

Young actresses at work: an analysis of gender and power inequalities in the Italian theatrical sector

Emanuela Naclerio

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

emanuela.naclerio@unito.it

Received: 18/05/2021

Accepted: 15/11/2021

ABSTRACT

From the time the ban on women performing in theatrical plays was lifted in mid-1600s England to the communicative impact of the ongoing #MeToo campaign, the presence of actresses on stage has always had the capacity to profoundly question and significantly reduce societal norms related to gender and cultural spaces. Using a qualitative methodology, this paper analyses young actresses' experiences of work in the Italian performing arts sector, considering aesthetic and emotional aspects related to theatre work. The occupational environment, described through the sector's specific datasets and surveys, appears to be characterised by marked power asymmetries in terms of age and gender which, in turn, is embedded in young actresses' everyday bodily and emotional experiences of work.

Keywords: gender inequalities, cultural work, theatre actresses, Italy, performing arts

SUMMARY

- Introduction
- Gender, bodies, and inequalities in cultural work
- Research context and methodology
- Gender inequalities in the Italian theatrical context
- Aesthetics, gender, and power on and beyond the stage
- Conclusions
- Bibliographic references
- Biographical note

Corresponding author: Emanuela Naclerio. University of Turin, University of Milan.

Suggested citation: Naclerio, E. (2022). Young actresses at work: an analysis of gender and power inequalities in the Italian theatrical sector. *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society*, 7, 31-48. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.28939/iam.debats-136-1.2>

INTRODUCTION

Although the ideal creative artist has been associated with male romantic and heroic types (Bain, 2004; Taylor and Littleton, 2012), recent feminist analysis frames young women at the centre of the emphasis the contemporary cultural industry places on entrepreneurship and creativity (Conor et al., 2015; McRobbie, 2009). The cultural sector presents itself around narratives of equality, coolness, and diversity (Gill, 2002; McRobbie, 2002), but scholars underline that working practices reproducing gender, race, and class inequalities are widespread in working environments (Barrios and Villarroya, 2021; Friedman et al., 2017; Simon, 2019). Along with many artistic domains, the performative arts sector is highly dependent on public policies and has even been considered avant-garde in its processes of labour market flexibilisation (Bataille et al., 2020; Menger, 1999). Nonetheless, in a working environment characterised by informal dynamics and

by the predominance of project-based activities, young workers occupy an increasingly vulnerable position within them (Armano and Murgia, 2013; Bertolini et al., 2019; Hennekam and Bennett, 2017).

In the context of the performing arts, women's presence on the artistic stage has a controversial history of both stereotyped and emancipatory representations (Davis, 2002; Pullen, 2005). Considering the body as a bearer of cultural meanings in the public sphere, feminist literature has underlined how women engage in an ongoing confrontation with asymmetric logics and disciplinary projects (Bartky, 2015). Thus, women in professions where look and appearance are consubstantial with the labour itself (Mears, 2011) and where recruitment practices are explicitly based on physical appearance (Dean, 2005; Donovan, 2019), are particularly exposed to aesthetic scrutiny (Wolf, 1991).

Thus, taking into account gendered and power inequalities in the performing arts sector, the present article analyses young actresses' accounts of work in the Italian context and presents results from qualitative research that took place in Milan during 2019 and 2021. Considering the role the forced unemployment that affected the performing arts during 2020 and 2021 played in amplifying both pre-existing gender inequalities (Özkazanç-Pan and Pullen, 2020) and creative workers' vulnerability (Comunian and England, 2020), this paper considers actresses' accounts of their pre-pandemic work. Starting from the contribution of cultural studies to understanding gender in the cultural production sector (Conor et al., 2015; Gill, 2014), and based on sociological reflections that consider the role of aesthetic and emotional labour (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006; Hochschild, 1983), this essay explores the gendered dimension of young women's working practices in the performing arts.

The article is organised as follows: the first section delineates the literature's contribution to the study of young women and cultural work and reviews scholars' reflections on the concepts of aesthetic and emotional labour. The second section describes the research context and methodology adopted in this work. Using descriptive statistics, the third section traces the contours of the labour market and careers of actresses and the features of the Italian theatrical system. The final section presents a reflection on the gendered implications of actresses' working practices in relation to the sector's standards of beauty and performativity and the unequal distribution of power along the axes of age and gender.

GENDER, BODIES, AND INEQUALITIES IN CULTURAL WORK

In post-industrial societies, culture and entertainment have often been enthusiastically considered a vanguard and a crucial economic sector (Florida, 2002). Creative and artistic work has become associated with fashion and 'cool jobs' in the popular imagery, producing

what can be considered a 'problematic normalisation of risk' (Neff et al., 2005, p.308). In line with general trends in the cultural sector, over the past 30 years the Italian theatrical environment has witnessed an increasing number of aspirants competing for short-term employment positions (Gallina et al., 2018). In fact, both the length of the *tournee* (tour) and the time dedicated to the production of shows consistently declined and has impacted the length of actors' engagements (Serino, 2020). Furthermore, recent labour market reforms paved the way for the spread of hybrid employment relationships (Armano and Murgia, 2017) in which performers are increasingly hired not only as employees but also as independent workers, thereby making semi-dependent or formally autonomous contracts increasingly common in the sector (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011). Thus, the ability to develop personal tools to face insecurity in the labour market is a crucial task for young workers.

The cultural sector appears to be driven by talent, coolness, and meritocracy (McRobbie, 2003) but studies devoted to the analysis of inequalities in the workplace have shown how workers' multiple positionings and unequal possibilities are reproduced (Acker, 2006; Gill, 2002). In the context of the performing arts, Deborah Dean (2008) considers the interrelation between the concepts of race, gender, and age in structuring the possibilities of accessing a highly segmented working environment for the female workforce. Starting from the position of common sense regarding the sector, an analysis of the opportunities of access to the theatrical sector in Britain confirms that actors from privileged family backgrounds not only had fewer difficulties in this sense compared to their working class colleagues, but were also granted more favourable economic treatment (Friedman et al., 2017).

Regarding the U.S.-based cinema industry, the work of Samantha J. Simon (2019) started from Acker's reflection of gender in organisations (Acker, 1992) and considered the work of talent agencies, by showing how they reproduced the inequalities of race and gender. In turn, the work of Christina

Scharff (2015, 2017) regarding the experience of young female musicians working in the classical music sector highlighted the relationship between an entrepreneurial ethos and gendered dynamics in the construction of artistic subjectivities. Reflecting on the Italian institutional context of classical music, Clementina Casula (2019) considered female musicians' professional trajectories and reflected on the gendered inequalities that characterised their education and career paths. Furthermore, feminist scholars of the sociology of the arts have analysed the role of cultural gendered constructions in relation to women's positionings in the history of the arts, shedding light on the subaltern position that women occupied in the world of art and how men had privileged access to artistic professions (Nochlin, 2021; Pollock, 1999).

