place, etc.), and the level of personal immersion (Suddaby 2006). This information as a whole forms for the readers a chain of evidence, through which they can assess the sincerity of the research performed (Tracy 2010).

Overview of this dissertation

The main research question of this dissertation is: '*How do self-employed ethnic minority creatives deploy, as agents, their identity as a discursive resource for their work*?'. This central research question is operationalized into three smaller questions that are answered consequently in the next chapters. A short overview of these essays will be given in the next paragraphs. Table 4 presents a summary of the used

theories, methods and data of the three different chapters, as well as the main stream of literature they are contributing to.

	Contribution mainly towards	Used theory	Used method	Used data
Chapter 3	Ethnicity in the creative industries	Diversity as a source of creativity	Discourse analysis	Interviews
Chapter 4	Creative entrepreneurship	Aesthetic innovation	Rhetoric analysis	Interviews and mediatexts
Chapter 5	Ethnic entrepreneurship	Legitimacy	Narrative analysis	Interviews

Table 4: Overview of contribution streams, theories, methods and data of chapter 3, 4 and 5

In the essay 'Diversity vs. creativity: ethnic minority creatives' identity as a source of creativity", in chapter 3, we contribute to the literature on ethnicity in the creative industries by opening up the black box of identity constructions of ethnic minority creatives. The research question of this chapter is: '**How do ethnic minority creatives construct their identity as an asset for their creativity and creative work?**'. For studying this topic, we used the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity' (e.g. Florida 2002) to specifically determine how ethnic minority identities are created by agents to be used as a discursive resource in a professional creative context. This chapter shows the heterogeneity in identity constructions of ethnic diverse individuals in the creative industries via an in-depth discourse analysis. It aims at exploring how individual creatives deal with their ethnic identity, and how they enable it to be an asset for their creative work. This study thus shows that ethnicity is a valuable discursive resource for both professional identity constructions and as a source of inspiration for creative products

Next, in the essay "Making claims on value: The rhetoric construction of aesthetic innovation by ethnic minority creatives", in chapter 4, we make a contribution to the creative industries literature by exploring the ambiguous position of ethnic minority creatives for claiming value for their creative products. The research question of this chapter is: '**How do ethnic minority creatives rhetorically construct their creative products as innovative?**'. For studying this topic, we looked at aesthetic innovation (e.g. Castañer and Campos 2002) to specifically determine what value is in the creative industries, and how it can be created. By using a rhetoric analysis namely, this study explores the different schemes that are deployed for constructing innovation in the creative industries. It answers questions about the nature of value in the creative industries, and how this can be both constructed and

assessed. By doing so, this chapter thus shows how ethnic identity features as a discursive resource to construct aesthetic innovation and claim value in the creative industries.

Finally, in the essay "Ethnic minority entrepreneurs' construction of legitimacy: 'fitting in' and 'standing out' in the creative industries", in chapter 5, we make a contribution to ethnic minority entrepreneurship studies by accounting for the agency of individual entrepreneurs, a view which is rarely taken up by this stream of literature. The research question of this chapter is: '**How do ethnic minority entrepreneurs deploy their ethnic minority identity and experiences to acquire legitimacy?**'. The study relies on the theoretical approach of 'fitting in' and 'standing out' advanced by De Clercq and Voronov (2009) to specifically determine how ethnic minority identity is constructed and deployed by self-employed creatives for their legitimacy. In this chapter, the focus is not in-depth on identity creation; we rather explore how ethnic identity plays a role as a discursive resource in the construction of legitimacy.

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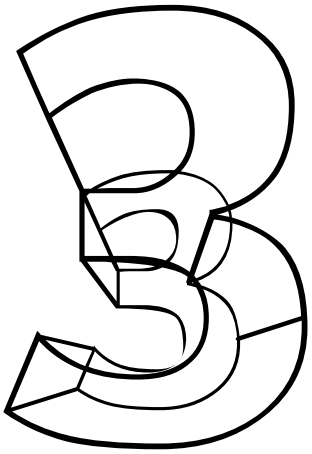

DIVERSITY AS A SOURCE OF CREATIVITY:

ETHNIC MINORITY CREATIVES' IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

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Diversity as a source of creativity: Ethnic minority creatives' identity constructions as a source of inspiration

Abstract

This study aims at highlighting the heterogeneity in the discursive strategies to construct one's ethnic identity as a source of creativity along the lines of the omnipresent grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity'. In the creative industries namely, one's identity is often used as a source of inspiration for creative products and services, warranting a careful construction of this identity. From our analysis of the identity narratives of 26 ethnic minority creatives four discursive strategies emerge: the active joining, the automatic belonging, the explicit self-exoticizing and the reflexive outsider strategy. This study contributes to the stream of literature studying the conception of immaterial sources of creativity and inspiration, and to a better understanding of the power of grand discourses in constructing one's identity as a source of inspiration in the creative industries.

Keywords

Ethnic diversity, creativity, identity construction, creative industries, agency, sources of inspiration

Introduction

In the literature on the creative industries, ethnic diversity is often associated with creativity (e.g. Florida 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004). It is portrayed as a unique source of inspiration (e.g. Brandellero 2010, 2011; Mavrommatis 2006), as an immaterial resource for diversifying products and crafting creative niches (e.g. Basu and Werbner 2001; Pang 2003, 2007), and as a key element in the creative business offer and thus as a potential source of competitive advantage (e.g. Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010). These studies focus in depth on the influence of ethnic diversity on creativity, and contribute greatly to the acknowledgement of its key role in the creative industries.

Yet, ethnic diversity – as a part of the identity constructions of ethnic minority creatives, and thus as a potential source of their creative work – is conceptualized in these studies as an invariable and permanent object, and as a fixed characteristic determined via one's attributed ethnic group membership (see also: Knights and Willmott 1989; Zanoni et al. 2010). This macro and positivistic view causes an overly rigid understanding of ethnic diversity because it on the one hand neglects the possibility of diversity to exist within the hybrid identity of one individual (Van Laer and Janssens 2014) and on the other obscures the individual's discursive 'identity work' processes (Ybema et al. 2009; Alvesson,

Ashcraft, and Thomas 2008) through which these identities come in to being. This is problematic as obscuring identity work inevitably results in the neglect of the processes of constructing one's ethnic minority identity as a source of creativity. Moreover, as value in the creative industries most importantly is contained in an immaterial idea (Throsby 2000), a materialistic viewpoint that is neglecting the discursive processes constituting this core idea (e.g. sources of inspiration), causes an incomplete understanding of creative work itself (Mauws 2000). We therefore maintain that a social constructionist view (Berger and Luckmann 1966), understanding reality to be constructed by language, is quintessential to explore the constitutive discourses of both ethnic minority identities and creativity.

In this study we aim at addressing the shortcoming of the current macro focused literature by incorporating recent views on identity and reflexive identity construction in both organization studies (e.g. Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas 2008; Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009; Ellis and Ybema 2010; Ybema et al. 2009), and entrepreneurship (e.g. Cohen and Musson 2000; Essers and Benschop 2007, 2009; Down and Reveley 2004; Down and Warren 2008). Especially when focusing on the creative industries, attention for the discursive actions constituting creative value, such as the identity work of individuals, is of crucial importance as the relation between the creatives' identity and the creative product is quite intimate (Caves 2000; Hagoort 2005). Also, neglect of identity work in the creative industry literature results in a homogenizing group identity that denies the individuality and uniqueness of ethnic minority creatives, nevertheless essential conditions for claiming creativity (Herrmann-Pillath 2010).

We conceive identity crafting as a process that occurs in self-reflexive storytelling and that is influenced by several macro-discourses (Alvesson 2010). In the context of this study, we specifically direct our attention to how ethnic minority creatives construct their identity in ways that echo the 'grand' discourse – a broader system of thought (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, 2011; Parker 1992; Phillips and Hardy 2002) – of 'diversity as a source of creativity', as is constituted by a broad variety of academic (e.g. DeFillippi, Grabher, and Jones 2007) and policy (e.g. NESTA 2006; Van der Herten and Jolling 2005) texts. This 'grand' discourse constructs diversity as an important factor in stimulating creativity (e.g. Florida 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004). We understand discourses to have an amount of power on the identity formation processes (Ogbor 2000; Townley 1993). Yet, we approach ethnic minority creatives as active meaning-makers who possess a transformative capacity or 'agentic power' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Giddens 1984) to actively position themselves along these available discourses by selectively combining discursive elements to strategically craft identity narratives (Hytti 2003a).

Empirically, we conduct a discourse analysis on the material gathered from 26 interviews with ethnic minority creatives who are active in Belgium. We analyzed the material along the following research question: how do creatives discursively construct their ethnic identities as a source of creativity? The study contributes to the extant literature on diversity and creativity by unveiling how ethnic identity can be constructed as a source of creativity. Empirically, we show the multiplicity of constructions of one's ethnic identity as a source of creativity, highlighting the ability of creatives, as agents, to make a difference and act in the world (Giddens 1984).

The sources of creativity in the context of the creative industries

The creative industries have been defined as those industries producing goods and services with an important aesthetic or semiotic content (Hirsch 1972; Scott 2000; Throsby 2000) inspired by highly individual experiences and emotions (Becker 1982, 66; Caves 2000; Handke 2004). These sectors commonly include: advertising, architecture, arts & antiques markets, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, computer games and radio & TV (DCMS 2001). Products deriving from these industries are understood to have a 'double nature', meaning they are not mere physical objects with a use-value, but more importantly, they are the expressions of an idea (Hirsch 1972; Howkins 2001; Throsby 2000)

This 'central' idea, which later on becomes materialized in creative products (Mauws 2000), originates through creativity. Creativity is defined as the capacity to create and discover new ideas (Amabile et al. 1996; Clinton 2007; Herrmann-Pillath 2010; Muhr 2010; Runco 2004), and is often linked with imagination, associations and the solving of problems (Herrmann-Pillath 2010; Guilford 1950; Runco 2004, 2007). Studies mention several immaterial sources of inspiration for being creative: mostly these are e.g. biographic elements, experiences, cultural or societal issues, nature phenomena, other creative work and everyday life (Eckert and Stacey 2000; Fredrickson and Anderson 1999; Howkins 2001; Kontos 2003; Reading 2008).

Yet, most of the literature studying the field of cultural production and its sources of creativity does unfortunately take up a positivistic viewpoint (for a critique see Mauws, 2000). This means studies often focus on the physical creative world and its objective conditions, rather than taking into account the 'objects' constructed via discourse that are at stake in creative social practices and the generation of ideas (Foucault 1972; Mauws 2000). This viewpoint causes studies to define creative work and its inspirations by referring to physical or objective elements in the creative industries such as other creative objects (e.g. Eckert and Stacey 2000; Reading 2008), or experiences, memories and opinions (e.g.

Fredrickson and Anderson 1999; Howkins 2001; Kontos 2003) rather than the perceptions and discursive constructions thereof. This is problematic as it leads to major difficulties in the in depth analysis of sources of creativity due to the neglect of their constitutive discursive tools (Mauws 2000).

Identity work

In line with a social constructionist view (Berger and Luckmann 1966), we consider identity as a socially constructed entity (Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas 2008; Alvesson 2010). This means that identity is discursively produced and re-produced through narratives (Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas 2008; Alvesson 2010; Brown 2006; Foss 2004; Watson 2009), and is influenced by several 'grand discourses' (Fairclough 1992). Being the medium through which individuals reflexively narrate their identities, language namely constructs and shapes our understanding of social reality (Cohen and Musson 2000; Ezzy 1998; Fletcher 2003; Foss 2004; Ybema et al. 2009). Discourses – such as e.g. the grand discourse connecting diversity to creativity – thus have a profound impact on identity processes (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Knights and Willmott 1989; Ogbor 2000).

Yet, although we have to acknowledge that individuals are not completely free in their actions due to these overarching discursive macro structures, they also are not powerless in this process (Giddens 1984; Knights and Willmott 1989). Due to the presence of constraining structures, individuals namely also are enabled to act as an agents, in which they use their ability to intervene in the world, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs (Giddens 1984), and to act upon it to 'make a difference' (Giddens 1982). As agents, individuals are thus able to pro-actively take a position along several discourses and to choose, omit and combine discursive elements for giving meaning to themselves and their actions (Brown and Coupland 2005; Brown 2006; Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009; Hytti 2003b; Kornberger and Brown 2007).

In constructing their identities, ethnic minority creatives are able to potentially use the available 'identity material' – discourses, feelings of belonging, available social categories, etc. – or to resist it (Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009; Ellis and Ybema 2010; Kornberger and Brown 2007; Mc Adams 1996; Watson 2008). Identity thus becomes a task, a 'work', which refers to "being engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness" (Alvesson 2010, 201). This means that individuals are responsible for performing this identity work, and carry the consequences thereof (Ybema et al. 2009). In this view, identity is never a fixed entity due to the possibility of constant revisioning of the story by the narrator (Alvesson and Willmott 2002; Down and Warren 2008; Kornberger and Brown 2007; Lindgren and Wåhlin

2001), and is only a temporary and fluid result of identity work (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Fletcher 2003; Ybema et al. 2009). Taking up this process oriented and fluid view on identity in this study thus allows us to conceptualize the ethnic minority creative as an agent who pro-actively and reflexively constructs his or her identity, incorporating or resisting salient grand discourses.

In this study we thus direct our attention to the usage of specific discursive elements by our creatives for the crafting of a self-narrative, and their resistance against the discursive elements that could render their narrative less plausible, or less useful for their creativity (Brown 2006; Fachin 2009). We conceptualize this pro-active meaning making as truly strategic discursive work, in which individuals construct meanings for themselves and their products for stressing their value in the creative industries. In the process of framing their creative work, creatives namely strategically use the toolkit of storytelling, to craft, convey and stress certain narrative elements (Czarniawska 2012; Foss 2004), showing a sequence of discursive strategic actions. Choosing strategically to mention certain elements or to ignore others, enables individuals to change the presence of these elements, which makes up an essential building stone of an argumentation as it acts directly on our sensitivity (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 116).

The grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity'

We specifically examine here the 'grand' discourse (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, 2011; Phillips and Hardy 2002) of 'diversity as a source of creativity' that in the case of ethnic minority creatives might serve as useful identity material. When looking at diversity in the creative industries specific, we namely detect a generally accepted belief – almost omnipresent in the literature – that constructs diversity as an important factor in stimulating creativity (e.g. Florida 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004). Diversity namely is constructed in many studies (e.g. Brandellero 2010, 2011; Basu and Werbner 2001; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005), policy documents (e.g. MayorOfLondon 2003; NESTA 2006) and even in the wider society (e.g. Cleemput and Boucharafat 2010; De Preter 2007; Jans 2004; Kets 2010; Kibbelaar 2007) to color perceptions, and thus as fostering creativity.

We conceptualize in this study all these voices to echo a grand discourse: the idea that diversity stimulates creativity. We see many scholars picking it up in their work: for example Basu and Werbner (2001), and Brandellero (2011, 2010) show how ethnic minority creatives are able to make new combinations of cultural elements and ideas through their unique position in the creative industries. Also Florida (2002), Pang (2007) and Smallbone et.al. (2010) mention diversity as an important factor elevating the creatives' cultural knowledge levels, making it easier for them to use their identity as an

asset for their creative work. Finally Mavrommatis (2006), Brandellero (2011) and Smallbone et al. (2005) indicate that ethnic diversity fosters the incorporation of different views into creative work, which stimulates diversification.

The grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity' echoed to in these studies, portrays ethnic diversity as encouraging creative individuals to look for solutions outside their expected frame of reference, making these solutions more innovative and broadminded (van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007), thus more creative (Muhr 2010). It is not only featuring in studies on the creative industries, yet we also see it being echoed in other fields engaging with diversity and creativity, such as diversity management studies (e.g. Earley and Mosakowski 2000; Schippers et al. 2003; Swann et al. 2003; van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007). By referring to this grand discourse in their identity work, creatives use it as an immaterial source of inspiration and a discursive resource for building strategic identity narratives (Kornberger and Brown 2007; Mauws 2000).

In line with Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984), we understand the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity' as both enabling and constraining ethnic minority creatives. This means that they are on the one hand controlled by the powers of the discourse in running the risk to be essentialized by it, and on the other are empowered by it to react against its forces (Giddens 1984). Due to the omnipresence of the discourse, creatives are namely called to action to proactively incorporate, adapt, address or resist this discourse in their identity work and in the construction of their identity as a source of inspiration (e.g. Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009). This both to avoid possible essentialization due to the imposing of an unwanted identity by others, as well to construct one's identity as meaningful to one's creative work. By taking up this agentic perspective, we are able to move away slowly from the conceptualization of diversity, seen in most studies (e.g. Florida 2002, 2005b, 2005a), as existing only on the macro or group level. For this study we namely take up a broader view, and also include the possibility of diversity to exist within one individual, who is able, e.g. due to a hybrid identity, to embody and confront different cultural perspectives on their own (see also: Van Laer and Janssens 2014). By doing so, we aim at showing the heterogeneity in strategies to include the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity' into one's identity work, while accounting for ethnic minority creatives individuality, a quintessential element of creativity (Herrmann-Pillath 2010).

Method

Sample and context

Respondent	Gender	Industry	Generation	Age	Origins (except Belgian)	Strategy	1 or 2 eth. min. parent(s)
Abdel	m	Advertising	2nd	53	Algeria	E, O, \	2
Adinda	f	Theatre	2nd	40	The Congo	\	1
Ali	m	Theatre	2nd	34	Morocco	E	2
Alisha	f	(silver) Design	2nd	36	India	B	1
Altan	m	Film/Theatre	2nd	36	Turkey	B, E	2
Ammon	m	Architecture	1st	37	Egypt	O	2
Charif	m	Architecture	3rd	31	Morocco	\	2
Ergin	m	Photography	2nd	31	Turkey	J	2
Fayza	f	Fashion	2nd	41	Morocco	J, E	2
Fourad	m	Theatre	2nd	42	Tunesia	J	2
Hamdi	m	Theatre	1st	39	Turkey	O, J	2
Heydar	m	(product) Design	1st	48	Iran	B, \	2
Iulia	f	Architecture	1st	34	Romania	E, O	2
Johanna	f	Film	3rd	34	Poland	B	2
Kerem	m	Film	2nd	41	Turkey	B	2
Khalid	m	(interior) Design	2nd	40	Tunesia/Algeria	O, J	2
Malika	f	Graphic design	2nd	32	Morocco	J	2
Metin	m	Music	2nd	28	Turkey	J	1
Michael	m	Media	2nd	51	Hungary	\	2
Murad	m	Film	2nd	32	Morocco	B, J	2
Najiba	f	Publishing	2nd	41	Morocco	O	2
Onat	m	Publishing	2nd	33	Turkey	E, O	2
Roger	m	Music	2nd	40	The Congo	B	1
Saaim	m	Dance	2nd	35	Morocco	J, O	1
Saida	f	(silver) Design	2nd	43	Palestine	B, \	1
Tina	f	Journalism	2nd	25	Rwanda	\	1

Table 5: Overview the used discursive strategy per respondent (J: active joining (9), B: automatic belonging (8), E: explicit self-exoticizing (6), O: being a reflexive outsider (8), \: not using identity as a source of creativity (6))

The empirical part of this study is based on the cases of 26 ethnic minority creatives (see table 5). We use qualitative in-depth face-to-face interview data gathered – in 2010 and 2011 by the first author – in the context of a larger and ongoing research project on self-employed individuals with foreign roots active in the creative industries in Belgium. In Belgium, the largest ethnic minority groups are of Maghrebian, Turkish or Eastern European descent (OECD 2008; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, and Crul 2003). Despite their heterogeneity in origins, the Belgian discourse towards these groups is quite homogenizing, using the term 'allochtons' or 'those from another country' (Ceuppens and Geschiere

2005). Even when descendents from migrants are born in Belgium, the discursive exclusion from the 'autochtons' group, or 'those from the local country' stays quite absolute (Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005). The binary discourse of 'autochton' and 'allochton' thus is used as mutually exclusive, making an in-between identity position very hard to construct for ethnic minority individuals.

Data gathering

We located our respondents through diverse channels such as field specific governmental support and subsidiary organizations, and diverse intermediaries like agents, dealers and managers. Following Cunningham and Higgs (2009), we included all creative sectors and moved beyond the sector-specific approach of most current research on the creative industries which is focusing on industry-specific ideas and concepts. In a second step, we used snowball sampling to locate additional interviewees, asking participants to provide contact information of other potential candidates. We interviewed respondents until saturation was reached, meaning until no new elements arose anymore from conducting interviews (Suddaby 2006).

The first stage of the interview consisted of an open part in which respondents were asked to explain their work and who they are, narrating their personal and professional trajectory. In this way, they had the opportunity to reflect on particularly salient moments in their lives, and introduce and contextualize their experiences. In a second stage, a semi-structured and open-ended questionnaire was used to explore a broad variety of themes including their creative work, clients, management aspects, financial matters, networks, encountered barriers in their career, as well as their personal background, including their family and education. To avoid probing, all the questions concerning the cultural background(s) of the respondents were posed at the end of the interview. The interviews took place – as preferred by individual interviewees – at the respondents' home, in a bar or at their workplace, and lasted between one and three hours each. Each interview was fully recorded and transcribed verbatim in the original language: English, Dutch or French.

Data analysis

To analyze our data, we read and reread the transcripts in order to become fully acquainted with their stories. By doing so, specific excerpts in which the individual creatives talked about the link between the self and the creative product, or instances where they indicated their ethnic identity to have an influence on their creativity were identified and selected for further analysis. In total, we selected in this step 29 excerpts originating from 22 of our 26 initial interviews. This means in 4 of the interviews no accounts on the link between the ethnic minority self and the creative product could be found (we will account for this

is the findings section). While analyzing the data in this first step, we wrote down some initial ideas about the construction of identity as a source of creativity on the one hand, and paid close attention to the 'identity material' the respondents were drawing upon on the other. This was followed by a discussion between the first and second author about the selection of the excerpts. During this discussion, we decided to leave out one of the excerpts for analysis as it did not focus enough on the link with the creative product, leaving 28 excerpts for analysis. We also decided to break up the subsequent data analysis in two parts, singling out the identity construction analysis in a separate step, as we judged it necessary to understand first how the identities of ethnic minority professionals in the creative industries were constructed, before analyzing how these identities were used for creativity.

In a second step we analyzed, using a discourse analysis, how our respondents constructed their identities in our 28 selected excerpts. In this step we read, reread, compared and coded the texts using the 1st and 2nd order analysis coding system (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2012; Suddaby 2006). We coded the texts first based on informant terms and categories (their words). This first level coding led up to 19 different labels for constructing one's identity, all staying close to the respondents' own words: such as 'being the only one', 'being different' or 'being mixed in origins'. We noticed that, by doing so, respondents in their identity accounts constructed both their identities and their contexts at the same time (e.g. to construct being the only one, respondents tended to construct their surrounding others first). Although we were not planning on taking the analysis of a context into account at first, we nevertheless took this up due to this data analysis step as it featured quite prominently in the narratives (Suddaby 2006). After this initial coding, we searched by constant comparison (Gibbert and Ruigrok 2010; Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2012; Suddaby 2006) for common themes, patterns and similarities amongst these 19 first level codes and grouped these under more abstract, second level labels. These labels were guided by the rereading of relevant identity literature. By doing so, we were able to narrow the analysis down to four different ways of constructing one's identity in relation to the context, calling them: I belong in the context, I am in an alien context, I am outside the context and I shape a new context, see table 6. We initially tried clustering these in a 2x2 matrix, using the categories hybrid/pure, in/outsider, agency/structure power attributions, but found this impossible, as they were too diverse to do so, and not all categories applied to all strategies.

In the third step, this specific analysis was taken a level further in analyzing how exactly our respondents used these identities in their arguments for their creativity. We therefore mainly looked in our material for relationships constructed between the identity and creative work. We coded these specific accounts again with the 1st and 2nd order analysis coding system (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton 2012; Suddaby 2006), now no longer analyzing the identity constructions, yet the link between identity

and creativity that was discursively crafted. For this first level coding, we found 39 different labels, which we narrowed down in a second round again into four categories, featuring in our four earlier established identity strategies. For example, we found the first level codes 'rare situation', 'tied to one individual', 'opportunity', 'capabilities', 'possibilities', 'exception', and 'special talent', and clustered these into the second level code 'unique possibilities', which features with the 'I am outside the context' identity construction.

By combining the categories of step 2 and 3, we came to our four discursive strategies to construct one's identity as a source of creativity, see table 6. We chose to analyze the texts in their original language (English, French or Dutch) to be able to fully account for the structures in the text. The excerpts in this article were translated after the analysis was complete, staying as close to the original as possible.

Findings

In this section, we present how ethnic minority creatives in our sample construct firstly their identity, and secondly the relation between this identity and their creative work. We found in our data four main discursive strategies of constructions of ethnic identity a source of creativity: the active joining strategy, the automatic belonging strategy, the explicit self-exoticizing strategy and the reflexive outsider strategy, see table 6. Although all four of the discursive strategies are being found separately across the material, some respondents combine two or more discursive strategies in their narratives, possibly to combine their discursive effects. Some of them also were 'silent' on the usage of their identity for their creativity, or denied there was a link all together. We added some examples hereof in a separate findings section.

Identity	Identity work	Me vs. context	Source of creativity
Automatic belonging	Seemingly effortless hybridity, attributing power to the structure	I belong in the context	original references
Explicit self-essentializing	Crafting a clear cut, crystallized ethnic minority identity	I am in an alien context	unique possibilities
Being a Reflexive outsider	Constructing to not belong to a group, while however being hybrid	I am outside the context	other viewpoints
Active joining	Agentic, strong identity work constructing a hybrid identity	I shape a new context	new combinations

Table 6: Detailed typologies of ethnic minority creatives for constructing their identities as a source in the creative industries

Active joining: the knowingly construction of a hybrid identity

A first discursive strategy is characterized by an initial acknowledgement of two cultural worlds by the respondents, one colored by the culture of the country of origins, and one influenced by Belgian or Western culture, mostly constructed as the majority and the minority culture. Respondents then explicitly construct their identities as a fusion of these two worlds, selectively crafted out of the best elements of both. This strong underlined 'identity work' creates a 'fusion' and very hybrid identity (Nederveen-Pieterse 1994; Young 1995; Van Laer and Janssens 2014; Werbner 2001) which firstly is explicitly constructed to be a personalized combination of all the influences the respondents have encountered so far, and secondly is constructed to be a new identity no longer belonging to the culture of either the majority or the minority. This identity construction enables these creatives to construct their creative products as the bearers of new cultural combinations and innovative elements. Consider the words of Metin, a musician and DJ with Turkish origins:

> My mother is Belgian, my father is Turkish. […] I am a half-breed, and I want everyone to know it. I will never prevent it from coming out, on the contrary, it's who I am. […] When I was 15 years old, I was fascinated by DJ's, and I started spinning some tunes myself. […] So first, I was more into electronic music, but I left that and later oriented myself a bit in Balkan music. Now I'm actually looking for a way to create my own music, my own Metin Öztürk music, distilled from these two broad influences I carry in me. […] Many things about me are double. I have a very double character, I can switch quite fast from one thing to another, and in music I also have these different genres I want to be part of. I have these electronic influences, but I also have Turkish elements in me. […] I have touched upon those sounds regularly, and now I'm looking for ways to blend both […] Which means I make an amalgam of electronic music, with a lot of Eastern sounds integrated at the same time. […] musically I'm convinced I need to bring this story, because it's my story.

In this excerpt, Metin constructs his identity as being originally influenced both by the Turkish and the Belgian cultural context. Yet he constructs to have crafted a completely new identity, distilled out of carefully selected elements of these two influences. He makes this especially explicit in taking up the identity of a half-breed. This identity enables him in turn to construct his creative work as hybrid, combining electronic music associated to Western culture, and Balkan music reflecting Turkish influences.

This discursive strategy is often taken up by our respondents. Consider also the words of Fourad, a Tunisian theatre maker:

> I grew up with four languages, Dutch in school, West-Flemish on the street, French of the television and the Arab language of my parents. This made able to play with and choose my identity, as if it was a little game […] I am child of many influences […] I turned towards dancing […] and I auditioned [… But] I thought I had to play the exotic too much. […] That's the moment I started my own dancing union […] That's where I made my family trilogy, 'The Lion of Flanders', 'Our Dear Lady of Flanders', and 'Brothers of Love'. […] It was a conscious mix of the Flemish tradition [*based on famous literature, symbols and themes such as Catholicism*] and my personal Arab and family context […] We really wanted to mix and show the conflict of both […] through the combination of elements it was new for that time. […] and of course, you know this is tainted, and soon people started to get aroused and started telephoning me: "What is that Arab doing with our Hendrik Conscience, and with our Lion!" […] But it is exactly those symbols that

> fascinate me, and that I wanted to join with my story, despite the clash and resistance. […] It was quite heavy, all that controversy.

In his interview, Fourad constructs being in between both Tunisian and Flemish culture, which enabled him to choose the elements of his own identity. He constructs his minority background to be a large influence for his life and work, as it on the one hand fostered the imposition of an exotic identity, and on the other caused controversy when working with Flemish symbols. He nevertheless constructs an actively joined hybrid identity, resisting the imposed overly exotic one, by referring to be child of many influences able to play with and choose his identity. In his work, he narrates to be joining both the Arab culture and Western literature, religion and symbols to reach an outcome that he constructs to be shocking and controversial for the audience. This all makes it possible to stress the new combinations he is able to make for his creative work using his actively joined ethnic minority identity.

Automatic belonging: constructing to be in a seemingly effortless hybrid identity position

The second discursive strategy is characterized by the same high level of constructed hybridity as the active joining strategy, yet respondents using the automatic belonging strategy do not stress as overtly their own role in crafting their hybrid identity. Rather, they focus on their context, which they construct as being hybrid, and to which they attribute the power of shaping their identities. By doing so, respondents construct their identities – however still as hybrid, and as being the result of the merging of two worlds – as an automatic, inevitable or even effortless result of their personal situation as a member of the ethnic minority group. This more structure-centered construction offers ethnic minority creatives the possibility to construct their creative products as the bearers of original references, or unexpected elements from the perspective of the ethnic majority public. This discursive strategy is well illustrated by the words of Alisha, a jewelry designer with an Indian background:

> My mother is Belgian […] my father comes from Bombay, India. […] The culture at home was a very nice equilibrium between East and West […] Concerning faith, although I am catholic, we went every year on holiday to India, so I saw many Indian temples there […] with Indian furniture and other Indian things. And I think that my love for decoration, and the adoration for jewelry – which is very present over there – later was the motivation to study for jewelry designer. […] And when I hear the reactions of clients coming into the store, it often something like: "well, this refers to something oriental". And I do not specifically include that, yet apparently it gets naturally intertwined somehow. There must be an Eastern flavor, which in the end apparently hits a spot […] Indian jewelry is also all made by hand, and I must say I'm not afraid to say that I really work a whole week to complete a ring. […] It's my cultural background which brings out that part of me.

Here, Alisha constructs here identity as a hybrid mixture of Indian and Belgian elements. In contrast to the active joining strategy, Alisha does not stress her effort in selecting the best elements out of each culture, bringing them together in her identity. Her identity work is rather constructed as the result of her

upbringing, which almost makes the hybrid influences a quite unconscious element of her self. Alisha constructs this identity as something which belongs to her due to her context, and something which is spontaneously, naturally formed. By doing so, she constructs her 'exotic' influences to only show unconsciously below the surface of her creative work. We could say she references in her interview in a very controlled way to a possible stereotyping of her by her clients. When narrating that these oriental references are however perceived by clients as original and unexpected, Alisha immediately counters any possible negative effects and underlines the benefits of her hybrid identity for her creativity.

The irresistible – be it conscious or unconscious – show through of ethnic minority identity in creative work is made even more explicit in the excerpt from the interview with Johanna, a film director with Polish roots:

> My mother is Polish […] but was born in the Congo and then […] she came to live in Belgium. My father is half French, [half] Flemish. […] So at home, we spoke mostly French […] and I attended the international school in Brussels […] in the Dutch speaking department, yet we also had classes in English and Spanish. I always was surrounded by a large variety of languages and cultures, […] with many different sounds […] Which means, while making movies, it appears to me as if I cannot tell a [classic] Belgian story. Because I'm raised between so many different cultures, it feels as if I can only develop my personal film language in between of them all. […] For example I made a short film on the Trans-Siberian Express […] about a Flemish woman and a Russian man, and they don't have a common language, so […] they need to communicate without words. And now my new project […] is again a story about a French woman going to Japan, dealing again with all the problems concerning language. So it appears to be a strong inspiration for me. It seems as if I need to talk [in my movies] about communication between different cultures. And the idea in the end is that communication is also possible without words and without a common language.

