

CREATIVE WOMEN: ARE THE CCIS A BETTER WORKPLACE?

Annalisa Cicerchia¹, Federica Vigano²

Summary

Recent data released by Eurostat show that men continue to account for a larger share of the EU labour market in 2016 (54 %). The cultural employment sector mirrors the overall market ratio. In six Member States (Belgium, Spain, France, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), female cultural employment's share was the lowest recorded in the EU (45 % or less), and in comparison with the total employment figures, women result under-represented in culture.

Given an existing difficulty in mapping the CCIs within the whole economy, it is even more complex to produce gender- and sector- disaggregated data. Nevertheless, this is an urgent need as from the recent report by UNESCO (2014), *Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity*, which calls for strengthening the evidence base “through regular and systematic collection and dissemination by national statistical offices of sex-disaggregated data in all areas of the cultural sector”. At the EU and country level, statistics on women's contribution to the CCIs reveal persistent gaps and disadvantages. Even though the sector results appealing for women, specifically in some more “feminized” subsectors (i.e. fashion design, publishing industry), gender biases and gender-related barriers appear embedded into the CCIs.

The paper proposes a closer, micro and qualitative look to professional and occupational paths in the creative and cultural enterprises of six women, with different positions (entrepreneur, self-employed, employee), in creative/cultural enterprises of different nature (public, private, non-profit). Data are collected via narrative interviews and semi-structured interviews. The aim of the paper is to understand if the gender stereotypical disadvantages, such as family responsibilities, gender pay gap, career development, segregation into certain type of employment affect the creative development and productivity of women.

¹ Istat, via C. Balbo, 16, 00184 Rome, acicerchia@istat.it

² Free University of Bolzano, viale Ratisbona 16, 39042 Brixen-Bressanone Italy, e-mail: federica.vigano@unibz.it (corresponding author).

1. Introduction³

The belief that creative workers and entrepreneurs are somewhat different from traditional workers/entrepreneurs is well documented in the literature (Welsch and Kickul 2001; Baines and Robson 2001; Henry 2007). While, on the one hand, creative workers display the core, typically entrepreneurial, characteristics of inspiration, creativity, innovation, strong internal locus of control, self-reliance, autonomy, flexibility and adaptability, on the other hand, they come from different backgrounds, are often self-employed, rely on a tightly-knit network and may well operate micro or very small capital-intensive – in both human and financial terms – enterprises (Rae 2007). They also appear to have specific issues in relation to independence and collaboration (Wilson and Stokes 2005), flourishing in an independent work environment and not fitting easily into traditional corporate structures.

With regard to women, when it comes to consider creative women, we should distinguish between those working in a well-established cultural or creative industry, and those who have started a more entrepreneurial activity on their own, starting a micro-business or a micro-enterprise. In our paper we will consider seven topical examples of women employed or self-employed in the cultural and creative sector drawing first on the dimension of the female employment in the sector and the gender inequality as provided by the literature, but then adopting a qualitative approach aimed at understanding in depth case histories of good/bad experience of the cultural and creative work.

Inequalities in creative work have been relatively underexplored even though recent literature (*The Sociological Review*, Vol 63, Issue 1, 2015) shed a light on different theoretical aspects which help understanding the persistence of inequalities in a sector reputed to be ‘open’, ‘diverse’ and ‘Bohemian’, ‘hostile to rigid caste systems’ (Florida, 2002) and associated with work in cultures that are ‘cool, creative and egalitarian’ (Gill, 2002).

1. Gender equality process in Europe: an overview

The Gender Equality Index 2017 measures progress made in the EU 2005-2015 in 6+1 domains:

- Work
- Money
- Knowledge
- Time
- Power
- Health
- (Satellite domain) Violence

Over the 10 years, progress towards gender equality in the EU-28 is rather slow — the Gender Equality Index score increased from 62 points in 2005 to 65 points in 2012 and 66.2 points in 2015.

Out of the Index’s six core domains, the most improved is the domain of power, while gender inequalities have increased in the domain of time over the past 10 years.

With 71.5 points, the domain of work has the third-highest score, but progress has stagnated: the score improved by only 1.5 points over the past decade, of which 0.5 points since 2012.

Gender segregation in employment persists. There are still barriers to accessing the labor market, especially for women with disabilities and women with low qualifications.

Limited work-life balance negatively affects both women and men, but women with children are particularly affected. Only 23 % of women and 27 % of men can very easily take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal and family matters

³ Draft paper, please do not quote

2. Culture and creativity: a few raw facts

The 2014 Unesco survey points to a list of persisting inequalities about the cultural and creative sectors, namely:

- Gender gaps in cultural consumption: Far more women than men consume cultural goods and more regularly.
- Gender imbalance in higher education: Although there is a majority of women enrolled at university courses related to culture and the arts, the professional world does not mirror this pattern in terms of career progression.
- Unequal access to decision-making roles in cultural professions: Despite the strong feminine presence in cultural professions, men's chances of career progression in that field are better than women's (glass ceiling) and they also have more choices of career paths.
- For women, the chances of "successful career trajectories to leadership positions" differ depending on the type of employment, of cultural industry and of institution. They have greater access to decision-making roles in public cultural institutions than in other areas of culture.
- Underrepresentation of female artists, theatre or movie directors, composers etc. in museum collections and in the programming of cultural institutions, and minor commercial value of works by women compared to works by male artists.
- The small number of women who reach top positions at decision-making level, as cultural gatekeepers or in professional networks does not necessarily make it easier for their peers to achieve the same level. The report underlines the lack of "a domino effect on the visibility and access potential of female entrepreneurs, operators and professionals to share, create and gain credibility with their peers" (UNESCO report, p. 81).

To measure gender equality in the cultural and creative sector, Eurostat proposes: the proportion of women and men in the creative, arts and entertainment sector and in the libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities. According to 2014 data, women involved in creative, arts and entertainment represent 43.7 % of the total work- force in the sector (457 000). In libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities women reach 64.8 % (380 000) of the total in the EU-28.

3. Gender inequalities in the cultural and creative sector: key aspects

Eurostat data show that men account for a larger share of the EU labour market in 2016 (54 %). The cultural employment sector mirrors the overall market ratio. In six Member States (Belgium, Spain, France, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), female cultural employment's share was the lowest recorded in the EU (45 % or less), and in comparison with the total employment figures, women result under-represented in culture.

Given an existing difficulty in mapping the CCIs within the whole economy, it is even more complex to produce gender- and sector- disaggregated data. Nevertheless, this is an urgent need as from the recent report by UNESCO (2014), Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity, which calls for strengthening the evidence base "through regular and systematic collection and dissemination by national statistical offices of sex-disaggregated data in all areas of the cultural sector".