In an increasingly entrepreneurial-led context, women's positions seem to be split between the possibilities offered in a reflexive and individualised landscape (Beck, 1992) and the risk of experiencing dynamics of gender re-traditionalisation (Adkins, 1999; Banks and Milestone, 2011). If, in the past, the figure of the successful entrepreneur bore masculine traits (Bruni et al., 2004), nowadays young women are considered the entrepreneurial subject *par excellence* (Scharff, 2016), in a context where communication abilities are increasingly requested in the labour market (Grugulis and Vincent, 2009; Nickson et al., 2012). Hence, Arlie Hochschild's concept of emotional labour (1979, 1983), which was originally employed to describe the working domain of care and services, has been increasingly adopted in the past 20 years in scholars' reflections on cultural industries (Grindstaff, 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2008; Mears and Finlay, 2005). Moreover, the attention paid to the socio-psychological dynamics of cultural work has been at the centre of an increasing number of cultural work analyses in recent years. These studies have underlined emotional labour's relationship with both entrepreneurial stances and precarisation processes (Ashton, 2021). Thus, several authors have reflected upon the role of project-based working and informality in creative environments

in the development of instrumental social relationships (Neff, 2012; Wittel, 2001), especially regarding 'compulsory networking' (Neff et al., 2005, p.308).

By directing increased attention towards physical practices in academic analyses, the concept of aesthetic labour has been used to try to overcome the notion of emotional labour's distinction between internal and external dispositions (Witz et al., 2003). The notion of aesthetic labour has been mainly studied in relation to employees (Warhurst et al., 2000) but the work of Dean (2005) was pivotal in extending the concept of aesthetic labour to freelance performers' recruitment practices. Following a phenomenological analysis (Crossley, 1996; Csordas, 1990), scholars have problematised the need to understand the embodiment of labour practices and now consider aesthetic labour to be a possible extension of the concept of emotional labour (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006). Indeed, in the field of professional fashion models, women's performance of emotional labour and the management of body capital has been regarded in relation to irregular occupational patterns (Mears, 2011; Mears and Connell, 2016; Mears and Finlay, 2005). The relationship between aesthetic labour and identity formation has further been considered in the work of Sylvia Holla, who analysed the fashion practices of models from an anthropological standpoint (Holla, 2016, 2020).

Some authors have highlighted that aesthetic ideals such as feminist thought (Butler, 1990; Grosz, 1994) and symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1979; Kessler and McKenna, 1985) are created in specific sociocultural environments and mirror asymmetric gender, race, and class relationships (Skeggs, 1997). Indeed, pointing to the structures of power and inequality at stake in different contemporary sectors, an edited collection of essays on 'aesthetic entrepreneurship' has been introduced to indicate the increased attention on normative aesthetic values and its entanglement with entrepreneurial and neoliberal ideals in women's experiences of life and work (Elias et al., 2017).

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this paper are based on qualitative research aiming to explore Italian actors' and actresses' working experiences and was conducted between 2019 and 2021. Considering the crisis the entertainment sector encountered following the COVID-19 pandemic, this analysis focuses on actresses' narratives of work in reference to a time before March 2020 and considers Italian National Social Security Institute (*Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale* or INPS) statistical data relating to 2019. The main fieldwork was carried out in Milan because of its relevance to the Italian creative and cultural sector. In the past decades, one third of the city's population was directly employed in creative and cultural industries (Bonomi, 2012). Indeed, the vivacity of cultural production is directly reflected in the performing arts' sector. Considering data from 2019, collected and elaborated by the Italian Authors and Publishers Association (*Società Italiana degli Autori e degli Editori* or SIAE), the majority of the theatre business was focused in the Lombardy region of Italy (*Annuario dello Spettacolo*, 2019) both in terms of the number of shows performed (16.3% of total in 2019) and as the location for businesses that received public funds for theatre activities (18.91% of total in 2019).

According to Gallina (2013, p.22), the Association of Italian Entertainment Industries (*L'Associazione Generale Italiana dello Spettacolo* or AGIS) gathered 128 acting companies (*compagnie*) in Lombardy, 79 of which are located near Milan; out of a total of 30 theatres financed by the state, 21 were in Milan. The theatrical vocation of the city was not only due to La Scala's presence. The first Italian public theatre, Piccolo Teatro, opened there in 1947 with the intent to provide the citizens not with mere entertainment but with artistic and socially valuable cultural productions (Colbert, 2005; Locatelli, 2015). Development of the theatre offerings has further been sustained by the City council through a network of conventions and funding opportunities that generate a fertile environment for the growth of theatre projects (Calbi, 2011).

However, over the past 20 years, activities related to the live performance sector have suffered from contraction of the state's economic funding (the *Fondo unico per lo Spettacolo* or FUS) for the entertainment industries (Ferrazza, 2019, p.36). Despite the growing attention and support live performance has received from the private sector, and while established organisations have managed to navigate the crisis, new proposals and experimental projects have found it difficult to be sustainable in the urban environment over the past 10 years (d'Ovidio and Cossu, 2017; Gallina, 2013). Moreover, the role of the public has become central for theatres' cultural programming (Taormina, 2006). Thus, when the COVID-19 crisis sunk the sector during March 2020, the live entertainment industry had already been struggling to maintain economic sustainability before then, making the coming years a crucial challenge for both publicly and privately funded entities.

The fieldwork performed for this current work consisted of the collection of field notes in online and offline interaction spaces and the performance of in-depth interviews with workers. Following the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and necessity for physical distancing, several research participants were recruited and interviewed remotely via spaces such as Skype or Zoom. The interviews lasted from 40 to 100 minutes and were recorded with audio and/or video support with the written consent of the participants. After the meetings, the recordings were transcribed in Italian and were anonymised. Following a first open-ended and colloquial start to the interviews, they were then guided according to the following topics: education, working practices, personal satisfaction, and future expectations. To try to comprehend the structure and functioning of the Italian theatrical field, contextual interviews with field experts were also conducted and quantitative data from different sources including the INPS or the Italian General Confederation of Labour (*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* or CGIL) union were analysed.

This present analysis considers 11 interviews conducted with actresses aged between 27 and 36 years who had 3 to 8 years of experience in the performing arts sector, along with five contextual interviews with field experts. Thus, the category of ‘young’ actresses was constructed around both their biographical age and career experience. Considering both institutionalised and informal working environments, some of the interviewed actresses had attended established state-funded theatre academies while others had had a heterogeneous education. Embracing the diversity of performing arts, the sampling choice was open to

workers in various theatre genres (such as cabaret, drama, or experimental theatre), that had specific variations in production processes and informal regulations. All the research participants had an Italian ethnic background and held either a Bachelors’ degree or an equivalent issued by an artistic academy. With the purpose of obtaining different points of view on the performing arts working environment, this paper considered the accounts of two private theatre school directors, one coordinator of a publicly-funded acting school attended by some of the interviewees, one agent and manager, and one union member.