In this fragment, the identity of the speaker's work is again constructed as a direct result of her upbringing and specific intercultural situation. The original context is – in contrast to the story of Alisha however – not constructed as consisting of an ethnic majority cultural sphere of influence versus an ethnic minority one. Johanna refers in her interview to many influences which make up the hybrid elements of her identity. Because of these (so constructed) inescapable influences which are quite strongly attributed to structural and contextual elements in her surrounding context, Johanna is able to achieve a strong 'inevitability' in using these elements in her creative work. By doing so, she constructs an unavoidable influence of her ethnic minority roots, which nevertheless is not put explicitly on the foreground, rendering it a surprising and original element of her work.

To conclude, the automatic belonging strategy is characterized by hybrid identity constructions, as also seen in the active joining strategy. Yet in these arguments, respondents do not stress their own agentic effort in crafting their identities but they attribute a great amount of power to their surrounding cultures. Compared to the other discursive strategy, we see that this strategy is often used alone, without combining it with others. This possibly points to the discursive strength this one conveys, as it does not need to be reinforced by other strategies.

Explicit self-exoticizing: clear cut construction of otherness

A third discursive strategy is characterized by a strong stress on one's agentic effort and identity work, quite similar to the first strategy, yet here this effort is not used to construct a hybrid identity but, au contraire, to construct an explicitly 'exotic' one. Creatives achieve this self-exoticization via their construction of 'otherness' vis-à-vis the ethnic majority culture. This allows them to argue that they possess unique creative possibilities, e.g. the legitimacy to convey certain (controversial) opinions in their work, or the opportunity to use an otherwise not approachable network. This is well illustrated by the following fragment from the interview with the Moroccan Ali, a stand-up comedy actor:

> I work as a comedian […] What strikes me is that I'm still the only one with Moroccan origins, and even the only one with an ethnic minority background. […] I perform stand-up and […] my show actually handles about me, about the things I experience as a Moroccan in Flanders. Although I was born here, people still see me as a Moroccan, so I keep on using that in my shows. [Because] as long as you still are the only one, people will come and see your shows, right? […] Recently, I also started organizing a comedy event. I know some Moroccan performers living in Morocco, and have invited them to […] come and do a show in Flanders […] I mainly do this for my parents. They cannot come to my shows [as they do not speak Dutch], and they have never visited a theater before. When you can present someone from Morocco, then also they can see Moroccan stand-up once […] and off course they also talk about the differences between here and there.

In his narrative, Ali constructs his identity as a Moroccan living in a Western context. By doing so, he constructs the Belgian context as an alien one for him, stressing his otherness. In his narrative, this is however presented as an explicitly positive element, as his ethnic minority identity enables his creativity. Ali constructs his both imposed and chosen otherness as an asset, referring to the unique possibilities this position brings. First of all, it is constructed as positive for the content of his creative products, as he uses it as his main source of inspiration. Secondly, the strong links with his country of origin are seen as positive for his knowledge of the Moroccan language and Moroccan networks, a benefit he can use directly in his professional activities.

Throughout the data we noticed that the explicit self-exoticizing strategy is the one to be almost always combined by respondents with other discursive strategies. Possibly, this is due to the risk of stereotyping that emanates from (self-) exotization. A sole focus on the ethnic minority status involves the self risks to cast the creative as a mere representative of the larger ethnic group, and might downplay too much one's individual subjectivity, which is an essential condition for being creative (Herrmann-Pillath 2010).

Being a reflexive outsider: constructions of belonging outside the context

A last discursive strategy is also characterized by the 'otherness' of the creative vis-à-vis both the ethnic majority and minority cultures. Yet the reflexive outsider strategy is different as respondents do not

stress their agentic efforts in obtaining this position. Often first two groups are identified, an ethnic minority group on the one hand and a majority Belgian/Western group on the other. Then a claim of 'not-belonging', or to be different to either one of these groups, is advanced. By doing so, a strong outsider identity is created, which allows respondents to claim to possess novel outlooks and different viewpoints than other creative professionals, making it easier to claim to be innovative in their approaches. A clear example of this is present in the words of Najiba, a writer with Moroccan roots. In her interview with us, she explained:

> My parents came here from North-Morocco […] I was two when I came here […] which means I am a Moroccan Belgian with Muslim roots. I've got an Islamic upbringing when I was younger, but I've also been immersed in Western culture, the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen, and Sesame Street and Mickey Mouse. […] At home we spoke Amazigh, so Berber language, yet I've always followed classes in Dutch […] and now I also write in Dutch. […] I often doubt between these two [cultures] […] You know you're in between both. But if I'm not the one, and not the other, what am I? […] I started writing because […] my outside world mainly consisted of a school in which I was confronted with teachers who didn't understand my faith and principles, and who sometimes were very racist. I constantly felt that this wasn't a place where I could be myself. […] I felt like an outsider, who wasn't fitting quite well in her environment, and I needed to write that down, to create a parallel inner world […] So I developed this outsider stance for myself, which is the perfect position for a writer. Because then I could observe everything from the sideline, and try to capture these [insights] in my writings.

In this interview, Najiba constructs her identity by reference to both the ethnic majority and the minority cultures. She claims to be raised in between both, and to understand them fully. Yet she highlights the feelings of not belonging completely to one of them, are constructed as the barrier for being an insider in these two worlds. The conflict between having a hybrid identity mixing both influences, and having an outsider identity of non-belonging resulted for Najiba in taking a stance outside both groups. She constructs this however as an asset for her creativity, allowing her to observe everything from the sideline, and to develop a different and novel creative point of view.

Also, the narrative of Ammon, an architect with Egyptian roots, well illustrates this reflexive outsider strategy:

> I'm doing modern architecture. I don't build a lot […] I was born in Alexandria in Egypt. I lived there, I grew up [there] until I was 16. But I've always travelled with my parents so I lived in Morocco and in Egypt and a little moment in Germany too. After I graduated [from high school] I went to Paris to study architecture. I also lived and worked there and since three years I have an office in Brussels. […] I once took a plane, and I wasn't looking at the movie but at the Mediterranean Sea [...] and you saw nothing but this. I realized that this is my land; this is my real identity, this non-identity […] I guess in my work you feel that my architecture is neither from the south nor from the north. It's too much north to be from the south and there is too much south in it to be really architecture from here, from the north. This is what I like. […] You have to admit that your life has to be a just solitary travel with your boat, and you cross these other cultures. In the end, [your work] is only going to say something about you. You['re] going to see nothing Belgian in my architecture, nothing French, nothing Egyptian – there is no pyramid – it talks about me, and the people I met.

Similar to Najiba, Ammon also claims to be an outsider, although he claims to be imbedded in both cultures. His two initial contexts however are not constructed as the cultures of the ethnic majority and the minority. Ammon rather makes the comparison based upon a broader north-south duality. In explicitly mentioning a non-identity stance – however resulting out of many initial influences and viewpoints – almost a universal identity is constructed that overarches all these separate cultures. By doing so, Ammon has the opportunity to construct his creative work as a direct representative of nothing more than his identity (contrary to explicit self-exoticizing strategy, which establishes strong connections with a larger ethnic group), underlining his personal agency in creating it.

The mixed usage of strategies, and the explicit denial of the usage of identity for creativity

Although all four of the discursive strategies are being found separately across the material, we regularly see respondents combine two or more in their narratives, possibly to combine their discursive effects. We will review some of these mixed examples here, such as in a fragment by Saaim, an internationally renowned Belgian-Moroccan choreographer, who subtly mixes elements from the active joining with the reflexive outsider strategy:

> My father is Moroccan and my mother is Flemish. It always made me feel between two chairs. I never completely belonged to either one of those cultures. In fact, I made my own island, and from there I tried to attract people who also felt alone, or thought they were more 'in between' to that island […] Normally you grow up without clear references – in this case the Moroccan reference and the Flemish one – yet I had to take a stance [concerning both] quite immediately, something what for others normally comes quite late. […] For example: when I was small, my mother once took me to the cathedral of Antwerp, and I remember her saying: "look there, look at that painting, see how beautiful it is!". And being a child, I started associating what I saw with beauty. But for other children, whose mother showed them something else, they might have completely different ideas of beauty. So my associations of beauty are the paintings of Rubens, paintings of suffering bodies […] What I do now in my performances is nothing more than that, it is a consequence of my mother telling me: "this is beauty". My father, he liked Arabian calligraphies, mostly just words or prayers from the Koran. We had some at home, and I thought they were very beautiful too. My father always said: "look Saaim how beautiful that one is!". Yes, and I liked it. So my references of beauty are those calligraphies and those paintings. And as an artist, I was raised to look [in my work] for those two different kinds of aesthetics.

In his narrative, Saaim testifies of feeling obliged to take a stance on his identity quite early in his life. When talking about both the Belgian as well as the Moroccan influences he experienced during his childhood, he mentions feeling 'in between' them. Yet, in contrast to the pure active joining strategy, Saaim's identity construction rests more on the idea of not belonging completely to either, referring to the reflexive outsider position. Yet, this outsider feeling encourages him – in contrast to the individuals using only the reflexive outsider strategy – to take elements out of both cultures for constructing actively an own 'hybrid' island. By doing so, Saaim not only constructs his identity to be a very hybrid one, made up out of elements from both cultures; he also explicitly mentions his strong (and early) identity work in

'joining' these two different worlds caused by the feeling of being an outsider. Exactly these new combinations of ideas and influences are constructed also as a valuable source for creating a novel and unique product, as exemplified by the elaborate example referring to both cultural aesthetics. This means it is not only the hybrid identity that is constructed to be a source of creativity and creative products, here also the act of the joining identity work in itself is brought into the argumentation. Although the active joining strategy is thus dominant here, Saaim also uses elements from the reflexive outsider strategy, making it possible to also refer for his creative products to a different viewpoint due to his perceived otherness.

Also Altan, a Turkish director combines the explicit self-exoticizing with the automatic belonging strategy to combine rhetoric effects and weaken possible negative results. This is well illustrated by the following fragment from his interview:

> I'm a Flemish Turk, or a Turkish Fleming, as one would like to call it. It is what it is, but I am a Fleming, and I am a Turk, and I understand that this is difficult for some people, but it is the way it is. […] I do the things that I feel I need to do, but it's not that they're extremely thought trough. It's not like: "well, I'm now a Turkish-Antwerpian, of Flemish-Turkish movie-maker. I have to make this or this now because they expect me to". I could never do that, I do what I want to do. That's why I made a Belgian vampire movie […] It's a movie dealing with lots of different issues that wouldn't be in a commercial production. But that's who I am. And of course you see influences of my origins, definitely. You see there are Turkish elements in it, but it's not done consciously […], definitely not. […] As a filmmaker, I make niche movies. I make films that could not be easily made by others because I have the advantage to have two backgrounds, I have both identities […] I can easily, to give an example: in one of his movies [name of famous Belgian director] had a scene in which two criminals were stealing a car. And I said: "oh god, please make one of them a Moroccan or a Turk?!". Yet, he didn't do it, afraid for the criticism he might get. But I could easily do that, you see, that's the advantage I have. I can easily make my characters say: "Makak" [popular swear word used for ethnic minorities with a darker skin tone]. No problems with that, because it comes from me, you know. […] I think in some ways I can switch very easily between emotions: from humor directly to drama and back. I think it is quite Turkish too, I've noticed it in many Turkish movies. But it's not done consciously. Yet it makes the storyline different. So my movies are Flemish, but I always call them 'different' Flemish movies.

In this case, the argumentation is built on a combination of the automatic belonging and the explicit self-exoticizing strategy. Altan constructs his identity here in two additional ways, depending on the desired argument made about creativity. First Altan takes up a hybrid identity as seen in the automatic belonging strategy, and constructs himself as both Flemish and Turkish at the same time, because "it is the way it is". This opens up the opportunity of denoting the Turkish elements in his films, and constructing creativity through original references to several cultures. Secondly, just as in the case of Ali, Altan constructs his identity further on in the interview more as a Turk in a Flemish context, using this crafted otherness to underline the unique possibilities this position brings him for telling certain stories as a film director.

Finally, four of our respondents did not refer to their identity as a source of their creative products (Tina, Michael, Charif and Adinda), even although we asked them to reflect on this during the interviews. This shows that refraining from the usage of identity as a discursive resource is an option that can be chosen by creatives, implying that they will (need to) construct their creativity in other ways. Next to this 'silence' on the usage of identity for creativity, we also detected some combinations between one of the discursive strategies, and the 'denial' of the usage of identity for creativity, although this might seem contradictory at first sight. One respondent (Abdel) e.g. mentioned a shift in strategy over time, from first using his identity to gradually not using it anymore for his creativity. Although we would not categorize these 'non-identity strategies' as a fifth kind of discursive strategy (they namely are not used for constructing one's ethnic identities as a source of creativity), we believe that excerpts where ethnic minority creatives address their identity-creativity link, even if ethnicity is not involved, can show us the richness and heterogeneity in constructing their narratives. A good example hereof is the story of Saida, a designer with Palestinian roots running her own design company:

> My father is Palestinian, my mother was Belgian, and yes, that influences you […] because in the end you've got the two cultures. And I completely don't see that as an obstruction, but rather as an enrichment. […] I don't think that what I'm doing now is caused by me being raised with two cultures […] Identity […] is really the theme I think, that 90 percent of the people use in their work […] but I don't have that, far from it! […] And still people really expect you to […] I get a lot of interpretations like: "well your work is very feminine, and very oriental" […] yet I don't think anyone can see that in my work […] [My] objects […] are in the end daily objects with a […] I don't know really. Some say it's a twist […] sometimes it's a wink […] Look, I've designed that waterpipe over there. It was an order from a company just like I've got all my other orders […] I've never said: "I'm now going to make a waterpipe". […] The only advantage I may have is that I have more affinity with waterpipes then someone here, and that I've smoked shisha, I know the product. But for me this was not like: "well and here I'm going to use my roots, and now I finally can show who I am and how important that is".

In her interview, Saida uses the automatic belonging strategy when constructing her identity, yet she adds to her story a very explicit denial of using this identity for her creativity. She narrates being brought up between two different cultures and conceptualizes this as an influence of her hybrid context, and as an automatically received enrichment for her personal identity. This allows her to construct creativity as resulting from the additional knowledge she gathered from both cultures, resulting in creative products with original (yet however unconsciously brought in) twists and winks. On the other hand, she argues not to use her hybrid identity openly and explicitly in her creative work, although she narrates to be expected to do so by the ethnic majority public. With this explicit resistance, Saida stresses her pro-activeness in actively choosing desired identity elements, a possibility which is not at the forefront of the automatic belonging strategy.

Discussion and conclusion

The goal of this study is to understand how creatives discursively construct their ethnic minority identities as a source of creativity. For doing so, we analyzed the identity work of ethnic minority creatives, examining how the constructed identities are discursively used as sources of creativity and are echoing the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity'. From the analysis of ethnic minority creatives' narratives, we could identify four different discursive strategies. For all four, respondents started with analyzing their cultural context, explaining their initial starting points and mapping the identity material of which they could draw from when constructing their identities. Mostly respondents in this initial acknowledgement sketched two cultural worlds, one colored by the culture of the country of origins, and one influenced by Belgian or Western culture, mostly constructed as a majority vs. a minority culture narrative.

Using the active joining discursive strategy, creatives place the emphasis on their strong efforts in their 'identity work', by claiming to actively select and join the relevant elements out of their different initial cultural atmospheres. By doing so, they are able to construct their ethnic identity, crafted out of the relevant influences from both cultural worlds, as a suitable source of creativity. Namely, by stressing their identity to be a new combination of identity material, and by interlinking their creative products with this selectively compiled new identity, creatives are able to strategically construct a strong argument on the novelty and (aesthetic) innovation of their work.

When respondent use the automatic belonging strategy, they rather address power to the structural level, claiming their identity to be the automatic result of the hybrid context to which they construct themselves to belong. In this strategy, respondents do not stress their strong and effortful identity work, making the construction of the causal relationship with their creative products less obvious. The arguments in this case showed that creatives construct their ethnic minority identity as a source of creativity by referring to the subtle, yet original references under the surface of their creative products. Often arguments of the automatic belonging strategy feature alone, without another strategy reinforcing the initial arguments.

In the explicit self-exoticizing strategy, respondents construct to be 'the other' in a Western context. They refer to a certain degree of exotism, often referring to the stereotypes used for their specific ethnic group. Due to this strong focus on ethnic groups, this discursive strategy is often combined with others that stress more the individuality, possibly to not hinder the construction of one's creativity as an individual. Yet, when used wisely, ethnic minority identity constructed as an unequalled

asset can be used to claim unique possibilities – not accessible to majority creatives – for the creative work.

Finally, in the reflexive outsider strategy, creatives construct an identity which is not belonging to any pre-defined context. This constructed loner position liberates them strongly from most group stereotypes, and enables them to focus completely on themselves as individuals. Respondents use this discursive strategy furthermore to construct their identity as a positive source of their creative work, as it offers them a different point of view which fosters their creativity.

Ethnic minority identity work in the creative industries: constructions of agency, hybridity and otherness.

Comparing our four strategies, we note that the identity constructions of our respondents vary greatly on the one hand, yet draw on similar overarching discourses as their identity material on the other. Concerning the first point, our findings show the rich heterogeneity in approaches of ethnic minority creatives in constructing their identities as a source of creativity. We see creatives strategically addressing or resisting the discourse in a very personal and nuanced way. Although they all fall into the four categories presented in this chapter, we see many differences amongst them. For example, by adding personalized (often biographical) identity material, or by making an individual combination of one discursive strategy with another, a wide diversity across the data in constructing one's identity as a source of creativity is seen. This again advocates our focus on the micro level. Identity work, and its several individual outcomes, can only become fully visible when stepping out of a macro focus. By taking up this scope, we address each individual's uniqueness, and thus creativity; we avoid the essentialization which derives from a too homogenizing group perspective; and we account in our analysis for the value of biographical resources (Brettell and Alstatt 2007; Kontos 2003).

But apart from the variety in identity constructions in our data, some discursive strategies also share common features with others. Firstly, we see a clear usage of 'hybrid' (Bhabha 1994; Nederveen-Pieterse 1994) or 'in between identities' (Van Laer and Janssens 2014) on the one hand, versus more 'pure' identities on the other. Using the active joining, automatic belonging and reflexive outsider strategy respondents construct, to a respectively greater or lesser extent, their identities as a hybrid combination of different cultural influences and experiences (see also: Lindgren and Wåhlin 2001). This makes that they – independent of their current context – conceptualize themselves as being an individual, with a highly individualized and custom made identity (Werbner 2001), without losing the possibility of using the grand discourse as recognizable identity material. Only the respondents using the explicit self-exoticizing discursive strategy refer to a more pure 'ethnic minority' identity, much more

adhering to the overarching ethnic group identity. By doing so, they incorporate the notion of the majority context in their narratives, using it as discursive material for constructing their identity.

Secondly, When using the explicit self-exoticizing or the reflexive outsider strategies, respondents in both cases construct to be an outsider. They however do so on respectively different terms. Respondents using the explicit self-exoticizing strategy construct themselves as being an insider to the ethnic minority group, yet as being an outsider in their current Western context. The ones that use the reflexive outsider strategy however refer to feeling alienated from both the minority and majority culture, lacking insider feelings on ethnic terms altogether. We note hereby that we did not in our sample see accounts of the explicit self-exoticizing or the reflexive outsider strategies for those respondents that at least had one parent of a non ethnic minority origin. This enables us to speculate the in/outsider category to possibly to be a too strong or fixed contrast for creatives who have an official link to the majority group.

Finally, the creatives who refer to using their ethnic minority identity as a source of their creative work are all very conscious about the role they ascribe themselves. We notice a constant attention in all the discursive strategies for the attribution of power – however differing in various degrees – towards agency and/or structure. Some creatives narrated their identities to be the result of very labor intensive identity work, stressing their personal agency (active joining and explicit self-exoticizing strategies), where others rather constructed them to be a quite automatic result of their individual situation, stressing the power of the structures (automatic belonging and being a reflexive outsider strategies).

These power attributions towards the self as an agent on the one hand, or towards the structure on the other seem to feature constantly as narrative building stones in our creatives' speech. Although the idea that creatives might not ascribe agency to themselves could seem in contradiction with our initial theoretical insights (in which we conceptualize every creative to be an agent), these self-ascriptions feature only in the content of the narratives and are thus on a different level than our theoretical conceptualization of creatives as being agents in general. We saw, when analyzing the data, that respondents that attribute power to the structure (instead of constructing their individual agency) are actually also doing this agentically. This means we have to conceptualize the denial of agency in the content of one's narratives also to be in fact an agentic action which serves the same goals – constructing meaning for oneself and one's products – as in the other discursive strategies where indeed there is an active self-attribution of agency to ethnic minority creatives as individuals. Uncovering this 'self-depowering discursive construction' as being made while actually being fully empowered, thus aides us in showing the true strategic undertone of the narratives here under study, as it equally helps in reaching one's artistic and business goals in the creative industries.

Using grand discourses as identity material and sources of creativity

Our findings expose how the widespread grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity' (Basu and Werbner 2001; Brandellero 2010, 2011; Florida 2002; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004; Mavrommatis 2006; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010) urges ethnic minority creatives to strategic discursive action. Due to the omnipresence and general recognizability of this discourse, and the risk of being essentialized by it, creatives often feel obliged to address and incorporate it as discursive 'identity material' in their identity work. This is fully in line with our view on agency, in which structures are both constraining (through their powers) and enabling (opening the possibility to resist these powers) agentic action (Giddens 1984). Our findings show that creatives incorporate the grand discourse in their talk for three main reasons: 1. to resist its constraining and essentializing powers, and to claim authorship, 2. to enable the transfer of the positive values attributed to diversity through the grand discourse onto themselves 3. to construct creativity as a result of their own pro-active identity work, not their group membership.

First, a powerful imposition of the grand discourse by others might lead to homogenization, essentialization and the denial of individual uniqueness. This constrain has quite negative consequences for ethnic minority creatives who are trying to construct the value of their creative products. In order to avoid this powerful imposition, our findings show how some creatives pro-actively and strategically select and combine the elements of the grand discourse which they do consider to be useful for their identity work and construction of creativity, even if these elements are referencing to a possible stigmatization by others. By doing so, we see our respondents not merely echoing the grand discourse in their identity work, yet claiming the full authorship of it by framing it in such a way that it constructs a suitable identity, and is a useful source of creativity. Our data shows that by taking it in their own hands, ethnic minority creatives are enabled to pro-actively react against the constraining powers that grand discourses deploy on them, as for example is seen very well in the cases of Fourad, Alisha, Ali, Najiba and Saida. Our approach thus shows how identity material, even if this includes constraining and powerful elements such as can be found in the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity', can be strategically and consciously adapted by an individual to fit the specific purpose of the identity work, and thus be turned into an significant enabling element of identity construction.

Secondly, ethnic minority creatives who are referring to this grand discourse in their identity constructions inscribe themselves inevitably in its logics and generally held beliefs. By doing so, they create an analogy between their personal (diverse) situation and it's positive outcomes for creativity on the one hand and the general 'diversity being positive for creativity' premise predicted by the grand discourse on the other. This means the positive value, attributed to diversity in the grand discourse, is

rhetorically transferred onto the creatives' own identity and creativity constructions, because comparisons between terms assume that they rhetorically can be placed on the same plane (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). By strategically constructing identity narratives, our findings show how they are thus able to transfer only the positive values attributed to a grand discourse, while carefully resisting the intertwined negative effects, such as the possibility of essentialization.

Finally, we show how creatives are able to claim back their individuality, as they to construct creativity as a result of their own pro-active identity work. Individuality is a quintessential element in constructing creativity (Herrmann-Pillath 2010), and is denied to the creatives when only taking up the macro focus of the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity'. Creatives in our sample are enabled by this larger discourse to claim back their individuality as it is the discursive basis for values such as uniqueness, independence and non-conformity (Goncalo and Staw 2005; Nemeth 1985). These elements allow a creative to deviate from groups norms, and to propose novel ideas that might not be readily accepted. By thus assuring to be accounted for their individual identity (vs. a collectivist or group identity), the creatives in our sample thus enable themselves to be accounted for their individual creativity. Taking stock of these insights, future research could gain from incorporating the personal level when studying diverse identities in the creative industries.

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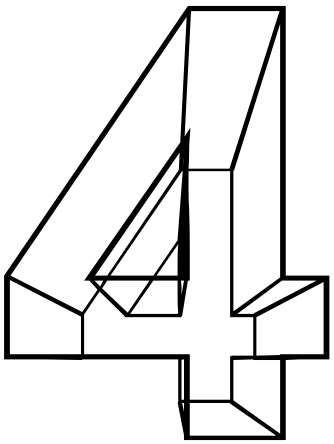

MAKING CLAIMS ON VALUE:

THE RHETORIC CONSTRUCTION OF AESTHETIC INNOVATION BY ETHNIC MINORITY CREATIVES

Previous versions of this study were presented at the 'Belgian Entrepreneurship Research Day' Diepenbeek (2012), the 'Organizational Discourse Conference' Amsterdam (2012) and the 'Art of Management Conference' York (2012)

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Making claims on value: The rhetoric construction of aesthetic innovation by ethnic minority creatives

Abstract

Conceptualizing aesthetic innovation as the social and cultural act of claiming value, we investigate how ethnic minority creatives rhetorically construct their work as innovative, while dealing with contradictory discourses of ethnicity. From our analysis of the rhetorical schemes they deploy to construct aesthetic innovation, three types of argumentations emerged: 1) argumentations relating one's creative work to one's unique self and biography through *liaisons of coexistence*; 2) argumentations establishing aesthetic innovation vis-à-vis other products and traditions through *comparisons* and *model schemes*; and 3) argumentations highlighting power struggles between the creative and some 'significant others' in the creative industries through *personifications* and *hierarchies*. This study contributes to a better understanding of rhetorical strategies to construct aesthetic innovation focusing on the role social identities play in this process. More generally, it shows the suitability of rhetoric theory and method to analyze claims on value.

Keywords

aesthetic innovation, value claims, ethnicity, creative industries, rhetoric

Introduction

In this study, we draw on rhetorical theory and method to investigate the claims on value by ethnic minority creatives. In the creative industries, value – both economic and 'other-than-economic' (Jacobs et al. 2012) – is assessed through a power-laden system of 'significant others' such as peers, critics, patrons, journalists, curators, clients, teachers and experts, and is based on the 'insight' understanding of the norms, development and aesthetics of the specific creative fields (Becker 1982; Khaire and Wadhwani 2010; Anand and Jones 2008; Brandellero and Kloosterman 2010; Hirsch 1972). As aesthetic innovation represents today the quintessential criterion for determining, acknowledging and legitimating the value of creative products (White and White 1993; Wijnberg and Gemser 2000), creatives are called to build rhetorically strong argumentations of aesthetic innovation towards these 'significant others' in order to claim value.

In contemporary creative industries however, ethnic minority creatives stand in a particularly ambiguous position to advance claims on value. On the one hand, they are increasingly regarded as possessing unique resources for creativity and aesthetic innovation, as their ethnic background supposedly allows them to make novel cultural combinations and to apply 'different' points of view to

creative work (Brandellero and Kloosterman 2010; Florida 2002, 2005b, 2005a; Muhr 2010; NESTA 2006; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010). On the other, ethnic minority creatives are arguably less well placed to claim value for their creative products as that same ethnic minority background is in Western societies often discursively constructed as subordinate 'otherness', precisely defined by its inferior value (Prasad 2006; Said 1978). This broader construction of non-Western ethnicity as inferior, hampers the value claims of ethnic minority creatives. It makes the creatives' arguments less plausible and thus less persuasive (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969), in the eyes of the (mostly ethnic majority) 'significant others' (Werbner 1999; Muhr 2010; Florida 2002).

Starting from the imperative of all creatives to make value claims for their work, this study investigates the claims of ethnic minority creatives from this specific ambiguous position. Our focus is in line with a broader stream of organizational literature studying the mechanisms of value attribution through claims and beliefs (e.g. Kaplan and Murray 2010; Reinecke and Ansari 2012; Beckert 2011; Khaire and Wadhwani 2010), rather than as the mere effects of supply and demand. In this literature, innovation is defined as 'a social and cultural act of ascribing value' to creative work (e.g. Rehn and Vachhani 2006, 312). We therefore take up a social constructionist epistemological perspective (Berger and Luckmann 1966) to conceptualize aesthetic innovation not as something objective or 'given' but rather as socially produced through language (Phillips and Hardy 2002).

Accordingly, our analysis of the construction of aesthetic innovation relies on both rhetorical theory and method, a widely applied approach in management and organization studies (e.g. Sillince and Suddaby 2008; Hartelius and Browning 2008). As one of the many ways to study how language shapes social reality, rhetoric theory focuses on argumentations used by speakers – conceived as active and creative 'makers' of discourse – to persuade their audience (Gill and Whedbee 1997) and is thus particularly suitable to study claims. It assumes that argumentations derive their persuasiveness from their recognizability: the speaker needs to connect ideas in ways that are shared with and thus familiar to the audience (Warnick and Kline 1992). Methodologically, we deconstruct argumentations of aesthetic innovation by identifying the rhetorical schemes, i.e. the frames minimally connecting ideas and concepts to build argumentations (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969; Warnick 2000), on which they rest. Our empirical material consists of interviews and mass media texts produced for a general, non-specialized audience by ethnic minority creatives who are professionally active in the creative industries in Belgium.

Aesthetic innovation in the creative industries

The creative industries have been defined as those industries producing goods and services with an important aesthetic or semiotic content (Scott 2000; Throsby 2000; Hirsch 1972) inspired by highly individual experiences and emotions (Caves 2000; Handke 2004a; Becker 1982, 66; Florida 2002). They commonly include advertising, architecture, arts & antiques markets, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, computer games and radio & TV (DCMS 2001; Maenhout et al. 2006; Flew and Cunningham 2010).

Aesthetic innovation in the creative industries has variously been defined as, for example, innovation on a non-functional level (e.g. Stoneman 2010), non-conventionality in repertoire (e.g. Heilbrun and Gray 2001; DiMaggio and Stenberg 1985), changes in an artistic vision or idea (Becker 1982, 309), content creativity (e.g. Handke 2008), and stylistic originality (e.g. Khaire and Wadhwani 2010; Wijnberg and Gemser 2000). Despite their heterogeneity, these definitions all conceptualize aesthetic innovation as something 'objective', entailing the major theoretical difficulty of identifying a suitable way to measure it (Handke 2004b; Castañer and Campos 2002). The creative industries are namely characterized by incommensurability, as innovation cannot be fully captured through for example market prices (Miles and Green 2008). In the context of this study, we rather understand aesthetic innovation as 'a social and cultural act of ascribing value' (Rehn and Vachhani 2006, 312) to creative work. We maintain that, as aesthetic innovation occurs on the plane of meaning, it does not precede language but is rather constituted by it, warranting the investigation of such language (see also: Lane and Maxfield 2005).

Creatives crafting claims on value

Creative products are often understood to consist, next to economic value, of an interrelated 'other-than-economic' or symbolic value – e.g. aesthetic (Kornberger, Kreiner, and Clegg 2011), artistic (e.g. Swanson, Davis, and Zhao 2008), historic (e.g. Throsby 2000), educational (e.g. Frey 2008), emotional (e.g. Boztepe 2007), experience (e.g. Pine and Gilmore 1998) and social value (e.g. Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen 2011) – which nevertheless often contributes to the economic value itself (Hutter and Throsby 2008; Throsby 2000; Jacobs et al. 2012). This 'double nature' of creative products means they are not mere physical objects with a use-value but also, more importantly, expressions of an idea (Throsby 2000; Hirsch 1972). Their value is thus highly dependent on the meanings associated to them (Scott 2000; Throsby 2000; Khaire and Wadhwani 2010) and of which aesthetic innovation represents a

key aspect (White and White 1993). In the absence of 'objective' measures (Throsby 2000), the valuation of creative products takes place via an organic process of compromise among the 'significant others' (Becker 1982; White and White 1993) expressed through e.g. positive reviews, large selling numbers, awards, collaborations and media attention (e.g. Jones 2002; Delmestri, Montanari, and Usai 2005).