At the EU and country level, statistics on women's contribution to the CCIs reveal persistent gaps and disadvantages. Even though the sector results appealing for women, specifically in some more "feminized" subsectors (i.e. fashion design, publishing industry), gender biases and gender-related barriers appear embedded into the CCIs.

It has to be pointed out that "Gender" is a social construction of sex through which particular masculine characteristics are ascribed to men and particular feminine characteristics are ascribed to women (Oakley 1973; Ahl 2004). A number of stereotypical behaviours are associated with the masculine and feminine,

where the former is privileged over the latter, thus supporting a hierarchical valuation of traits and characteristics (Marlow and Patton 2005). The force of the stereotypes impacts directly on women's career progression, defining a more masculine model suited for whatever competitive industry, and leaving women behind, attributing them characteristics which become then "feminine" as the attitude to interpersonal relationships, the environment, a sense of service (Hofstede, 1980).

Recent studies, in Europe and in the United States, converge in identifying six major areas of gender inequalities that affect workers in the cultural and creative sectors:

- Segregation
- The glass ceiling: few women on top cultural jobs
- Access and opportunities to jobs, career patterns and award systems
- Pay gap
- Gravititas
- Reconciliation of work and family life.

4.1. Segregation

In the cultural industries, as in many other sectors, the tasks most often carried out by women rather than men include public relations and marketing.

A second area of cultural work that is markedly female in the composition of its workforce is, broadly, those types of work concerned with the co-ordination and facilitation of production. In addition, this relates closely to a third area of occupational segregation: 'creative' jobs tend to be taken by men.

As in other industries, men tend to dominate technical and 'craft' jobs, such as camera operators and editing in television, engineering and 'road managers'. Crafty and technical occupations associated with women, such as costume design, tend to be relatively unrecognized and undervalued (Banks 2009). This can happen to the degree that such occupations are not even recognized as involving craft or technical skills at all.

4.2. The glass ceiling: few women on top cultural jobs

The Glass Ceiling is the unequal access to top positions and decision-making roles in cultural professions. Despite the strong feminine presence in cultural professions, men's chances of career progression in that field are better than women's and they also have more choices of career paths.

The Glass Ceiling is very frequent in large organisations and in the most industrialised subsectors (TV-Radio, Cinema, Books and Press).

In Italy, Since 1974, MiBACT has been under the leadership of a male minister 23 times, under the leadership of a female minister only two times: in 1988-1989 and in 1998-2001.

For the UK, see the table from the EIGE report. The art market presents huge gaps, but differences are found also in the public sector, despite the fact that the law prohibits gender pay gaps.

4.3. Access and opportunities to jobs, career patterns and award systems

The relevant literature (see EIGE Report, Unesco 2014....) also documents that access to jobs, career patterns and award systems tend to disfavor women in the cultural and creative sectors as in the economy in

general (see the recent empirical study of Marcella et al. 2005⁴). We discuss in section 4.5. devoted to the *gravitas* issue, one possible explanation for this phenomenon, as least for what concerns authoritative cultural heritage and art institutions.

Nearly all the women we have interviewed, as we will describe in detail in section 5, mention a distinctive gap in their ego as compared to their male peer colleagues. Size matters, at least as far as ego is concerned.

Despite its image as 'cool', non-hierarchical and egalitarian, the new media sector, this paper will argue, is characterized by a number of entrenched and all too old-fashioned patterns of gender inequality relating to education, access to work and pay. Moreover, a number of new forms of gender inequality are emerging, connected- paradoxically -to many of the features of the work that are valued -- informality, autonomy, flexibility and so on.

4.4. Pay gap

Data scarcity in this respect is remarkable. The EIGE Report, covering Germany, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, the UK, Sweden and France, summarizes gender pay gap in the cultural and creative sector ("arts, entertainment, and recreation" and "information and communication") compared to general economy the as in the following figure (data refer to 2014):

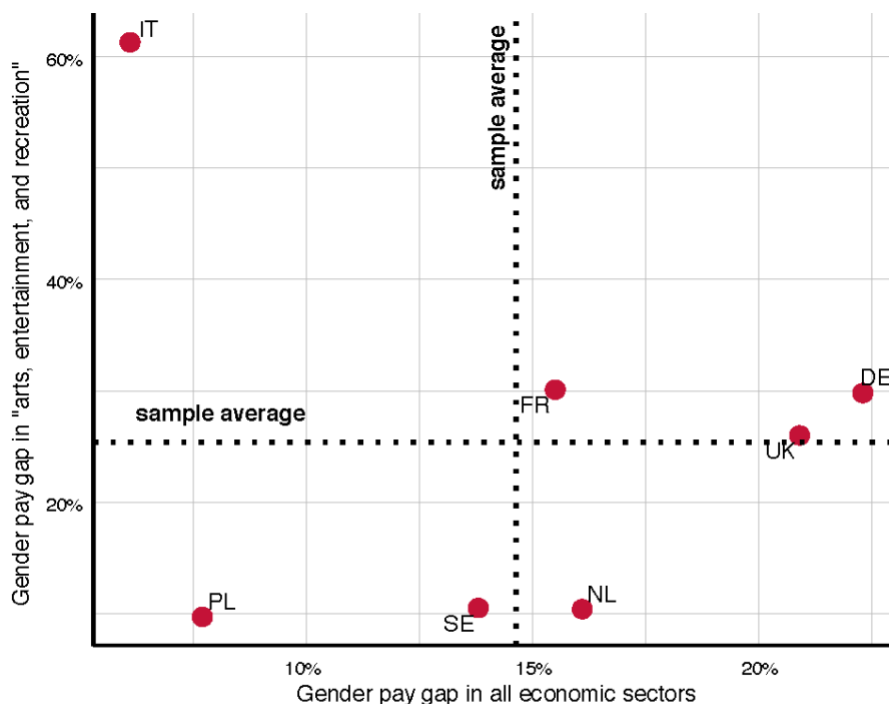


Fig. 8: Gender pay gap in economy overall and the creative-cultural domain

Interpretation: The gender pay gap in the Netherlands in the economy overall is slightly higher than the sample average (dotted vertical line), but the sectoral gender pay gap in "arts, entertainment, and recreation" is far below the sample average (dotted horizontal line).

⁴ The research found that over 60 per cent of the women surveyed had experienced unequal treatment, and more than half had faced a number of gender-related issues in their working lives that were highlighted as major barriers to career progression. Such barriers included juggling work and family commitments, long working hours, the 'old boys' network and a culture that was condescending towards women. The survey also revealed that work-related training available to men had not been made available to women.