Table 1 Descriptive data for the research participants.

NAME	AGE	ACADEMIC TRAINING	GENRE	WORKING MORE OR LESS THAN 5 YEARS
Mary	29	No	Various	Less
Candy	31	Yes	Drama	Less
Mirana	35	Yes	Various	More
Alicia	34	Yes	Various	More
Selene	30	Yes	Comedy	Less
Ermione	29	Yes	Clownery	Less
Juno	29	Yes	Drama	Less
Tamara	29	Yes	Experimental theatre	Less
Nina	30	Yes	Drama	More
Morena	27	Yes	Various	Less
Bruna	36	No	Various	More

Source: Prepared by the authors.

To describe the Italian context of occupations in the performing arts, this paper considered data from: (i) the 2019 INPS National Social Welfare Observatory on performing artist occupations; (ii) national research on performers’ working

conditions commissioned in 2017 by the Communication Workers’ Union (*Sindacato Lavoratori della Comunicazione* o SLC)-CGIL and the Vittorio Foundation (*Fondazione Di Vittorio*); and (iii) research on gender inequalities in Italian

theatres conducted in 2019 by *Amleta*, the feminist collective of actresses.

The analytical process was influenced by grounded theory assumptions (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012) and concerned interviewees' narratives about themes such as the body, vulnerability, passion, and careers. The collected data was approached from an intersectional perspective to explore age and gender interactions, leaving race and class dimensions for future research. The Italian state does not collect statistical data on the race or ethnic origin of the population (Ambrosetti and Cela, 2015), meaning that data concerning individual ethnic backgrounds is not available (Pagnoncelli, 2010) and so proxies must be used to grasp the effects of these variables. Thus, we considered the research participants' interviews in terms of gender, educational background, and career opportunities as well as other categorisations emerging from interviewees' narratives such as sexual orientation.

GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE ITALIAN THEATRICAL CONTEXT

In recent years, scholars who have analysed gender inequalities in the Italian context of work have—despite the rise in participation of women in the job market—underlined the persistence of occupational exclusion (Bertolini, 2010; Bozzon, 2008; Reyneri, 2009). Furthermore, in a context where careers and working environments are constructed and run through a specifically masculine structure (Gherardi, 1995), the relationship between gender, work flexibility, and life trajectory has also been highlighted (Saraceno, 1991, 2002). In particular, in the performing arts, the working environment appears to reproduce a gendered occupational segregation between creative professions in the masculine domain and mostly feminine administrative occupations (Proust, 2017). This also occurs along the lines of traditional female and male tasks (Fraise, 2000) where dressmakers were usually women and technicians were

usually men.¹ In this section, we use quantitative data collected in three sector-specific surveys to detail the main features of actors' work in the theatre sector in Italy, focusing especially on young women's positions.

The Italian theatrical environment has undergone several transformations during the last century that have shaped actors' occupational and career courses (Serino, 2020). Nowadays, actors' work is predominantly project-based and is organised around short contracts lasting from one day to several months, thereby making short periods of unemployment an organic part of the sector (Gallina et al., 2018). According to the survey *Vita da artista* (Life as an artist)² (Di Nunzio et al., 2017), in 2015, more women working in the live performance sector experienced periods of unemployment lasting more than six months than men (16.4% female vs. 11.5% male; p.23). Furthermore, actors are traditionally considered employees but, as has happens in other working domains, hybrid employment relationships are rising and semi-dependent and formally autonomous contracts are increasingly common in the sector (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011).

Thus, considering that the Italian welfare system is based on dependent employment, the uncertainty of social protection during periods of unemployment or underemployment is likely to expose workers to hardship and blackmail (Armano and Murgia, 2017). In 2015, among the artists who did not benefit from

1 INPS data collected on performing arts workers in 2019 shows that women were overrepresented in certain occupational categories. For example women represented a total of 12% of the technicians employed but outnumbered their male counterparts in sectors such as administration (70% of the workers) and in costume, make up, and set design (71% of the workforce).

2 *Vita da Artista* is a national research survey on the living and working conditions of workers in the performing arts sector, promoted and financed by Fondazione Di Vittorio and the SLC-CGIL union. The research is devoted to mapping the main aspects of artists' experiences and to supporting union and workers' association interventions. The results were presented in 2017 and were based on 2,090 questionnaires completed by a non-probabilistic sample of respondents and collected during 2016 and 2017 through an online survey (Di Nunzio et al., 2017).

unemployment indemnity, 43% did not meet the required criteria for accessing this allowance (Di Nunzio et al., 2017, p.23). Furthermore, according to *Vita da artista* (2017, p. 22), irregular working conditions are more likely to be faced by young people (50.7% of workers aged under 30 define it as “fairly common”) and by women (39.4 % of women vs. 35% of men). If, in the past, medium-high daily salaries used to compensate for moments of unemployment, after the 2008 crisis, Italian performers’ earnings are now considered to be just above the poverty line (Turrini and Chicchi, 2013). Indeed, in 2015, 83.4% of female workers who completed the survey declared that they earned less than 10,000 euros per year, a figure also reported by 93.9% of respondents aged under 30 and 78.4% of all the actors contacted (Di Nunzio et al., 2017, p.18).

In this context, a useful source to trace the contours of inequalities in actors’ and actresses’ employment positions are the data collected by the INPS Observatory on performing artists’ occupations.³ Considering data referring to 2019, before the COVID-19 outbreak, 16.4% fewer women were working in the acting profession than their male colleagues. With the intention to collect data on gender differences in the performing arts, the *Amleta* feminist collective of actresses analysed performers’ presence on the main Italian theatre stages between 2017 and 2020 and found that actresses constituted 37.5% and actors 62.5% of the total number of workers.⁴ Thus, this field research highlighted that the un-

derrepresentation of women in theatre, performing arts, television, and cinema is widely known among professionals in the sector, who recognise its impact on women’s careers, beginning with their education. The following excerpts from our research interviews with field experts illustrate this recognition:

For women the issue is, unfortunately, related to the job market. There are more parts for men than for women and so on and so forth. This is the biggest problem for actresses; the competition is fiercer. —*Astianatte, 46 years old, director of a private theatre school.*

It’s a man’s world, therefore representations are predominantly of male characters, there are fewer [dramaturgical] parts for women. Women’s difficulties in succeeding are enormous compared to men’s. Canonical beauty is still very important for women while for men, obviously, this is less so... For example, ageing: a woman of sixty years old is old, but at sixty years old a man has become very ‘interesting’. —*Alina, 48 years old, actors’ manager.*

Despite their different positions in the institutional field, both Astianatte and Alina acknowledged the presence of a gender issue in the entertainment sector as well as its cultural origins. *Figure 1* considers the cumulative number of worked days of actors and actresses in 2019 divided by their age groups and allows for further reflections on gender inequalities and career trajectories. The overall career pattern appears to be similar for both men and women. It registers a peak of opportunities between 25 and 34 years and a slow decrease over the years, a trend that can be compared to other occupations in which body capital is central (Bertolini and Vallero, 2011; Mears, 2011; Wacquant, 1995). Nevertheless, women appeared to be working less than their male colleagues at every stage of their careers and the gender gap originating during their late 20s continued to characterise each subsequent cohort of actresses. Looking at the number of worked days for each cohort in 2019 also gives insights into

3 The INPS National Social Welfare Observatory on performing artist occupations is a statistical dataset made available to the general public by the INPS; the data are updated every year and are gathered from the administrative archive of the monthly taxes paid by employers (*Uniemens*) and contains information regarding (i) worker identification; (ii) working contracts; and (iii) unemployment and other indemnities.