Creatives, or creative professionals (Mavrommatis 2006), are however not mere spectators in this game of value. Rather, as agents (Giddens 1982; Emirbayer and Mische 1998), they can attempt to positively influence the perceptions of the 'significant others' through language, and thus the value ascribed to their creative products (e.g. Boon, Jones, and Curnow 2009; Khaire and Wadhwani 2010). They bear a great responsibility in claiming the positive valuation of their creative products by rhetorically framing, explaining and communicating the ideas and meanings behind them (e.g. Khaire and Wadhwani 2010).

Ethnic minority creatives' ambiguous position to craft claims on value

Ethnic minority creatives are in a highly ambiguous position for making value claims for their creative work. On the one hand, their 'different' ethnicity is commonly associated with creativity (e.g. Florida 2002, 2005b, 2005a; Lee, Florida, and Acs 2004; Smallbone, Kitching, and Athayde 2010; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005; Mavrommatis 2006) and aesthetic innovation (e.g. Brandellero and Kloosterman 2010; NESTA 2006; Brandellero 2011). They are for example seen to possess firstly unique insights for triggering creative inspiration (e.g. Brandellero 2010, 2011; Mavrommatis 2006) and secondly valuable immaterial resources to diversify products and craft new creative niches (e.g. Pang 2007, 2003; Basu and Werbner 2001). These ideas echo the arguments used to support the widespread value-in-diversity thesis in the organizational literature on diversity, where heterogeneous perspectives are expected to stimulate creativity and innovation (e.g. van Knippenberg and Schippers 2007; Muhr 2010; Bassett-Jones 2005; McLeod et al. 1996). As these discourses that portray ethnic diversity as a key resource for innovation are widespread and recognizable, they represent rhetorical resources for ethnic minority creatives to build plausible and persuasive value claims for their creative work (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969).

On the other hand, ethnic minority creatives are at the same time likely to encounter important obstacles for discursively claiming value for their work. As a whole, Western societies tend to represent ethnic minority cultures in negative, often stigmatizing and exoticizing ways (Prasad 2006; Said 1978; Tekin 2010). Operating in a field dominated by 'significant others' of (almost exclusively) majority origins (Werbner 1999; Muhr 2010; Florida 2002), ethnic minority creatives run a serious risk of being perceived

as 'exotic' (Said 1978) or as the 'other' (see also: Ogbor 2000; Muhr 2010). In these cases, difference is constructed as unfamiliarity, inferiority and inequality. This type of discourses undermines their recognizability, a crucial element to be persuasive (Warnick and Kline 1992) and build legitimacy (De Clercq and Voronov 2009). These representations further undermine claims on value, as one's ethnic minority background (and the creative products reflecting it), in itself is constructed as less valuable (see also: Bassett-Jones 2005).

Ethnic minority creatives are thus likely to craft value claims in highly careful ways, as they need to act upon the contradictory, power-laden nature of the discourses through which their ethnicity is constructed in the West. In the context of this study, we thus conceptualize ethnicity as socially constructed through categories of ascription and identification either made by the actors themselves (Barth 1969; Jenkins 1997) or attributed by others (Jenkins 1997).

A rhetorical analysis of aesthetic innovation

We specifically turn to rhetoric as the 'art of persuasion through argumentation' (Warnick 2000), or as a 'powerful tool of manipulation' (Hartelius and Browning 2008), to explore the use of language by ethnic minority creatives constructing the innovative nature of their products towards a general audience. Rhetoric assumes a dialectical relationship between the speaker as an active producer of discourse and the audience s/he addresses (Gill and Whedbee 1997), providing both a theoretical framework and a methodology to analyze such discourse.

Rhetoric is an often applied perspective in management and organization studies (e.g. Gill and Whedbee 1997; Hartelius and Browning 2008; Sillince and Suddaby 2008; Watson 1997), and in communications research (e.g. Boyd and Waymer 2011; Hoffman and Ford 2010). The topics studied through a rhetoric lens vary greatly, ranging from organizational legitimacy (e.g. Sillince and Brown 2009; Suddaby and Greenwood 2005) to diversity (e.g. Zanoni and Janssens 2004) and organizational change (e.g. Heracleous and Barrett 2001; Mueller et al. 2003). In general, these studies stress the agency, intentionality and power of the central protagonist (Green 2004; Hartelius and Browning 2008; Hoffman and Ford 2010; Sillince and Suddaby 2008). We use rhetoric theory and method here explicitly to study the social construction of reality, an approach which has steadily gained popularity over time (Phillips and Brown 1993; Sillince and Suddaby 2008).

In contrast to the (persuasive) communication approach used in the literature studying the rhetoric of organizations as a whole (e.g. Boyd and Waymer 2011; Hoffman and Ford 2010), we rather take a social constructionist view. In management studies, rhetoric is often used to analyze the

construction of power relations, identities and control from the viewpoint of managers as rhetors (e.g. Barley and Kunda 1992; Zanoni and Janssens 2004). Persuasive language is hereby seen as an influential tool of powerful managers to control less powerful actors, e.g. employees (Hartelius and Browning 2008). In our study, we look at the rhetorical language of ethnic minority creatives' in their ambiguous power positions, when persuading more powerful 'significant others' of the value of their creative work. Understanding rhetoric to create, sustain and challenge organizational orders (Hartelius and Browning 2008, p.22), we thus use it here as a specific form of discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992), suited to study persuasion, power and identities in the creative industries through the viewpoint of creatives themselves.

According to rhetoric theory, the challenge for rhetors lies in persuading an audience to accept a certain interpretation (Burke 1969). Yet argumentations are only able to persuade an audience when they are recognizable (Warnick and Kline 1992). This means that speakers, in order to be persuasive, need to draw ideas in the first place from a shared and recognizable context (Warnick 2000). These context-bound ideas must further be linked through rhetorical schemes which are in their turn recognizable to the audience because of their familiar structure (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). Precisely because the persuasiveness of argumentations depends on the recognizability of the context and the deployed schemes (Warnick and Kline 1992), ethnic minority creatives are likely to encounter additional difficulties.

Rhetorical analyses of the creative industries generally approach rhetoric as a means to acquire legitimacy in a field constituted by a set of institutional actors and dominant logics (e.g. Jones and Livine-Tarandach 2008; Cohen et al. 2005). Our analysis rather focuses on the content and rhetorical micro-structure of language used by speakers to connect ideas and concepts. Epistemologically, we assume that language is constitutive of social reality and aesthetic innovation thus not exists outside and independent of language (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Rhetoric is hereby helpful in capturing the social shaping of aesthetic innovation as it focuses on the micro-structures of language (see also: Green 2004). We elaborate in the method section on the specific rhetorical schemes, as they guide the analysis of our data.

Method

Data sources and data collection

The empirical data were gathered in the frame of a larger, ongoing research project on self-employed creatives with foreign roots active in Belgium. Similar to other continental European countries, in Belgium

the largest ethnic minority groups have a Turkish, Maghreb or Eastern European background (Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, and Crul 2003; OECD 2008). We only selected self-employed individuals because they, as 'representative individuals' (Hartelius and Browning 2008), can more freely use the overlap of the creative company goals and the individual goals to develop their argumentations.

The study is based on 131 texts on the work of 26 creatives with an ethnic minority background. They consist of 26 in-depth face-to-face interviews, 20 company websites, and 85 mass-media texts on respondents' work. These latter were published in non-specialized national newspapers and magazines, and broadcasted on non-specialized national television programs, and only include material in which the creatives' voice was extensively reported (e.g. interviews, articles with extensive quotes).

We are aware that these various sources do not produce the same type of text. In in-depth interviews the text is in principle not meant for consumption by a broad audience of more or less powerful actors judging the value of the creative work. Texts published in the media on the contrary precisely address that large (majority) audience of 'significant others' on whose perceptions the value assessment of the creative product depends. Nonetheless, the interviewer's social profile does not substantially differ from the broader non-specialized public the ethnic minority creatives address with their work and talk. She is an ethnic majority researcher with no specialized knowledge on, yet a strong interest in the creative industries, and a consumer of creative products. This similarity, as well as the fact that creative work is generally portrayed as a manifestation of the creative's identity possibly reduces rhetorical differences between the various sources.

We opted for including a variety of sources in the analysis because claims on value are today made through a multiplicity of texts on creative work directed at various audiences, including a broad majority public. Thanks to the rapid evolution of communication technologies, texts multiply, are more rapidly available, and therefore become increasingly important in the communication of creatives with their public.

The respondents were identified through the media, field specific governmental support and subsidiary organizations, and diverse intermediaries like agents, dealers and managers. In this way we obtained a list with names of potential interviewees, which we all contacted personally. In a second step, we used snowball sampling to locate additional interviewees, asking participants to provide contact information of other potential candidates.

The interviews took place at the respondents' home, in a bar or at their workplace, and lasted between one and three hours each. Each interview was fully recorded and transcribed verbatim in the original language: English, Dutch or French. Respondents were first asked to tell their personal and professional trajectory. In this way, they had the opportunity to reflect on particularly salient moments in

their lives, and introduce and contextualize their experiences. In a second part, they were then asked open questions on a variety of themes including their creative work, their relationship with clients, management aspects, professional networks, funding, training, as well as on their personal and family background. Concerning innovation, we asked our respondents if they specialized in a certain niche, in what aspects their work was innovative or new, and how they attempted to highlight this novelty. The argumentations on aesthetic innovation were however not only present in the specific answers to these direct questions, but were also in other parts of the texts under analysis.

For the media texts, we first selected the newspapers, weekly journals and radio and television channels directed to a general non-specialized audience that paid sufficient attention to culture in the broad sense. For locating the specific texts and programs on our respondents, full-text and full-program databases of these media were used. Only texts where the creatives' own voice was extensively heard were included for analysis, such as informative talk show fragments, interviews in documentaries and extensive interviews in the written press.

Interested in the argumentations of creatives when addressing a general, non-specialized audience, we included a wide variety of creative industries: fashion, design, architecture, music, film, theater, dance, photography, publishing and advertising. As non-specialized audiences are less familiar with industry-specific ideas and concepts, we expected creatives in different industries to construct aesthetic innovation using similar types of argumentations. This approach allows us to move beyond the sector-specific approach of most current research (Cunningham and Higgs 2009).

Data-analysis

To identify the relevant fragments on aesthetic innovation in the 131 available texts, each author read and reread the texts separately, selecting the excerpts concerning novelty, distinctiveness and specificity of the speakers' creative work. We then jointly discussed the fragments and finally reached consensus to include a total of 132 fragments in the analysis. These were located in 78 of the 131 original texts (see Table 7. All names are pseudonyms).

In a next step, we inductively coded the fragments based on the content of the argumentations on aesthetic innovation. After some discussion rounds, three main clusters emerged: the speakers' own self and biography (39), the creative work itself (72), and power struggles with 'significant others' (21). All our excerpts could be subsumed under one of these types, although in few instances we had initially coded them differently as some fragments mixed elements of two types.

	Name	Industry	Origins	Gender	Source of aesthetic innovation rhetoric
1	Roger	Music	Congo	M	Interview, Newspaper article, Magazine article
2	Onan	Publishing	Turkey	M	Interview, Company website, Newspaper article,
					Radio sound clip
3	Malika	(graphic) Design	Morocco	F	Interview
4	Khalid	(interior) Design	Tunisia/Algeria	M	Interview, Newspaper article (2), Magazine article
5	Murad	Film	Morocco	M	Interview, Internet article, Magazine article
6	Saida	(silver) Design	Palestine	F	Interview, Company website, Newspaper article,
					Magazine article
7	Altan	Film	Turkey	M	Interview, Newspaper article
8	Abdel	Advertising	Algeria	M	Interview, Newspaper article
9	Hamdi	Theater	Turkey	M	Interview, Company website, Magazine article,
					Documentary film fragment
10	Fayza	Fashion	Morocco	F	Interview, Internet article, National television
					interview, Newspaper article
11	Iulia	Architecture	Romania	F	Interview, Documentary film fragment, Company
					website
12	Michael	Media	Hungary	M	Interview, Magazine article (3), Documentary film
					Fragment, Newspaper article, Company website,
					National television interview
13	Saaim	Dance	Morocco	M	Interview, Company website, Newspaper article (2)
14	Kerem	Film	Turkey	M	Interview, Newspaper article
15	Ammon	Architecture	Egypt	M	Interview, Magazine article
16	Metin	Music	Turkey	M	Interview, Internet article (2), Magazine article,
					Newspaper article
17	Ali	Theater	Morocco	M	Interview, Company website, National television
					interview, Newspaper article
18	Tina	Journalism	Rwanda	F	Interview
19	Ergin	Photography	Turkey	M	Interview, Company website
20	Adinda	Theater	Congo	F	Interview
21	Najiba	Publishing	Morocco	F	Interview, Internet article, Magazine article,
					Newspaper article
22	Fourad	Theater	Tunisia	M	Interview, Internet article (2), Newspaper article
					Radio sound clip
23	Alisha	(jewelry) Design	India	F	Interview, Company website
24	Charif	Architecture	Morocco	M	Interview
25	Heydar	(furniture) Design	Iran	M	Interview
26	Johanna	Film	Poland	F	Interview, Newspaper article

Table 7: Overview of respondents and collected data sources

In a third step, we analyzed each cluster on the basis of the rhetorical schemes developed by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, see also: Warnick and Kline 1992; Warnick 2000). The use of rhetorical schemes to construct aesthetic innovation was present across all data sources. Throughout the data analysis, we worked in the original language of the interviews to stay close to the rhetorical strategies of the speaker. Only when the findings were fully written, we translated as literally as possible the selected excerpts into English, to maintain the original rhetorical schemes intact.

Rhetorical schemes

Based on a thorough analysis of the structure of argumentative language used in literary, political and philosophical sources, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca classify in *The New Rhetoric* (1969) rhetorical schemes in two large types: starting points for an argumentation and rhetorical schemes further developing argumentations. Starting points for an argumentation consist of premises that are already accepted by the audience, and are made up by 1. premises that focus on the real (e.g. *facts*, *truths* and *presumptions*) and 2. premises that focus on the preferable (e.g. *values* and *hierarchies* of values). Rhetorical schemes further developing argumentations link up the already accepted premises to the actual claims made by the speaker (Warnick and Kline 1992), and consist of: 1. quasi-logical arguments, 2. argumentations based on the structure of reality, and 3. argumentations establishing the structure of reality.

Quasi-logical argumentations have the rational appearance of formal logic. They simplify arguments and appear therefore quite persuasive (Warnick and Kline 1992). *Contradictions* for example, point at an inconsistency in a certain system, forcing the audience to choose sides between viewpoints. *Comparisons* are crafted by relating two terms and evaluating them via their relation to each other.

Argumentations based on the structure of reality build on relationships already accepted by the audience. *Liaisons of succession* unite a phenomenon or term to its consequences or causes. *Liaisons of coexistence* connect a tangible manifestation to its invisible essence, such as e.g. an individual to his/her acts. A specific form hereof is the *personification*, a figure applied to certain traits of an individual, which makes it possible to stabilize the boundaries of an essence.

Argumentations establishing the structure of reality are actively creating new audience perceptions. *Models* present a person or a group to be imitated or aim to incite an action inspired by them. An *analogy* is an extension of thought via a hypothesis. It is mostly constructed by 'reasonable induction' of a situation resembling the subject of the argumentation into a different sphere. *Metaphors* are artistic alterations of words or phrases from its own proper meaning to another, and thus fuse two different spheres in one image.

Ethnic minority creatives' argumentations to build claims on value

In their narratives, our respondents constructed their creative work as innovative relying on three types of rhetorical argumentations. Table 8 presents an overview of their main characteristics.

Aesthetic innovation as	Expression of the self and one's biography	Distinct creative work	Engaging in a power struggle to affirm one's work
Core points of reference	Self-reference, on 'own terms'	Creative traditions and products	Gatekeepers in positions of power
Rhetorical schemes	Liaisons of coexistence	Comparisons and models	Hierarchies and personifications
Role of ethnic background	Often present and constructed as resource	Absent	Used to qualify the encountered barriers as discriminatory
Role of 'significant others'	Limited role	Products of peers used as terms of comparison Occasional role of customers valuing aesthetic innovation	Prominent role of customers as 'real market' benefitting from aesthetic innovation Prominent role of gatekeepers hampering aesthetic innovation

Table 8: Overview of key characteristics of the argumentations constructing aesthetic innovation

Each type of argumentation relied on one or two key rhetorical schemes complemented by others that were supporting the main ones. By doing so, they enhanced the overall rhetorical effects of the argumentation. We illustrate our key rhetorical schemes here using excerpts from our data that are selected for their rhetorical power. For every category we chose the excerpt in this way they echo the wide heterogeneity in nuances in the material.

Argumentations centered on one's biography: Aesthetic innovation through liaisons of coexistence

A first type of rhetorical argumentations constructs aesthetic innovation by referring to the unique biography and background of the creative through *liaisons of coexistence*. This is a scheme linking two elements together by representing one as the manifestation of the other, its essence. Our respondents used two types of *liaisons of coexistence*. In some cases, they constructed their work as innovative by portraying it as the manifestation of their unique self, its essence. Alternatively, they portrayed their creative work as the manifestation of either the culture of the ethnic group they belong to, or their mixed cultural background, both of which stand for its essence. These *liaisons of coexistence* were sometimes combined to develop a double argumentation including both the creative work as the manifestation of the unique self and this latter's mixed cultural background.

Reference to an underlying essence represents a particularly strong means for winning the approval of the audience as it highlights uniqueness, which is highly valued in western cultures (Perelman

and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 89). The scheme transfers such uniqueness to the manifestation of the essence, i.e. the speaker's creative product. This rhetorical strength is well illustrated by the words of Ammon, an architect with an Egyptian background:

> I once took a plane, and I wasn't looking at the movie but at the Mediterranean Sea [...] and you saw nothing but this. I realized that this is my land; this is my real identity, this non-identity […] I guess in my work you feel that my architecture is neither from the south nor from the north. It's too much north to be from the south and there is too much south in it to be really architecture from here, from the north. This is what I like. […] You have to admit that your life has to be a just solitary travel with your boat, and you cross these other cultures. In the end, [your work] is only going to say something about you. You['re] going to see nothing Belgian in my architecture, nothing French, nothing Egyptian – there is no pyramid – it talks about me, and the people I met.

Ammon claims here that his creative work is innovative because it represents a manifestation of himself, a unique individual, rather than the ethnic majority and minority cultures in general that constitute his background. This central *liaison of coexistence* is supported through two powerful *metaphors:* the Mediterranean Sea as his 'non-identity' and a boat trip as his solitary search for creativity, stressing his own uniqueness.

Abdel, an Algerian advertisement creator uses an analogous *liaison of coexistence* to highlight his biography as the source of his distinctive creative work:

> You would be surprised about our very different [approach]… Well, I think that because of me – as I've always been a man of stories, since my childhood – I carry with me these horrible stories of war and things […] I know all the stories, I can tell you thousands. I have a very different view on things, my approach on something quite normal can be completely surprising. When you're dealing with coffee, I can look at coffee in a complete different way than you yourself. So well, I think I have an advantage – because I am a kind of funnel where many things were thrown in – that I can reach a different viewpoint that others don't reach. That's surprising […] and sometimes I have to explain what I mean. So well yes, it's a completely different creative look on things.

Abdel portrays here his creative work as a manifestation of his unique self, defined as 'a man of stories'. The argumentation centers on his personal experience of war as a source of stories, in which he however makes no explicit reference to a collective history. This main scheme is supported by numerous other ones. For instance, a *liaison of succession* is used to establish a causal relationship between the stories heard during his childhood and becoming a storyteller today, as a creative. Finally, the *metaphor* of the funnel is used to visualize his unique capability in joining these experiences for his creative work.

Other respondents' argumentations are rather built on *liaisons of coexistence* presenting the speaker's creative work as innovative by constructing it as the manifestation of the creative's specific cultural background. For instance, Kerem, a film director with Turkish roots, told us:

> I can say that movies like [mine] are distinct because of their makers […] At first I thought: "I want to be the same [like ethnic majority people]". Yet, I noticed that the audience makes a distinction, and then I thought: "Well, probably it's like that then somehow, I probably behave differently without knowing" […] I think I'm different because I've had another upbringing. I'm

> coming from a different kind of home, another culture, even another home culture, so I think that makes me different. So, this is why I cannot make the same kind of movies as some of my [ethnic majority] colleagues. Their enrichment comes from their upbringing, my enrichment comes from mine […] I mean, being a director with Turkish roots you bring a complete luggage of things which could not be discussed before [in Belgian films], or were discussed in different ways.

Here, Kerem's creative work is portrayed as the manifestation of his culture specific upbringing, the essence. This central *liaison of coexistence* is reinforced by various *liaisons of succession* establishing cause-effect relations. Because of his roots, he 'automatically' carries a certain 'luggage' – a *metaphor* – and he is who he is because of his 'different kind of home', both stressing his ethnically distinct self. Later on, a *comparison* with ethnic majority film directors is used to stress the difference with them.

Yet other respondents built argumentations on a double *liaison of coexistence* in which both one's self and one's background play a key role. This is illustrated by the following fragment from the interview with Fayza, a Moroccan fashion designer:

> I mix the Western with the Arabic […] For example, we would never wear a beanie with a scarf. […] I thought it was so cozy, all these Western ladies wearing a beanie in the winter, together with a scarf, and that was something we couldn't. And so I thought […] I have to do something with that. […] Only a headscarf, that isn't so warm in winter […] So I thought, I'm going to connect the two […] and then a small flower on the side and that's a success of course. It can be worn by both Western as Muslim ladies […] Also, the materials, like leather, fur, etc. I don't think in Morocco you would wear leather and fur, because it's too warm there. […] So, those are things you make and design as a Western Muslim woman, and I think in the Arab world they are actually slowed down to just design Arabian, because they didn't get that Western [influence], and I've got both. […] That's the most beautiful, that you can mix the two.

In this excerpt, Fayza portrays her innovative headscarves as the manifestation of her unique self – the essence – which is in turn itself the manifestation of two cultures, the Arabic and the Western, again the essence. This main scheme is complemented by various other ones. Through an *analogy*, in which a warm climate stands to light materials as a cold climate stands to fur and leather, the argumentation is crafted that new materials should be used for headscarves in the West because the climate is colder, stressing their value due to necessity.

Through this first type of arguments, ethnic minority creatives rhetorically construct aesthetic innovation by portraying their creative work as the expression of their unique self and/or their self as an expression of their minority or hybrid ethnic background. These *liaisons of coexistence* echo the close relationship between the creative products and the creatives' own identity, which is central to the creative industries literature (Hagoort 2005; Caves 2000). These findings specifically show the use of ethnic identity as a rhetorical device to stress the innovative nature of one's creative work and claim symbolic value on one's own terms, through self-reference.

Our findings indicate that some ethnic minority creatives highlight their (hybrid) ethnic/cultural background in this type of rhetorical argumentation, while others refer to it only indirectly, rather

stressing their individual self. This heterogeneity suggests a tension between using one's specific background as a rhetorical resource to claim value – echoing overall discourses of ethnic minority cultures as fostering creativity (Brandellero, 2010; NESTA, 2006) – and the risk of portraying one's work as the automatic expression of a whole (hybrid) culture, which would downplay the role of the creative and lean towards folklore, detracting from its uniqueness and value (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 89).

Argumentations centered on one's creative work: Aesthetic innovation through comparisons and models

A second type of rhetorical argumentations deals with the speakers' creative work itself, constructing its innovative character by means of *comparisons* and *models*. Respondents compared their own work to products that were on the market before – rhetorically constructed as *facts* – or to whole traditions of products in which the own work is inscribed. In other instances, a *model* scheme was used to construct the creative work as pioneering in their field, and thus to be a model for others to follow. These two key rhetorical schemes were complemented by a variety of other ones to strengthen the argumentation.

The rhetorical power of *comparisons* to construct aesthetic innovation is well illustrated by this fragment from our interview with Altan, a Turkish film maker:

> That's why I made a Belgian vampire movie. Why? It has nothing to do with my origins or something like that. It's just a Belgian vampire movie, and that's never been done before. […] I couldn't think of a title and I thought: "A Belgian vampire movie, that sounds like fun!". So I started writing the script and some three years later it gets played in the [largest cinema theater chain in the country]. I mean, for me it was: "Wow!". And no, it's not a high budget movie, definitely not, it's a niche film. It's a movie dealing with lots of different issues that wouldn't be in a commercial production. […] I wanted a theatrical movie, a theatrical vampire movie, which is something you absolutely should not do [commercially]. That's why certain sequences in the film are really theatrical, and that's what I wanted to make. Well, and that is something that commercially doesn't work at all, theater.

In this excerpt, Altan relies on two related *comparisons*. The movie is first compared to other movies produced in the country in terms of genre, highlighting the absence of 'local' vampire movies. It is then compared to other movies with higher budgets and more 'commercial' subjects, highlighting the speaker's theatrical 'l'art pour l'art' approach to script writing and filming. The stress on the artistic aspects, through the repetition of the term theatre, avoids the audience's possible association of the creative work with commercial movies due to its theme – vampires – which is commonly seen as commercial. Together, these two comparisons build Altan's argumentation that his movie is aesthetically innovative and thus valuable.

The key role of *comparisons* to construct innovation is also clear in the excerpt from a published interview with Saaim, a choreographer with Moroccan roots running his own internationally renowned dancing company:

> I want to engage the public in my performance […] This means I have to make sure they can enter my imaginary world. I'm not from a generation like [two famous Belgian choreographers]. I'm not a shocking rebel. If you offend the public, you leave little space for communication. I don't work like that. […] In my performances I do not try to show the heaviness of dance, the effort. I want it to seem light, except when I want to say something about suffering.

Here Saaim compares his creative work with the work of the previous generation of choreographers. By doing so he contrasts his approach centered on involving the audience with his predecessors' heavy, shocking approach, excluding communication. To strengthen the effect of this *comparison,* a *personification* is used, in which non-communication and shocking content is made tangible by naming two well-known choreographers.

In the following fragment from the website of Iulia, an architect with Romanian origins, aesthetic innovation is rhetorically constructed through a *comparison* and a *model* scheme:

> [We] deliberately choose not to have a typical architectural style but we do have a consistent approach. […] We aim for quality at every scale, accept change and include – next to space – 'time' as the main context of a project. Over the 20th century, the history of architecture has evolved from a 'Beaux Arts' approach towards a rational, autonomous, problem solving one. We claim the necessity to push this approach to the next level and aim for an architecture that dares to let go of its autonomy and that is meaningful in today's society.

This text inscribes Iulia's creative work within the broader history of architecture, by comparing it to the last step in the evolution of the discipline, rational architecture. At the same time her work is portrayed as a *model* for the future of the field, pushing it to a 'next stage' of development. Together, these schemes convey a sense of aesthetic innovation due to a distinct, forward-looking and unique approach towards architecture.

An even stronger emphasis on the pioneering role of creative work is present in the words of Roger, a musician and music producer with Congolese roots. In his interview with us, he explained:

> I'm quite an adventurer actually, I mean, I started singing in Dutch, and I did not consult anyone about that. I thought, well, all that English, all those dictionaries, those texts… My girl-friend is a native English speaker, she speaks real English. We cannot fool ourselves, what I try to write is school English, it's never real […] I thought, you know what, I start in Dutch, I can do that, it's my language, I think in Dutch, I dream in Dutch, so I can sing in it too. But for the media that was like: "Wow, what's that?". There's nothing difficult about it, you just do it. But a lot of artists ask me like: "Tell me, how did you do that?". So I notice like, yes, I have pioneered in things. […] I also remember that we started playing acoustic, I think about seven years ago, and we were on tour with a string quartet that we had put together ourselves, just a guitar, that string quartet, some local venues. And three years later [a famous band] had one like that too, and everybody started using the same quartet we did. Yet, and this was the funny thing, we selected it. The four ladies we specifically chose had to work everywhere. But we were the pioneers.

In this fragment, the aesthetic innovation of the speaker's work is constructed through a *model* scheme. Roger constructs his aesthetic innovation – singing in the local language and performing acoustically with an all-female, self assembled string quartet – as valuable by pointing to their subsequent adoption by others. In this way, he casts them as the starting point of a tradition. Roger's stylistic choice and

selection of artists is constructed as positive by mentioning the later success of the quartet, referring to the fact that it was later asked to perform together everywhere. This main rhetorical scheme is supported by others. The causal relation between the speaker's own innovation and the behavior of other colleagues following his example is underlined by a *liaison of succession*.

In this second type of arguments, ethnic minority creatives construct aesthetic innovation by rhetorically relating their creative work to other products and traditions through *comparisons* and *models*. Existing products and traditions provide points of reference to 'benchmark' one's creative work. As the creative industries are characterized by an absence of universal aesthetic standards (see also: Castañer and Campos 2002; Handke 2004b), creatives proactively select reference products and/or traditions to highlight distinctive characteristics of their work as aesthetically innovative and thus as valuable. As theorized in rhetoric, these terms of comparison need to be chosen among those assumed to be familiar to a general audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) – such as local or internationally renowned creatives or Western artistic traditions – in order to be recognizable. It is then no surprise that one's ethnic minority background plays no role in this type of argumentations.

Both *comparisons* and *models* highlight the temporal structure of aesthetic innovation. On the one hand, innovation can only be constructed through reference to products and traditions located in the past. On the other the symbolic value of one's aesthetic innovation is constructed through *model* schemes which establish its durability and subsequent replication by others in the future.

Argumentations centered on power struggles: Aesthetic innovation through personifications and hierarchies

The last type constructs aesthetic innovation by referring to the power struggles in the creative industries. Typically, this argumentation relies on *personifications* and/or *hierarchies,* whereby the speaker's creative work is constructed as embodying higher values than those of gatekeepers' preferences and selection criteria and/or as better meeting the public's expectations. These schemes are further reinforced by various other ones. In his interview with us, Ergin, a photographer with Turkish roots, explained:

> I'm open for new techniques. I've even had troubles with my teacher for some portraits I made. In the beginning, he was not supportive at all […] he was against it because I used certain techniques to create certain effects. It's actually an effect you create, but actually it is just a means to reach the end. In the beginning there were teachers that were very strict: "You cannot do this, it has to be pure". So I had some troubles with that. Yet, in the end, well, it turned out to be my thing anyway, and I was really happy with it. I do experiment a lot. Also new techniques: digital, analog, it doesn't matter. I've seen the evolution of the digital camera, at first all the teachers were against, and the next day they bought one themselves.

In this excerpt, Ergin rhetorically constructs his photographic work as innovative by opposing it to norms of the previous generation. This main argumentation crafts acceptance by means of two *hierarchies:* a first one placing the new above the traditional and the habitual, and a second one placing experiments above proven methods. Furthermore, the negatively perceived value element of the hierarchy – the old – is further stressed through a *personification* in the teacher as a gatekeeper. The aesthetic innovation of the 'unaccepted' creative products is highlighted by evoking the power of the established norm. The ultimate embracement of the new by the teacher personifying the old, showing the gradual adoption of the 'rejected' by the 'rejecter' – a *contradictory* argumentation – further strengthens the construction of aesthetic innovation.

The combination of a *hierarchy* and a *personification* featured frequently in this type of argumentations. Consider the words by Onat, a Turkish publisher:

> My focus is on immigrants who don't write on migrant themes. So it gets a lot of attention [in the media], it's something new […] Have you ever seen an immigrant publishing a thriller? No way! A Mohammed who is a new Aspe [famous crime-scene writer]? No way! Science fiction? Those writers nevertheless do exist! I mean, if you put some effort in finding them […] Yet the publishers never give anyone a chance if it means too much risk. [They say:] "Yes, this is not tremendous, but it is fine, we'll publish it. [We want] no risks. We need to get a return on investment", you know. That's the attitude here […] and in the end I thought: "I'm going to do it by myself!" […] I have to do it like that because all those *ancien régime* clowns don't value [my work]. […] I was a bit inspired by… Well, you also see this in music and film. Low budget films you know, all those pals saying: "Fuck off, I'm recording what I like myself, I have talent anyway" […] Yet, in literature it's not like that yet […] So I've applied that 'do it yourself' – some say the punk attitude – to literature.