V.Hedija's article (2017), measuring sector specific gender pay gap across the EU countries, documents that the largest variability is observed in financial and insurance activities (k), human health and social work activities (q), construction (f) and arts, entertainment and recreation, etc. (r–u) where the coefficient of variation reaches more than 80%. She adds that the largest average unexplained gender pay gap is identified in construction (f), agriculture, forestry and fishing (a) and arts, entertainment and recreation (r–u).

In 2018, Art News published some figures about pay gap in selected cultural institutions in the UK. The results are presented in the table below.

	Difference in hourly rate (%)		Proportion of women in the top paid jobs (%)
	Mean	Median	
MUSEUMS			
The Victoria and Albert Museum	-5.3	-7.2	70.9
Royal Academy of Arts	-14	-1	60
British Museum	0	-4	57
The National Gallery	-14.4	-5.2	62
National Portrait Gallery	-8.3	-13.1	61.4
Southbank Centre	-10	-18.3	55.4
Natural History Museum	-9.8	-7.5	43
National Museum of Scotland	-4.5	-15	60.9
National Museum of Wales	-6.8	-2.3	50.6
ART MARKET			
Bonham's	-42	-36.7	27
Christie's	-39.8	-25	43
Sotheby's	-34.2	-22.2	47.6
GOVERNMENT			
Arts Council England	-6.7	-2.6	56.9
Own calculation, from Art News 6 April 2018			

4.5. *Gravitas* : “Far too young and far too female”

Kaywin Feldman, Director and President of the Minneapolis Institute of Art since 2008, past president of the Association of Art Museum Directors and a past chair of AAM's board, contributed in 2016 a brilliant rendering of the *gravitas* issue.

“I've done a fair amount of interviewing to get to where I am, and I heard the exact same concern every time I was not hired. Every time I was hired, this is what they always said: “We're worried that she doesn't have *gravitas*”.

Gravitas was one of the key Roman virtues, along with “*pietas*,” “*dignitas*,” and “*virtus*” (which, incidentally, comes from “*vir*,” the Latin word for “man”). “*Gravitas*” signifies heft, seriousness, solemnity, and dignity. It is weighty and replete with importance. The Oxford dictionary gives the following two examples of “*gravitas*” in a sentence:

- A post for which he has the expertise and the *gravitas*.
- A comic actress who lacks the *gravitas* for dramatic roles.

Funny that the negative example of “*gravitas*” is female. Behind the use of the word there is this [line of] thinking:

- Women don't have *gravitas*.
- Leaders must have *gravitas*.
- Women can't be leaders.

Feldman adds: “A recent New York Times article noted that when a profession that is largely male transitions to largely female, salaries go down significantly, even after adjusting for education, experience, and geography. The implication is that the job just can’t be as serious, challenging, or sophisticated if it can be done by women. When I read it, I realized that this was one of the main reasons many boards are reluctant to hire women directors. Deep down, they fear that it would demean and debase their museum—and the profession—if a woman can do it.

In the art museum field, about 45 percent of museum directors are female. That is great. But among the 17 largest encyclopedic art museums, with budgets over \$30 million, there are only two of us. A colleague noted that the Association of Art Museum Directors is replete with foreign accents, noting that art museums are now importing men from abroad. I promise you that boards do not explicitly decide that they want to hire a man; I know they have the best of intentions and are committed to diversity. But they think a director has to exude silver-haired, baritone solemnity, and therefore they unwittingly rule out female applicants” (Feldman, 2017).

4.6. Reconciliation of work and family life

Pioneering studies in the 1990s (see Bodo, Fisher, Cicerchia 1996) pointed to the fact that jobs in the creative, artistic and cultural sector tended to be more informal, irregular, intermittent and flexible as compared to the general economy. They also were often part-time, and workers forced to hold multiple jobs to make the ends meet.

The subsequent years have seen the radical change of the occupational patterns in Europe and in the majority of the OECD countries, and those characters that used to be peculiar of the cultural and creative sectors are now widely found, not only in other areas of the services sector, but also in the industry and the manufacturing sector.

Motherhood and caring of family (elderlies, children etc), the so called “informal care” has a major impact on women (Carmichael et al. 2008).

Such a negative impact is potentially more significant with regard to self-employment and entrepreneurship. For example, in their study of the work-family interface (WFI) Jennings and McDougald (2006) argue that female business owners are not only more likely to experience greater work-family conflict than their male counterparts but are also more likely to use coping strategies that (intentionally or unintentionally) constrain rather than enhance the growth of their firms.

Flexibility for women, as the interviews underlie, is double-edged. On the one side, at least for those workers who enjoy enough freedom of organizational choice, it means that they are able to arrange their professional duties in forms that allow to provide for their other multiple duties, especially care. On the other side, uncertainty, fragmented experiences, the dominance of project- rather than organization-oriented work patterns increase frustration and undermines long term strategies of professional growth and career advancement.

4. A portrait of Italian women in the cultural and creative sectors

We have collected seven stories of women working in the CC sector in Italy, in different sub-sectors and type of business (all of them belong to the private sector). The interviews show some points of similarity and difference (see Table 1) that are briefly summarized here. First of all, the first 3 women are in a major age, between 45 and 65 years of age, and share the fact that they have already achieved work and personal goals, while CW4 is placed in an intermediate band, and the last three women interviewed are between 35 and 40 years, and all three have recently gained greater stability to their activity.

All of them, except one, work in a micro-enterprise, with few employees, and almost all of them have a female team. CW5, 6 and 7 have founded their own business more recently, while the first 4 have 15 to 20 years of activity behind them.

As for the sub-sectors, it is important to specify some differences: 3 of them work in cultural industries, carrying out management and project management activities, one of them is an actress as well as director of a theatre company, and the other 3 must be considered cultural entrepreneurs, founders of a creative business that they manage directly, in the form of micro-enterprises or cooperatives. The level of managerial responsibility is generally very high, even if in some cases it is shared in an atmosphere of perfect collaboration with (female) colleagues. The level of satisfaction with the work carried out is high, with a generational difference between the most Aniane and the young ones that are still consolidating their activity.

Looking at the elements of success and the obstacles, almost all mention tangible elements, such as the maintenance of the level of activity over time, the achievement of some concrete targets such as the increase of public for the activities carried out, the creation of a recognizable brand and also the greater experience that leads to greater autonomy and authority. Among the obstacles, some mention bureaucracy, others the resistance related to the gender, others economic insecurity that the sector entails, especially at entry levels.