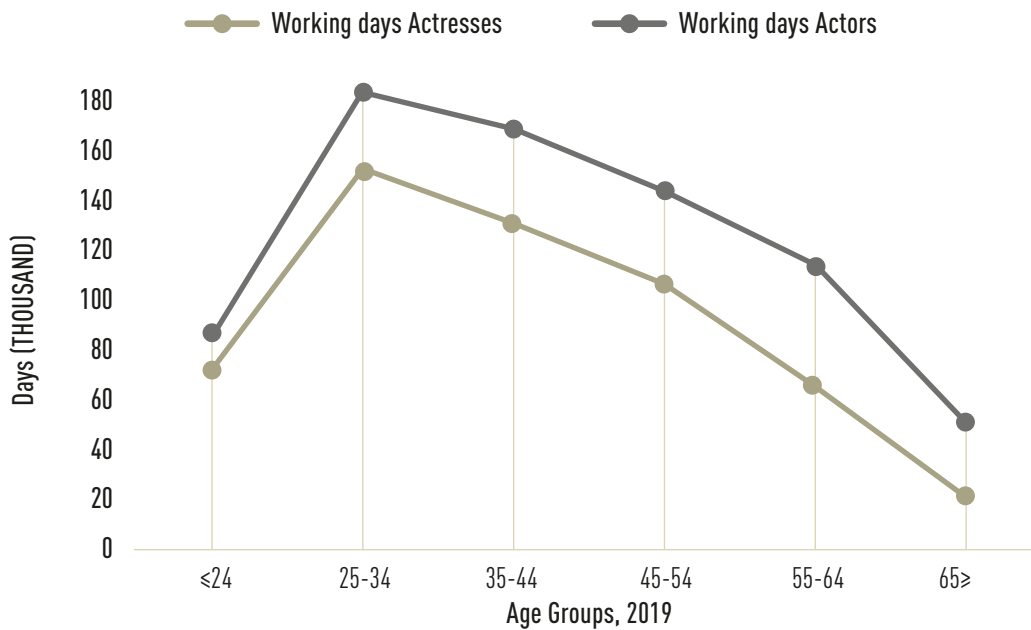
4 *Amleta* is a collective of actresses created in 2020 to gather evidence for and contrast gender inequalities and discriminations in the entertainment industry. The survey referenced is available at: <https://fb.watch/4pLZpv89Uy/>. According to my fieldwork notes, the group extracted the data on gender participation in theatrical ensembles from Italian theatres’ websites during April and May 2020.

society’s dominant cultural representations. Thus, the media industries seemed to prefer representing males over females and youth over older people,

painting the contours of a job market in which age and gender are the central variables of employment opportunities.

Figure 1 The cumulative number of worked days in 2019 (professional category of actors).

Calculated by the author. The figure shows the cumulative number of worked days by actresses and actors in the year 2019 divided by their age groups. *Source:* INPS, 2019.



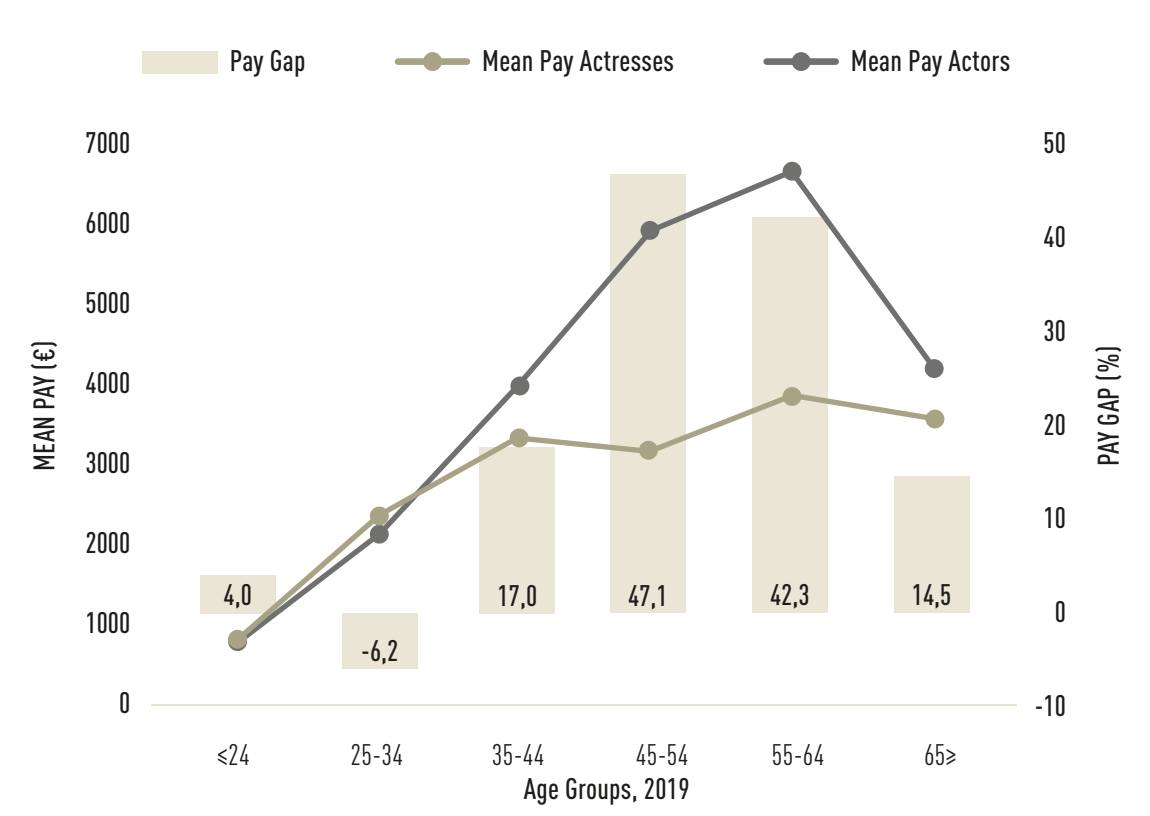
SOURCE: Instituto Nacional de Seguridad Social Italiano (INPS), 2019.