In this excerpt, Onat constructs the aesthetic innovation of his work as the outcome of the power struggle with the (almost exclusively ethnic majority) gatekeepers in the publishing field. He does so by using several *hierarchies*: placing value chain innovation through 'do-it-yourself' strategies above more traditional production forms; and high commercial risk above low commercial risk. These hierarchies are all used to rhetorically contest the gatekeepers' approach to publishing, highlighting one's own innovative products and way of working. This central scheme is complemented by a *personification* of the old in the '*ancien régime* clowns'. Finally, the two central schemes are complemented by a powerful *analogy* between literature and other creative sectors, like music and film, in which a 'punk attitude' already exists. This scheme stresses the desirability and inevitability of the aesthetic innovation in publishing and portrays resistance to gatekeepers for aesthetic innovation as a potentially successful strategy for creatives.

Although Onat's excerpt refers to ethnicity as qualifying the power struggle with gatekeepers, this factor is even more central in the *hierarchy* and *personification* used by Hamdi, a theater maker with Turkish origins, in a documentary interview:

> In the definitive evaluation of the commission [evaluating theater makers receiving subsidies] – it's still hanging above my bed – they wrote something like: "Being a Turkish theater maker in Belgium, you want to perform a piece of [two playwrights], who are both European writers. We had expected that you would follow your roots and use material from there [Turkey]. We don't find your project interesting enough to support you because you don't want to work with Turkish material and language here [in Belgium]."

In this case, the argumentation is built on a *hierarchy* placing the value of creative freedom of the creative above the stereotypes of ethnic majority gatekeepers, *personified* in the evaluation commission. By refusing to accept the ethnic essentialization imposed by the majority gatekeepers, Hamdi resists the limits imposed upon his creative work, confirming its aesthetic innovation.

In some cases, respondents use *hierarchies* not to highlight struggles with gatekeepers, but to talk about their relations with other 'significant others' such as colleagues, as in the following excerpt from the interview with Ammon:

> I work a in a very dynamic way, and I like it a lot. For sure I will never associate. [...] [Architecture] becomes more and more complex and then architects associate to become stronger. You can build up the biggest projects etc. But I don't like this way of working. […] I only like this for certain projects. Like I said for the project in [name European city] I was associated with [name]. I was also associated with an architect in [name European city] to do a project in Niger, in Africa. From time to time, to associate for one specific project, yes […] but not to be married to someone. I try to be always out of the frame, to go away and not to follow the track. This is what it is to be innovative: you try to have the maximum of freedom.

Here, Ammon rhetorically constructs his aesthetic innovation by relying on a *hierarchy* scheme placing creative freedom above commercial values, such as having access to large projects. To stress this freedom several *metaphors* are used such as the frame, marriage and the track.

In this third type of argumentation, ethnic minority creatives construct aesthetic innovation by portraying their innovative products as embodying 'higher' values (e.g. creative freedom, experimentation, dialogue) than those of their gatekeepers (e.g. commercial strategies, established techniques, shocking the public). In addressing their general audience, they deploy *hierarchies* in which negative values are often *personified* in those same gatekeepers posing barriers to aesthetic innovation, which the speakers have been able to overcome. Different from the previous two, this type of argumentation is centered on the power dynamics which are at the core of the creative industries (see also: Negus 2002; Entwistle and Rocamora 2006; Hirsch 1972; Jones, Anand, and Alvarez 2005). Some of our respondents refer to ethnicity to qualify the power struggle and to strengthen their argumentation. Dominant aesthetic norms are then cast as the norms of the majority gatekeepers, enforced to exclude them as minority creatives (see also: Özbilgin and Tatli 2009). Interestingly, these norms are not associated with the general public, although this latter also is mostly composed of ethnic majority individuals. On the contrary, when the public features in the argumentation, it does so often in a positive way, supporting the aesthetic innovation of the creative's work.

Discussion

This study took a social constructionist perspective (Berger and Luckmann 1966) to examine the rhetoric of ethnic minority creatives' claims on value. Theoretically and methodologically, we relied on Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's (1969) rhetorical schemes to deconstruct the micro-structure of argumentations used to make such claims. From our analysis three types of argumentations emerged, each using specific schemes to discursively construct distinct object as well as subject positions (e.g. one's ethnic background, the creative work, creative traditions, the position of various 'significant others' such as peers, gatekeepers and the public, etc.) and relationships between the two (Fairclough, 1992). These argumentations address the problem of the intrinsic incommensurability of creative work by constructing aesthetic innovation along three distinct criteria: one's own biography, the creative tradition, and power struggles in the field. In their argumentations however, ethnic minority creatives often use them as complementary. Hereunder, we discuss each type, elaborating in particular on the role ethnic identity plays in it.

Aesthetic innovation through the self and one's biography

A first type of argumentations uses representations of the self and one's biography to construct aesthetic innovation as the expression of the unique creative. In this case, symbolic value is claimed solely on the creative's own terms, with no exogenous point of reference. Rhetoric theory suggests that the power of these claims derives from the fact that the unique is highly esteemed in Western cultures (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 89). This is further in line with the conception of creative work as an individual's creative act expressing his or her identity (Caves 2000; Hagoort 2005), as is well shown in the literature on authenticity in the creative industries (Jones, Anand, and Alvarez 2005; Peterson 2005; Svejenova 2005).

As one's ethnic background represents a strong marker of identity in contemporary Western societies at large, and the cultural industries in specific, it is perhaps not so surprising that it often features in these argumentations. Social identity markers are namely particularly effective rhetorical means to define one's identity because they represent categories that are highly recognizable to a wide range of audiences. In this type of argumentations ethnic minority creatives self-ascribe their specific ethnicity (Barth 1969) and pro-actively construct it in a specific way: as a source of experience and knowledge, which then can be portrayed as supporting their claims on value. This argumentation is effective because it echoes the abstract associations of diversity and creativity which are dominant in the

creative field (e.g. Florida 2002; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005). Yet it makes it personal, and thus more tangible and 'real' (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969).

This type of argumentation is however not void from the danger of (self-) essentialization, as it could strengthen existing stereotypical views of ethnic minority cultures as being less valuable. The ethnic minority creatives in our sample defuse such danger by often combining this first type of argumentation with the following two, balancing among the three criteria of value ascription. Future research might want to look further into the use of ethnicity in argumentations on value, as well as into broader range of other social identities such as gender, class, regional identity, language, etc. and their intersections, as they may be rhetorically used in analogous ways. Also in this current study we find references to these other social identities, sometimes in combination with ethnicity to qualify it (e.g. a Muslim female creative, a lower-class ethnic minority creative).

Aesthetic innovation through other creative products and traditions

A second type of argumentations constructs aesthetic innovation by inscribing the product within a broader tradition and/or the context of other creative work. Symbolic value is here claimed by virtue of the original 'contribution' the product makes to the creative tradition as it is developing in time (Wijnberg and Gemser 2000). This (artistic) tradition is rhetorically constructed and deployed to benchmark one's own work, effectively addressing the incommensurability of creative work. These argumentations thus both reflect and reproduce dominant understandings of aesthetic innovation as a break from the past (White and White 1993; see also: Rehn and Vachhani 2006, for a critique).

Due to mere fact that creative products are compared, the symbolic value of the reference term is transferred to one's own work. Comparisons between terms namely assume that they rhetorically can be placed on the same plane (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). This explains why our respondents do not refer to their ethnic background in these arguments, as such a reference might suggest that their work is on another plane – e.g. the 'exotic' –. This would entail a quasi impossibility of the works' inscription in a majority creative tradition and thus its comparison with others. In a second variant of this argumentation, the creative work itself is cast as valuable by referring to peers imitating it, through a model scheme. In this case, the value of one's work implies a devaluation of subsequent work as less original. Yet there is no explicit denigration of copies, as the aesthetic innovation of the own work is itself rhetorically contingent on them, the very proof of its recognized value.

Aesthetic innovation through power struggles

The third type of argumentation finally embeds the creative in a rhetorically established power struggle with the value assessing 'significant others' (Becker 1982, 306-307). Symbolic value is here claimed through the creative's engagement in the political act of assessing aesthetic innovation. This type of argumentation highlights the barriers creatives encounter when engaging with powerful 'significant others' to affirm the value of their work. This casts them as agents who heroically overcome the structural barriers they encounter. This builds up a rhetoric *locus of the person*, which claims superiority for things done with effort (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969).

The nature of the struggle for aesthetic innovation is often political, and is in our data sometimes rhetorically supported by qualifying the unequal power relations between the creative and the 'significant others' in ethnic terms. Whereas in the first type of argumentations ethnicity is self ascribed (Barth 1969) and is positively portrayed as a source of aesthetic innovation, whenever ethnicity features in the arguments here, it is constructed as imposed upon the creatives by ethnic majority individuals to exert power (Jenkins 1997; Prasad 2006). The creative is in these cases reduced to an essentialized understanding of his or her ethnic background, as stereotypically conceived by the 'significant others'. In this way, his or her individual subjectivity, a quintessential element of creativity (Herrmann-Pillath 2010), is denied. This argumentation makes visible how ethnicity can be used rhetorically as a powerful means of exclusion, reproducing inequality in creative fields.

This attributed ethnic identity, often seen in this type of argumentation, can however be re-appropriated by ethnic minority creatives to construct value claims centered on the argument of successfully overcoming these barriers and exclusive powers. By doing so, our respondents reveal the power dynamics that are underlying these ascribed ethnicity conceptualizations, and further cast themselves as meeting the public's 'real' market demand, in order to pose an even stronger claim on their products' value. Creative work thus offers rare opportunities for members of historically disadvantaged social groups, such as ethnic minorities, to use their often stigmatized identity (Slay and Smith 2011) as a viable rhetoric asset and discursive resource for claiming value.

Future research might look into the viewpoint of 'significant others', investigating how for example actors in gatekeeper positions or even the public itself rhetorically justify artistic choices, and develops argumentations based on social identity markers. This type of research could generate valuable insights on the rhetoric construction of inclusion or exclusion criteria in creative fields.

Combining argumentations of aesthetic innovation

The ethnic minority creatives in our sample often combine the three types of argumentations to highlight the aesthetic innovation of their creative work, as it is assessed along different criteria to overcome its incommensurability. Combining the arguments namely reduces the risks that one argumentation is re-appropriated and/or overstressed by others to deny the aesthetic innovation and value of the creative work. For instance, biographical elements can be effectively used by the creative to rhetorically highlight uniqueness and originality, but can also potentially be re-appropriated by powerful actors to essentialize creatives and deny the value of the creative work. We see this effect to be possibility reduced through the use of complementary argumentations, for instance by establishing links with the broader creative tradition which is recognizable for the majority, providing additional support for value claims. At the same time, an exclusive focus on power struggles for claiming aesthetic innovation by ethnic minority creatives might raise suspicion by the general audience that the creative fails to meet the 'general' creative standards. This argument thus calls for additional argumentations stressing for example the embeddedness of the creative work in a broader tradition and/or providing a more positive representation of the creative's ethnicity.

Implicit argumentations of aesthetic innovation and value claims

Further reflecting on our findings beyond the specificity of the three argumentations presented above, we observe a tendency to talk about aesthetic innovation and its value in highly indirect ways, and through alternative vocabularies. Neither the term innovation nor value – be it symbolic or economic – features prominently in our respondents' argumentations. We only see echoes thereof, as if there exists a rhetorical impossibility. We speculate, given the 'business' or 'humdrum' connotation of the terms innovation and value (Caves 2000), that claiming them too explicitly would point too directly to economic motives. This would entail a loss of symbolic value and, ironically, also the economic value that is based on it (Hutter and Throsby 2008). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) write about the *deliberate suppression of presence*, a rhetorical technique which has the ability to stress a term profoundly, yet inexplicitly (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 118). Far from being less persuasive, these implicit argumentations can be a highly effective rhetorical strategy (Sillince, 1999). To us, this is an additional confirmation of the creatives' competence in navigating through the 'unspoken rules' of the fields in which they are embedded. They rhetorically craft powerful claims of value for their own work yet, by doing so, avoid contradicting the fundamental assumptions they estimate are held by the general public they address.

Conclusion

Conceptualizing aesthetic innovation as the social and cultural act of claiming value, we investigated how ethnic minority creatives rhetorically construct their work as innovative. Ethnic minority creatives are in an ambiguous position for claiming value for their creative work, as their ethnicity is discursively defined in contradictory ways, both as a creative resource and as inferior otherness. Our analysis revealed that they construct their creative work by relating it to their unique self and biography, by establishing aesthetic innovation vis-à-vis other Western products and traditions, and by highlighting power struggles with 'significant others'. Our study shows the key rhetorical role social minority identities, such as ethnicity, play in processes of claiming value. This because they, due to their high recognizability, provide useful vocabularies for building rhetorical argumentations. More generally, our study shows the suitability of rhetoric theory and method to analyze claims on value.

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ETHNIC MINORITY ENTREPRENEURS' CONSTRUCTION OF LEGITIMACY: 'FITTING IN' AND 'STANDING OUT' IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Previous versions of this study were presented at the 'Bringing Diversity into Entrepreneurship Research Symposium' Diepenbeek (2011), the '7th Critical Management Studies Conference' Napels (2011), and the 'Race and the Cultural Industries Conference' Leeds (2011)

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Ethnic minority entrepreneurs' construction of legitimacy: 'fitting in' and 'standing out' in the creative industries

Abstract

Drawing on De Clercq and Voronov (2009) we investigate the narrative use of ethnic minority identity for constructing legitimacy through 'fitting in' and 'standing out'. By doing so we aim at bridging a individual and organizational level of inquiry to understand how ethnic minority entrepreneurs' identities can be used as an asset for business achievement. Based on data collected through 26 in-depth interviews with ethnic entrepreneurs in the creative industries, we identify four types of use of the ethnic minority background: the 'ethnic' creative strategy, the 'hybrid' creative strategy, the 'heroic creative strategy, and the 'neutral' creative strategy. The study contributes to the stream of literature approaching ethnic minority entrepreneurs as agents, by highlighting the heterogeneous ways in which ethnic minority identity and background can be deployed for business strategies.

Keywords

Ethnic minorities, entrepreneurship, creative industries, legitimacy, agency

Introduction

In mainstream entrepreneurship literature, entrepreneurs as individuals are often the focus of research. They are conceived as strong heroic personalities; as (white) individuals in charge of their personal and business successes (Essers and Benschop 2007; Nicholson and Anderson 2005; Ogbor 2000). In this tradition entrepreneurs are considered to be risk-taking agents (Knight 1921), who spot opportunities, act, and create new value (Jones and Butler 1992; Schumpeter 1949), building their own business success.

The perception of an 'heroic' and 'agentic' entrepreneur is however remarkably absent from ethnic minority entrepreneurship literature, which largely focuses on macro structural characteristics constraining and/or enabling entrepreneurial action (Essers and Benschop 2007). Ethnic minority entrepreneurship literature often examines the effects of ethnic group features such as culture (e.g. Basu and Altinay 2002; Light and Bonacich 1988; Nwankwo 2005; Ram and Deakins 1996), ethnic networks (e.g. Chaganti and Greene 2002; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Light 1972; Masurel et al. 2002) and family bonds (e.g. Bagwell 2008; Ram 1992). Further studies investigate how the environments of host countries affect ethnic minority business, such as the formation of (ethnic) markets (e.g. Aldrich et al. 1985; Altinay 2009; Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990; Zhou 2004), specialization in niches (e.g. Boyd

1998; Baycan-Levent, Nijkamp, and Sahin 2009) and access to resources (e.g. Basu and Werbner 2001; Ram et al. 2003).

Despite the contributions of this literature, its overwhelming interest in macro structures and ethnic minority group relations has produced stereotypical, deterministic portrays of ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Furthermore, by too often focusing on the 'structural disadvantage' (Brettell and Alstatt 2007) of ethnic minority entrepreneurs this literature obscures the entrepreneurs' own perspectives and personal influence needed to understand ethnic entrepreneurial business strategies. Gratefully incorporating a critical stream of research investigating ethnic minority entrepreneurship from the entrepreneurs' own point of view (Brettell and Alstatt 2007; Essers and Benschop 2007; Pio 2007), we thus aim in this chapter to bridge the micro (individual) and the meso (organizational) level of inquiry, to counterbalance the overwhelming focus on the macro structures. In this chapter, we understand ethnic minority entrepreneurs not only to be 'caught' in contexts that constrain and enable their actions in specific ways, they are also, similar to majority peers, agentic individuals capable to detect new demands, create opportunities, and envision successful business futures (cfr. Werbner 1999).

To take up this perspective, we investigate how ethnic minority entrepreneurs narratively deploy their ethnic minority identity and experiences – deriving from the individual level – to acquire business legitimacy in their professional field – the organizational level. Legitimacy, needed for strategic resource access (Minahan 2005; Wilson and Stokes 2004), has been theorized as resulting from an entrepreneur's capacity to balance 'fitting in', the awareness and conformance to the established dominant norms, and 'standing out', bringing something original, new and different into the field (De Clercq and Voronov 2009; Deephouse 1999).

In Belgium, amongst other Western-European countries, ethnic minority cultures are often discursively constructed in highly negative terms as the 'other' and associated with socio-economic disadvantage (OECD 2008). In as far as ethnic minority entrepreneurs thus are embedded in sectors constituted by social actors overwhelmingly made up of majority individuals, such as the creative industries; they are likely to have to deal with their minority background in their legitimacy constructing entrepreneurial narratives. However, how they deploy their background is not easily predictable. On the one hand, it has been argued that it is particularly hard to reconcile a minority background with dominant discourses of entrepreneurship which reflect personality traits associated with white men, to 'fit in' (e.g. Essers and Benschop 2007; Ogbor 2000). On the other, in as far as an ethnic minority background is discursively constructed as 'otherness' it might also provide specific opportunities to claim difference and authenticity (Brandellero 2011; Mavrommatis 2006), thus 'standing out' and rather fostering one's legitimacy.

Empirically, we conduct a narrative analysis (Riessman 1993) on 26 in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs in the creative industries in Belgium. Following Cunningham and Higgs (2009), we included all creative sectors and moved beyond the sector-specific approach of most current research on the creative industries which is focusing on industry-specific ideas and concepts. The creative industries as a whole are namely the prototype of a 'symbolic economy' (Lash and Urry 1994), and individuals thus must master the signs they convey to achieve legitimacy (Throsby 2000).

Ethnic minority entrepreneurship literature and agency

The influence of macro structures and ethnic minority group characteristics on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behavior is a well researched phenomenon. For instance, a stream of studies focused on ethnic entrepreneurs operating in (co-)ethnic markets, offering products in ethnic niches (Aldrich et al. 1985; Boyd 1998). The entrepreneurs' ethnic background is here conceptualized as cultural capital providing them a competitive advantage in ethnic product niches (Aldrich et al. 1985). Other studies take up the collective immigration history of ethnic community members and the related 'we-feeling' which enables them to develop a 'bounded solidarity' and 'enforceable trust' (Zhou 2004). This form of social capital is seen as contributing to the concentration of ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the ethnic market, as trust and solidarity create network advantages among all stakeholders (Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990; Zhou 2004). Conversely, others have pointed to the downside of these competitive advantages which often hold ethnic minority entrepreneurs back from developing a growth strategy towards mainstream markets (Ram et al. 2003; Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990).

By however approaching ethnic minority backgrounds as factors enabling and/or constraining the entrepreneurial activities of a whole ethnic community, this literature rather portrays minority entrepreneurs in an essentialistic and deterministic way. To gain a better understanding of ethnic minority entrepreneurship, in this study we account for the ethnic entrepreneurial agency (Brettell and Alstatt 2007; Kontos 2003), or an individuals' ability to intervene in the world or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs despite historically specific bounds (Giddens 1984). Agency specifically accounts for the capability of humans to be reflexive about their situation – their 'discursive consciousness' – and to act upon it to 'make a difference' (Giddens 1982).

Only some scholars have turned to the investigation of how ethnic minority backgrounds are reflexively deployed by individuals, shaping their entrepreneurial experiences. Thanks to their conceptual and methodological attention for the entrepreneurs' own perspective, these studies 'give voice' to them,

unveiling the individuals behind the facades of only seemingly monolithic ethnic groups. Examining ethnic minority womens' experiences of mixed embeddedness in ethnic communities and host societies, Pio (2007) inductively identified stages in their entrepreneurial development. Both Brettel and Alstatt (2007) and Kontos (2003) integrated the biographical method to better balance between structure and agency in their analyses of the experiences of ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Essers and Benschop (2007) rather focused on ethnic minority female entrepreneurs' reflexive construction of enterprising identities. They show how these women construct complex yet distinct identities in dialogue with different constituencies by drawing on ethnic, gender and entrepreneurial discourses.

This study adopts a similar perspective, studying the entrepreneurial experiences from the entrepreneurs' point of view. Yet, we aim at taking this argument further, in bridging the individual and organizational level to understand how an ethnic minority identity, often seen as a liability, can be agentically used by entrepreneurs as an asset in creating business strategies. We specifically focus on individuals' narrative crafting of legitimacy, as this perspective allows us to highlight entrepreneurs' conscious deployment of narratives specifically in function of their businesses.

Crafting entrepreneurial legitimacy through 'fitting in' and 'standing out'

The concept of legitimacy refers to credibility and a social process of acceptance and recognition by the strategic peers and other stakeholders constituting a field (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Baumann 2007; De Clercq and Voronov 2009; Deephouse 1999; Johnson, Dowd, and Ridgeway 2006; O'Connor 2004; Rindova, Pollock, and Hayward 2006; Suchman 1995). In the entrepreneurial literature, legitimacy is considered key to business strategies as it allows gaining access to quintessential resources (Minahan 2005; Wilson and Stokes 2004), needed for business success. Entrepreneurial narratives play a fundamental role in the process of entrepreneurial legitimization (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001) because they communicate and frame the entrepreneurs' specific personal and business intentions in a way that shows conformance to existing, socially constructed norms, thus becoming believable for others (Johnson, Dowd, and Ridgeway 2006). At the same time, however, they need to demonstrate their innovativeness to break through those norms (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; De Clercq and Voronov 2009; Lounsbury and Glynn 2001).

De Clercq and Voronov (2009) theorize, similarly to Deephouse (1999), legitimacy as resulting from entrepreneurs' capacity to craft narratives that meet these two contradictory expectations, simultaneously 'fitting in' and 'standing out' in the field. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu (1986), De Clercq and Voronov stress the power relation between the legitimacy-seeking entrepreneurs and the

incumbents constituting the field. Specifically, they argue that the cultural capital of entrepreneurs, or the capacity to access and mobilize institutions and cultural products of a society (De Clercq and Voronov 2009, 404-405), enhances their ability to fit in. Namely, objectified (material goods), institutionalized (formal certifications and credentials) and embodied (norms of behavior) cultural capital demonstrates to social actors their understanding of and conformance with the sector's dominant practices. It is however their symbolic capital, or 'the ability to manipulate symbolic resources, such as language, writing, and myth' (De Clercq and Voronov 2009, 406) and to impose it on others in the sector, which allows them to stand out.

For ethnic minority entrepreneurs in specific, on the one hand they might be in a particularly disadvantaged position in terms of their reduced access to the cultural capital necessary to fit in, as they are further from the majority's norms and institutions (Florida 2002) and this capital is often codified and transmitted through socialization into the habitus of the majority middle and upper class (Bourdieu 1986). Yet given the central role of creativity and authenticity and the increasingly fragmented nature of the contemporary creative industries (Lash and Urry 1994), ethnic minority entrepreneurs on the other hand might be able to deploy their ethnic 'difference' as an asset for symbolic capital to stand out, and even to partially redefine the norms predominant in their sector (Brandellero 2011).

We approach ethnic entrepreneurs here as active meaning-makers who, despite their specific embeddedness, posses a transformative capacity or power (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Giddens 1984). They are namely able to actively position themselves along the available discourses by selectively combining discursive elements to craft professional narratives (Czarniawska-Joerges 1994; Czarniawska 2012; Brown and Coupland 2005; Brown 2006; Hytti 2003) and resist to use discourses that might undermine their legitimacy (Johnson, Dowd, and Ridgeway 2006).

The creative industries

The term creative industries (Caves 2000; for a review see: Flew and Cunningham 2010) covers a wide variety of activities including advertising, architecture, arts & antiques markets, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, computer games and radio & TV (DCMS 2001; Maenhout et al. 2006; Smallbone, Bertotti, and Ekanem 2005). In these industries, entrepreneurs highly depend on their reputation because they generally work through temporary collaborations including peers, clients, distributors and employees (Bechky 2006; Blair 2001; Carnoy, Castells, and Benner 1997; Delmestri, Montanari, and Usai 2005; Haunschild 2004; Jones 2002; Menger 1999). To maintain access to resources via these loose networks, they therefore need to continuously

invest in narratives that legitimize their work and maintain social acceptance (Baumann 2007; Faulkner and Anderson 1987; Wilson and Stokes 2004).

A distinctive feature of the creative industries is that creative commodities do not only carry economic value but also symbolic value (Jacobs et al. 2012; Throsby 2000). This latter is seen to originate in creativity, independence, novelty and authenticity (Jung and Moon 2007; Peterson 1997; White and White 1993). However, precisely these quintessential sources of symbolic value are seen as conflicting with the materialistic overtone of entrepreneurship (Throsby 2000). Creative entrepreneurs therefore need to manage the inherent tension between the symbolic production and its economic aspect (Dimaggio 1982; Scardaville 2009), as too much emphasis on the latter will likely undermine legitimacy in the creative industries. In particular a too 'commercial' approach will diminish, rather than enhance, the symbolic value of the creative good because it is considered to limit the independency of the creative production (Jung and Moon 2007; Throsby 2000).

The creative industries offer a particularly suitable context for studying ethnic minority entrepreneurs' narrative crafting of legitimacy. On the one hand, ethnic minority entrepreneurs are likely to be in a particularly disadvantaged position to fit in. They generally have more limited access to the cultural capital shaping the sector, as this capital is largely transmitted through socialization into the habitus of the majority middle and upper class (Bourdieu 1986). On the other, ethnic entrepreneurs might be able to deploy their background as an asset for symbolic capital to stand out, claiming a specific form of creativity, aesthetic and authenticity due to their cultural 'otherness' (Mavrommatis 2006).

The narratives

Data sources and data collection

The empirical part of this article is based on 26 in-depth interviews (see table 9) conducted by the first author in 2010 and 2011. The narratives of ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the creative industries were gathered in the frame of a larger, ongoing research project on high-skilled entrepreneurs with foreign roots active in Belgium. Similar to other continental European countries, the largest ethnic minority groups in Belgium are of Turkish, Maghreb or Eastern European descent (OECD 2008; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, and Crul 2003), and largely consist of former guest workers and a smaller higher educated migration group, both with their children (Favell 2008).

Respondent	Gender	Industry	Generation	Age	Cultural origins (except Belgian)	Strategy
Abdel	M	Advertising	2nd	53	Algeria	Neutral
Adinda	F	Theatre	2nd	40	The Congo	Heroic
Ali	M	Theatre	2nd	34	Morocco	Ethnic
Alisha	F	(silver) Design	2nd	36	India	Hybrid
Altan	M	Film/Theatre	2nd	36	Turkey	Heroic
Ammon	M	Architecture	1st	37	Egypt	Hybrid
Charif	M	Architecture	3rd	31	Morocco	Heroic
Ergin	M	Photography	2nd	31	Turkey	Heroic
Fayza	F	Fashion	2nd	41	Morocco	Ethnic
Fourad	M	Theatre	2nd	42	Tunisia	Hybrid
Hamdi	M	Theatre	1st	39	Turkey	Hybrid
Heydar	M	(interior) Design	1st	48	Iran	Neutral
Iulia	F	Architecture	1st	34	Romania	Neutral
Johanna	F	Film	3rd	34	Poland	Neutral
Kerem	M	Film	2nd	41	Turkey	Hybrid
Khalid	M	(interior) Design	2nd	40	Tunisia/Algeria	Hybrid
Malika	F	Graphic design	2nd	32	Morocco	Ethnic
Metin	M	Music	2nd	28	Turkey	Hybrid
Michael	M	Media	2nd	51	Hungary	Neutral
Murad	M	Film	2nd	32	Morocco	Hybrid
Najiba	F	Publishing	2nd	41	Morocco	Ethnic
Onat	M	Publishing	2nd	33	Turkey	Heroic
Roger	M	Music	2nd	40	The Congo	Heroic
Saaim	M	Dance	2nd	35	Morocco	Hybrid
Saida	F	(silver) Design	2nd	43	Palestine	Neutral
Tina	F	Journalism	2nd	25	Rwanda	Neutral

Table 9: Overview of the respondents, and their used strategies for constructing legitimacy

Respondents were selected to take part in the research based on four criteria. First, as our focus lies on entrepreneurs, only self-employed respondents were included. Second, focusing on Belgium, we selected creative entrepreneurs who were born in a country outside North-America and the EU15, or with at least one parent who was. We chose this definition because it is commonly used to define ethnic minority groups (OECD 2008; Phalet, Deboosere, and Bastiaenssen 2007). Third, we only selected 'established' creative entrepreneurs rather than starting ones, to be able to examine narrative strategies that have apparently favored professional business development. This is reflected in prizes awarded by the sector, positive acclaim in the media, substantial financial revenue by selling products, and/or collaborations with significant peers in- and outside their sector. Finally, to enhance the comparability of the data, we tried to keep the sample as balanced as possible in terms of the respondents' creative industries.

Respondents were first asked to explain their work and who they are, narrating their personal and professional trajectory. In a second stage, they answered open-ended questions exploring a broad variety of themes including the product, clients, management and entrepreneurship issues, financial matters, networks, encountered barriers in their career, as well as about their personal background, including their family and education. While interviewing, we listened with a minimum of interruptions and asked as much open ended questions as possible, using the informants' own words to make sure the data fitted our narrative analysis (Riessman 1993). The interviews took place at the respondents' home, in a bar or at their workplace, and lasted between one and three hours each. Each interview was fully recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data-analysis and narrative method

In this study we turned to the narrative method of Riessman (1993), to understand our texts as stories creating meaning, framing experiences and as produced through the interaction of two speakers. To stay close to the entrepreneur and his or her narrative strategies (Hytti 2003; Gartner 2010), we conducted the data analysis on the full interview transcripts in their original language, either Dutch, French or English. Only the texts selected for inclusion in the study were translated after the analysis, respecting as much as possible their original meaning.

In a first phase, we read and reread the transcripts to become completely familiar with their content and the overall sense of respondents' narratives. We then went back to each and reduced the whole narratives to a core story (Riessman 1993), using the segments in which interviewees referred to their ethnic minority backgrounds in more or less explicit and extensive ways. In a third step, we coded the specific usages of one's minority background in these narratives in either fitting in or standing out in their specific field through a content analysis and constant comparison of the material. We found that some respondents used their minority backgrounds to stand out (4), some to partially stand out (9), some to fit in (6) and some did not use it at all (7). Following De Clercq and Voronov's (2009) idea that legitimacy is achieved through balance, for each type of account we also identified the other discourses deployed to balance standing out and fitting in. The analysis resulted in the four-fold typology presented in Table 10.

In the next section we will present the four strategies. For each, we analyze in depth extensive narrative fragments of one illustrative interview. All names used in the text are pseudonyms.

Type	Use of minority background	Stand out: Symbolic capital	Fit in: Cultural capital
'Ethnic' Creative Strategy (4)	To stand out	Claiming one's minority culture as being at the core of one's creative product, against the established creative norms in the majority dominated professional field	Deployment of objectified, institutionalized and embodied cultural capital associated with the majority dominated professional field
'Hybrid' Creative Strategy (9)	Partially to stand out	Acknowledging the most interesting aesthetics, values and traditions of one's minority and majority culture and claiming to bring these mixed into one's work	Deployment of objectified, institutionalized and embodied cultural capital associated with the majority dominated professional field
'Heroic' Creative Strategy (6)	To fit in	Claiming to excel in quality and originality along established creative norms in the majority dominated professional field	Deploying one's subordinate social position due to one's minority background to construct a classical narrative of heroic entrepreneurship
'Neutral' Creative Strategy (7)	No use	Claiming to excel in quality and originality along established creative norms in the majority dominated professional field	Deployment of objectified, institutionalized and embodied cultural capital associated with the majority dominated professional field

Table 10: Typology of ethnic minority entrepreneurs' use of their background

Findings

Fayza: the 'ethnic' creative strategy

A first strategy is characterized by entrepreneurs' extensive use of their ethnic minority background in their creative production to stand out in their creative field. These respondents counterbalanced standing out through their ethnic background with fitting in through showing conformity to majority dominated field norms concerning high standard quality, aesthetics and entrepreneurship. To illustrate this type of accounts, we selected the narrative of Fayza, a fashion designer with Moroccan roots, running her own label of fashionable headscarves (hijabs).