	Age class	Marital status	Children	Size of enterprise	Age of the enterprise	Turnover	Sector	Profession	Role	Satisfaction	Responsibility	Best success	Biggest obstacle
CW1	45-55	Married	yes	micro	20 years	200	Cultural heritage	Archaeologist	President	High	High	Being still active and thriving after 20 years	Initial opposition by the only male partner
CW2	45-55	Married	yes	small	20 years	//	Performing arts	Actress, author, puppeteer	Artistic director	Very high	Very high	Being still active and thriving after 20 years	Bureaucracy
CW3	55-65	Married	yes	large	18 years	65 million	Cultural heritage	Cultural entrepreneur	President	High	High	Visitors increased from 600,000 to 6 million	Bureaucracy
CW4	35-45	Married	yes	micro	15 years	80 to 100,000	Cultural heritage	Art historian	Founder and president, cultural educator	High	High	Being able to create an Education Department in a museum	Managing job insecurity
CW5	36	Not married	no	micro	2	//	Textile, creative manufacturing	cultural entrepreneur	President, founder	medium high	shared and not on other people	always the next!	Keep working, finding motivation
CW6	38	Married	no	micro	10	//	Communication	cultural entrepreneur	President, founder	medium high	shared and not on other people	Creation of a brand	Economic insecurity and ethical discrimination
CW7	41	Not married	no	micro	10	//	Communication	cultural entrepreneur	Founder and member	medium high	shared and not on other people	Accumulation of experience and more relax	finding new inspirational pauses

Table 1. Seven histories

Considering now the elements more specifically related to gender biases, some of them claim to have observed in their work environment episodes of occupational segregation, connected above all to the more executive type tasks. None of them, however, has experienced this experience in the first person, reporting it as an element of personal disadvantage. As for the "Glass ceiling" effect, none of them has directly experienced it. The younger report both pay gap compared to men and access to opportunities as an observational element. The element on which they all agree, without generational differences, is instead the "gravitas" effect, that is the observation or the experience of the fact that women are often considered too young or not sufficiently authoritative to occupy some work positions.

One of the aspects that emerges in at least 4 of the stories analyzed, especially those of an entrepreneurial nature, bear witness to the importance of achieving economic goals as a sign of getting out of precarious condition. Entrepreneurs work as freelancers, with all the advantages and disadvantages associated with this type of work: greater flexibility, but also a greater and constant commitment, the need to look after customers and to always be in search for new ones, the insecurity deriving from not having a safe salary at the end of the month. The mention of money as a goal in the context of creative enterprises disconfesses the pattern of creative people as not interested in money but only in the creative content of their work. In these case histories, however, the economics objective is both a measure of success and a sign of having a

propensity to personal growth and to better their own business with an investment-oriented mentality typical of the entrepreneur.

	Segregation	Glass ceiling	Access and opportunities	Pay Gap	Gravitas	Reconciliation of work and life
CW1	x				x	
CW2					x	
CW3					x	
CW4	x					
CW5	x	x	x	x	x	attitude to support
CW6			x	x		self responsibility
CW7			x	x	x	self responsibility

Table 2. Reported inequality in the past or present experience

The most common aspects of the 7 life experiences in the cultural and creative fields are the work style and the creation of a specific work setting, between formal and informal definition of rules according to which to behave. In particular, all the women interviewed stress the importance of the participated approach to the work, the importance given to the quality of the process, and the relevance of the team work. Almost all of them have a female team, which corresponds to a voluntary choice and to the observation that having female colleagues has favored the understanding of some issues that in traditional industries can represent an obstacle to a career or a managerial problem. Specifically, it refers to maternity, time management, work life balance management, this last whether represented by children or by family care in general.

On the topic of motherhood, there are two different types of positions: the seniors have children and testify that their jobs have not prevented them to live their maternity in full. The younger, currently without children, perceive a classic trade off: “if I have a child, I risk losing the level, the pace and the quality of work hardly conquered until now”. Two of them at the moment declare, although not contrary to maternity, to consciously choose the quality of their life and their work without children, but without perceiving it as a problem. Almost all declare how crucial the support of the partner or family has been. Support services seem to play a marginal role.

Flexibility is a positive value for all the witnesses, often seen as a characterizing element of the creative context. However, especially the younger emphasize that it is important that flexibility be accompanied by self-responsibility towards the work, that is, given the full understanding towards the needs of other women and the reciprocal trust, it is expected that each one is well aware of the achievement of work goals. One could say that “management by objective” prevails rather than traditional work patterns. In almost all the cases analyzed, among other things, there are no particular company measures (apart from the law) to support maternity, even if freelancers are very willing to create solutions and internal policies that can favor work life balance, also given the absence of alternative supports.

Another important element is the statement by all the interviewees to do a "craft" work, not standardized or serial. This aspect, as well as being connected to the creative work par excellence, also reveals the care - perhaps this very feminine - compared to the creation of one's own work, and the quality of the work itself.

	Participatory approach	Flexibility	Personal growth	Comprehensive vs/segmented approach	Quality of the process	Human factor is essential	Low conflict	Artisanal style	Teamwork	Slower, more complex decision making process
CW ₁	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
CW ₂	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
CW ₃	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
CW ₄	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
CW ₅	X	x	x	x	x	x			x	
CW ₆	X	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
CW ₇	X	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	

Table 3. Working style

5. A better workplace?

5.1. About working styles

The entrepreneurship literature reports differences between male and female style of management (Women's Unit UK and Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications (Sweden) 2001), underlying how women experience under-capitalization (Carter et al. 2001), manage risk and growth differently (Marlow and Carter 2006; Brush et al. 2007), and are more oriented to networking (Rosa and Hamilton 1994), albeit in different ways from their male counterparts (McGowan and Hampton 2007). Of course one of the major problem remain the work-life balance issue (Fielden et al. 2003). That said, women are also reported to be 'portfolio workers par excellence', with their multi-tasking skills and experiences making them ideally suited to project-based enterprises (Gill 2002).

5.2. Keywords: "I have been lucky"

A study on professional life stories published in 2003 (Gherardi and Poggia) documents how often women who have succeeded tend to attribute at least a part of their accomplishment to *luck*, while men rather speak of their own capacity. A few of our interviews mention luck – "easy children", cooperative husbands, etc. - . Such examples suggest that some key aspects of the professional outcome for women still depend from factors that are out of control, choice or plan.

5.3 Formal and informal management styles

The self-employed, the top managers or owners of small enterprises considered here seem to benefit most of flexibility and informal management styles, than those in larger business, where formal relationships tend to prevail, and the quality of the working experience depends on the degree of compliance with specific rules and regulations.

5.4 Keyword: "economic stability"

The women interviewed assert that money has a value for their career, both as the achievement of a work goal and as an expression of their creative work, which must be able to be valorized according to the rules of the market. Choosing a creative job is a vocation, but it must still be paid work.

‘Art for art’ has never been the goal of my work since I decided to do a creative job, the decision was to make money and live well with my work. Otherwise I would have looked for a job in a company and I would have built a career and, in a shorter time, I would have reached economic objectives”.