According to INPS data, considering the average retribution of actresses and actors in 2019, women earned 30.4% less than men. In relation to figure 2, which shows the gender pay-gap related to age cohorts, it appears that differences in wages started to become marked in the cohort aged 35 to 44 years and peaked in the successive decade,

reaching 47.1%. Concerning young actresses aged 25–34 years, the figures show that, in 2019, they cumulatively earned 6.2% more than male colleagues in the same cohort. This feature is characteristic of spectacle professions where gender and sexuality are traditionally intertwined (Mears and Connell, 2016).

Figure 2 Gender wage-gap (percentage).

Calculated by the author. The figure shows the gender wage-gap, i.e., the average differences between the remunerations of actors and actresses in 2019 divided by their age groups. *Source: INPS, 2019.*



SOURCE: Instituto Nacional de Seguridad Social Italiano (INPS), 2019.

In this context, the absence of a formal qualification to access the job market and growth in the number of aspirants has fostered the increased relevance of informal rules and professional networks (Bertolini and Vallero, 2011). Thus, inequalities are equally related to earnings and working possibilities as they are to symbolic and aesthetic capitals. As happens in several creative environments, social and professional networks have emerged as a means to validate actors' reputations and trustworthiness and, ultimately, to distribute work (Alacovska, 2018; Gandini, 2015). Therefore a concerted and consistent effort must be devoted to enhancing personal and professional relationships and to maintaining and increasing

professional skills among actors. This represents a series of economic and relational investments that are particularly onerous for young workers at the beginning of their careers (Bertolini et al., 2019). Furthermore, in this context, power inequalities have specific connotations in terms of age and gender. According to data gathered by *Amleta's* survey, 76% of theatre artistic and administrative directors and 78.4% of theatrical directors are men. Considering the INPS 2019 data, the cumulative data for actresses showed that their earnings were 38% less than the total salaries of male directors and playwrights. At the same time, a total of 18.4% of actresses employed in 2019 were aged between 20 and 24, while directors'

biggest cohort comprised males aged 40 to 44. Thus, in the context that adult males held the majority of leading positions while young women constituted the largest workforce section, power appears to be related to age and gender.

AESTHETICS, GENDER, AND POWER ON AND BEYOND THE STAGE

The systems' attention to age and gender, and to the related aesthetic aspects, emerged from the interviews as something that characterises actresses' experiences of work not only in terms of career possibilities but also as an impact on their emotional well-being. Institutionalised practices in the sector, theatrical tradition, and scenic exigencies open and close spaces of possibilities to actresses and define a standard in relation to both physical form and body adaptability and to their emotional peculiarities (Naclerio, 2020). Some interviewees openly criticised the unwritten rules of beauty that dominate the auditions system. Among them, Mary, an actress and feminist activist, stressed the importance of legitimising non-compliant bodies on the stage.

This constant request of being absolutely compliant with the beauty norm that is requested of an actress, but why? [...] It is limiting and humiliating, we know that very well. —*Mary*.

Other actresses pointed to the constant work needed to maintain an employable—and compliant—body, mentioning eating practices, meditation, and sport activities and the engagement in a constant learning activities to perfect their abilities or acquire new skills. Candy and Mirana, who both studied in prestigious academic settings and worked in big theatrical productions, said the following.

It is very important to have a body that is ready [...] there are directors that ask you to run for hours or to perform extenuating choreographies [...] I experienced [having to stand] in heels for two hours; it is the most painful thing that I've ever done, your body needs to be ready. —*Candy*.

There is a lot of carelessness, there's the idea that they do with you what they want, right? So, today is a 'Yes', tomorrow is 'Oh my gosh you've lost too much weight, you're too skinny'. —*Mirana*.

Even if accounting for different episodes, from Candy and Mirana's words emerges a sentiment of disposability and disempowerment surrounding the relationship between young actresses' bodies and their working practices. If it is true that not only women's bodies are marked by aesthetic norms in spectacle professions (Mears, 2011; Wolkowitz, 2006), it is also true that women's bodies are at the centre of asymmetric attention and gendered ideas. In the following extract, Alicia exemplifies the masculine structure of the theatrical sector that she came to understand through academic training and working experience in different theatrical genres. As happens in other working environments (Gherardi, 1995), a white, cisgender, and middleclass ideal man is taken as the reference term both of working practices related to consumer tastes and to aesthetics and artistic aims.

The feminine voice, for example, [...] is often higher, while in the theatre [we're asked] to perform in deep voices [...]. It's as if the feminine body isn't accepted, the feminine voice is shrill. —*Alicia*.

Thus, it appears that actresses are trained to embody, through practice and exercise, physical features that are canonically ascribed to male actors, hinting at the intrinsically masculine structure of the sector. Thus, the public nature of the actor's figure and the historical prevalence of male workers has set the standard not only for the technical skills required from actresses but also for what concerns employer's expectations in relation to working long hours when debuting (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011). In particular, theatre work is characterised by late evenings, social relationships with journalists or fans, and by working during public holidays and festivities. Both Selene and Alicia were in their 30s and, during our interaction,

longed for the possibility of forming a family and having a more regular life.

A part of me would like to have a child, the other part of me knows that I should stop, therefore, I am postponing this decision [...]. But I know that if I had a job that could provide me with more security, I'd do it. —*Selene*.

If you want to have a kid, for women, it's a problem [in your career], at least for a while, you can't do it. —*Alicia*.

The consideration of those features, alongside the instability that characterises theatre careers and the reduction of social security, echoes the discourses of the interviewees on topics related to maternity. In line with analyses considering the relationship between insecurity and life trajectories (Saraceno, 1991; Solera, 2012) emerges the fact that the combination of scarce economic security, low salaries, highly unstable career paths, and short term contracts have led young women to postpone maternity to an indefinite time in the future, when they presume that their economic conditions and career positions will have improved. In a context where body capital is central and young actresses represent the majority of the workforce, their relationship with directors and producers appears to be at the centre of gender and age-related power structures. Similar to the outcomes of project-based working activities, actresses are responsible for both finding new working opportunities and negotiating their personal salaries. Indeed, during the interviews, Candy and Selene openly spoke about their emotional difficulties in the phase of negotiation.

'Could you please respect me? Even though I'm a 30-year-old woman. Or is it that only 50-year-old men are respected?'... It is not easy at all. —*Candy*.

At the end [of the negotiation] I'm always the one who gives up [...]. I think, 'after all they're doing me a favour in hiring me'. I always have this thought, but it shouldn't be like this. —*Selene*.