> It all started because of personal needs. … A few years ago, I started as a fashion designer to look – as I am wearing a headscarf myself – … for different materials and fabrics … for headscarves, and I found nothing on the market … Well, and then I started on my own to create and draw, to design. I make … exclusive headwear … Designing exclusive headwear is something

> that doesn't exist yet. [So there is] no competition at all … Since we have been to Paris [with the governmental fashion support agency] there has been a lot of interest in accessory headscarves.
>
> You have the normal, classic, traditional headscarf consisting of a piece of fabric … There was not such a thing like the ease of getting it on, and the different materials. For me, the most important thing [is] ... the freedom of it. Because the other one, the traditional [headscarf] is in fact not comfortable to wear … It [was] on my head and always when I got in somewhere, and I moved a little, it fell off my head on the floor . So I thought … there must be a solution, a … technical invention I should say … to put one on, and it is secured here, behind the ears … It's more beautiful, you look younger too I think. Because the other one is more grandmother-like … [But] I don't think they're expensive, as we are in high fashion, like Dior and Chanel, we want with our headscarves to reach as high as them. … It's not because you wear a headscarf that you have to walk around like a frump … You have to look good, elegant, and that is ok, absolutely. … That is also what I want … big names like Dior, Chanel … Yves Saint Laurent … [their] style, also classy, that is also want I want to achieve with my designs. … So I don't think that … I should keep my prices very low … No, I want to – because it [making fashionable hijabs] also doesn't exist yet – keep that high [standard].
>
> I thought it was so cozy, all these Western ladies wearing a beanie in the winter, together with a scarf, and that was something we couldn't. And so I thought … I have to do something with that. … Only a headscarf, that isn't so warm in winter … So I thought, I'm going to connect the two … and than a small flower on the side and that's a success of course. It can be worn by both Western as Muslim ladies … Thus, those are things you as Western Muslim woman make and design and I think in the Arab world they are actually slowed down to just design Arabian, because they did not get that Western [influence], and I've got both. I was born here so … half is Moroccan and the other half is Belgian.
>
> Sometimes there where people that said: "What are you going to start with?!". … I must say people didn't take me seriously before, because I wear a headscarf … now I notice people are surprised about [my work]. "Did you do that?". … In our culture, they say a Muslim woman is allowed to do everything. Studying, opening her own business, it's even encouraged to do so … Hadija, the wife of the prophet had a business, as the first woman in history, where she had a lot of men under her, and to that woman I look up enormously.

In her narrative, Fayza constructs her own minority culture as a valuable resource for creating her unique product, standing out in the fashion field. She indicates her own personal experience as a Muslim woman, unable to find fashionable and practical headscarves, as the origin of her enterprise. The strong emphasis on her own cultural specificity and 'difference' allows her to claim a specific type of symbolic capital to stand out within the broader field. As a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf herself, she argues that she is best placed to understand what kind of product Muslim women wearing headscarves want. Interestingly however, relying on this specific form of symbolic capital she risks to being pinned down as a 'Muslim woman', an identity that is, in Western countries such as Belgium often associated with subordination. To counter this possibility, Fayza stresses that her identity as a Muslim woman is compatible with a creative entrepreneurial one.

In her narrative, Fayza's standing out centered on her ethnic background is counterbalanced by fitting in by complying with the dominant norms in her field which she discursively constructs as international and culturally diverse. For instance, although her minority culture represents her main source of inspiration, she mentions combining it with Western elements, creating products that are attractive for both Muslim and Western women. Stronger, she claims that precisely the integration of those elements provides her a creative advantage vis-à-vis Arab world designers, who are 'slowed down' because they can only design 'Arab' products.

Throughout her narration, Fayza discursively deploys institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital associated with the majority dominated professional field in which she is embedded. She draws on her institutionalized cultural capital when she mentions that as a fashion designer running her own label, she is acknowledged by the national government support agency for fashion. By doing so, she constructs herself as fitting in the institutionalized high fashion industry in Belgium. Along the same lines, she refers to the interest in and the positive feedback on her work from peers and customers.

Her objectified cultural capital emerges in her claim to have upgraded the traditional, 'grandmother-like' and uncomfortable headscarf to a fashionable, elegant new product. By stating that she uses different fabrics and materials, makes beautiful hijabs, applies flowers and wants women to look good and elegant, she presents herself as a creative entrepreneur who understands the quality and aesthetic norms of the fashion industry.

Finally, Fayza enacts her embodied cultural capital to craft legitimacy by fitting in her field. She behaves as a high fashion entrepreneur by expressing her ambition to create products comparable to those of international up-market brands such as Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent and Dior, and adopts the appropriate pricing strategy. On the same time, echoing classical entrepreneurship discourses, she stresses elements of market opportunity and innovation. Also her reference to the price of her products and the high standard she wants to keep on the other hand, underlines her understanding with the financial standards of the high fashion field.

Fayza's narrative is exemplary for this type in which one's ethnic background is used as a key resource to stand out and craft legitimacy. These accounts are all centered around creating competitive advantage at the product level, caused by insider information about the ethnic group's experiences and demands. To fit in the broader creative field and achieve legitimacy, the respondents in this group do also incorporate references of the majority dominated system in their narratives. One respondent even told us that he offered a role in his film to a famous Flemish male actor to attract more press attention.

Khalid: the 'hybrid' creative strategy

In the second type the respondents mainly focused on creating a unique product by mixing their knowledge of both the minority and majority cultures. In this type of 'hybrid' creative strategy, the entrepreneurs stand out by claiming the ability to capture the best of two worlds in their creative products. They counterbalance this standing out by fitting in their creative field in through conformity to the predominant (majority) aesthetic and symbolic norms. They craft legitimacy in fundamentally different ways from the 'ethnic' creative strategy entrepreneurs, as their ethnic minority background is

less central and stands out in a more balanced relation to Western elements. To illustrate this type we selected the narrative of Khalid, an interior and furniture designer, with roots in Algeria and Tunisia.

> [I] went through an awful lot … My youth brought about a language deficit, as from Paris I was put in a [Dutch-speaking] Belgian [foster] family … It all turned out bad … I was obliged to start on an apprenticeship contract, to be able to stay here all together … In the meanwhile … I went travelling with my girlfriend who had acquaintances living in Morocco. … And well, yes, there I found my roots again. So, only on my 17th I was for the first time confronted with the Arab world. … And then a world opened up for me, that wasn't known to me but felt very familiar … You do have that in you, you recognize it like: "Well, maybe I'm not crazy after all, they also do this or that here".
>
> And by coincidence after a couple of years I ended up designing a large stand for a Dutch company, and they were so satisfied … that they asked: "Would you like to make a house label for us?"… for that Dutch company [I] started working there … in Marrakech … where all the materials can be obtained, and where all the artisans – the best of the country – are. … And since then I have there an atelier, with a lot of employees and things are turning out well. … We are located 30 kilometers outside [the city center], in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the Atlas, we are completely isolated in our world. … I'm going one week back and one week forth. In Morocco I look at the things from a distance and vice versa. … When I draw a form, I'm always thinking: "How would they perceive this here? How do they perceive it there? How do I perceive it? And if we would turn it around, how could it be functioning?". And I also always jump between these two worlds. … [T]hat's me, those two cultures, and I'm always seeking, and my misfortune is today my strength.
>
> I just helped completing the design of the bridge of [the Dutch city] Nijmegen. And you have the architects of the Lange Wapper [controversial bridge in Belgium] that call you and ask: "Well, what do you think about it?". Why do they do that? Well, I don't have a degree [in designing], so I don't go to work thinking: "Course 1 was this, course 2 was that", no I look at it from a totally different angle, and that's very important for society today.
>
> I'm mainly occupied with energy, designing, color, joining materials, and exactly that is the key to my designs. … There is always a solution in purification. Constantly purifying, purifying, purifying, and making sure you get back to the essence. That's important for me … So actually I create a décor, where you get in and where you feel yourself immediately more rich and more open, and at ease, and that is my intent, yes that's my life. …
>
> [But] it's mainly Europeans that judge my work. My work here, the Arabic world can't understand that. That's the same if I would say to you: "We'll take your toilet and make there [points at the bottom] an opening". … I've made lots of chairs, of which they didn't understand us to be sitting on them. … It's innovative because I use [Moroccan] techniques of already 500 years old … with a view from here, from there, so it's purified, and revisited … I think that that's the art – I always say: "Going backward is going forward" – … to see how it was before and to see what we have now.

In his interview, Khalid claims to be standing out because he brings the best aesthetic elements and techniques of both his ethnic minority and majority cultures into his work. Namely, it is the incorporation of selected ancient traditional Moroccan techniques that makes his work special and qualitative. When he mentions growing up in Belgium, yet having found his roots again in Morocco, he is claiming for himself the symbolic capital to stand out in his field in this way. This is further reflected in his construction of himself and his work as 'hybrid', constantly jumping between two worlds both physically and mentally.

To fit in, Khalid discursively deploys institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital defining his international, yet still majority dominated professional field. For example, he draws on his objectified and embodied cultural capital to fit in when claiming his products to be purified and 'essential', along contemporary norms of Western design. To reinforce his conformity he mentions that, although all his work is produced in Morocco, the Arab world cannot understand it as it is made to meet the

qualitative and aesthetic standards of the European context. When mentioning the cooperation with famous architects and designers, Khalid draws on his institutional cultural capital to fit in. He constructs himself as being a valued link in the chain, being called for advice on some major projects. Elsewhere in the interview, he mentions that other established architects envy him for his freedom and creativity and are therefore eager to work with him.

In this type of accounts, the entrepreneurs thus portray their work as combining the best elements of their ethnic minority culture and the majority culture to create 'hybrid' products valued by majority stakeholders constituting the field. These respondents stand out by constructing hybridity as a key source for creativity and fit in by referring to predominant majority norms in the field.

Onat: the 'heroic' creative strategy

In the type of the 'heroic' creative strategy, entrepreneurs discursively construct their minority background as a source of subordination and deficit to fit in. Namely, they craft legitimacy by portraying themselves as heroically overcoming difficulties, a common element in entrepreneurship narratives. Regarding their creative work, they rather claim to stand out along dominant quality and originality norms in their professional field. These narratives differ from the previous two types because these individuals only perceive their minority background as a constraint for their personal and entrepreneurial development. To illustrate this account we selected the interview of the Turkish rooted Onat, founder and manager of Onat Publishing.

> Like all writers I was at home, did it [writing] in my spare time, got not so much response. … You get a lot of rejection. Something every writer has to deal with. … Gradually things came like [name of a supporting organization for migrants] … so I sent everything to them. … I learned there that mine [my work] was good, yes. "Strange that this wasn't picked up" … Then I started to think. … I did put one and two together and in the end I came to the conclusion that I was considered to be an *allochtoon*! [pejorative term for person with a foreign background]. … I was born here. … I have Turkish roots; I am not going to deny that. … although I have no noteworthy differences with anybody else here. … But nevertheless publishers expect for instance: … "He writes on immigrant themes like migration, racism and all that stuff". And you also notice that in the literature they publish. It's all about … the Aid [Muslim Celebration of Sacrifice] for instance, or how one came here from Morocco or Turkey, and the integration and all that kind of things. … [but] I don't write on that. I write on things that I'm interested in. … My work apparently is similar to what Bret Easton Ellis is writing, that's a nice reference … So the very first books I had were mainly a sort of coming of age with sex and drugs and rock'n roll – you could say that are quite Western themes – … and that doesn't fit with them. They then can't sell me or something, you know … You have to know that literature, especially here, is very archaic. It's like this little elite world … everyone knows everyone en you mainly get a chance when you're constantly in the picture. … and *allochtones* don't get in … and in the end I thought: "I'm going to do it all on my own" … And that's somehow the start of *Onat Publishing*. … I also publish others. Everyone is welcome for me, if you are good. My focus is on immigrants who don't write on migrant themes. So it gets a lot of attention, it's something new … Have you ever seen someone from an ethnic minority group publishing a thriller? No way! A Mohammed who is the new Aspe? [famous Belgian crime-scene writer]. No way! Science fiction? Those writers nevertheless do exist!
>
> Not a lot of Belgian culture did filter through for us. … They [my parents] read the Turkish newspapers; quite a lot of Turkish culture came in, but hardly any Belgian. … my father said: "What is that, Belgian culture? That's [only] beer and fries". Then you could start saying: "Dad, pall, all that writers, fucking Margitte, Fernand Khnopff, what are you talking about?", you know. …

> I've never had an impulse there. … So I came here [he moved at 18 from the countryside to a major city] and I learned [everything] … Someone who, on his 18th, is interested in culture, in literature from Belgian parents, has a huge advantage. On my 18th, I still had to start. … For example: when I was 12, 13, I went to the library by myself to get a library card, because I heard from a friend that you could borrow books. I remember very well, I found Moby Dick, a large book with illustrations, and a story: hé Herman Mellville! I came home and said: "Look mum, I have borrowed a book from the library!"… and my mother said: "What the fuck … did you steal that?!" And I said: "no, I borrowed it". They didn't know the concept of lending … So I explained ... and then the reply was: "Well, ok, then just read it fast and quickly give it back", you know. ... I lagged behind a lot.

In his narrative, Onat associates his work with Western writers and ideas. By doing so, he claims that his work stands out in his creative field for its creativity, quality and originality. Drawing on his symbolic capital as a creative, he stresses that his work is of high quality, yet was never picked by the mainstream Belgian publishing industry, which is dominated by an archaic, elitarian and commercial logic. His emphasis on quality is further supported by the statement that every writer, independent of his or her ethnic background, is welcome to publish at Onat Publishing, as long as his or her work meets high quality standards.

To counterbalance standing out along creative norms in the field, Onat discursively uses his ethnic background to highlight his individual effort to acquire the cultural capital necessary to fit in the field. He extensively recounts how the lack of socialization into the ethnic majority culture (due to his upbringing in an ethnic minority one) caused him to start out his career as a writer with a structural cultural disadvantage. Precisely Onat's admission of this disadvantage proofs, a contrario, his awareness of the dominant creative norms in the field. Not only, it also enables him to build a heroic narrative of acquiring this cultural capital on his own, solely through his individual efforts. By so doing, he stresses his agentic role, echoing a classical 'heroic' entrepreneurial narrative leading to success. By constructing himself as an entrepreneur, Onat enacts his embodied cultural capital to fit in his creative field.

At the same time, Onat discursively claims he fits in his cultural field by explicitly associating his work with famous writers such as Bret Easton Ellis. He further forcefully rejects any association with other Muslim writers by virtue of having a Muslim background and expresses his disapproval for being pinned down as an '*allochthonous*' (Dutch pejorative term for individuals with a foreign background) writer in a certain 'ethnic minority genre'. In this way, he resists the stigma associated with ethnic minorities and reaffirms his fitting in the majority norms.

Similar to Onat, all 'heroic' cultural entrepreneurs in our study stress the disadvantage they experienced in their lives due to their ethnic minority backgrounds. This subordinate position is then discursively deployed to craft legitimacy by claiming to having acquired the cultural capital necessary to fit in their creative field through a 'heroic' entrepreneurial route. They craft legitimacy by

counterbalancing this fitting in with standing out in terms of quality excellence and originality along established majority norms.

Saida: the 'neutral' creative strategy

In the last type respondents showed a complete orientation towards the majority norms, values and culture. The respondents in this group use 'Western' discursive elements both to stand out and to fit in their creative fields, without any significant reference to their ethnic minority background. They stand out solely by referring to the dominant majority norms of quality, and they fit in by associating themselves with the cultural capital of the majority dominated creative field. The narrative of Saida, a silversmith and flatware designer with roots in Palestine, well illustrates this type.

> I don't think there are a lot of people designing cutlery … And maybe it's just getting the essence out of that … everyone eats with flatware, every day again. … [it] is something that needs to be very functional. You must be able to prick with it, you must be able to pick up a fluid and bring it to your mouth … You hold it in your hands, so in one way or the other it must be ergonomic. … [My] objects … are in the end daily objects with a … I don't know really. Some say it's a twist … sometimes it's a wink … In the end, I'm just … keeping the link with … silversmithing. But actually I'm a designer … for little productions, for larger productions, but there's always an exchange between craft that is brought to an industrial process.
>
> [I'm] almost always working on command … I was lucky of course that … Jean-Louis Dumas of Hermès and Puiforcat thought: "Ok, I believe in her, and I will give her an order, and I'll give another, and it works" … I also didn't get any commands in Belgium before. But I have to say, what made a great difference was the fact that I became designer of the year [in Belgium]. So that put me in the picture, and opened up the market in Belgium for me.
>
> Identity … is really the theme I think that 90 percent of the people use in their work … but I don't have that, far from it! … Sometimes I even feel pressure from others like: "Well, you're not doing anything with that! Why is it you're not doing anything with that?" … and then I think like: "I don't want to do something with it, I don't have to do something with it!" …. And still people really expect you to … Look, I've designed that waterpipe [nargileh or shisha] over there. That waterpipe was an order from a company just like I've got all my other orders … I've never said: "I'm now going to make a waterpipe". … The only advantage I may have is that maybe I've more affinity with waterpipes then someone here, and that I've smoked shisha, I know the product. But for me this was not like: "Well and here I'm going to use my roots, and now I finally can show who I am and how important that is". That's for me just the same as that beer glass. … So I designed a beer glass for [a garden furniture firm] … and they have brewed their own beer now … So you could say: "Beer that's Belgian, well then it has something to do with your background and …". But so yes, for me it's not about designing a beer glass to show this is Belgian and I'm a Belgian … that's their [the ordering clients] choice, from their side.
>
> My father is Palestinian, my mother was Belgian, and yes, that influences you … because in the end you've got the two cultures. And I completely don't see that as an obstruction, but rather as enrichment. … What I'm doing now, if that would be caused by me being raised with two cultures, I don't think so. … … Still I get a lot of comments like: "Well, your work is very feminine, and very oriental" … I don't think anyone can see that in my work … it is not about, let's say, a chair that you only make once, and that can express everything you would like it to express.

Similar to Onat, Saida also claims to excel in quality and originality referring to the established creative norms in her majority dominated professional field. Drawing on her symbolic capital, she defines her creative field as the one of flatware designers, an international sub-field made up of only a few. This enables her to stand out against the larger mass of designers. She portrays her work as original and unique, mentioning to keep the bond with silversmithing, yet making products with 'a wink' or 'a twist'.

To fit in, Saida deploys in her narration her objectified, institutionalized and embodied cultural capital. Her institutionalized cultural capital is reflected in her reference to how the award of designer of the year, an acknowledgement for her work by peers and clients in her creative field, opened up the Belgian market for her. She also mentions the established large firms for which she has worked in the past, such as Hermès and Puiforcat. These references as well as stating that she is generally working on command indicate that she not only understands the dynamics of her field, but she is also part of a larger network of important majority stakeholders within it.

Saida also draws on her objectified cultural capital in constructing her work as ergonomic and functional. Stressing these elements, she disassociates herself with aesthetics-for-aesthetics, and so fitting in the designing industry where the norm of functionality needs to be balanced with design. Significantly, she argues her ethnic minority background to be irrelevant to her production. She does so by explicitly rejecting being pinned down in categories such as 'feminine' and 'oriental'. Stressing that there are no elements of her background in her work helps to construct herself and her products as fitting in the majority dominated creative field.

Finally, Saida enacts her embodied cultural capital by constructing herself discursively as a designer, making use of craft and tradition, yet brought to an industrial process. In Saida's field of flatware designing, there is namely often no other way to distribute work than to cooperate with larger firms that reproduce the products they ordered. By doing so, she constructs herself as a creative entrepreneur fitting in the silverware designing industry in Belgium.

The entrepreneurs in this group associate their work with the majority dominated norms in their field, disassociating it from their ethnic minority background. When asked about the lack of reference to their ethnic background in their work, most observed having always worked in this way. One entrepreneur however, stated explicitly that he switched from the 'hybrid' creative strategy to not using his minority background at all, understanding it as a better strategic choice for his business.

Discussion and conclusion

The goal of this study is to understand, bridging personal and business levels of inquiry, how ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the creative industries deploy as agents their minority background to craft professional legitimacy by standing out and fitting in their field. From the analysis of ethnic minority creative entrepreneurs' narratives, we could identify four different types of use of their minority background to this aim.

In the 'ethnic' creative strategy accounts, respondents use their minority background as the core of their creative production to differentiate themselves from others, standing out in their field. To counterbalance this standing out, they associated themselves to fit in with the institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital to show conformity to the norms of the majority dominated creative field. The 'hybrid' creative strategy accounts rather combine elements from their ethnic minority and majority cultures to produce creative work that stands out while at once referring to the majority field norms to fit in. In the 'heroic' creative strategy accounts, respondents claim standing out in terms of the quality and originality of their creative work along majority norms prevalent in their field. However, they still discursively deploy their ethnic minority background to claim an initial disadvantage and cultural deficit which they were able, as agents, to overcome. By so doing they align themselves to classical heroic narratives of entrepreneurship, fitting in. Finally, using the 'neutral' creative strategy, entrepreneurs neither draw on their minority backgrounds for standing out nor for fitting in. Rather, they claim standing out for the quality and originality of their work according to the established majority norms of their field and fitting in by referring to their institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital along those same norms.

Comparing our four strategies, we note that the degree to which the ethnic minority background is deployed to stand out in one's creative field varies greatly. This indicates that ethnic minority entrepreneurs maintain latitude in defining their professional selves as well as their creative work. Distinct choices on the usage of ethnic minority background further seem to be related to different ways of fitting in, or to showing compliance to the dominant norms. We observe that the two more extreme strategies for standing out – those of the 'ethnic' and the 'neutral' strategy – go together with the most comprehensive and least critical manifestations of fitting in, including references to institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital. 'Hybrid' and 'heroic' accounts tend to craft legitimacy by fitting in a field that is first (partially) discursively redefined to link with the own creative philosophy.

A theoretical perspective highlighting ethnic minority entrepreneurs' agency allowed us to reveal the heterogeneity of ways in which ethnic minority backgrounds can be deployed by individuals, affecting their entrepreneurial experiences and their business strategies. Such heterogeneity results from individuals' biographies (e.g. Brettell and Alstatt 2007; Kontos 2003) which, due to their uniqueness, foster the development of a personal and professional sense of the self in which one's ethnic minority background enters to different degrees and in distinct ways. However, this does not occur automatically or in a deterministic way. As our data well shows, ethnic minority entrepreneurs as agents self-reflect on themselves and the world around them and act accordingly, to create a difference (Giddens 1982, 1984). To strategically navigate through fields shaped by multiple actors and unequal power relations, they

construct professional narratives balancing the conflicting needs to fit in and stand out in one's field (cf. De Clercq and Voronov 2009; Deephouse 1999).

These findings expose the bias in the understanding of ethnic minority entrepreneurs prevalent in the research on this topic. In line with the emerging stream of ethnic entrepreneurship literature with a focus on the personal level (e.g. Brettell and Alstatt 2007; Essers and Benschop 2007; Kontos 2003; Pio 2007), we call into question the tendency of the extant literature to represent these entrepreneurs as deterministically 'caught' in multiple structural factors including their ethnic minority background, obscuring their agency. At the same time, our approach centered on the notion of legitimacy goes beyond the indisputable need of 'giving voice' to ethnic minority entrepreneurs in research. Namely, it attempts to offer theory to better understand the role and relevance of such voice in processes of wealth creation. This important economic aspect generally remains absent from the literature focusing on ethnic minority entrepreneurs' personal experiences and background, as it is not linking these to the entrepreneurial business dynamics (e.g. Essers and Benschop 2007; Pio 2007). Conversely, as mentioned above, the overwhelming majority of ethnic minority entrepreneurship literature addresses economic aspects yet completely neglects the personal experiences behind them. Taking stock of these insights, future research could gain from combining both aspects to gain a better understanding of ethnic minorities' entrepreneurial behavior and specifically, the sort of behavior leading to their business success. Whereas our analysis admittedly remained limited to the realm of discursive constructions – or narratives of legitimacy – future studies could consider integrating in the analysis more 'material' and 'objective' indicators of wealth and success and/or aspects such as market dynamics (Oswick and Phillips 2012a, 2012b)

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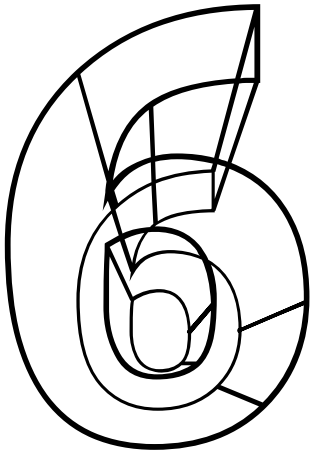

EPILOGUE

We intended to gain in this dissertation, via the combination of different disciplines of research, insights in the specific processes that are at stake when working as a creative with diverse roots. By doing so, we aimed at answering: *How do self-employed ethnic minority creatives deploy, as agents, their identity as a discursive resource for their work?*. This dissertation therefore takes the ambiguous situation of self-employed creatives with diverse roots – which can be an asset in the creative industries, yet is often stigmatized (Slay and Smith 2011) and triggers exclusion – together with the highly ethnic majority dominated context of the creative industries, as its starting point. This research question was addressed by drawing from distinct bodies of literature in three empirical chapters. In table 11 an overview of how each chapter of this dissertation contributes to the general research question is given, both in goal as method of identity deployment.

	Goal of identity deployment:	**How ethnic identity is deployed:**
Chapter 3	To construct creativity	Use ethnic identity for constructing sources of inspiration
Chapter 4	To construct value	Use ethnic identity for rhetorically constructing aesthetic innovation
Chapter 5	To construct legitimacy	Use ethnic identity for constructing 'fitting in' and 'standing out' of the sector

Table 11: Overview of the contributions of each essay

Overview of the findings

Chapter 3: Identity deployed as a discursive resource for creativity

In chapter 3 we contribute to the general research question by showing how creatives deploy their (ethnic) identity as a discursive resource by constructing creativity for themselves through the grand discourse of 'diversity as a source of creativity'. As studies of the creative industries generally rely on a positivistic epistemology and consider identities as 'given', they neglect the individual creatives' 'identity work' involved in their deployment of identity as a source for creativity. We showed in chapter 3 that ethnic minority creatives are urged, by the omnipresence of the 'diversity as a source of creativity' discourse and the very real possibility of being defined in essentialistic, stereotypical and devaluating terms by this 'grand discourse', to rely on it in their accounts, rejecting and/or embracing it for their identity constructions. This enables ethnic minority creatives to construct their identity as a discursive resource for their creativity. Our findings show they do this for three main reasons: 1. to avoid

essentialization and to claim authorship, 2. to transfer the positive values attributed to diversity onto themselves 3. to construct creativity on account of their own agentic identity work, not their group membership.

The contributions of this chapter towards the academic literature of diversity and creativity are situated on several levels. First, with this study we reconceptualize the nature of possible sources of inspiration as immaterial resources in the creative industries, by showing how ethnic identity, as a discursively constructed element, can be an input for creativity. Second, by understanding how identity is constructed in the creative industries, we contribute to the understanding of the nature of creative products as a whole. By better understanding the resources for creative products namely – such as (ethnic) identity – we are able to add to the understanding of final creative products that can be the output of these resources. Third, we show how the grand discourse of 'diversity vs. creativity' (e.g. Florida 2002) has a profound impact on the identity constructions and entrepreneurial activities of our creatives. We explored however how they agentically resist the essentializing aspect of these powers, by e.g. claiming authorship and claiming back their individuality, uniqueness and creativity.

Chapter 4: Identity deployed as a discursive resource for value and innovation

In chapter 4 we contribute to the general research question by showing how creatives deploy their (ethnic) identity as a discursive resource by rhetorically constructing value through aesthetic innovation. Aesthetic innovation, as the quintessential criterion for determining, acknowledging and legitimating the value of creative products is rhetorically constructed by ethnic minority creatives along three distinct criteria: one's own biography, the creative tradition, and power struggles in the sector. For the rhetoric construction of innovation via these three argumentations, creatives need discursive resources, and identity can be one of these. As ethnic minority creatives are in an ambiguous situation – in which their identity can both result in innovation and exclusion – we showed in chapter 4 that it is especially in the arguments that focus on one's biography and the power struggles in the sector, that ethnic identity is a useful discursive resource for constructing value. In these cases namely ethnic identity on the one hand serves as a discursive resource in making argumentations more tangible and 'personal' through the echoing of one's biographic background, stressing uniqueness. Or on the other hand ethnic identity serves as a discursive resource to highlight encountered barriers imposed by 'significant others' and the heroic overcoming of these by the creatives, stressing the superiority of effort.

The contributions of this chapter towards the academic literature of the creative industries are situated on several levels. First, we add to the exploration of the ambiguous position of ethnic minority creatives for claiming value for their creative products. We show how ethnic identity is an asset for

creatives, as it can be used as a discursive resource to construct aesthetic innovation, a main element in the construction of value in the creative industries. Secondly, we deal with the intrinsic incommensurability of creative work, and show how the rhetoric construction of aesthetic innovation creates symbolic value, and thus indirectly establishes the economic value for one's creative product. Finally, via our study, we highlight key elements constituting aesthetic innovation, such as struggles in the value chain, novelty, authenticity and uniqueness. By doing so, we help gaining a better understanding of the nature of value in the creative industries.

Chapter 5: Identity deployed as a discursive resource for legitimacy

Finally, in chapter 5 we contribute to the general research question by showing how creatives deploy their (ethnic) identity as a discursive resource by claiming legitimacy for themselves as entrepreneurs and their creative business through 'fitting in' and 'standing out' of their sector. Legitimacy is needed for strategic resource access and has been theorized by De Clercq and Voronov (2009) as resulting from an entrepreneur's capacity to balance 'fitting in' and 'standing out'. Accordingly, we explored how ethnic minority creatives, as agents, craft entrepreneurial narratives by selectively combining favorable discursive resources for their legitimacy, while resisting discursive elements that might de-legitimize their activities. Using ethnic identity as a discursive resource in these entrepreneurial narratives, they are able to actively construct their identity as an asset for their business activities in a majority dominated industry.

The contribution of this chapter towards the academic literature of ethnic entrepreneurship is mainly that we highlight the key role of agency of ethnic minority creatives. We argued that ethnic minority entrepreneurship studies leave out too easily the perspective of the individual entrepreneur and that the very few studies that do take up an individual perspective (e.g. Essers and Benschop 2007; Pio 2007) do not provide much insights about how the constructed identity is deployed for business activities. By focusing on legitimacy strategies through narratives, we showed how ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the creative industries deal as pro-active agents with their (mostly majority dominated) creative sector in order to enhance their legitimacy, a key condition for their professional chances. To contribute towards this literature we maintain that, as ethnic minority entrepreneurs are agents, their position cannot be fully explained by only studying the structural level.

Theoretical lessons

Taking a social constructionist perspective, this dissertation conceptualized ethnic minority creatives as proactively engaging with the discursive structures in which they are embedded to reach their professional goals. Different from the positivistic and 'structural' macro focus of most literature, we highlighted the constitutive power of language, and advanced a more micro, complex and heterogeneous representation of ethnic minority creatives than is currently held in the various relevant bodies of literature. Where an overly macro focus mostly stresses the structural disadvantages of these creatives, our perspective contributes to the current literature by showing how an ethnic minority identity can be discursively turned into an asset in the creative industries. Our social constructionist and structurationalist perspective also allowed us to theorize how creatives, as individual agents in the creative industries, have the power to deploy their identity through the constitutive power of language.

Taken together, the adopted perspective and the findings of our three separate studies show that ethnic minority creatives are in an ambiguous position from which they have the possibility to deploy their identity as a discursive resource for their entrepreneurial activities in the creative industries. In the next sections, we elaborate further on the theoretical lessons that can be drawn from this dissertation. In what follows, we discuss the implications of our micro, structurationalist and social constructionist perspectives for gaining a better understanding of the complexity of identity constructions of ethnic minority creatives, the nature of ethnic identities as discursive resources, and their discursive, agentic and strategic deployment for creative work.

The construction and complexity of our respondent's identities

An overarching theme we touched upon in all three empirical chapter of this dissertation is identity construction. We felt we needed to understand first the identities of our ethnic minority creatives, before we could dig deeper into the deployment of these identities as discursive resources in the creative industries. We therefore both looked at how creatives construct their identities (mainly in chapter 3), and at the complex whole of discourses that feature in these constructions. To understand how identities of ethnic minority creatives are constructed, we asked them in the interviews to narrate who they are. Through an in-depth analysis of these data we gradually came to understand the highly intersectional nature of our respondents' identities.