5.5 Keyword: Maternity

“The condition of free-lance in the perspective of motherhood does not help. being an employee puts you in the most suitable condition to think about having a certain evolution of things, work, family, children. But being a freelancer requires a lot of work and concentration”.

6. Conclusions

The article found that despite some difficulties – the issue of the supposed *lack of gravitas chief among them* -, women can have a positive career in the cultural and creative even though some characteristics of the work environment in general such as a gender stereotyping, the work life balance issue, a tendency for women to diversify their efforts and to give more value to the human factor affect also the creative work-environments.

First, the seven histories prove that women possess many of the core characteristics of creative workers, such as independence, self-reliance, autonomy, flexibility and adaptability and, as emphasized by Gill (2002), the fact that they are ‘portfolio workers par excellence’, and these are actually element of strength.

Second, as emerged, some of the creative industries are appealing to women because they can manage better the work-life balance through a flexible and part-time working, even if this require greater responsibility toward the work. Nevertheless, this particular aspect can militate against women’s progress, creating a tradeoff situation which generated from personal considerations about the quality of their work and the possibility to grow.

Third, even the literature reports the presence of more feminized sectors (fashion, beauty, design and related sectors), in our examples, the interviewed women report positive experience of their access to good positions, specifically in those cases where they cannot tolerate masculine hierarchies and they opted for a freelance job rather than working in a bigger industry.

Fourth, in terms of entrepreneurship, the idea that women tend to set up micro or very small businesses that are service oriented and value the cultural, quality and human elements of business, this is partially true but also disavowed. If it is true that there is a greater ability to listen and a management style more attentive to individual problems, which gives greater flexibility to women for the work-life balance, the 7 stories also testify of a great attention to the quality of work, which requires constant commitment and team work. Growing up as individuals and as an organization, however small, is among the goals stated by many of them.

Thus, it is argued that the creative industries may represent a huge opportunity for women in the future. In this sense, the point is rather that women do create a better workplace, when they are able to deploy all their potential.

In particular, future research in this area should focus on gaining in-depth insights into women’s actual experiences within the creative sector so that a stronger empirical foundation can be gained with regard to

the barriers encountered. Such research could potentially inform the design of specific interventions that would aid women's progress within the sector.

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Appendix

Seven stories

We report here in a succinct form some relevant contents of seven extensive interviews with as many women working in the cultural and creative sector in Italy. General information on the seven cases is offered in the table 1 about age, discipline, size of the enterprise, role, etc.

In the following sections, we give a brief presentation of the seven women and their working experience.

1. *CW1*

53, married, two sons, studies in Archaeology in Rome, Diploma of Fine and Decorative Arts from Antiquity to 1450 (London); MA in Museum Studies (Leicester); MA in Technological Instruments for the Economic Evaluation of Cultural and Environmental Heritage (Ferrara). CW1 is since 2010 the President and Legal representative of an association and a small enterprise in the field of cultural research, consultancy, planning and training. Established in 1995, they work in Italy and abroad.

Her current activity

CW1 develops and carries out research and projects in the field of cultural management, training and consultancy for public and private cultural organisations and institutions. She also manages, with her partners, her cultural association and company.

How CW1 got there

CW1 took over the business in 2010, the day their three senior founding Partners declared all of a sudden their decision to withdraw, implying that the business was to close. CW1 replied that the business was instead to continue, on her responsibility. She became both President and Legal representative of the cultural enterprise and related association, and she still is in charge of both.

Her talent

Besides being competent in museology and cultural heritage management, with special regard for social inclusion, CW1's talent lies in her creative, planning and managing capacity.

Being a professional woman in the creative field

CW1 is self-employed and is the responsible of the welfare and income of her partners and collaborators. She appreciates her flexible and self-organised mode of work. She declined, in the past, offers of more stable and perhaps financially rewarding, but also more rigid, working positions. CW1's experience shows that, no matter the cultural and creative sub-sector, the business models can be heavily influenced by gender. While there is not such a thing like an intrinsically feminine sector or task, there are indeed man-oriented styles of working behavior: more competitive, less cooperative, less sharing, more ego-oversized. She has suffered, in the past, pressures into subordinate supposedly female roles (like secretary, or person in charge of whatever organizational cares, etc.), not only by her male seniors, but also peers and juniors.

Budget responsibility

Together with her 2 partners (both women), CW1 has the final say about her business' expenditure and budget, which amount to about 200,000 euros/year.

Human resources responsibility

CW1 shares with her partners the responsibility of hiring and managing all human resources in their enterprise.

Management style

CW1 has experienced directly and welcomed the drastic change from a man-oriented management style, which she suffered in her early years in the business she now runs, and what she defines a woman-oriented style. The latter is characterised by lack of rigid categories, a high degree of involvement, artisan vs. serial processes, strong focus on the person, equal emphasis on the quality of the process as on the quality of the result, intense circulation of information, lower levels of conflict and competitiveness.

Working time and organization

CW1 and her partners enjoy a full flexible work organization. This extends to the staff, with the exception of some positions, like secretarial service, which require relatively fixed shifts and timetables.

Career

The enterprise of CW1 is presently made of all women. They share equal opportunities based on their skills.

Maternity

The enterprise applies to the hired personnel the Italian law about maternity leave and related benefits.

Caregiving

CW1 appreciates the high degree of freedom granted by the organizational model of her enterprise. She has been able to raise her children and to give her own mother the necessary care without conflict or constraints or excess sacrifice of her career. She thinks this is due to the business model rather than to the sector.

The most difficult obstacle

Surviving the initial steps after the withdrawal of the senior partners, faced by the regular opposition of the only junior male partner who came up to the point of threatening CW1 he would have a talk with her husband to induce her to relinquish her leadership.

The most important conquest

Being able to celebrate 20 years of successful activity.

2. CW2

51, married, one daughter, she is a theatre author, director, actress, puppeteer, teacher, artistic director and legal representative of a Theatre company since 2000 and since 2013 director of a network of theatres based in Rome and a number of puppet and kids' theatre festivals. She also organizes shows in favor of children's rights in a number of countries, refugee camps all around the world and war scenes. Her company has been awarded international prizes, like the world's Best puppet musical cabaret award (Bangkok).

Her current activity

CW2 she is a theatre author, director, actress, puppeteer, teacher, artistic director and legal representative of a Theatre company and director of a network of theatres in Rome.

How CW2 got there

When CW2 was very young curious and passionate, one activity led to another, offering non-formal and informal training and the constant support of a group of peers, mostly women. The daughter of an actor, she wanted to work in a creative setting, with and for children.

Her talent

CW2 loves creating and maneuvering puppets, designing and making costumes, props and scenes. She acts, but never appears in person, but through her voice and the puppets she moves. She is also very good in keeping in touch with children and their families as a constant source of inspiration, as well as at managing the company and marketing it, paperwork and bureaucratic burden included.