Like the excerpts quoted above, several interviewees reported feelings of discomfort related to the possibilities of being listened to and considered because of their age and gender. Selene's excerpt points to the emotional involvement that characterises young aspirants' approaches to acting possibilities. In line with previous research (Hakim, 1991), the young women interviewed appeared to be highly committed to and satisfied with their job, even when not believing they had been adequately rewarded (Arvidsson et al., 2010; Murgia, 2015). In this picture, directors and producers not only controlled the economic negotiation but, considering the informality of the sector's recruitment practices, also held the power to select aspirants and drive young actors' careers towards success or failure. Mirana started to work soon after she left theatre school. She described herself as very young and unprepared for the strenuous environment of cinema and television production. During her interview, she talked about the first and most successful part of her career as being characterised by negative emotional and interpersonal experiences that affected her body and her feelings towards acting, leading her to take a break from the stage.

Several times I thought that I had to be attractive, because this is how people behaved [around me] or maybe because I was afraid to say no [...]. Then I started to realise that in this work, especially if you are a woman, you need to protect yourself enormously. —*Mirana*.

As the #MeToo movement brought to light, the highly aestheticised and sexualised position of actresses' work often entertains an ambiguous relationship with directors' central roles in the professional community. Ermione worked in big theatre productions for several years but, following a troubled relationship with a director, she decided to temporarily withdraw from large theatres and to work on smaller artistic projects. Even if she did not like the ambiguity of the working environment, Ermione believed she was cut off from the 'seduction game' played between actresses and producers/directors because of her sexual orientation.

I've felt completely deprived of this [seductive] power because I'm gay [...] several times I had the impression I had been considered and observed less. —*Ermione*.

Both Mirana's and Ermione's excerpts depict an environment where differences of power produce discrimination and emotional discomfort. The pervasiveness and dangerousness of these injustices and psychological distress was frequently recounted in their collected interviews. Young actresses talked about hazing practices, depicted themselves as 'exposed', and explained the necessity to protect themselves in a sexualised and aestheticised competitive environment. As Mirana and Ermione did, several interviewees reported having taken a break from highly rewarding theatre or cinema production work out of the necessity for less stressful and more spontaneous working environments, despite being in the early years of their careers. Thus, through ongoing self-reflection, these workers were engaged in continuous emotional work on themselves and their careers with the aim of finding and keeping an emotional space of comfort and realisation.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I explored young actresses' working positions in Italy using qualitative and quantitative sources. The gendered implications of these working practices were strictly related to, on the one hand, the sector's emphasis on physical appearance and the relevance of stereotyped representations and, on the other, the project-based nature of the occupation. In this context, the data presented here suggested that women occupy a particularly vulnerable position: they face more unemployment and underemployment and earn and work less than their male colleagues. Consistent with other findings for occupations in which body capital plays a central role (Bertolini and Vallero, 2011; Mears and Connell, 2016), most working opportunities were made available to young adults. The aestheticised and sexualised nature of the occupation also led

young women to experience a reverse pay gap, whereby actresses aged between 25 and 34 earned slightly more than their male peers. Furthermore, while the majority of aspirants were young women, the positions of power central to the occupational field—directing and producing—were mostly held by adult males who controlled both auditions and salary negotiations.

Thus, analysis of gender and power inequalities in this sector must consider precarious employment conditions as well as the relevance of informal aesthetic norms. As occurs in many entertainment professions, ongoing attention to physical techniques and appearance is required to maintain and enhance employability. Linked to this, feelings of disempowerment and inadequacy were often reported by the interviewees in relation to body-centred working practices. Similar to several other sectors of cultural work, alongside the centrality of aesthetics, low income, instability, compulsory socialising, and the sector's fundamentally masculine structure combine to affect actresses' decisions to postpone maternity (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011). Thus, the theatre sector can be defined as a context of strong power asymmetry connoted in terms of age and gender, in which relationships between employers and employees are often ambiguous. In this context, both aesthetic and emotional factors are involved in finding work opportunities and in salary negotiation. Thus, a need for ongoing self-reflection emerges, whereby emotions are modified and negotiated in relation to both the working environment's characteristics and actresses' personal desires.

This present analysis used the theatrical sector to deepen the literature's contributions to, and to raise awareness of, gender inequalities in cultural work. The use of qualitative and quantitative data allows us to consider both structural characteristics of performing art environments. In turn we can reflect upon the peculiar emphasis on appearances typical of exhibitive professions to grasp young actresses' bodily and emotional experiences of inequality.

Finally, the results of this work suggest that current lines of research on cultural work should be

expanded to consider both gender and other structural inequalities such as race and class.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- Acker, J. (1992). From Sex Roles to Gendered Institutions. *Contemporary Sociology*, 21(5), p.565. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2075528>
- Acker, J. (2006). Inequality Regimes. *Gender and Society*, 20(4), 441–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243206289499>
- Adkins, L. (1999). Community and Economy: A Retraditionalization of Gender? *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16(1), pp. 119–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327699016001008>
- Alacovska, A. (2018). Informal creative labour practices: A relational work perspective. *Human Relations*, 71(12), pp. 1563–1589. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718754991>
- Ambrosetti, E., and Cela, E. (2015). Demography of Race and Ethnicity in Italy. In R. Sáenz, D. G. Embrick, and N. P. Rodríguez (Eds.), *The International Handbook of the Demography of Race and Ethnicity* (pp. 457–482). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-8891-8_22
- Armano, E., and Murgia, A. (2013). The precariousnesses of young knowledge workers: A subject-oriented approach. *Global Discourse*, 3(3), pp.486–501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23269995.2013.865313>
- Armano, E., and Murgia, A. (2017). Hybrid areas of work in Italy. In *Mapping Precariousness, Labour Insecurity and Uncertain Livelihoods* (pp. 47–59). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315593838-5>
- Arvidsson, A., Malossi, G., and Naro, S. (2010). Passionate Work? Labour Conditions in the Milan Fashion Industry. *Journal for Cultural Research*, 14(3), pp. 295–309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14797581003791503>
- Ashton, D. (2021). Cultural organisations and the emotional labour of becoming entrepreneurial. *Poetics*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2021.101534>
- Bain, A. (2004). Female artistic identity in place: The studio. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 5(2), pp. 171–193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360410001690204>
- Banks, M., and Milestone, K. (2011). Individualization, Gender and Cultural Work. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18(1), pp. 73–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2010.00535.x>
- Barrios, M., and Villarroya, A. (2021). What is needed to promote gender equality in the cultural sector? Responses from cultural professionals in Catalonia. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, pp. 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494211048903>
- Bartky, S. Lee. (2015). *Femininity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*. Routledge.
- Bataille, P., Casula, C., Bertolini, S., and Perrenoud, M. (2020). From atypical to paradigmatic? Artistic work in contemporary capitalist societies. *Sociologia Del Lavoro*, 157(2). <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.32829.49126>
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity* (Vol. 17). SAGE Publications Inc.
- Bertolini. (2010). Genere e precarietà tra lavoro e famiglia: Percezioni, aspettative e strategie delle giovani donne. *Autonomie locali e servizi sociali*, 1, pp. 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.1447/32395>
- Bertolini, S., and Luciano, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Incontri dietro le quinte: Imprese e professionisti nel settore dello spettacolo*. Il Mulino. <https://www.mulino.it/isbn/9788815150127>
- Bertolini, S., Moiso, V., and Unt, M. (2019). Precarious and creative: *Youth facing uncertainty in the labour market*. In *Youth and the Politics of the Present: Coping with Complexity and Ambivalence*. Routledge.
- Bertolini, S., and Vallero, M. (2011). “Io non faccio la ballerina, io sono una ballerina”. Tra successo e abbandono: I percorsi di carriera nei settori artistici. *Sociologia del lavoro*, 123, pp. 207–229. <https://doi.org/10.3280/SL2011-123013>