When asked to narrate their identity positions namely, not once did the 'ethnic', the 'entrepreneurial' or the 'creative' element stand on its own. Instead, a complex identity was constructed, involving several layers, nuances and identity markers. This is probably due to the unique positioning of

ethnic minority creatives on the intersection of social categories and professional positions, which makes them subject to several different 'grand discourses' such as entrepreneurship, diversity and creativity. Due to these complex discursive structures, the identity work of ethnic minority creatives might be quite challenging. Namely, the various discourses that are available can be opposed, and difficult to reconcile; or sometimes even be antagonistic, making plausible identity constructions often complicated (e.g. Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009). Yet at the same time such complexity also offers multiple possibilities. We would like to review the most salient discourses ethnic minority creatives used as identity resources in our study here.

First, ethnic minority creatives are dealing on the one hand with the grand discourse portraying diversity as an important factor for stimulating creativity (Florida 2002), and on the other with the discourse portraying minority individuals as subordinate due to their 'otherness' (Prasad 2006) resulting in social stigma (Slay and Smith 2011). Although the former discourse has a rather positive connotation and the latter a clearly negative one, both essentialize ethnic minority identity and its relationship with creativity. Due to these strong and very present discourses, ethnic creatives run the risk that their social identity will be defined and imposed upon them by others in a position of authority. We saw this very possibility to trigger a proactive attitude in constructing one's ethnic identity upfront, to avoid the risk of imposed essentialization. By discursively framing the two discourses of diversity and selectively combining desired discursive elements, the identity constructions of the ethnic minority creatives in this dissertation were strategically crafted in between these discourses. This creates a more nuanced, favorable and workable identity for the creatives themselves, serving as the basis for their creativity.

Secondly, for their 'entrepreneurial identity' constructions ethnic minority creatives are dealing with the dominant opposed discourses on entrepreneurship on the one hand, and on ethnic minority entrepreneurship on the other. Concerning entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs are often conceived as heroic and charismatic individuals (Essers and Benschop 2007; Ogbor 2000). In this tradition, constructing an entrepreneurial identity also means associating oneself with the agentic creation and possession of opportunities. Dominant discourses of ethnic minority entrepreneurs however, often focus on their disadvantaged position in society, and especially on their lack of opportunities (see chapter 5). We saw ethnic minority entrepreneurs sometimes struggling to construct – in between the acclaimed lacking and possessing of opportunities at the same time – a plausible ethnic entrepreneurial identity reconciling contradictory elements of both discourses.

Finally, ethnic minority creatives deal in their identity constructions with the discursive tension of both being an entrepreneur and being a producer of creative artifacts. Being an entrepreneur namely, has discursively a 'wealth-creating' undertone (e.g. Aldrich and Martinez 2001; Cunningham and

Lischeron 1991; Lumpkin and Lichtenstein 2005; Wennekers and Thurik 1999), often expressed in portrayals including e.g. financial revenue, economic growth, commercial success and firm performance. Being an entrepreneur is thus often associated with having economic motivations. Yet, in the creative industries wealth-creation is seen as having a negative influence on the 'independency' and 'authenticity' of creative production (Jung and Moon 2007; Peterson 1997) – two quintessential elements of being creative and crafting symbolic and cultural value (Bourdieu 1986, 1992). We see that creatives therefore often find it a difficult match to make between the financial discourse involved in being an entrepreneur, and the 'authenticity' oriented discourse of being an artist (DiMaggio 1982; Scardaville 2009). In contrast to the other two discursive tensions mentioned above, where an attempt is made to rather reconcile two different discourses, in this case the discursive tension often leads to an explicit denial of the 'economic entrepreneurial' identity, in favor of an identity construction that is stressing one's creative and artistic features.

To conclude, we thus see that many, often antagonistic discourses are involved in the identity constructions of our ethnic minority creatives. By looking closely at their identity narratives however, we see how they deal with these tensions by incorporating generally held beliefs, rejecting undesired elements or attempting to reconcile various diverse and even contradictory discourses (see also: Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009). The complex image that stems from this in-depth analysis highlights the capacity of creatives to discursively engage with these 'grand discourses' in the construction of identity in creative ways. By taking up a micro focus to explore the agency of ethnic minority creatives, we could show the heterogeneity amongst these ethnic minority creative identities, while reacting against the homogenizing effects of most macro focused literature.

Discursive resources in the creative industries and beyond

Approaching our general research questions through the foci of legitimacy, innovation and creativity, we showed how ethnic minority identity can represent, in itself, a functional and flexible discursive resource in the creative industries. This conceptualization is new, and has implications for the creative industries literature. A discursive resource is "a concept, phrase, expression, trope, or other linguistic device that (a) is drawn from practices or texts, (b) is designed to affect other practices and texts, (c) explains past or present action, and (d) provides a horizon for future practice" (Fairclough 1992; Kuhn and Nelson 2002; Kuhn et al. 2008). Discursive resources are studied in a broad variety of disciplines including: identity studies (Kornberger and Brown 2007; Larson and Pearson 2012; Mininni, Manuti, and Curigliano 2013), healthcare (Foley and Faircloth 2003; Macleod, Sigcau, and Luwaca 2011), cultural studies (Mauws 2000), family businesses (Watson 2009), psychology (Spong 2008; Taylor 2006) and linguistics

(Young 2008). Our social constructionist perspective (Berger and Luckmann 1966) opens up the scope of this research towards the discursive possibilities of identity as a resource in the creative industries. By doing so, we show how ethnic identity offers immaterial input for the possible construction of meaning. This is especially salient in the sector under study where value creation often occurs via socially constructed ideas, values, and meanings, rather than materialistic products themselves (Throsby 2000). This means that discursive resources can be seen as potentially having a more powerful impact than their tangible counterparts on both creative content and the communication and marketing of creative products. We hope future research is inspired by this perspective, and will look further into issues of intangible resource construction and deployment in the creative industries.

Next to this general conclusion of discursive resources in the context of the creative industries, we will elaborate here further on the implications of our research for several other streams of literature. In the next paragraphs we will argue that resources are not necessarily valuable from the beginning, but can be performatively turned into it, which implies that resources can prove their worth during their implementation. We conceptualize resources to be possibly even valuable when not used, and thus to entail an immanent or intrinsic power even when not employed. We attribute attention to a broader group of users of resources, opening up the scope of studies that limit their investigations to mere organizations. Finally, we argue that resources are able to serve more purposes than mere economical goals, connecting our focus on resources to the urge of looking at the strategies that are used to deploy them.

Firstly, we are able to redefine the nature of what can be considered as a resource. Inspired by Baker and Nelson's (2005) 'bricolage' idea, we maintain that resources are not inherently valuable from the beginning (see e.g. Barney 1991; for a critique see: Priem and Butler 2001), but are rather entities that prove their worth during their possible implementation. We namely show with this study how creative entrepreneurs *fabricate* their ethnic identity through language in ways that it becomes a resource (Powell and Baker 2011). In other words, identities, and possibly other intangible objects as well, do not contain in themselves discursive resources, yet the performative discursive practice of strategic agents such as entrepreneurs can turn them into one. Future research in the creative industries stream might investigate further how identity (in general, but also other social identities) can be used as a resource in each of the different sub-fields of the creative industries, and also look for other intangible objects that in a similar way are discursively and 'performatively' turned into resources by (creative) entrepreneurs.

This point has also implications for streams of literature outside the creative industries that focus on resources, such as the resource based view (RBV) in strategic management (Barney 2001). The RBV understands resources to be all (tangible and immaterial) objects that are (at least semi-permanently) in the possession of a company and allow it to realize its activities and business output (Barney 1991; Hall 1992; Molloy et al. 2011; Penrose 1959; Wernerfelt 1984, 1995), such as brands, technological knowledge, organizational processes, information, firm attributes, qualified personnel, commercial contracts, funding, equipment, procedures, capital, etc. The RBV considers these resources to be able to bring a sustainable competitive advantage for the firm only when they are valuable, rare, in-imitable and non-substitutable (Barney 1991; Barney and Zajac 1994; Oliver 1997; Sirmon and Hitt 2003). The understanding of resources to prove their worth during their implementation, as conceptualized in this manuscript, might aid researchers and managers using the RBV to take into account resources that might not look valuable from the start, or resources that need very specific strategies (such as discursive strategies) for their utilization. Future research in this stream might therefore want to look further into business cases where resources are used of which the value is not clear or doubted from the first moment of implementation (encompassing the current tautology critique, see: Priem and Butler 2001).

Secondly, by taking this further, this dissertation shows – through the inclusion of cases of creative entrepreneurs who are not using their ethnic minority identities for their work – that even if all categories of the RBV apply to a resource (as in the case of identity), refraining from its usage is an option that can be consciously chosen by entrepreneurs, and that not necessarily leads to a loss of competitive advantages. The choice to not to use a certain resource, although it is valuable, rare, in-imitable and non-substitutable, rather creates the urge of constructing one's competitive advantage in different and possibly even more innovative ways, voluntarily triggering 'entrepreneurial resourcefulness' (Corbett and Katz 2013; Powell and Baker 2011). This means we can attribute an immanent power to resources, which exists inside of them, even if they are not used. This means that the potential for being valuable is present inside of them, but can only be realized when used correctly. Future research could take up cases where 'good' intangible resources are available (such as e.g. 'familiness' (Habbershon and Williams 1999; Hermann et al. 2010) in family businesses), but deliberately not used, to gain a broader insight in the possible ways and solutions to construct competitive advantage and trigger entrepreneurial creativity for this purpose.

Thirdly, we aim with this study at joining the stream of research which already broadens the understanding of who can be 'users' of resources. In contrast to the RBV namely, which conceptualizes resources mostly as assets deployed by an organization for its activities (Barney 1991, 2001; Molloy et al. 2011; Penrose 1959; Sirmon and Hitt 2003; Wernerfelt 1984, 1995), we advocate with this

dissertation an open scope by including also mere individuals as the users of resources. By doing so, we aim at placing identity in the tradition of discursive resources to be deployed by all individual users for reaching broader personal (not only economical goals), such as also: medicine (Foley and Faircloth 2003), motivation (Kontos 2003), ethics (Kornberger and Brown 2007), place (Larson and Pearson 2012) and equality (Spong 2008).

Finally, we are also able to reconceptualize the purpose and goals of resources for entrepreneurship in a broader way. Many studies in the entrepreneurship literature consider entrepreneurship as a wealth-creating economic phenomenon (e.g. Aldrich and Martinez 2001; Cunningham and Lischeron 1991; Lumpkin and Lichtenstein 2005; Wennekers and Thurik 1999), often understanding resources and their strategic application to be the raw material for (economic) success. We showed that for creative entrepreneurs however – as equally goes for entrepreneurs in several other sectors including healthcare, sustainable development and social profit – success and value creation are not only to be measured in mere economic terms, but are also measured along other types of valuation criteria: e.g. creative, symbolic, environmental and social terms (Calás, Smircich, and Bourne 2009; Rindova, Barry, and Ketchen 2009). This means there are resources needed in these sectors that are not only creating economic value, but are also aiding in achieving these other purposes, such as identity as a discursive resource in these contexts. Future research might want to take up these 'non-economic' resources, and study their deployment and usability both for the entrepreneurs themselves as for their organizations.

This point also ties into the behavioral theory of the firm (Cyert and March 1963), in which a neoclassical understanding of economic decisions to always seek to maximize profit is critiqued, and the scope of research is opened up for organizations to also pursue different goals and aspirations (Kaufman 1990; Van Ees, Gabrielsson, and Huse 2009; Van Witteloostuijn 1988; Winter 1971, 2000). A central concept is 'satisficing behavior' (from satisfy and suffice: Simon 1955, 1959) which conceptualizes a firm to seek a maximal profit only until a sufficient level is gained for its survival needs, but beyond this point profit is sacrificed for the attainment of other higher order needs (Kaufman 1990), the simultaneous achievement of multiple goals (Mosley 1976) or social or individual more beneficial outcomes (Güth 2010). This stream of literature is serviceable for looking into the usage of identity as a discursive resource by creatives as it also understands individuals as agents (Simon 1956) – with all their included personal motivations (Kaufman 1990) – but also includes the context (which is also often seen as highly uncertain such as the creative industries (Güth, Levati, and Ploner 2010)). Future research on the creative industries might therefore want to look into this theory to take our conceptualization of discursive resources (as entities that are serving more than only economic purposes) further, to gain a

better understanding on the precise decision processes involved in the strategies to deploy them in a creative context.

Deployment of identity by ethnic minority creatives: discursively, agentically and strategically

Reflecting on this 'deployment' element of our overall research question, a threefold answer stems from our findings: we see that ethnic minority creatives deploy their identity discursively (as a resource, as reviewed above), agentically and strategically.

First, we conceptualize the deployment of ethnic identity to be agentic. In this dissertation, we understand agency in a binary and dialectic relationship with structure, as agentic individuals will always be "acting within historical specific bounds of the unacknowledged conditions and unintended consequences of their acts" (Giddens 1984). In our data we saw that ethnic minority creatives are, due to their ambiguous position, called to agentic discursive action to counteract the possibility of being portrayed as exotic, or as the 'other'. Only by doing so, creatives can claim back a part of the voice and control to self-define who they are, which is quintessential to construct their identity as a useful discursive resource.

Elaborating further on this, we conceptualize these agentic (re)actions to be indispensable for ethnic minority creatives' professional activities, as they touch at heart of what it is to be active as an ethnic minority professional in the creative industries. The agentic deployment of identity namely, also means resisting the excluding powers of the structure of the creative industries. This entails that the structure of the creative industries, and its related process of action and reaction (Knights and Willmott 1989) is not only constraining ethnic minority creatives, but also enabling resistance and change. This because the (re)action against a structure cannot exist without the structure being in place itself (Alvesson and Willmott 1992; Hardy and Thomas in press).

Secondly, next to a discursive and agentic deployment of identity in the creative industries, we also conclude the deployment of one's ethnic identity to be inherently strategic. While early understandings of strategy highlight a detailed and thought-through plan which is to be carefully executed (e.g. Porter 1985), other theorists such as Henry Mintzberg (1978) define strategy as a pattern that is becoming gradually visible in choices, actions and the stream of decisions one makes. We see that creatives, across all our empirical data, take on specific strategic actions and perform targeted choices in order to reach their goals. When asked about their professional activities namely, many creatives respond with a precise analysis of their structural environment and the specific proactive actions they undertook.

More recently, authors have reconceptualized strategy as discourse, inside the strategy-as-practice research discipline. This theory offers a perspective to investigate strategies in terms of how they

are constituted by language, and what they can achieve through it (Barry and Elmes 1997; Ezzamel and Willmott 2008; Vaara, Kleymann, and Seristö 2004; Vaara and Whittington 2012). Future research might want to adopt this theoretical framework to gain a better understanding of ethnic minority creatives' strategies. Especially in the context of the creative industries, where overly stressed economic actions of creatives quickly delegitimize core symbolic/artistic goals, many creatives perform no explicit strategy making. Yet with this dissertation, we showed that they however engage in strategic discursive actions to reach their professional goals, advocating a strategy-as-discourse perspective for exploring these further.

Reflections

Self-Reflections

Due to the overall social constructionist view of this study, some words of self-reflexivity are quintessential (Berger and Luckmann 1966). In this dissertation we did not study absolute certainties, nor objectively lived realities, but rather narratives that we consider to be discursive constructions of the experiences and opinions under study (Essers and Benschop 2007, 2009; Ybema et al. 2009; Alvesson 2010). In line with this epistemological stance, we understand our methods to produce, and not just to re-produce meaning (Clarke, Brown, and Hope-Hailey 2009). As these meanings however originated to a large extent in interactions with the researcher (Essers 2009; Zanoni and Van Laer in press), we are called to account for the possibility of a 'textual collaboration' (Essers and Benschop 2007) in two ways. On the one hand the creatives in this study have framed and adapted their story in certain ways in order to be able to narrate it to me, and on the other hand the interpretation of their voices resonates my voice in studying and questioning them (Essers 2009). This means that I, as the author of this manuscript, am present in the produced knowledge as I have taken an authoring role in both the creation and the interpretation of the collected data (Zanoni and Van Laer in press). This is in this dissertation partly eliminated however by the involvement of other authors in the interpretation of the data who did not participate in the production of the narratives, and who could therefore take up a more distant stance.

Although this is not the easiest task, elaborating on my background, motivations and prior knowledge is common in these types of studies (Zanoni and Van Laer in press). It is needed to clarify my position in, and my outlook on the world, as this is likely to have influenced the kind of knowledge produced. The next paragraphs are thus written to give the reader a better understanding of how the knowledge in this dissertation was produced. I would like to start the overview with the differences and similarities between my background and the one of my respondents, and in a second part continue with the prior knowledge I obtained that might be salient for this research.

Hoeselt, a village in Limburg I grew up in, defines many of my perspectives on the world. This little town in a rural area in the east of Flanders did not have many ethnic minority inhabitants at the time I grew up. Although I would not consider myself, nor my family as such, having a Dutch mother was 'different' enough to be considered an *allochton* by the quite conservative population. This means at a very young age I was already confronted with questions about identity and cultural differences, my earliest memories on this reach back to when I was four years old. Many respondents in this dissertation told me they experienced similar feelings at a quite young age, such as being very reflexive about culturally constructed values and norms early on. Also this meant that processes of identity construction and the intertwined narrative communication thereof were very soon known to me, and became especially pressing when being visited by family members or spending time with them up North. I do indeed believe, like the interview with Saaim, that being brought up between two different cultures sometimes feels like being on an island 'in between' both, never completely belonging to the one, nor the other. While collecting data for this dissertation, I felt like reading 26 books with the same theme as mine, yet all with their very different story. By focusing on heterogeneity, giving voice to each different creative and addressing great attention to their own words, I hope to have convinced readers of this dissertation that in wide diversity there is always some kind of unity.

Secondly, my parents ran the flower nursery and shop that my Dutch grandparents started in 1975. This made them, in the completely majority dominated village, a sort of ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Unlike the reflexivity towards identity processes, which I understood early on, it was only when starting research for this dissertation that I understood how much the theories in the literature on ethnic minority entrepreneurship resembled their business. Just as described by Boyd (1998), working in an ethnic niche – Dutch flowers are known all over the world – can be quite comforting for entrepreneurs. My (grand)parents namely were able to sell as legitimate 'middle man minorities' their goods the 'majority' population (see: Bonacich 1973) and benefitted until some point from a 'protected market' (first described by: Aldrich et al. 1985) in our small village due to a lack of competition. Furthermore many family members back in Holland were at that time – and some of them still are today – working in the flower business, often as cultivator. I remember uncles and aunts coming over in high season to help as a true 'co-ethnic workforce' (Ram 1992) and aiding my parents and grand-parents with specific 'co-ethnic knowledge' via this social network (Bagwell 2008). Also, as they were exclusively working with Dutch suppliers until about 2002, I witnessed 'bounded solidarity' and 'enforceable trust' in real life (Zhou 2004). These experiences however did not color the present research profoundly. They aided me at understanding quickly large parts of literature, remembering their findings and efficiently making links

between various studies. Yet the current specific case of ethnic entrepreneurship in the creative industries is profoundly different from the one I experienced and is described in the literature.

One last issue that is at stake here is my education in Art History and Cultural Management. This means I was not trained as a 'pure' economist before starting this Ph.D., although I held a degree from the faculty of Applied Economics. Due to my two prior master degrees, I have a profound knowledge on cultural tastes and products, their productions systems and the Western canon. My education made me also very aware of the socially constructed nature of cultural symbols and symbolic value, and the prevailing ways of assessing, analyzing and conceptualizing them, both in Europe and in North-America[iii]. As an art historian, I was namely trained to be on the side of the 'significant others', to construct symbolic meaning for creative work through my research, and to reach compromises via the assessment process for these meanings. This inside knowledge both of the content and the operations of the creative field can be considered my cultural capital gained via effort in study (Bourdieu 1986), and was a large advantage for this research. For example, at the beginning of this Ph.D., I was able to locate some of the initial respondents without prior aid, as I already studied some of them before (e.g. Saaim). Also, I was able to understand quickly the symbolic worth of the artifacts produced by the creatives under study, and detected immediately their 'silent' efforts to balance between both artistic and economic concerns. It also aided me in finding my way in the discursive research data (having worked with 'the words of artists' before). Most importantly, my prior knowledge was a great advantage for comparing the discursive data with the 'material' information I distilled from my cases. Although this does not feature openly in the three research chapters in this Ph.D.[iv], as a cultural omnivore (Bourdieu 1984; Laermans 2002) consuming regularly concerts, plays, films, books, musicals and exhibitions, I namely looked with the eyes of an art historian into the actual creative work of each of my respondents, in order to trying to understand their talk better.

However, besides the acknowledgements I make here on similarity with my respondents and on the advantages of prior knowledge and background, I am aware that the differences between me and my respondents outnumber the similarities described. When interviewing respondents, numerous differences in gender, age, occupation and education level apply. I am after all, a young, high educated woman with a Flemish name, birth-place, accent and appearance, and these differences with my respondents admittedly might have shaped the knowledge produced in our interaction. As all communication is adapted by the sender towards its receiver, we might speculate that other discourses and formulations would have appeared in the interview material if the interviews were co-produced by another interviewer. These differences between me and the group of respondents however, are not a shortcoming in the

research. I felt it made the respondents to be more explicit in their interviews, as they tried to explain with more detail their situation (which is not resembling mine), rather than assuming me to pre-understand it. This resulted in more detailed interview transcripts and richer data, as fuller narratives are present due to the more explicit and detailed narrating of the respondents.

A final major difference between me and my respondents is my occupation as a researcher. This entails first of all that I am not a creative, nor an entrepreneur, and potentially will never be able to fully relate to these elements of their narratives. Secondly, being a researcher also entails that I am not a regular journalist who encourages interviewees to make their point quickly and balled. The idea of talking to a researcher brought my respondents – who are all used to giving short and to the point interviews for which they get e.g. media coverage or reviews in return – in an often new and sometimes shocking situation. Regarding the latter, I recall for example a sunny day in 2011 were I was about to interview a well-known respondent in Antwerp. I started my interview as I always did (with the open part in which respondents are asked to explain their work and who they are) but this quite briskly aroused the respondent's anger. He told me that all this information was to be found on his website, and that he was very disappointed I expected him to take the time to explain this all over again. When I tried to frame that this was not a lack of respect from my side (I had read his website on the contrary very carefully before the interview), but that I was interested in talking in-depth and from zero about his work and the salient moments in his life, he resolutely requested me to stop the interview and leave. Although none of the other respondents referred to being offended like that by my 'purposively naïve' questions as a researcher, I might imagine that some of them possibly had similar feelings but did not express them.

Reflections on the produced knowledge

Next to the insight the reader needs in my personal background to understand the data gathering and data analysis, I would also like here to reflect critically on the produced knowledge in this Ph.D. to add nuances to the findings. More specifically, I am aware of some points of critique that might arise when reading this manuscript, and would like to address them here.

First, I am aware of the possible irony, or even contradiction, of accounting in depth for the strategic agency of my respondents, while at the same time I do seem to not critically assess their words and authenticity in the analysis. Indeed, in this manuscript I take up a critical stance for many types of research, viewpoints and methods, and even for myself as a researcher in the self-reflexion, but being so concerned with the respondent's agency and portraying them as full and powerful subjects, I am aware for the sake of doing research that I do approach their words as being 'sincere', 'honest' and 'authentic'. This might contradict with the idea that they are established strategic individuals, acting in such manner

that benefits their artistic and entrepreneurial goals. By stepping back and looking at the data in this manuscript, we have to admit that using their words as 'honest' might be even considered naïve due to exactly my own conceptualization of them as being strategic agents. Although they are thus represented in the different chapters as being 'sincere', we certainly understand their words as their 'strategic' story to me, which they possibly would have framed differently in other situations, or to fit other purposes. In fact, rather than just 'mere' stories, I believe accounting for my respondents as 'being strategic' needs to inherently entail this understanding of their narratives as the manifestations of their strategies, and them talking to me as a 'strategic performance'. The strategy of being 'authentic' – a highly esteemed and almost quintessential value in the creative industries (Glynn and Lounsbury 2005; Handler 1986; Jones, Anand, and Alvarez 2005; Peterson 1997, 2005; Peterson and Berger 1971) – is namely a strategy after all. Taking this even further, conceptualizing their words as such – as possible 'not true' but just strategic – might ironically even attribute more value to them as 'true' strategic agents.

Secondly, I am aware that I reproduce categories when applying them in my research. In a setting where language namely is understood not to be a neutral tool, but one that is involved in the construction of reality, I therefore must note here that the usage of some terms is problematic. For example, by using categorical terms such as 'ethnic minorities', I am aware of the notion that this research reinforces the minority-majority contrasts found in discourse. This entails that I, as a researcher, deploy power by pigeonholing my respondents in one category. By doing so, although I aim at focusing on the micro level, I do (re)produce the macro level in this study. Also, the usage of other polarizing terms such as hybrid-pure and insider-outsider categories establish or strengthen, rather than critique the current dichotomies in our social reality. By using these black and white categories in this study namely, it might almost seem as if no in between identity state is possible. The choice I made to nevertheless use these terms in this research serves mostly scientific reasons, and by far does not mean that I understand them to be unproblematic. I acknowledge language to be my form of power, used to represent the world in a way that falls short to its complexity, but I do agree with Rhodes and Westwood (2007) and Van Laer (2011) that reflexivity about this should not lead to silencing a topic.

The last issue I would like to address here is the possibly problematic stress on my respondents as 'agents'. I do realize that putting them forward as such is labeling them again, although this is also done with the reason of addressing an 'emancipatory' political indignation which originated from my in depth study of the macro focused and homogenizing literature on their cases. I am aware that, due to this agentic focus, the way I approach my respondents is showing parallels with Alvesson's (2010) 'strategist' image of the individual. This means I am mainly focusing on the agentic strategies and enabling structural powers that brought my respondents professional success, with the effect of possibly

downplaying salient constraining elements of struggle or self-doubt that also stem forth of the ambiguous position ethnic minority creatives are situated in. This is furthermore increased in this research by my choice to only include established creatives; which means that the accounts referenced here might overly stress the levels of control, coherence and intentionality of ethnic minority creatives, while possibly belittling the controlling powers that structures have on their identity constructions, life struggles and creative work. I acknowledge here that my strong focus on agency does indeed entail a larger attention for the enabling powers of structures, and a smaller for the constraining side, as this also did not feature often in the talks of my established respondents themselves. The choice I made to nevertheless take up this view is rooted in elaborate scientific reasons, as elaborated upon e.g. in chapter 5, and is made with the full awareness of this bias towards action over constraining structures, which is moreover commonly seen when studies take up a structurationalist view (see: Conrad and Haynes 2001; Fairhurst and Putnam 2004, 19-20).

Limitations of this dissertation

In this chapter we would like to overview some of the limitations of the research performed in this study. By doing so, we will also use this opportunity for pointing out the directions future research might take to remediate these limitations.

The findings of this study largely reflect the chosen research design. While our micro-focus on the narratives and experiences of ethnic minority creatives is suitable to understand their own perspective, it leaves out other relevant perspectives such as the ones of the 'significant others'. We reconstructed such perspective from the extant literature rather than directly investigating it empirically. When aiming to understand the power relations inside one sector however, and the agentic reactions of a group of agents against these powers, it might be enlightening for future research to additionally look into the discourses produced by these 'significant others' themselves. Their side of the story could illuminate elements that were not given prominence to in this study. A subsequent qualitative study might for instance investigate how artistic choices of gatekeepers are made and justified, and how social identity markers play a role in these processes.

Also, while our social constructionist discourse-centered perspective allowed us to unravel in-depth the role of language in the social construction of value and other immaterial resources, such perspective does unfortunately not acknowledge 'material' elements and practices beyond their discursive representation (Hardy and Thomas in press; Oswick and Phillips 2012a, 2012b), and thus entails a limitation. Especially in a sector that heavily relates to, and relies upon material objects and

performances, our focus on the social construction of value and immaterial resources was limited in shedding light on the nature of creative products themselves. Future studies might overcome these limitations by taking up perspectives that are more balanced between the discursive and the material (Oswick and Phillips 2012a, 2012b) to conduct for instance iconological research (Holly 1984; Panofsky 1939; Rampley 1997; Warbug 1999), in-depth stylistic and image analyses (De Visser 2003; Focillon 1989) and observations trough ethnographic research (Richardson 2000; Van Maanen 2011; Ybema et al. 2010). By doing so, broader answers to the question how ethnic identity might be of use in the creative industries could be generated.

Furthermore, this research on minority creatives only took up minority ethnicity as a focal social identity in the analysis. We found ethnic identity to be a useful discursive resource in the creative industries because it of its recognizability as an identity marker, and also because of its positive connotation when combined with creativity. In our research however, we did not purposively study other social identities, nor different contexts for ethnic identity to be used as a discursive resource. This leaves open several questions on the nature of ethnicity as a discursive resource compared to other social identities, and on the usage of social identities in general in the creative industries. Future research therefore might want to look more systematically into a broader range of social identities such as gender, class, regional identity, language, etc. and their intersections, as they may be used by creatives in analogous ways.

Implications

The essays in this dissertation illustrate how ethnic minority creatives use their ethnicity for their creative work, and recast them as agents in a majority dominated context. These conclusions have practical implications for both the creatives themselves, as for all 'significant others' surrounding them. Based on the findings of this study, we thus would like to conclude here by giving some suggestions specifically for policy makers and significant others.

Implications for policy and policy makers[v]

Most policies concerning diversity in the creative industries and ethnic minority creatives are currently made by the department of Arts and Heritage (Kunsten en Erfgoed)[vi]. This department of the Flemish government focuses largely on the development of demand in e.g. stimulating participation of ethnic minorities to culture, and e.g. enlarging the engagement of audiences with topics concerning diversity. The current policies are thus mainly focused on stimulating the demand for 'color in the creative

industries', and on changing the structures that influence the current cultural sector. By taking a micro-focus, this dissertation rather highlights ethnic minority creatives as agents, generating insights into how policy makers can support and facilitate creatives' own agency in order to change extant structures.

A sole focus on excluding structures and related policies for getting 'colored art' through the value chain currently often leads policy makers to categorize ethnic minority art as 'different' or 'standing out' from the majority canon. This difference then becomes institutionalized, resulting in e.g. the formal requirement to pay special attention to 'interculturality', as a criterion that is evaluated when granting subsidies, or adapted platforms, art centers or festivals for production and distribution. Although we acknowledge the good intentions of these policies that aim at changing the structures hampering ethnic minority creatives, they inadvertently reproduce inequality and incomparability. By labeling ethnic minority art upfront as inherently 'different', these policies reproduce the idea that 'majority' art is a norm of which ethnic minority creatives deviate, leaving them no space to 'fit in'. By doing so, current policies often are actually hampering ethnic minority creatives even more in constructing the value of their work, as it is considered to be on another level.

With this dissertation, we showed that creatives are agents who both need to 'fit in' and to 'stand out' to create legitimacy, and who can rhetorically construct value when they are able to compare themselves to the canon. When treating their work solely as different, ethnic minority creatives face a hard task in embedding themselves in the 'majority' context needed. Treating ethnic minority creatives as mere victims of a powerful structure 'that needs to be changed via new policies' denies their agency, and deprives them from their possibility to be on the same level as 'majority' creatives. This is why a new policy, to be empowering, should rather support these creatives themselves as agents, rather than again adapting the structures around them.

This could e.g. happen via support for education of all creatives on topics such as self-marketing, power dynamics in the creative industries, value chain pressures, storytelling and identity constructions, as well as encouraging the training of gatekeepers and policy makers themselves to understand these issues and intercept them actively. I sometimes for example see, as a member of the multidisciplinary subsidy commission[vii], that the work of ethnic minority creatives is not understood as it does not match with the 'majority norm' and therefore gets classified as less relevant or less urgent. Yet also, I get to read many dossiers in which the creatives themselves are not able to frame their work in such a way their added value becomes visible. If ethnic minority creatives – and this might as well hold for majority creatives too – are better placed to 'sell' their stories and products, the supply of these products will become more visible, which will entail an increase in demand for products with a 'different view'. This however does not mean that the current efforts to stimulate 'the demand for color in the creative

industries' by the department should be abandoned completely. As with all good policies, keeping a balance is important.