Being a professional woman in the creative field

CW2 has never felt gender discrimination in her professional life. She thinks theatre, and figure/puppet/children theatre in particular are somehow special in this. She mentions that the inventor of Teatro ragazzi in Italy, mid- 1930s, was a special creative woman, born in 1908. CW2 rather felt, at the beginning of her career as a cultural entrepreneur, and especially in the puppet theatre, that her young age (she was 24 at the time) was the main obstacle to being taken seriously.

Budget responsibility

CW2 shares with her partners the entire responsibility of the financial management of the company

Human resources responsibility

CW2 shares with her partners the responsibility of recruitment and management of the human resources of the company and is directly involved in the theatre school for young people, a few former students of which are now working with the company.

Management style

CW2 stresses that independence is a key value for her and her company. Also working in a group has always been the rule for them. They believe in the power of the group. They often think they have created a management model of their own. They are a group with a clear purpose in mind, and, for them, the process plays a role as much important as the product. They are not interested in the product alone, but in the inseparable unity of process and product. They try to make each component of the group to do what they are best at doing, and, at the same time, also something that maybe they do not like, but that is necessary for the general benefit.

CW2 feels that this attitude, this model, can be considered culturally feminine.

Working time and organization

Theatre production is very flexible, apart from obvious constraints due to the schedule of the shows. Working hours and places are never rigid, and the group is ready to support those who need help. This often results in a huge amount of extra hours worked, but people find the time spent there rewarding in terms of their own wellbeing (economic gains are instead modest). CW2 thinks that such an absorbing work has some negative impacts on their social life, because they also work on Saturdays and Sundays, but that, in a way, the satisfaction they derive compensate their sacrifice.

Career

CW2 has been able to build her career following her desires and talents, thanks to her will strength and the support of the group. She has never felt pressure or competition from her male partners, let alone discrimination.

Maternity

CW2 considers herself lucky. Her daughter's birth was smooth and easy, and her husband – a composer – shared childcare duties and made it possible, thanks to his collaboration, for CW2 to breastfeed the baby for a long time, while being very soon back to work. The child was raised amidst scenes and puppets, and travelled with the company when they went on tour. She was a healthy, happy child, who slept the entire night and ate everything. She is now 15 and is interested in music. The group helped CW2 constantly, and in turn each of its members got their share of help, be it with babies or elderly.

Caregiving

The group has been essential in assisting its members for a number of other forms of care giving: old parents, serious illness, losses, etc. CW2 thinks that solidarity and sharing form a basic dimension of their business model. Personal life and cares are never let outside the theatre. Each person in the company is free to bring them inside, and to expect support and help when they need it.

The most difficult obstacle

..and the greatest disappointment: the growing bureaucratic short-circuit

The most important conquest

Continued, self-sustained independence. Having always been able to support ourselves without public funding. I would have never said that I was to celebrate my twenty years of activity. The company also runs a theatre school for young people aged 18-24, about 150 a year, and another important satisfaction is being able to form a new generation of artists.

Places

CW2 is very satisfied with the public services, especially schools, she was able to access. But she also recognizes that the group produces its own welfare system, and has been doing so for a very long time.

3. CW3

55, married, one daughter, a degree in Philosophy, many experiences in the field of cultural communication, CW3 is the President of a large cultural cooperative, working in the area of cultural heritage management, with over 1,700 associates, established 25 years ago, active all over Italy.

Her current activity

CW3 is president of a large cultural cooperative, working in the area of cultural heritage management. In addition to her representative role, she is also in charge of product innovation, especially in the area of audience engagement.

How CW3 got there

CW3 founded, with a small group of friends, in 1990 a small cooperative of 9 young people, who had taken part in the so-called Giacimenti culturali (Cultural deposits) project in the mid-1980s: a pioneering and debated experience of electronic inventory and cataloguing of the Italian cultural heritage. Some 4,000 unemployed young people were temporarily hired by large ICT companies at the time, and, once their training was over, the Ministry of cultural heritage failed to hire them. The key idea, revolutionary for the time, was to use cataloguing information for a better experience of the public. They started in the early 1990s with the Pompeii frescoes at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, stubbornly applying for investment funds to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and finally getting them. CW3 recognizes that her own family and her culturally thriving city, Siena, had a distinctive influence on her education and personal growth.

Her talent

CW3 talent lies in the capability to apply innovative technologies and marketing techniques to cultural heritage, aimed at developing its audiences. She and her partner have invented an altogether new product for Italy, i.e. digital and innovative creative cultural services for an improved enlarged experience of the cultural heritage. The relative market sector was acknowledged by the Ministry in 1996. They invented integrated visit circuits and integrated cards for accessing heritage places normally closed. They had vision

Being a professional woman in the creative field

Those who work in the cultural and creative find it easier to invest a great amount of their time in their occupation, because the passion is always great and the line between work and personal pleasure and enjoyment tends to blur. Family duties came later in the life of CW3, past the heroic stage, when she created her own profession. She was able to invest all her energies on her enterprise, with huge sacrifices, with a relevant support by her family during the hardest times. Her professional choice dates back to the early 1990s and remains unchanged.

Budget responsibility

The value of the production of the Organization is over 65 million euros in 2017.

Human resources responsibility

There are many women in the organization: out of over 1,700 employees, over 1,200, i.e. 72%, are women. Women also represent the most skilled and educated component of the organization human resources. 50% of those women are aged between 31 and 45. CW3's concern, that she thinks very maternal, is to create ways to hand down from a generation to another processes and knowledge. Likewise, CW3 hopes that, thanks to the cooperative, even the small member organization enjoys resources, tools and opportunities.

Management style

Being independent, not relying on public funding, but on the market, has helped CW3's organization to survive and be resilient, despite the repeated crisis and cuts in public funding of culture. The management style of the enterprise has always been based upon quality and capacity, rather than tactics. In this, CW3 thinks her business model is feminine. As creating networks and relationships is also distinctively feminine, no matter the size of the enterprise. CW3 perceives the will to creating connections, enhancing what every person in the group is best at doing, rather than feeding one's own ego and individualism, as feminine vs masculine approach.

Working time and organization

Women hold the majority of top positions in CW3's organization, as administration staff, directional and cultural production staff. There is complete salary equality. The organization has many front-end and back-end workers, and the issue of work-life time conciliation is addressed with special attention. This involves shifts, flexible work, smart office, work by objectives, and tailored solutions. The cooperative works very often for families, children, etc., and the workers often benefit of those services. The level of protection and quality of the work at the cooperative, overall, is very high.

Career

CW3 has been elected President by the Assembly of the Associates of her organization 9 years ago, and is at her third mandate. Career for women at the cooperative, as they represent 72% of the workforce, is completely open.