- Bonomi, A. (2012). Milano: *Le tre città che stanno in una*. Mondadori.
- Bozzon, R. (2008). Modelli di partecipazione delle donne al mercato del lavoro. Un'applicazione dell'analisi delle sequenze alle storie lavorative femminili. *Stato e mercato*, 2, pp. 217–250. <https://doi.org/10.1425/27523>
- Bruni, A., Gherardi, S., and Poggio, B. (2004). Doing Gender, Doing Entrepreneurship: An Ethnographic Account of Intertwined Practices. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4), pp. 406–429. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2004.00240.x>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge. <https://philpapers.org/rec/BUTGTF>
- Calbi, A. (Ed.). (2011). Milano. *Città e spettacolo. Teatro danza musica cinema e dintorni*. Sassi.
- Casula, C. (2019). Gender and the Classical Music World: The unaccomplished professionalization of women in Italy. *Per Musi*, 39, pp. 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.35699/2317-6377.2019.5270>
- Charmaz, K., and Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, and K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (Vol. 2, pp. 347–365). Sage Thousand Oaks, California.
- Colbert, F. (2005). The Piccolo Teatro of Milan: Theatre of Europe. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 7(3), pp. 66–73.
- Comunian, R., and England, L. (2020). Creative and cultural work without filters: Covid-19 and exposed precarity in the creative economy. *Cultural Trends*, 29(2), pp. 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2020.1770577>
- Conor, B., Gill, R., and Taylor, S. (2015). Gender and Creative Labour. *The Sociological Review*, 63(1_suppl), pp. 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12237>
- Crossley, N. (1996). Body-Subject/Body-Power: Agency, Inscription and Control in Foucault and Merleau-Ponty. *Body and Society*, 2(2), pp. 99–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X96002002006>
- Csordas, T. J. (1990). Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology. *Ethos*, 18(1), pp. 5–47. <https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.1990.18.1.02a00010>
- d'Ovidio, M., and Cossu, A. (2017). Culture is reclaiming the creative city: The case of Macao in Milan, Italy. *City, Culture and Society*, 8, pp. 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2016.04.001>
- Davis, T. C. (2002). *Actresses as working women: Their social identity in Victorian culture*. Routledge.
- Dean, D. (2005). Recruiting a self. *Work, Employment and Society*, 19(4), 14. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1177/0950017005058061>
- Dean, D. (2008). No human resource is an island: Gendered, racialized access to work as a performer. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 15(2), pp. 161–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2007.00389.x>
- Di Nunzio, D., Ferrucci, G., and Toscano, E. (2017). *Vita da artisti: Ricerca nazionale sulle condizioni di vita e di lavoro dei professionisti dello spettacolo*. Fondazione Di Vittorio and SLC-CGIL.
- Donovan, R. (2019). 'Must Be Heavysset': Casting Women, Fat Stigma, and Broadway Bodies. *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, 31(3). https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_pubs/539
- Elias, A., Gill, R., and Scharff, C. (2017). *Aesthetic Labour: Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47765-1_1
- Entwistle, J., and Wissinger, E. (2006). Keeping up Appearances: Aesthetic Labour in the Fashion Modelling Industries of London and New York. *The Sociological Review*, 54(4), pp. 774–794. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2006.00671.x>
- Ferrazza, F. (Ed.). (2019). *Relazione sull'utilizzazione del Fondo Unico per lo Spettacolo e sull'andamento complessivo dello spettacolo* (p. 284). MiBACT - Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali e per il Turismo.
- Florida, R. L. (2002). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. Basic Books.
- Fraisse, G. (2000). *Les deux gouvernements: La famille et la Cité*. Gallimard Paris.
- Friedman, S., O'Brien, D., and Laurison, D. (2017). 'Like Skydiving without a Parachute': How Class Origin Shapes Occupational Trajectories in British Acting. *Sociology*, 51(5), pp. 992–1010. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038516629917>
- Gallina, M. (2013). *Le organizzazioni culturali di fronte alla crisi: Enti teatrali, musicali, di produzione e promozione d'arte contemporanea e audiovisuale* (No. 10; Quaderni dell'osservatorio). Fondazione Cariplo. <https://doi.org/10.4460/2013quaderno10>
- Gallina, M., Monti, L., and Ponte di Pino, O. (Eds.). (2018). *Attore... Ma di lavoro cosa fai? Occupazione, diritti, welfare nello spettacolo dal vivo*. Franco Angeli.