Implications for some groups of 'significant others'

As reviewed thoroughly in this dissertation, in the creative industries 'significant others' do play an unavoidable role. Although we focused mainly on the creatives themselves here, there are also some lessons for 'significant others' in this study. For the group of gatekeepers such as press, curators, experts, casting directors, publishers, programmers and buyers, the most important message from this study is that ethnic identity can have a positive effect on the value of creative products. It makes creatives able to 'stand out', it is a valuable resource for constructing aesthetic innovation and it aids to build plausible claims on creativity. Gatekeepers should realize this potential when making value assessments on the work of ethnic minority creatives, rather than classifying them systematically as 'deviant from the norm', not 'fitting in' the regular field. This could be done by awareness campaigns concerning added value, support for gatekeepers in picking up the right stories, and a subsequent quantitative study showing the monetary impact of choosing for ethnic diverse creative products.

Also when educating creatives, attention should be given to the value of social identities for both creative products and the construction of their story (Reading 2008). This can be valuable for all aspiring creatives, as other social identity markers can probably be used in analogous ways[viii]. Thinking more strategically about discursive resources in the context of the creative industries could be tangled in into the necessary extra attention towards entrepreneurship and marketing that is needed in educational curricula in the arts (Carey and Naudin 2006; Reading 2008). Making creatives not only aware of the 'tension' between artistic and economic motives, but also helping them pragmatically to deal with such tension, might aid them in crafting more plausible stories and balance their 'fitting in' and 'standing out'. This also applies in more in general terms to educational programs targeted at aspiring entrepreneurs, in which more attention can be directed towards the value of immaterial resources for discursive claims and value-creation on the one hand (Gartner 2007; Steyaert and Hjort 2003), and the development of a useful entrepreneurial identity on the other (Black 2012; Lewis 2004a, 2004b).

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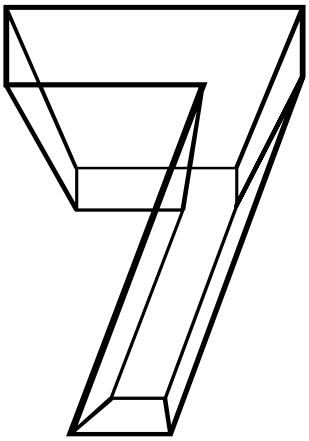


ENDNOTES

[i.] A classic example of a seemingly contrary logic is the 'cost disease' explored by Baumol and Bowen (1966) in the performing arts sector. These authors show that an increase in scale will not necessarily lead to cost efficiency, as the ever present "earnings gap" which marks the difference between profit and costs – often bridged by subsidies – will increase continuously due to the fact that there are almost no efficiency gains possible in the labor output of the creative industries. (Baumol and Bowen 1966; Heilbrun 2003)

[ii.] For some industries this results in using the internet and "do-it-yourself" strategies such as home recording, printing and filming for getting through the value chain. This however lowers (the already low) the entry barriers to the field (Abadie, Friedewald, and Weber 2010; Lewis, Graham, and Hardaker 2005; Talbot 2005) which is augmenting competition between creative entrepreneurs (van Andel and Vandenbempt 2012).

[iii.] I have studied in the period 2004-2009 at the following universities: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, University of British Columbia Vancouver, Universiteit Antwerpen and Universiteit van Amsterdam.

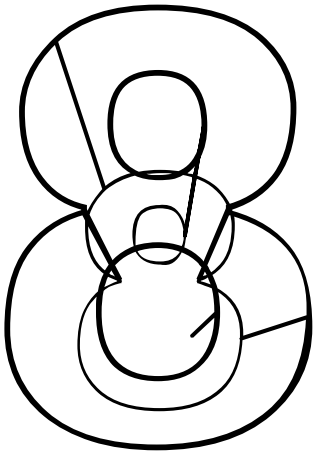
[iv.] I chose not to openly include classical art historical methods and analysis (e.g. iconology) in this Ph.D., as I would then actively "construct" myself – as a critic/gatekeeper/significant other – the symbolic meaning of creative works, rather than analyzing how these meanings are socially constructed by others.

[v.] I presented the implications and suggestions for policy of this dissertation to the management of the Flemish administration of Arts and Heritage (Kunsten en Erfgoed) on February 27th, 2014. Part of my input is used in the policy preparation document aimed at minister of culture Sven Gatz, elected on May 25th 2014.

[vi.] In addition, Enterprise Flanders also has some attention for ethnic entrepreneurship in general. e.g. the VON (Vlaams Ondernemerschapsbevorderend Netwerk) session of June 9th 2011 in Ghent presented a study of the needs of ethnic entrepreneurs.

[vii.] This is a commission of the Flemish government, giving advice to the minister of culture on the subsidies concerning multidisciplinary art, and multidisciplinary art centers. I became a member in September 2013. There are several other commissions, mostly divided per genre (e.g. theatre, music, dance, etc).

[viii.] For two years in a row (2013 and 2014) I taught these themes via my guest lecture "Identity as a valuable resource in the creative industries" to product design students at the MAD-faculty (Genk).



PRESS ATTACHMENTS

UH Magazine

Type: local university journal

Date: April 1st, 2011

Theme: UHasselt research department: SEIN – Geef diversiteit een kans

Pages: 18-20

Title: De wondere wereld van 'ongewone' ondernemers: Vlaamse allochtone ondernemers succesvol in creatieve industrieën

Allochtone ondernemers in Vlaanderen zijn sinds kort steeds succesvoller aanwezig in de creatieve industrieën. Dit maakt dat ons clichébeeld van allochtone ondernemers die enkel en alleen werkzaam zouden zijn in branches zoals nachtwinkels of exotische restaurants moet worden bijgesteld.

Allochtone ondernemers van vooral 2de en 3de generatie zijn namelijk gemiddeld beter opgeleid dan hun ouders, en vinden daardoor steeds vaker hun weg naar de 'high value added' sectoren. Annelies Thoelen werkt aan een doctoraatsonderzoek over de wondere wereld van deze 'ongewone' ondernemers in de creatieve sector.

Wanneer het begrip 'ondernemer' valt, denkt men gemakkelijk aan blanke charismatische mannen die het in de zakenwereld op eigen initiatief willen maken. We associëren het begrip met een context van '*hard core businesses*' en '*making money*'. Hierbij wordt echter vaak uit het oog verloren dat er ook ondernemers bestaan die niet helemaal thuishoren in dit verhaal. De 'mythe' van de blanke mannelijke hoogopgeleide ondernemer klopt met andere woorden niet altijd. Onder andere vrouwelijke en allochtone ondernemers, en ondernemers in 'zachtere sectoren' worden wel eens uit het oog verloren.

Allochtone ondernemers waren traditioneel vaak actief in de zogenaamde 'etnische niche markten' met erg veel op elkaar gelijkende en ongedifferentieerde organisaties voor weinig klanten (bijvoorbeeld nachtwinkels, kebabzaken, enzovoort). Recent onderzoek naar de sectoren en vestigingsplaatsen van allochtone ondernemers heeft echter een 'break out' van steeds meer allochtone ondernemers uit de stereotype etnische niche markten vastgesteld. Ze zouden zich steeds vaker toeleggen op de 'high added value sectors'.

Een van die sectoren is de creatieve industrie, de verzamelnaam voor branches zoals architectuur, dans, mode, film, design, games, beeldende kusten, theater, muziek, uitgeverswezen en media. Deze creatieve industrieën zijn niet alleen aantrekkelijk voor nieuwe allochtone ondernemers omdat ze mogelijk een hogere winstmarge opleveren en weinig opstartkapitaal nodig hebben, ook staan allochtone creatievelingen van de tweede en derde generatie vaak nog dicht genoeg bij de oorspronkelijke cultuur van hun ouders. Dit vormt 'competetive advantage' bij de productie van creatieve goederen doordat deze ondernemers al dan niet kunnen terug vallen op het culturele kapitaal uit hun dubbele origine.

Net vanwege de grote symbolische meerwaarde voor het creatieve product wanneer men werkt vanuit verschillende culturele achtergronden, leeft de verwachting dat ondernemers in deze branches erg zelfreflectief met hun (professionele) identiteit omgaan. Dit omdat er in de creatieve industrieën een structureel nauwere relatie bestaat dan in andere sectoren tussen de identiteit en het voortgebrachte product dat deze identiteit als grondstof heeft. Bovendien is in de creatieve sector het individuele imago een cruciaal productie- en marketingelement. "Het gaat hier over een breed en erg gelaagd gegeven. Dit onderzoek wordt dan ook ruim en vanuit verschillende invalshoeken benaderd", zo stelt Annelies Thoelen. "Het kwalitatieve onderzoek heeft tot doel verschillende academische velden zoals ondernemerschap, creatieve industrieën, identiteitsonderzoek, creativiteit en hybriditeit succesvol met elkaar te verbinden (zie figuur)".

Drie vragen staan centraal in het onderzoek: 1. Hoe construeren allochtone creatieve ondernemers hun persoonlijke- en ondernemersidentiteit? 2. Hoe gebruiken zij deze identiteit(en) als grondstof voor hun creatieve product? 3. Hoe balanceren zij tussen commercialisering en artistieke integriteit?

Vaak worden producten die als commercieel worden beschouwd namelijk minder gezien als een 'authentieke' creatie, en vice versa. Diepte-interviews met allochtone ondernemers uit de creatieve sector vormen het materiaal om deze vragen te kunnen beantwoorden.

Een van de creatieve ondernemers die Annelies Thoelen interviewde is choreograaf Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui richtte vorig jaar zijn eigen dansgezelschap Eastman op. Eerder verwierf hij bekendheid als onder meer danser, choreograaf bij Les Ballets C de la B en Toneelhuis theatermaker. Hij is de zoon van een Marokkaanse vader en een Vlaamse moeder. Dit beïnvloedt Cherkaoui niet alleen als persoon en als ondernemer, maar ook als kunstenaar. Wanneer dit onderwerp werd aangesneden kwam er een bijzondere anekdote over de oorsprong van zijn "hybride" kijk op de dingen naar boven.

"Mijn vader was Marokkaans en mijn moeder Vlaams, waardoor ik me altijd heb gevoeld tussen verschillende stoelen. Mijn moeder en ik, wij gingen naar de kathedraal in Antwerpen, en ik herinner mij

toen ik nog heel klein was dat mijn mama zei van: "kijk eens naar daar, kijk naar dat schilderij, kijk eens hoe schoon dat is". En als kind gaat ge dat dan associëren met schoonheid. Maar voor andere kinderen, wiens mama iets anders toonde, die gaan iets anders associëren met schoonheid. Dus mijn associatie van schoonheid is dus de schilderijen van Rubens, schilderijen van lijdende lichamen, echte lichamen. Wat ik nu doe in mijn voorstellingen is niet anders dan dat. Die zijn een gevolg van mijn moeder die zei "dit is mooi". Mijn vader, wat hij mooi vond waren kalligrafieën, dus Arabische kalligrafieën, meestal woorden uit de Koran, dus een heel schoon schrift. Wij hadden dat hangen thuis en ik vond dat ook heel mooi, en mijn vader zei altijd van: "kijk eens hoe schoon dat den dieje is". Dus mijn referentie van schoonheid zijn die kalligrafieën en zijn die schilderijen. En als kunstenaar ben ik opgegroeid om op zoek te gaan naar die twee esthetieken".

Dit laat zien dat het voor Cherkaoui als ondernemer en kunstenaar met een hybride identiteit een meerwaarde betekent om zijn werk vanuit een dubbel uitgangspunt te kunnen bekijken. Het is eveneens een sterk voorbeeld van hoe de identiteit van de ondernemer een resource kan vormen voor het voortgebrachte creatieve product, waarbij deze resource bovendien door zijn hybriditeit nog in rijkdom en symbolische meerwaarde wint.

In het volgende citaat vertelt Cherkaoui over de oprichting van zijn gezelschap Eastman. Hij benadrukt hierbij het feit dat het ondernemerschap hand in hand gaat met het creatieve, en dat deze aspecten wederzijds voor elkaar een voedingsbodem en een leidraad vormen:

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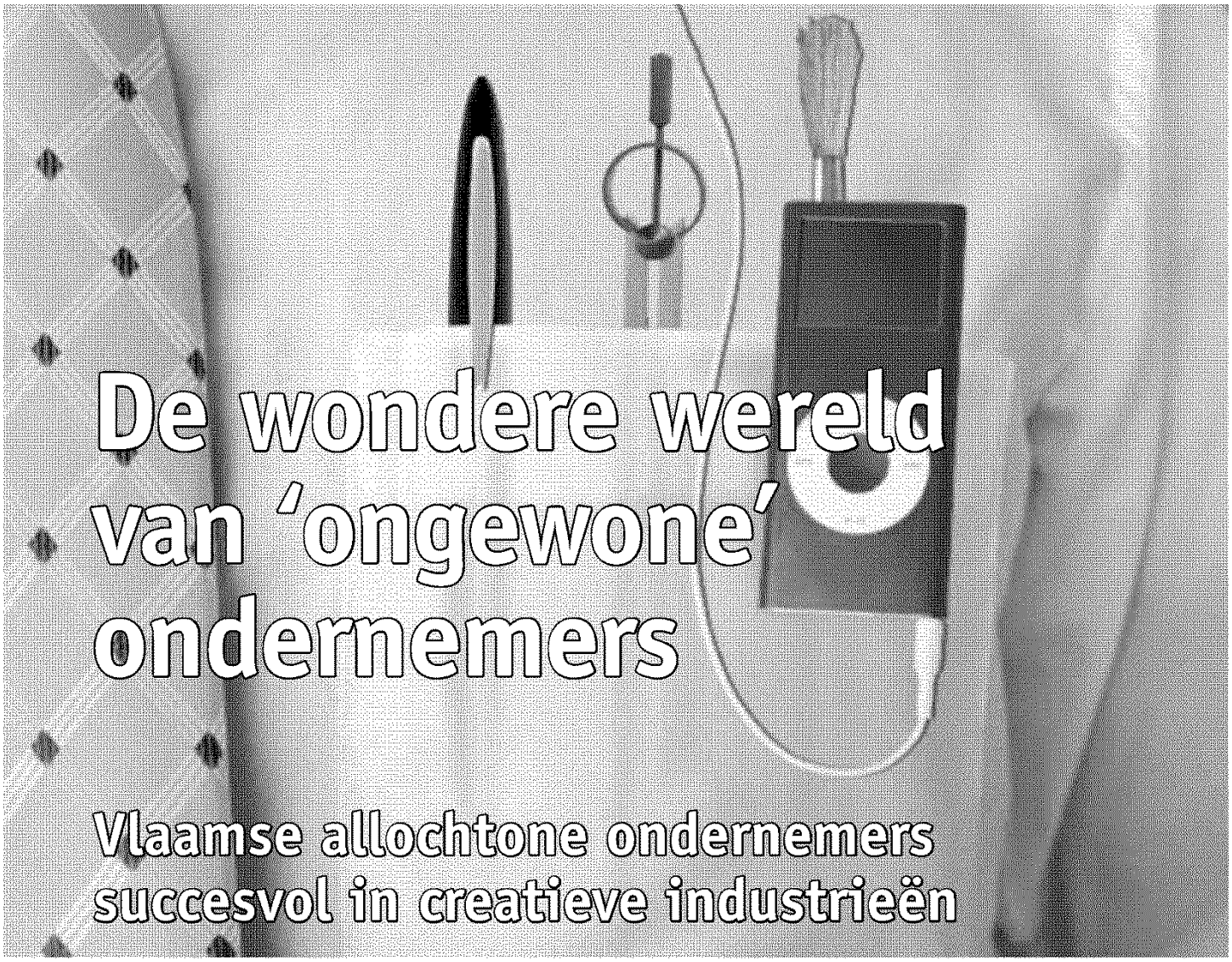
Universiteit Hasselt MAGAZINE

FUTURE PROOF

Nummer 2 • april 2011 • jaargang 6 • Verschijnt viermaal per jaar



De wondere wereld van 'ongewone' ondernemers

Vlaamse allochtone ondernemers succesvol in creatieve industrieën

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Professionele identiteit

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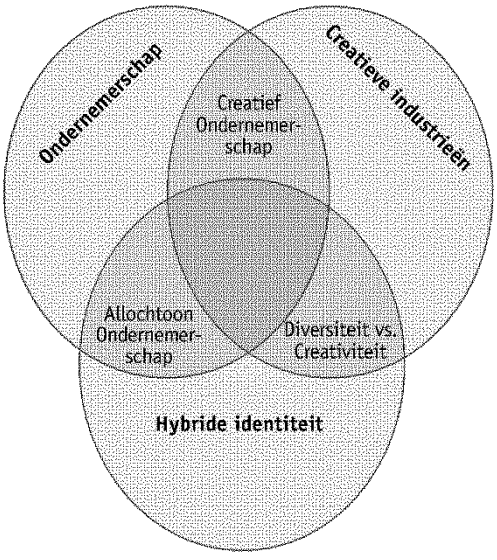

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Het verhaal van Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

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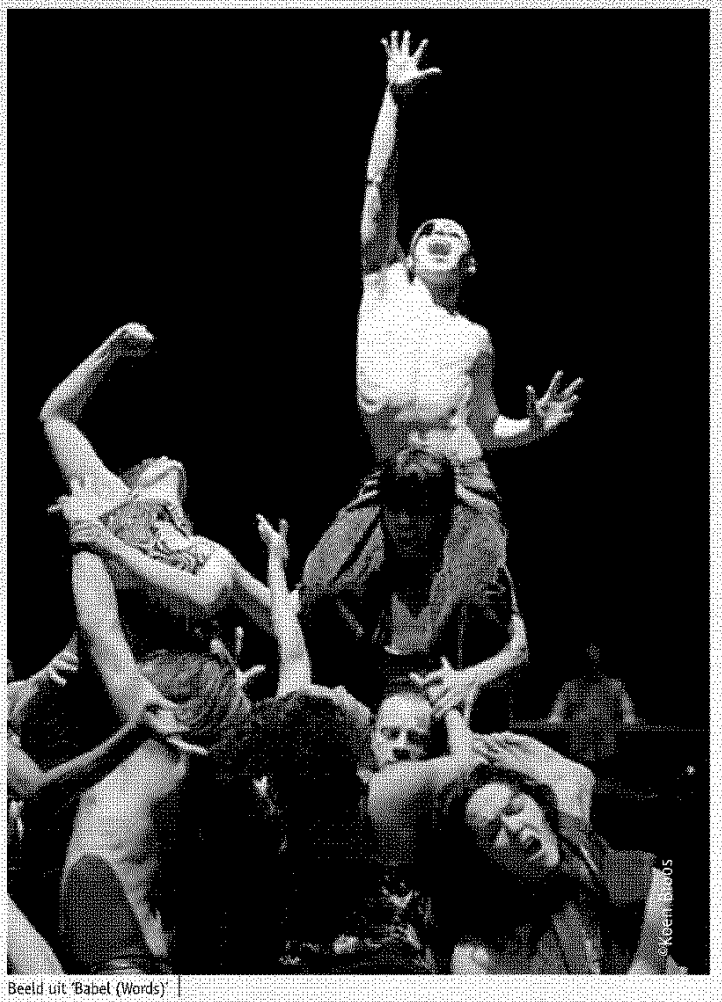

Beeld uit 'Babel (Words)'

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De Standaard

Type: National newspaper Flanders

Date: October 30th 2013

Theme: Dossier Racism in Flanders: "De Zwarte Lijst. Leven in een Kleuronvriendelijk Land"

Pages: 12-13

Title: Allochtone kunstenaar hoort allochtone kunst te maken

De culturele wereld is een blanke wereld. De weinige kunstenaars met een migratieachtergrond worden wel omarmd - op voorwaarde dat ze in de kunst hun migratieachtergrond gebruiken. 'Wat ze ook doen, ze geraken niet af van de labelallochtoon.'

Een filmproducent met een Algerijnse achternaam krijgt tot zijn grote ergernis voortdurend opdrachten om televisiespotjes over diversiteit te maken. Een zilversmid met een Palestijnse vader hoort van journalisten dat haar werk er zo 'oosters' uitziet, hoewel ze haar voorwerpen zo functioneel mogelijk ontwerpt. Een schrijver vindt geen uitgeverij omdat hij over van alles schrijft, maar niet over hoe het is om in een Turks gezin op te groeien. Het zijn drie verhalen van jonge creatievelingen die van hun werk kunnen leven. En die moeten opboksen tegen wat van hen verwacht wordt: allochtone kunst.

Voor haar doctoraat tekende Annelies Thoelen, onderzoekster aan de Universiteit Hasselt, 26 verhalen op van kunstenaars met een migratieachtergrond. Ze werken in Brussel, Antwerpen of Gent. Ze maken muziek, ontwerpen mode of zijn beeldende kunstenaar. 'Kunstenaars van vreemde origine, of ze nu tot de eerste of tweede generatie behoren, zijn een erg kleine minderheid in de creatieve sector. Met maar 26 personen heb ik dus wel een heel goed beeld gekregen van de allochtone kunstenaars in Vlaanderen.'

Zo verschillend die kunstenaars en hun werk ook zijn, één ding kwam in elk diepte-interview bovendrijven. 'Geen enkele kunstenaar die ik gesproken heb, kan er omheen dat ze 'allochtoon' zijn. Ze dragen het als een vlag op hun voorhoofd. Ook al zouden ze het willen, ze geraken niet af van die label.'

Dat kunstenaars met een migratieachtergrond als 'anders' of 'speciaal' worden gezien, blijkt niet altijd in hun nadeel te spelen. Een deel van de kunstenaars zegt zelfs dat hun gemengde culturele achtergrond hen helpt bij hun werk, bijvoorbeeld bij het ontwerpen van modieuze hoofddoeken. Sommigen mixen in hun werk ook het beste van de twee culturen waarmee ze zijn opgegroeid. Zoals een dj die succes oogst met zijn combinatie van elektro- en balkanmuziek. Thoelen: 'Voor die groep is hun origine het handelsmerk, ze spelen ermee en onderscheiden zich ermee.'

Maar er is ook een andere grote groep kunstenaars die wél last heeft van de label 'allochtoon'. Thoelen: 'Wie van zijn origine net níet zijn handelsmerk wil maken, heeft het een pak moeilijker. Ook zij worden altijd in de allochtone hoek geduwd. Ook al willen ze méér bereiken dan alleen spotjes over diversiteit maken, of vinden ze het vervelend dat hun werk geïnterpreteerd wordt als oosterse kunst.' Thoelen beschouwt dat als een subtiele vorm van discriminatie. 'Openlijke discriminatie of racisme komt daarentegen in de culturele sector amper voor. Die sector heeft niet voor niets de naam links te zijn en open te staan voor diversiteit. Volgens mij slaat de slinger daardoor wel door: omdat er zo weinig kunstenaars met een migratieachtergrond zijn, zijn ze erg welkom - maar dan moeten ze alstublieft ook hun allochtone rol vervullen.'

Dat het publiek vooral uit de blanke middenklasse komt, net als de recensenten en de personen die over de cultuursubsidies beslissen, werkt die subtiele discriminatie in de hand, zegt Thoelen. 'Daar zal niet zo snel iets aan veranderen. Des te belangrijker is het dat jonge kunstenaars met een migratieachtergrond intussen wel almaar meer voorbeelden hebben, zoals de succesvolle choreograaf Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Hij geeft zijn migratieachtergrond een plaats in zijn werk en in interviews, zonder zich in een hoek te laten duwen. Cherkaoui zegt dat hij het niet erg vindt dat hij als Arabier gezien wordt. Door zijn werk kan hij juist het stereotiepe beeld van "de Arabier" bijschaven.'

DE STANDAARD
WOENSDAG 30 OKTOBER 2013

DOSSIER RACISME IN VLAANDEREN

Als ze zich maar aanpassen en goed Nederlands spreken, hoeven Vlamingen met buitenlandse roots geen discriminatie te vrezen, klinkt het vaak. Het tegendeel blijkt waar. Wat ze ook doen, de label 'allochtoon' blijft op hen kleven: in de klas, op het werk, bij het uitgaan, op zoek naar een woning.

Met getuigenissen en cijfers spit *De Standaard* het racisme in ons land uit.

Morgen: wonen.

ONDERZOEK TOONT SUBTIELE DISCRIMINATIE IN CREATIEVE SECTOR

ALLOCHTONE KUNSTENAAR HOORT ALLOCHTONE KUNST TE MAKEN

De culturele wereld is een blanke wereld. De weinige kunstenaars met een migratieachtergrond worden wel omarmd – op voorwaarde dat ze in de kunst hun migratieachtergrond gebruiken. 'Wat ze ook doen, ze geraken niet af van de label *allochtoon*.'

VAN ONZE REDACTRICE
MAXIE ECKERT

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© Borgerhoff

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ANNELIES THOELEN
Onderzoekster Universiteit Hasselt

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Blanke middenklasse

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INTERVIEW ■ INAN AKBAS SCHRIJFT OVER SEKS, DRUGS EN ROCK'N ROLL

'Ik weiger knuffelallochtoon te zijn'

Inan Akbas: 'Ik moest in een niche passen: die van de allochtone literatuur.'
© Dieter Telemans

Uitgevers vonden Inan Akbas' boek wel goed, maar te weinig allochtoon om het op te nemen in hun programma. 'Het allochtoon zijn was gewoon niet mijn onderwerp. Waarom zou ik er dan over schrijven?'

VAN ONZE REDACTRICE
MAXIE ECKERT

GENT | 'In Overpelt woonden er in de jaren 80 misschien nog drie of vier andere Turkse gezinnen. Ik groeide dus op tussen de Limburgers, en ik was een van hen. Het allochtoon zijn was in mijn jeugd ook nooit echt een probleem.' Dat mensen hem niettemin als allochtoon zien, dat besef kwam pas later, vertelt Inan Akbas (35). Het kwam toen hij de druk voelde om in zijn boeken over iets te schrijven waarover hij niet wilde schrijven: over het probleem om als allochtoon in Vlaanderen op te groeien.

Akbas verwerkte in zijn verhalen liever wat hij in Overpelt wel had gezien en gehoord. Hij schreef over jongeren die wiet roken en hoe een van hen afglijdt naar harddrugs, over vrienden die mekaar uit het oog verliezen, over een jongeman die naar bed gaat met de vriendin van een goede maat. 'Die verhalen hebben niet per se iets met allochtonen te maken. Hoe zou het ook? Er waren amper allochtonen in Overpelt.'

'Als kind voelde ik natuurlijk wel dat ik anders was dan mijn klasgenoten. Bij ons kwam ander eten op tafel dan bij hen. Anders dan zij mocht ik ook niet bij vriendjes blijven slapen, en ik was geen lid van een jeugdbeweging. Mijn ouders vonden dat maar rare westerse gewoontes.'

'Mijn vader was midden jaren 70 naar België gekomen om in de mijnen te werken. Mijn moeder volgde in 77. Een jaar later werd ik geboren. Waar zij zijn opgegroeid, op het Turkse platteland, was het heel anders dan in mijn leefwereld in Overpelt. Ik moest soms dingen aan hen uitleggen die voor autochtone ouders vanzelfsprekend zijn. Ik herinner me nog dat ik een keer thuiskwam met het boek "Moby Dick", dat ik had geleend in de bibliotheek. "Dat boek heb je toch niet gepikt?", vroeg mijn moeder meteen. Ik moest het concept van een bibliotheek uitleggen. Dan antwoordde ze: "Lees het boek maar snel uit, en breng het terug"."

De literatuur werd u dus niet in de schoot geworpen.

'Nee, het waren leerkrachten die vonden dat ik talent had om te schrijven. Mijn ouders vonden het wel oké dat ik als kind veel las en zelf verhalen schreef. Zolang ik het maar op school goed deed, zodat ik later een goede baan zou hebben. Toen ik aan de universiteit in Gent studeerde, had ik veel vrije tijd en schreef ik een roman. De eerste versie van "De nullen" is toen ontstaan. Na mijn studie heb ik het manuscript ook opgestuurd naar uitgeverijen.'

Wat vonden die ervan?

'Ik kreeg geen reactie.'

Dat overkomt wel meer beginners.

'Ja, natuurlijk. En toch voelde ik toen een verschil met autochtone Vlamingen. Ze krijgen meer hulp van hun ouders, die hier een netwerk hebben. Veel ouders kennen wel iemand, al is het via via, die je uitleg kan geven over hoe je dat het beste aanpakt, een manuscript voorleggen aan een uitgeverij. Maar ik moest het weer maar eens allemaal zelf uitzoeken, net zoals ik als twaalfjarige op eigen houtje een voetbalclub moest zoeken.'

'Omdat ik geen reactie kreeg van de uitgeverijen, gooide ik het over een andere boeg. Ik begon een netwerk op te bouwen in de literaire wereld. Mensen moesten mijn naam kennen, dat was het plan. En dus las ik mijn werk voor op poëziefestivals, ik bood mijn teksten aan voor publicatie in kleine literaire tijdschriften. Het bracht op, want ik werd uitgenodigd om een masterclass te volgen in het Brusselse literatuurhuis Passa Porta. Zo kwam ik eindelijk in contact met professionals uit de literaire wereld.'

En wat vonden zij van uw werk?

'Ze zagen wel iets in "De nullen" en ook in mijn tweede roman, die ik toen aan het afwerken was. Er was nog wel wat redactiewerk aan, maar dat is normaal. En dan volgde steevast de zin: je kan toch maar beter met een ander boek debuteren. "De nullen" zou een goed tweede of derde boek zijn. Ik begreep niet wat ze bedoelden. Als ze mijn boek goed vonden, waarom kon het dan niet als debuut gepubliceerd worden? Pas toen ik die uitleg aan verschillende recensenten en boekhandelaars voorlegde, kwam de aap uit de mouw. Om aantrekkelijk te zijn voor uitgeverijen, moest ik als auteur in een niche passen. Mijn niche zou de allochtone literatuur zijn.'

Allochtone literatuur?

'Een boek over racisme, schijnhuwelijken, je "anders" voelen in de blanke wereld. Waarover de meeste allochtonen schrijven, dus. Mijn boek ging over seks, drugs en rock'n roll – een zeer westers thema. Zodra ik met zo'n boek gedebuteerd had, kon ik wel schrijven over wat ik wilde. Maar mijn debuut moest een allochtoon boek zijn, dat zou het beste verkopen. Het maakte me heel kwaad, ik vond het onrechtvaardig. De culturele elite schreeuwt het uit dat ze vóór pluralisme is, ze wil allochtonen betrekken. Maar die allochtonen zijn dan alleen bevoegd voor allochtone zaken, ze mogen alleen schrijven over diversiteit. Allochtonen moeten knuffelallochtonen zijn die zich niet kritisch uitlaten over onderwerpen die buiten het allochtone hokje vallen. Ik weiger om me daarin te laten duwen.'

Toen hebt u beslist om 'De Nullen' zelf uit te geven.

'Ja, toen heb ik Beefcake Publishing opgericht. Ik kan er niet van leven, hoor, ik werk nog altijd als programmamedewerker bij de VRT. Maar ik wilde het zelf doen, en ook andere allochtone auteurs een kans geven die niet over allochtone zaken willen schrijven.'

Zijn er veel?

'In het begin kreeg ik veel manuscripten van allochtonen die inderdaad over andere onderwerpen schreven dan diversiteit. Maar ik vond de teksten al te vaak niet goed genoeg om ze uit te geven. Er zijn dus heel weinig schrijvers die én allochtoon zijn én goed kunnen schrijven én allochtone onderwerpen links laten liggen. Van het oorspronkelijke concept ben ik intussen afgestapt. De niche van mijn uitgeverij is nu veeleer dat we keuzes maken die de grote uitgeverijen niet willen of kunnen maken. Eén onderdeel daarvan zijn allochtone schrijvers die niet over allochtone onderwerpen willen schrijven. Maar ook allochtonen die over migratie schrijven, zijn welkom. Zolang het maar niet mainstream is.'

> 'Als ze mijn boek goed vonden, waarom kon het dan niet als debuut gepubliceerd worden?'

Kwintessens

Type: Flemish magazine for design and fashion

Date: March 1st 2015

Theme: Identity and design

Pages: 46-51

Title: Inspirerend cross-cultureel design: vervlochten identiteit als handelsmerk?