Maternity

As regulated by the law

Caregiving

As regulated by the law

The most difficult obstacle

When the business started, being young, being women, being stubbornly convinced their business model was not to ape male behavior, being a private business, they had to face manifold prejudice and bias of many public Cultural Institutions' officials. Today, bureaucratic jams have jeopardized an important project, with important investments, and that is probably the most absurd obstacle CW3 has faced.

The most important conquest

In relatively few years, one of the cultural heritage sites managed by CW3's organization has passed from 600,000 to 6 million admissions per year. Other unique products, which have been imitated now by many other enterprises, also represent an important success.

4. CW4

Art historian and expert in museum education, mother of three, she is a founding member and president of a cultural association which develops educational programs for museums and to artistic heritage. As head of the Educational Department a museum, she is responsible for designing and coordinating all the educational activities, from schools to families and access programs.

Her current activity

CW4's Association develops projects in the field of museum activities. She has constantly to do with culture and creativity.

How CW4 got there

CW4 founded in 1994, together with a colleague, the Association, with the aim of developing cultural and educational projects for museums. Her interest for education and dissemination, for a better access to art for people dates back to the time of her university studies. She started to engage in this field on her own initiative, with a trial and errors approach, as a volunteer, as no formal course was available at the time. She discovered the need for additional tools in the area of museum education, and obtained a master. Other important influences are Reggio Children, and the approach to creativity of Bruno Munari and James Bradburne.

Her talent

CW4 talent lies in being able of teamwork, sharing, co-design, participatory creation.

Being a professional woman in the creative field

CW4 has maintained an absolute flexible model of work. She is self-employed, and free to manage her time at her own will. There is a high degree of informality of her working style, and this is positive because it allows caring for her children and family. On the other hand, such model has no guarantees, is risky and provides no traditional protection of any sorts. Her situation is prone to change any moment. CW4 does not feel that being woman, in her field of activity, has any special meaning. Some cultural and creative sectors are indeed more feminine, like education, both in museums and in the school. Cultural mediation, in her view, is also particularly suited for women. In the area of museums, while gender gap exists in terms of power, although maybe smaller than in other places, pay gap tends to be irrelevant, because of the public nature of the most part of museums.

Budget responsibility

CW4 has budget responsibility, for what concerns both the educational amount allocated to educational activities by the museums for which the association works (about 30,000 euros per year) and the association (80,000 to 100,000 euros per year).

Human resources responsibility

CW4 coordinates a variable group of collaborators, presently 6, in some occasions more. She is responsible of their recruitment, training, direction and monitoring.

Management style

Women make decision in a more complex way than men do. This is a partially critical aspect in terms of required amount of time, but on the other hand, women's decisions are more meditated.

Working time and organization

Flexible working style is an integral part of CW4's activity. In addition, her collaborators enjoy a high degree of flexibility and freedom. Planning allows guaranteeing flexibility to the largest possible extent.

Career

Women enjoy good opportunities, better than other workplaces. Men are few, and sometimes, for this reasons, their career opportunities are better.

Maternity

No specific support policies due to the kind of contract, but the positions are protected.

Caregiving

CW4 thinks she is has been able to council her work-life times. The lack of rigidity, typical of the cultural and creative sector, is very useful for this.

The most difficult obstacle

To come to terms with job insecurity.

The most important conquest

Being able to create an Educational Department in a museum.

The worst defeat

The shutting down of an Educational Department in another museum.

My best project

A project with people with Alzheimer's disease. And a school-work rotation

Places

The place where CW4 lives, a mid-sized city, has helped her in getting support , easy access to services, acceptable home-to-work time, good neighborhood and other social support network, especially for the children.

5. .CW5

36, not married, graduated in Political Economy by the Bocconi University. She has a valuable work experience in different industrial sectors, where she covered different managerial positions (in one case with a specific attention to other creative related fields). In the last 5 years she worked in a small creative industry, an online magazine on Art and Culture in South Tyrol, where she had economic and managerial responsibilities. CW5 is since 2015 she is the President and Legal representative of a cooperative called Lottozero, based in Prato, a center for art and design in the textile sector, established in 2015. Lottozero is also a show room for art exhibition and more commercial oriented fairs, a co-working space for textile designers, and a lab equipped with textile machineries. Lottozero is a not for profit organization.

Her current activity

CW5 is responsible for the different activities organized at Lottozero. The main aim of the center is to build a connection between the traditional textile industry and artists and designers; moreover, Lottozero offers a creative incubator for designers and creatives, to develop project management capacities, training and mentorship. Lottozero's economic sustainability is based on private consultancies offered to companies and individuals, but also on fundraising activities, participating in regional, national and European based projects. CW5 is specifically responsible for the economic and financial aspects of the activities of Lottozero, the flow management, the project management and the constant and intense activity of networking.

How CW5 got there

CW5 decided to found the center together with her sister, which is a textile designer. The initial idea develops from observing that after graduation, especially in Italy, students of applied disciplines such as textile design struggle to find work environments that help develop their talents and also provide regular employment. Prato came as an opportunity as it is one of the Italian centers for the textile industries with more than 8000 active companies in the field, and it has been in the past one of the most important industrial district. Her economic training and knowledge of economic and sociological models, together with the informal component of her education, that is, the interest in art and culture, were fundamental for the decision to go towards a creative work.

Her talent

Even it is not a talent, her enthusiasm is one of her best sources of ideas, capacity to create situations where people can be connected and involved. She's provided with a very open mind and global vision, and one of her prominent capacity, as a consequence of enthusiasm, is the networking and the global vision. It is quite easy for her to see undiscovered links, aspects and features in situations, and then develop concrete projects, where managerial and operative capacities are employed, based on these initial intuitions.

Being a professional woman in the creative field

CW5 as a not for profit worker today, reveals that this position is not weak per se, but often not for profit jobs are preferred by women, as they are more willing to work for less money than men, and not for profit organizations offer lower salaries than the traditional industry. This, she says, a matter of fact. Being women is not a plus nor a minus in the creative field. But if a value added can be recognized for CW5, is that she likes to work in a female environment. A context of female work implies not having to justify her ideas and believes, not being continually equated and compared with male models, where there is a substantial lack of trust in women. At the question if there are more feminine or masculine tasks or responsibilities in the CCIs, she observed a gender biased situation, where responsibility for management and command are in charge to men, while administrative tasks are mostly female roles. The hierarchical question very much marks the state of things. The textile sector for example is male oriented for the top positions, while women largely work in the base of the pyramid.

Budget responsibility

Together with her sister, she is responsible for managing a 120,000 euros yearly budget.

Human resources responsibility

Lottozero has no employees, but there is a team of 3 collaborating with the two sisters.