- Gandini, A. (2015). Il lavoro freelance: Reputazione e capitale sociale nell'era del "lavoro digitale". *Quaderni Di Sociologia*, 69, pp. 87–106. <https://doi.org/10.4000/qds.522>
- Gherardi, S. (1995). *Gender, symbolism and organizational cultures*. Sage.
- Gill, R. (2002). Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-Based New Media Work in Euro. *Information, Communication and Society*, 5(1), pp. 70–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180110117668>
- Gill, R. (2014). Unspeakable Inequalities: Post Feminism, Entrepreneurial Subjectivity, and the Repudiation of Sexism among Cultural Workers. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 21(4), pp. 509–528. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxu016>
- Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender advertisements* (1st Harper colophon ed). Harper and Row.
- Grindstaff, Laura. (2002). *The money shot: Trash, class, and the making of TV talk shows*. University of Chicago Press.
- Grosz, E. A. (1994). *Volatile bodies: Toward a corporeal feminism*. Indiana University Press.
- Grugulis, I., and Vincent, S. (2009). Whose skill is it anyway?: 'Soft' skills and polarization. *Work, Employment and Society*, 23(4), pp. 597–615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017009344862>
- Hakim, C. (1991). Grateful slaves and self-made women: Fact and fantasy in women's work orientations. *European Sociological Review*, 7(2), pp. 101–121. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.esr.a036590>
- Hennekam, S., and Bennett, D. (2017). Sexual Harassment in the Creative Industries: Tolerance, Culture and the Need for Change: Sexual harassment in the creative industries. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 24(4), pp. 417–434. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12176>
- Hesmondhalgh, D., and Baker, S. (2008). Creative Work and Emotional Labour in the Television Industry. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 25(7–8), pp. 97–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276408097798>
- Hochschild, A. R. (1979). Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(3), pp. 551–575.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart*. University of California Press.
- Holla, S. (2016). Justifying Aesthetic Labor: How Fashion Models Enact Coherent Selves. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(4), pp. 474–500. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241615575067>
- Holla, S. (2020). Food in fashion modelling: Eating as an aesthetic and moral practice. *Ethnography*, 21(1), pp. 26–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138118769914>
- Kessler, S. J., and McKenna, W. (1985). *Gender: An ethnomethodological approach*. University of Chicago Press.
- Locatelli, S. (2015). *Teatro Pubblico Servizio? Studi sui primordi del Piccolo Teatro e sul sistema teatrale italiano*. lulu.com.
- McRobbie, A. (2002). From Holloway to Hollywood: Happiness at Work in the New Cultural Economy? In *Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life Cultural economy: Cultural analysis and commercial life* (pp. 97–114). SAGE Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446218440.n6>
- McRobbie, A. (2003). *British Fashion Design: Rag Trade or Image Industry?* (0 ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203168011>
- McRobbie, A. (2009). *The aftermath of feminism: Gender, culture and social change*. Sage.
- Mears, A. (2011). *Pricing beauty: The making of a fashion model*. University of California Press.
- Mears, A., and Connell, C. (2016). The Paradoxical Value of Deviant Cases: Toward a Gendered Theory of Display Work. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 41(2), pp. 333–359. <https://doi.org/10.1086/682922>
- Mears, A., and Finlay, W. (2005). Not Just a Paper Doll: How Models Manage Bodily Capital and Why They Perform Emotional Labor. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 34(3), pp. 317–343. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241605274559>
- Menger, P.-M. (1999). Artistic Labor Markets and Careers. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25(1), pp. 541–574. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.25.1.541>
- Murgia, A. (2015). The Obverse and Reverse Sides of Precariousness in Italy: Young highly skilled workers between passions and skill mismatch. *Social Alternatives*, 34(4).
- Naclerio, E. (2020). Emotional e aesthetic labour nell'esperienza delle attrici di teatro a Milano: Uno studio esplorativo. In *Genere e R-esistenze in movimento: Soggettività, Azioni e prospettive* (p. 14). Università di Trento.
- Neff, G. (2012). *Venture labor: Work and the burden of risk in innovative industries*. MIT Press.
- Neff, G., Wissinger, E., and Zukin, S. (2005). Entrepreneurial Labor among Cultural Producers: "Cool" Jobs in "Hot" Industries. *Social Semiotics*, 15(3), pp. 307–334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330500310111>

- Nickson, D., Warhurst, C., Commander, J., Hurrell, S. A., and Cullen, A. M. (2012). Soft skills and employability: Evidence from UK retail. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 33(1), pp. 65–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X11427589>
- Nochlin, L. (2021). *Why have there been no great women artists?* Thames and Hudson.
- Özkazanç-Pan, B., and Pullen, A. (2020). Gendered labour and work, even in pandemic times. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 27(5), pp. 675–676. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12516>
- Pagnoncelli, N. (2010). Gli immigrati nelle indagini socio-demoscopiche: Un fenomeno sociale ancora largamente sfuggente. *Gli Immigrati Nelle Indagini Socio-Demoscopiche*, pp. 1000–1008. <https://doi.org/10.3280/LIC2010-003006>
- Pollock, G. (1999). *Differencing the canon: Feminist desire and the writing of art's histories*. Routledge.
- Proust, S. (2017). Directeurs artistiques et administratrices: Une distribution sexuée des rôles dans les compagnies de théâtre indépendantes. *Travail, genre et sociétés*, n° 38(2), p. 95. <https://doi.org/10.3917/tgs.038.0095>
- Pullen, K. (2005). *Actresses and whores: On stage and in society*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reyneri, E. (2009). *Il lavoro delle donne* (pp. 1–47) [Rapporto di ricerca. Il lavoro che cambia. Contributi e raccomandazioni].
- Saraceno, C. (1991). Changes in life-course patterns and behavior of three cohorts of Italian women. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 16(3), pp. 502–521.
- Saraceno, C. (2002). I paradossi della flessibilità: Una prospettiva di genere e generazionale. In G. Fullin and M. Magatti (Eds.), *Percorsi di lavoro flessibile* (Carocci, pp. 220–230).
- Scharff, C. (2015). Blowing your own Trumpet: Exploring the Gendered Dynamics of Self-Promotion in the Classical Music Profession. *The Sociological Review*, 63(1_suppl), pp. 97–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12243>
- Scharff, C. (2016). The Psychic Life of Neoliberalism: Mapping the Contours of Entrepreneurial Subjectivity. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 33(6), pp. 107–122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276415590164>
- Scharff, C. (2017). *Gender, subjectivity, and cultural work: The classical music profession*. Routledge.
- Serino, M. (2020). Continuity, change and transitions of artistic professions in the Italian theatre industry". *Sociologia Del Lavoro*, 157, pp. 186–205. <https://doi.org/10.3280/SL2020-157010>
- Simon, S. J. (2019). Hollywood power brokers: Gender and racial inequality in talent agencies. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 26(9), pp. 1340–1356. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12365>
- Skeggs, Beverly. (1997). *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable*. SAGE Publications.
- Solera, C. (2012). Corsi di vita femminili tra maternità e lavoro. In M. Naldini, C. Solera, and P. Torriani (Eds.), *Corsi di vita e generazioni* (pp. 87–107). Il Mulino.
- Taormina, A. (2006). Il teatro e i suoi pubblici. *Economia Della Cultura*, 2/2006. <https://doi.org/10.1446/22573>
- Taylor, S., and Littleton, K. (2012). *Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work*. Ashgate.
- Turrini and Chicchi. (2013). Precarious subjectivities are not for sale: The loss of the measurability of labour for performing arts workers. *Global Discourse*, 3(3), pp. 507–521. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23269995.2014.885167>
- Wacquant, L. J. D. (1995). Pugs at Work: Bodily Capital and Bodily Labour among Professional Boxers. *Body and Society*, 1(1), pp. 65–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X95001001005>
- Warhurst, C., Nickson, D., Witz, A., and Cullen, M. A. (2000). Aesthetic Labour in Interactive Service Work: Some Case Study Evidence from the 'New' Glasgow. *The Service Industries Journal*, 20(3), pp. 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642060000000029>
- Wittel, A. (2001). Toward a Network Sociality. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 18(6), pp. 51–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327601018006003>
- Witz, A., Warhurst, C., and Nickson, D. (2003). The Labour of Aesthetics and the Aesthetics of Organization. *Organization*, 10(1), pp. 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508403010001375>
- Wolf, N. (1991). *The beauty myth: How images of beauty are used against women*. Random House.
- Wolkowitz, C. (2006). *Bodies at work*. SAGE.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Emanuela Naclerio is PhD candidate in Sociology and Methodology of Social Research at the University of Milan and University of Turin. The research topics she is interested in are the sociology of gender, work, and culture. Her doctoral thesis focuses on the working experiences of performing artists in Italy using qualitative research methods.