Onze creatieve industrie is een overwegend blanke wereld. Consumenten van kunst en cultuur behoren traditioneel tot de autochtone middenklasse, net zoals recensenten, beleidsmakers, docenten, curatoren en experten. Maar in de huidige geglobaliseerde wereld stromen veel diverse invloeden ons leven binnen. Zo zijn er ook in Vlaanderen bijvoorbeeld steeds meer designers met een etnisch diverse origine werkzaam in de creatieve sector. (Een persoon uit een 'etnische minderheid' wordt meestal gedefinieerd als iemand die zelf geboren is buiten de EU15 of Noord-Amerika, of die ten minste één ouder heeft die dat is. Schattingen van het aantal designers van vreemde origine werkzaam in Vlaanderen variëren tussen de 1,5 % en 4 %.) Annelies Thoelen, medewerker bij Design Vlaanderen en onderzoeker aan UHasselt, zocht in een doctoraatsproefschrift uit hoe je je het best profileert in deze blanke kunstwereld, als designer met een diverse origine. Gebruik je je origine als inspiratiebron en als handelsmerk, of is dat niet altijd even zinvol? *Kwintessens* nam ook een duik in de roots van drie ontwerpers, die elk op hun eigen wijze omgaan met hun identiteit.

Graven in de grondstof

De groep van etnisch diverse designers is op zich bijzonder heterogeen. Dit betekent ook dat hun werk zeer uiteenlopend is. Niet het minst is de keuze om je identiteit te gebruiken voor professionele doeleinden een belangrijke differentiërende factor. Identiteit kan namelijk een onuitputtelijke inspiratiebron voor designobjecten betekenen, en een zeer authentiek verhaal vormen wanneer het wordt ingezet voor branding. Maar, net zoals bij autochtone designers, vinden niet alle designers met een etnisch diverse origine hun identiteit een relevante inspiratiebron om mee aan de slag te gaan. Sommigen gebruiken elementen uit hun origine als inspiratiebron in hun werk, anderen in hun branding, nog anderen in beide. Sommigen doen dit helemaal niet, of slechts ten dele. Sommigen laten toe dat er bij interpretaties van hun producten 'verwijzingen' naar hun cultuur voorkomen, en anderen verzetten zich hier hevig tegen. Kortom, een breed scala van profileringen in het gebruik van identiteit is mogelijk. Hoe kies je wat er zowel zakelijk als artistiek bij je past?

Om die vraag te beantwoorden, is het belangrijk om de opportuniteitsstructuur waarin designers met een diverse origine zich bevinden te begrijpen. Doordat ze opereren in een overwegend blanke creatieve sector, is deze voor hen namelijk nogal dubbel. Aan de ene kant hebben ze vele opportuniteiten. Designers met een diverse origine kunnen opvallen (al was het al maar door hun uiterlijk of naam) tussen de autochtone massa, en worden gezien als de potentiële brengers van een nieuw verhaal in de overwegend blanke creatieve sector. Men acht designers met een diverse origine in staat om met de blik van een buitenstaander ons design te herdenken of zaken mogelijk te maken die voorheen niet gebeurden. Vaak worden ze ook begrepen als die creatievelingen die door hun diversiteit mogelijk andere connecties kunnen leggen, en dus innovatiever zijn. Kortom, zelfs wanneer hun werk niet direct refereert naar hun origine, bekijkt men hen vaak als vernieuwend, creatief en opvallend.

Aan de andere kant vinden designers met een diverse origine ook hindernissen op hun pad. De mogelijkheid bestaat namelijk dat hun producten worden gecategoriseerd als 'anders' of niet voldoende aansluitend bij de mainstream, waardoor producenten of consumenten ze misschien sneller links zullen laten liggen. Ze worden bijvoorbeeld sneller gezien als 'moeilijker' verkoopbaar door eventuele referenties naar andere, 'minder begrepen', culturen. Maar ook designers die hun identiteit niet gebruiken in hun werk komen hierdoor geregeld moeilijkheden tegen. Door hun vreemde naam, donkerdere huidskleur of accent krijgen ze al snel het label 'allochtoon', waar ze, zelfs zonder referenties naar hun origine, maar moeilijk van afraken. Hierdoor wordt hun werk soms niet opgepikt omdat het niet voldoet aan ons bijna automatische verwachtingspatroon dat een allochtone designer vast iets doet met een achtergrond die 'zo afwijkend is'.

Het al dan niet gebruiken van identiteit in je werk en het maken van je origine tot handelsmerk is dus een individuele keuze met, door de dubbele opportuniteitsstructuur, zowel potentieel positieve als potentieel negatieve consequenties. Om als designer met een diverse origine zowel artistiek als zakelijk de weg te bewandelen die je zelf voor ogen had, lijkt het strak in de hand houden van je eigen verhaal dan ook een verplichting. Met of zonder referenties naar je diverse identiteit in je werk, is het veelvuldig communiceren van je keuzes het belangrijkste startpunt.

Grafisch ontwerpster Fenna Zamouri verwerkt duidelijk haar etnische origine in haar lettervormen, terwijl de duale achtergrond van juweelontwerpster Salima Thakker haar collectie alleen geruisloos inspireert. Productontwikkelaar Peyman Nadirzadeh ten slotte geeft het poëtische Iraanse gedachtengoed minzaam uitdrukking, maar quasi nooit in de vorm.

Fenna Zamouri: typografie door een brede bril

De in Antwerpen geboren en getogen Fenna Zamouri is als grafisch ontwerpster actief in Brussel. Ze begeeft zich met haar werk op het vruchtbare snijvlak tussen de westerse en Arabische cultuur. "Een product van mijn Marokkaanse origine zou ik me niet noemen, maar ik koester mijn roots, die me beïnvloeden voor bepaalde opdrachten. Via kruisende paden en mijn opleiding aan Sint-Lukas zocht ik mijn weg in het grafisch ontwerp."

"Mijn achtergrond sijpelt door in mijn werk. Je legt sowieso een stuk van je ziel bloot, door met letters, vormen, en beeldtaal bezig te zijn. Typografie maakt deel uit van de visuele cultuur. Idealiter omarmt grafisch design de schrijftaal. Het woord, de schriftuur en de illustratie vullen elkaar aan. Het is een hybride mengvorm. Ik hou van de poëzie van de typografie. Rond mijn zeventiende vond ik mijn dubbele identiteit een zware rugzak om dragen. Nu voel ik me 'sitting on the top of the world' als ik een deel van mijn cultureel erfgoed met een moderne draai in mijn ontwerp kan verwerken." Dat de culturele mix in haar werk ook opdrachtgevers aanspreekt, blijkt bijvoorbeeld uit de huisstijl die ze maakte voor Daarkom, het Vlaams-Marokkaans Culturenhuis."

"Naast mijn skills reken ik ook mijn roots tot mijn knowhow. Op Sint-Lukas liet men mij hierin vrij. Ik begaf me op onontgonnen terrein. Gedurende mijn hele opleiding heb ik projecten ontworpen met onder andere Arabische invloeden. Ik haalde inspiratie uit de taal, uit de aaneenschakelingen en curves die gemaakt worden om letters en woorden te creëren. Het neigt naar kalligrafie. Noem het de smaak voor de letter. Aantrekkelijk aan het Arabisch voor een graficus, is het poëtische element. Het schrift danst haast, waarmee je creatief aan de slag kunt. Je ontwikkelt een dynamische identiteit door de westerse en Arabische beeldtaal te vermengen."

De visuele cultuur is alomtegenwoordig en als grafisch ontwerper geef je woorden vorm en zet je een boodschap in de kijker. "Grafisch ontwerp is een vorm van expressie en communicatie. Je houdt hierbij rekening met je doelpubliek. Vooral in de culturele sector groeit de vraag naar Arabisch getinte vormgeving. Ik krijg wel wat opdrachten uit deze hoek, maar ik zet mezelf niet in een hokje, ik sta open voor een breed publiek. Ik ben tenslotte een ontwerper. Mijn creatieve vrijheid staat voorop. Ik wil mijn eigen stijl verder exploreren en werk aan een persoonlijke signatuur. Het is moeilijk om er de vinger op te leggen, het komt impulsief, instinctief. Het is een zoektocht, een continu onderweg zijn."

Salima Thakker: evenwicht tussen Oost en West

Salima Thakker blinkt uit in verfijnde, handgemaakte stukken uit edelmetaal en edelstenen. Na een opleiding juweelontwerp aan de Academie voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen en het Londense Royal College of Art startte ze een eigen atelier en winkel. Haar ontwerpen krijgen vorm aan de werkbank, via experimenten, doorgedreven onderzoek en een groeiend vocabulaire. Elke creatie getuigt van technisch kunnen en liefde voor detaillering die voortvloeit uit haar Belgisch-Indiase roots.

Haar gemengde roots geven een rijkdom die ze anders niet gekend had. "Mijn moeder was Belgische, mijn vader is afkomstig van Bombay, India. Mijn thuiscultuur was een evenwicht tussen Oost en West. Ook al kom ik er maar één keer per jaar, India is wel een tweede thuis voor mij. Ik voel me er geen toerist. Ik ben opgegroeid met het idee dat Oost en West elkaar nooit zullen raken, maar als een magnetisch veld verbonden zijn. Ik kreeg Belgische waarden mee, maar ook oosterse invloeden stroomden binnen. Zowel levensbeschouwelijk als in mijn liefde voor decoratie en sieraden, ben ik een kind van twee werelden. Als tiener stelde ik veel vragen, onder meer over de geloofsbeleving van mijn vader. Toen ik opgroeide stelde ik wel veel in vraag, maar mijn respect nam alleen toe. Het werd een dubbele identiteitsbevestiging."

"De juwelen ontstaan in mijn hoofd en ik vertaal ze eigenhandig tot een eindproduct, volledig met de hand uitgewerkt. De materialen waren van meet af aan belangrijk voor mij. Ik heb altijd gedaan wat ik wilde doen en niet noodzakelijk wat moest, wat men verlangde. Handwerk is mijn grootste kenmerk. Het is ambachtelijk. Dat is misschien wel de culturele achtergrond. Indische sieraden zijn ook met de hand gemaakt. Ik werk vrij mathematisch. Wat me intrigeert, inspireert me ook … mijn oog is erin getraind. Mijn technieken zijn veelal traditioneel. Ik krijg weleens te horen dat er iets oosters in mijn juwelen zit. Ik ga er niet specifiek naar op zoek, maar blijkbaar zit het er toch wel in verweven."

"Die dualiteit blijft, en vertaalt zich in contrasten. Mijn half-Indische identiteit is niet onbelangrijk in mijn werk, maar het komt vanzelf, eerder sluipend. Ik heb mijn juwelenlijn ook mijn eigen naam gegeven, net omdat het mezelf weerspiegelt. Mijn werk is niet uniform, maar ik ben het wel steeds."

Peyman Nadirzadeh: zoeken naar de essentie

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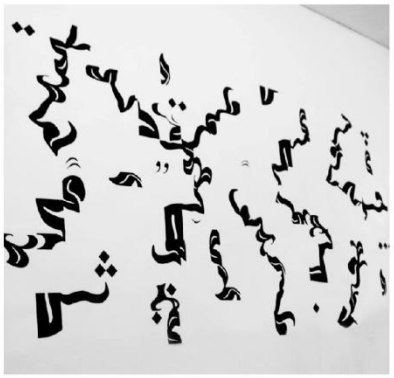
INSPIREREND CROSS-CULTUREEL DESIGN VERVLOCHTEN IDENTITEIT ALS HANDELSMERK?

Annelies Thoelen en
Koen Van der Schaeghe

Onze creatieve industrie is een overwegend blanke wereld. Consumenten van kunst en cultuur behoren traditioneel tot de autochtone middenklasse, net zoals recensenten, beleidsmakers, docenten, curatoren en experten. Maar in de huidige geglobaliseerde wereld stromen veel diverse invloeden ons leven binnen. Zo zijn er ook in Vlaanderen bijvoorbeeld steeds meer designers met een etnisch diverse origine werkzaam in de creatieve sector. (Een persoon uit een 'etnische minderheid' wordt meestal gedefinieerd als iemand die zelf geboren is buiten de EU15 of Noord-Amerika, of die ten minste één ouder heeft die dat is. Schattingen van het aantal designers van vreemde origine werkzaam in Vlaanderen variëren tussen de 1,5 % en 4 %.) Annelies Thoelen, medewerker bij Design Vlaanderen en onderzoeker aan UHasselt, zocht in een doctoraatsproefschrift uit hoe je je het best profileert in deze blanke kunstwereld, als designer met een diverse origine. Gebruik je je origine als inspiratiebron en als handelsmerk, of is dat niet altijd even zinvol? *Kwintessens* nam ook een duik in de roots van drie ontwerpers, die elk op hun eigen wijze omgaan met hun identiteit.

Fenna Zamouri voor Moussem

Fenna Zamouri voor Daarkom



Arabic Fragmentation, Fenna Zamouri

Graven in de grondstof

De groep van etnisch diverse designers is op zich bijzonder heterogeen. Dit betekent ook dat hun werk zeer uiteenlopend is. Niet het minst is de keuze om je identiteit te gebruiken voor professionele doeleinden een belangrijke differentiërende factor. Identiteit kan namelijk een onuitputtelijke inspiratiebron voor designobjecten betekenen, en een zeer authentiek verhaal vormen wanneer het wordt ingezet voor branding. Maar, net zoals bij autochtone designers, vinden niet alle designers met een etnisch diverse origine hun identiteit een relevante inspiratiebron om mee aan de slag te gaan. Sommigen gebruiken elementen uit hun origine als inspiratiebron in hun werk, anderen in hun branding, nog anderen in beide. Sommigen doen dit helemaal niet, of slechts ten dele. Sommigen laten toe dat er bij interpretaties van hun producten 'verwijzingen' naar hun cultuur voorkomen, en anderen verzetten zich hier hevig tegen. Kortom, een breed scala van profileringen in het gebruik van identiteit is mogelijk. Hoe kies je wat er zowel zakelijk als artistiek bij je past?

Om die vraag te beantwoorden, is het belangrijk om de opportuniteitsstructuur waarin designers met een diverse origine zich bevinden, te begrijpen. Doordat ze opereren in een overwegend blanke creatieve sector, is deze voor hen namelijk nogal dubbel. Aan de ene kant hebben ze vele opportuniteiten. Designers met een diverse origine kunnen opvallen (al was het maar door hun uiterlijk of naam) tussen de autochtone massa, en worden gezien als de potentiële brengers van een nieuw verhaal in de overwegend blanke creatieve sector. Men acht designers met een diverse origine in staat om met de blik van een buitenstaander ons design te herdenken of zaken mogelijk te maken die voorheen niet gebeurden. Vaak worden ze ook begrepen als die creatievelingen die door hun diversiteit mogelijk andere connecties kunnen leggen, en dus innovatiever zijn. Kortom, zelfs wanneer hun werk niet direct refereert naar hun origine, bekijkt men hen vaak als vernieuwend, creatief en opvallend.

Aan de andere kant vinden designers met een diverse origine ook hindernissen op hun pad. De mogelijkheid bestaat namelijk dat hun producten worden gecategoriseerd als 'anders' of niet voldoende aansluitend bij de mainstream, waardoor producenten of consumenten ze misschien sneller links zullen laten liggen. Ze worden bijvoorbeeld sneller gezien als 'moeilijker' verkoopbaar door eventuele referenties naar andere, 'minder begrepen', culturen. Maar ook designers die hun identiteit niet gebruiken in hun werk komen hierdoor geregeld moeilijkheden tegen. Door hun vreemde naam, donkerdere huidskleur of accent krijgen ze al snel het label 'allochtoon', waar ze, zelfs zonder referenties naar hun origine, maar moeilijk van afraken. Hierdoor wordt hun werk soms niet opgepikt omdat het niet voldoet aan ons bijna automatische verwachtingspatroon dat een allochtone designer vast iets doet met een achtergrond die 'zo afwijkend is'.

Het al dan niet gebruiken van identiteit in je werk en het maken van je origine tot handelsmerk is dus een individuele keuze met, door de dubbele opportuniteitsstructuur, zowel potentieel positieve als potentieel negatieve consequenties. Om als designer met een diverse origine zowel artistiek als zakelijk de weg te bewandelen die je zelf voor ogen had, lijkt het strak in de hand houden van je eigen verhaal dan ook een verplichting. Met of zonder referenties naar je diverse identiteit in je werk, is het veelvuldig communiceren van je keuzes het belangrijkste startpunt.

GRAFISCH ONTWERPSTER FENNA ZAMOURI VERWERKT DUIDELIJK HAAR ETNISCHE ORIGINE IN HAAR LETTERVORMEN, TERWIJL DE DUALE ACHTERGROND VAN JUWEELONTWERPSTER SALIMA THAKKER HAAR COLLECTIE ALLEEN GERUISLOOS INSPIREERT. PRODUCTONTWIKKELAAR PEYMAN NADIRZADEH TEN SLOTTE GEEFT HET POËTISCHE IRAANSE GEDACHTENGOED MINZAAM UITDRUKKING, MAAR QUASI NOOIT IN DE VORM.

FENNA ZAMOURI: TYPOGRAFIE DOOR EEN BREDE BRIL

De in Antwerpen geboren en getogen Fenna Zamouri is als grafisch ontwerpster actief in Brussel. Ze begeeft zich met haar werk op het vruchtbare snijvlak tussen de westerse en Arabische cultuur. "Een product van mijn Marokkaanse origine zou ik me niet noemen, maar ik koester mijn roots, die me beïnvloeden voor bepaalde opdrachten. Via kruisende paden en mijn opleiding aan Sint-Lukas zocht ik mijn weg in het grafisch ontwerp."

"Mijn achtergrond sijpelt door in mijn werk. Je legt sowieso een stuk van je ziel bloot, door met letters, vormen, en beeldtaal bezig te zijn. Typografie maakt deel uit van de visuele cultuur. Idealiter omarmt grafisch design de schrijftaal. Het woord, de schriftuur en de illustratie vullen elkaar aan. Het is een hybride mengvorm. Ik hou van de poëzie van de typografie. Rond mijn zeventiende vond ik mijn dubbele identiteit een zware rugzak om dragen. Nu voel ik me 'sitting on the top of the world' als ik een deel van mijn cultureel erfgoed met een moderne draai in mijn ontwerp kan verwerken." Dat de culturele mix in haar werk ook opdrachtgevers aanspreekt, blijkt bijvoorbeeld uit de huisstijl die ze maakte voor Daarkom, het Vlaams-Marokkaans Culturenhuis.

"Naast mijn skills reken ik ook mijn roots tot mijn knowhow. Op Sint-Lukas liet men mij hierin vrij. Ik begaf me op onontgonnen terrein. Gedurende mijn hele opleiding heb ik projecten ontworpen met onder andere Arabische invloeden. Ik haalde inspiratie uit de taal, uit de aaneenschakelingen en curves die gemaakt worden om letters en woorden te creëren. Het neigt naar kalligrafie. Noem het de smaak voor de letter. Aantrekkelijk aan het Arabisch voor een graficus, is het poëtische element. Het schrift danst haast, waarmee je creatief aan de slag kunt. Je ontwikkelt een dynamische identiteit door de westerse en Arabische beeldtaal te vermengen."

De visuele cultuur is alomtegenwoordig en als grafisch ontwerper geef je woorden vorm en zet je een boodschap in de kijker. "Grafisch ontwerp is een vorm van expressie en communicatie. Je houdt hierbij rekening met je doelpubliek. Vooral in de culturele sector groeit de vraag naar Arabisch getinte vormgeving. Ik krijg wel wat opdrachten uit deze hoek, maar ik zet mezelf niet in een hokje, ik sta open voor een breed publiek. Ik ben tenslotte een ontwerper. Mijn creatieve vrijheid staat voorop. Ik wil mijn eigen stijl verder exploreren en werk aan een persoonlijke signatuur. Het is moeilijk om er de vinger op te leggen, het komt impulsief, instinctief. Het is een zoektocht, een continu onderweg zijn."

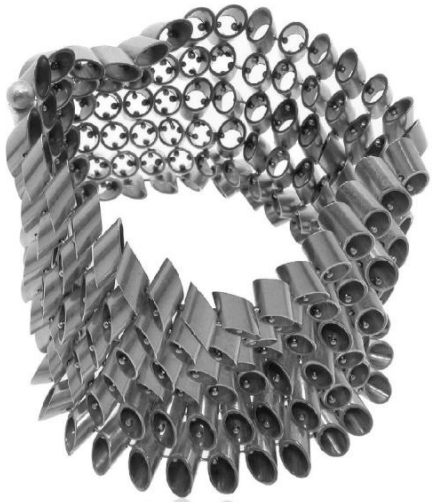
www.fennazamouri.be

Facet Collection, Salima Thakker

Grid Collection, Salima Thakker

Labyrinth Collection, Salima Thakker

Dancing Queen Collection, Salima Thakker



Modular Collection, Salima Thakker

SALIMA THAKKER: EVENWICHT TUSSEN OOST EN WEST

Salima Thakker blinkt uit in verfijnde, handgemaakte stukken uit edelmetaal en edelstenen. Na een opleiding juweelontwerp aan de Academie voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen en het Londense Royal College of Art startte ze een eigen atelier en winkel. Haar ontwerpen krijgen vorm aan de werkbank, via experimenten, doorgedreven onderzoek en een groeiend vocabulaire. Elke creatie getuigt van technisch kunnen en liefde voor detaillering die voortvloeit uit haar Belgisch-Indiase roots.

Haar gemengde roots geven een rijkdom die ze anders niet gekend had. "Mijn moeder was Belgische, mijn vader is afkomstig van Bombay, India. Mijn thuiscultuur was een evenwicht tussen Oost en West. Ook al kom ik er maar één keer per jaar, India is wel een tweede thuis voor mij. Ik voel me er geen toerist. Ik ben opgegroeid met het idee dat Oost en West elkaar nooit zullen raken, maar als een magnetisch veld verbonden zijn. Ik kreeg Belgische waarden mee, maar ook oosterse invloeden stroomden binnen. Zowel levensbeschouwelijk als in mijn liefde voor decoratie en sieraden, ben ik een kind van twee werelden. Als tiener stelde ik veel vragen, onder meer over de geloofsbeleving van mijn vader. Toen ik opgroeide stelde ik wel veel in vraag, maar mijn respect nam alleen toe. Het werd een dubbele identiteitsbevestiging."

"De juwelen ontstaan in mijn hoofd en ik vertaal ze eigenhandig tot een eindproduct, volledig met de hand uitgewerkt. De materialen waren van meet af aan belangrijk voor mij. Ik heb altijd gedaan wat ik wilde doen en niet noodzakelijk wat moest, wat men verlangde. Handwerk is mijn grootste kenmerk. Het is ambachtelijk. Dat is misschien wel de culturele achtergrond. Indische sieraden zijn ook met de hand gemaakt. Ik werk vrij mathematisch. Wat me intrigeert, inspireert me ook … mijn oog is erin getraind. Mijn technieken zijn veelal traditioneel. Ik krijg weleens te horen dat er iets oosters in mijn juwelen zit. Ik ga er niet specifiek naar op zoek, maar blijkbaar zit het er toch wel in verweven."

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www.salimathakker.com

PEYMAN NADIRZADEH: ZOEKEN NAAR DE ESSENTIE

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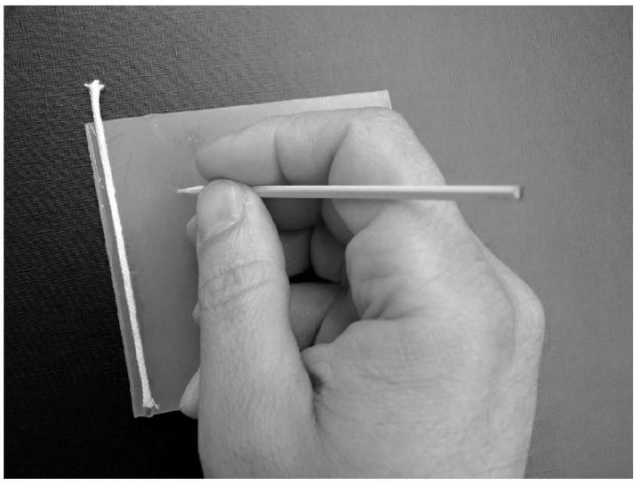
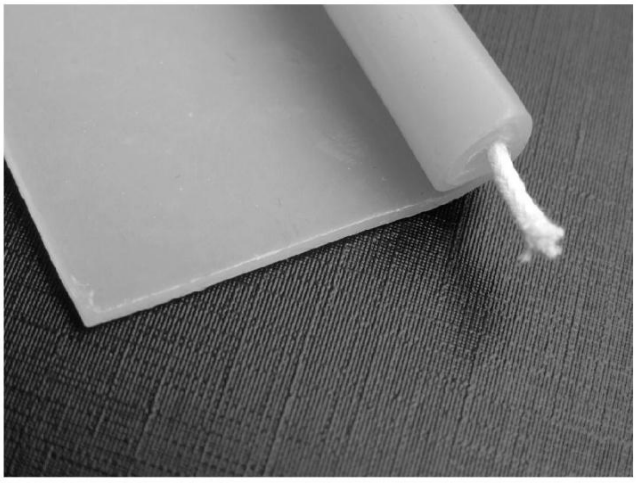
http://home.scarlet.be/~hm209763





Wenskaars, Peyman Nadirzadeh

Jumpy, Peyman Nadirzadeh.
Foto: Griet van Gent

Ariana, Peyman Nadirzadeh.
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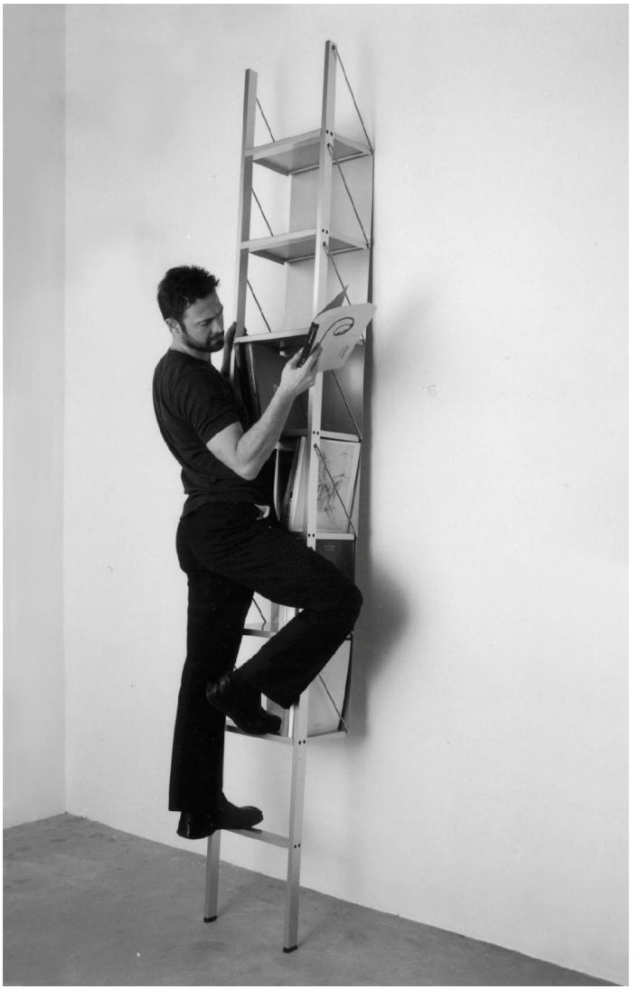
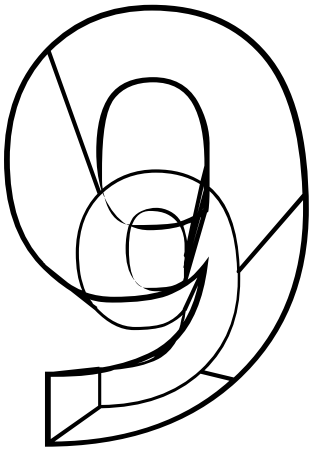


Ladderkast, Peyman Nadirzadeh. Foto: Griet van Gent



NEDERLANDSTALIGE SAMENVATTING

Allochtone ondernemers in de creatieve industrie hebben de laatste jaren veel aan zichtbaarheid gewonnen. Toch is er tot op heden weinig onderzoek verricht naar hun ervaringen, management en succesverhalen. Om de specifieke situatie van deze creatieve ondernemers te onderzoeken, deed voorliggend onderzoek een brede literatuurstudie binnen de velden van ondernemerschap, allochtoon ondernemerschap, creatief ondernemerschap, creatieve industrieën, identiteitsconstructies, etniciteit en diversiteit. Tevens werden 26 allochtone creatieve ondernemers diepgaand geïnterviewd. Het zijn dan ook hun (succes)cases die de onderzoeksdata vormen van dit proefschrift.

We detecteerden de situatie van allochtone creatieve ondernemers als zijnde zeer specifiek. Niet alleen zijn zij, zoals alle creatieve ondernemers, onderhevig aan de invloeden van 'significant others' in hun veld (docenten, recensenten, mecenassen, experten, journalisten, curatoren, klanten, critici, collega's, etc.); ook zijn zij, als minderheidsondernemers, zeer zichtbaar in de 'blanke wereld' die de creatieve industrie nog steeds is. Hierdoor bevinden allochtone creatieve ondernemers zich in een 'dubbele' opportuniteitsstructuur. Aan de ene kant is het voor hen mogelijk om op te vallen met hun werk, en een uniek vernieuwend verhaal te vertellen. Aan de andere kant is het mogelijk dat zij beschouwd worden als 'té anders', waardoor hun werk wordt geclassificeerd als minderwaardig, minder relevant of minder interessant. Deze 'dubbele' opportuniteitsstructuur is dus een interessante situatie waarin allochtone creatieve ondernemers, mits goede aanpak, een zeer positief effect voor hun professionele zichtbaarheid kunnen bewerkstelligen via hun identiteit.

Dit onderzoek vertrekt precies vanuit die dualiteit om te onderzoeken hoe allochtone creatieve ondernemers actief proberen om steeds de voordelen van hun 'dubbele' situatie aan te boren, en hierbij de nadelen te minimaliseren. Hiervoor zijn er in het manuscript drie deelonderzoeken opgenomen. Het eerste onderzoek toont hoe allochtone creatieve ondernemers hun identiteit construeren, en dit op zo een manier dat deze bruikbaar is als vruchtbare inspiratiebron voor hun creatieve werk. Dit hoofdstuk gaat in op de relatie tussen diversiteit en creativiteit, en onderzoekt via een discoursanalyse hoe allochtone creatievelingen hier actief voordeel uit kunnen halen. Het tweede deelonderzoek gaat in op precies het aspect van innovatie, en hoe dit door middel van retoriek geconstrueerd, gecommuniceerd en benadrukt kan worden. Dit hoofdstuk buigt zicht over de specifieke vorm van waardeconstructie binnen de creatieve industrieën, en gaat dan ook dieper in op de machtsverhoudingen met de 'significant others' in het veld. Het laatste onderzoek bestudeert dan weer hoe legitimiteit ontstaat doordat allochtone creatieve ondernemers balanceren tussen 'fitting in' en 'standing out' in hun respectievelijke creatieve veld. Door middel van deze drie deelonderzoeken wil dit doctoraatsproefschrift een duidelijk beeld scheppen van de mogelijke voordelen van een allochtone identiteit voor creatief ondernemerschap, en tegelijk vragen

beantwoorden over waarde in de creatieve industrie, authenticiteit, diversiteit en discursieve strategieën en resources.

De grote bijdrage van dit onderzoek kan voornamelijk gesitueerd worden in onze doorgedreven structurationalistische aanpak. Hierdoor is het in dit onderzoek mogelijk om allochtone creatieve ondernemers volledig als proactieve 'agents' en 'full subjects' op de voorgrond te zetten, zonder hierbij de structuren waarmee zij te maken krijgen uit het oog te verliezen. Hierbij wordt er in dit proefschrift vooral gekeken naar de actieve rol van allochtone creatieve ondernemers in het gebruiken van hun identiteit als een waardevolle resource in de creatieve industrie. Op deze manier worden verschillende successtrategieën blootgelegd, die ook voor ondernemers in andere velden interessant kunnen zijn. Onze sociaal constructionistische aanpak tenslotte, toont bovendien duidelijk hoe betekenis en meerwaarde actief gecreëerd wordt door taal. Dit is een onderschat, maar onmisbaar element voor de studie van de creatieve industrieën, aangezien de waarde van creatieve producten zelden wordt bepaald door hun materiële veruitwendiging, zij het wel door hun immateriële en symbolische betekenis.