Management style

CW5 has experienced a different style of management: women are more self-critical, they also analyze more their positions before taking decisions than men. CW5 herself has a more masculine style, and she says that it is more necessary when dealing with men. She regrets of this style of management, she would like to avoid it.

Working time and organization

CW5 and her partners have a fixed time work organization, from 9,30 to 7, with 1-hour lunch.

Career

The enterprise of CW5 is presently made of all women. There is no preclusion from men, but there is a sort of self-selection, because as said before, women are more willing to work with lower salaries, but enjoying the work for their interest.

Maternity

The idea is to support the maternity of employees by developing a specific company policy and an internal child care space. Moreover, they want to allow all collaborators to use teleworking in order to facilitate their work-life balance. They cannot offer specifically a corporate welfare, they follow for this the Italian regulation. The actual contractual fragility is at the moment an obstacle to maternity, but the willing to increase the business and to create a favorable environment, make them believe in the possibility to have a good work-life balance.

Caregiving

CW5 wants herself to have children and pays particular attention to the question of caregiving and work-life balance. She thinks that the CCIs are not very different from other sectors for what concerns these issues, it depends more on the vision of the entrepreneur or the employers, and the capacity to work for goals. She believes in the self-responsibility of workers in reaching objectives more than scheduled working hours which can also result also inefficient.

The most difficult obstacle

Want to keep working, finding always motivation and satisfaction even if the economic result is not in the short term. All the startup projects should be considered in the medium-long run.

The most important conquest

It is still in the future! She could be happy if and when the economic sustainability will be sufficient to solve all the voluntary work of their collaborators, or to avoid extra work.

The most beautiful project / milestone

The next is the most beautiful. She a future-oriented person, old projects are gone. The first work with Franzmagazine, the online magazine where she made her first creative experience was very significant. Apart from being a woman, the most relevant aspect was her personal financial autonomy ensured by her family, which constituted a precondition for the development of this experience. If you need a well-paid job, creative jobs are harder because they are less paid and require at the same time a lot of enthusiasm. Of course, this is not fair, but it's the crude reality. It is a privilege in a way to be able to work in a CCIs. Normally graduates in Economy or other related disciplines prefer to find a job who guarantee a good salary even if then they could not enjoy or be happy for their work.

The worst failure

Lots of failure, but the past is the past.

The location of your workplace and the influence on your being a woman

Urban Periphery not well served. She says there is not a specific impact on being women, to find a good balance between life and work does not depend on locations. The question depends on the effectiveness of the mobility system rather than on other factors.

The vision of the future

She is young, but she thinks that when you chose an individual path, where you are chef of yourself, it's not easy to imagine going back in an employee position. In the future she hopes that Lottozero could grow and provide more possibilities for all in term of economic retribution and satisfaction.

6. CW6

38, married, no children, a degree in DAMS, Disciplina Arti Musica e Spettacolo in Bologna, she has an extensive experience in the field of Communication of Culture. She is actually President of the Cooperative Franzlab and at the same time she's entrepreneur and founder of other businesses, Qollezione, a fashion collection and she offers independent consultancies in the field of communication.

Her current activity

CW6 is actually involved in two areas of activities, she's president of the cooperative Franzlab and she's working individually on different communication projects. She's specialized in communication, copyrighting and editorial projects. Franzlab is a cooperative dealing with specific projects, like Franzmagazine, an online magazine on culture and art in South Tirol, Joseph, a series of touristic guides (Bolzano, Merano, Trento) with a specific attention to art and culture, and projects for private clients. Most of the clients are cultural institutions. In her individual business she's offering her most advanced and creative skill, writing texts. CW6 is today specialized in different types of writing (journalism, online communication, tourism etc). She has worked extensively on creating a very recognizable "style of writing", a sort of brand, that becomes the reason why some clients turn specifically to her. The adaptation and creation of a specific language that refers to changing products and arguments, is based on constant research, reading and observation. She exerts also the role of art director for many private clients, where she develops the creative concept and coordinates the different phases of the development strategy.

How CW6 got there

CW6 was convinced since she was a child that her future work would have been in the humanistic and cultural field. Her family background has brought her to the interest in art, culture, theater, dance. She studied history of theater and her main interest was addressed to the performing arts. After finishing the studies, she wanted to work in the fashion world. Interestingly, she declares that when she was studying, she was deeply convinced not to be a creative herself, but that she would have worked for other creatives. Organizing fashion shows for instance. After some concrete experiences of project management in the field of theater and dance, she realized she had more a creative rather than an organizational attitude. The awareness of not being able to work for third parties led her to independent professional life, where she would have been at the head of herself, even with initial uncertainty about her skills and possibilities. The first project was a magazine – Kuehlschrank-. She dreamed about this magazine, and she tried to put all her skills, ideas and network in this project, where, since she had no editorial staff and collaborators she was working under three pseudonyms. This was a great 360° experience. After that she started working for a communication and advertisement agency, as copywriter. The writing skills became her strength.

Her talent

CW6 says the writing skill is her talent, the one she is able "to sell" in the best way, but an additional talent is her capacity to sketch the "big picture", to depict the overall vision with all their complexities.

Being a professional woman in the creative field

She is an individual worker and at the same time president of the Cooperative, the two working contexts can be defined as for profit small organizations. Being a woman in this creative field, she says is not the main issue. In the South Tyrolean context, there are other issues which matter (language and origins for instance), not the gender. What she appreciates most is the independence of her actual work environment, where she can decide about the use of time, about the direction to be taken. Being a woman doesn't make the difference, but having specific talents, experiences, capacities, these are relevant points in the creative fields.

She thinks that in the creative sectors there is more gender balanced and with less discriminations. These sectors in fact should be based on openness, vision and creativity and not on gender.

Budget responsibility

For what concerns the magazine-cooperative, they are three female members with an equal power in taking decisions. She is the legal responsible for the cooperative, while the economic responsibility is in charge to one of the other two members. They share all the decisions about collaborators,

payments and general administration. For what concerns her personal business, she addresses to consultants for the administration, but she is doing all by herself for the marketing, the pricing and the relation with clients. Giving the right price to her job was not easy at the beginning, when she was earning a small salary. In 10 years' time things are developed and today she can say she is out of the economic insecurity and is satisfied. Since 2017, she has an annual turnover around the 50K.

“‘Art for art’ has never been the goal of my work since I decided to do a creative job, the decision was to make money and live well with my work. Otherwise I would have looked for a job in a company and I would have built a career and, in a shorter time, I would have reached economic objectives”.

“We have worked for a long time thinking of doing a lot for this territory, of changing things, of asserting our ideas, but I have always thought that this should be accompanied by a satisfactory salary”.

Human resources responsibility

Franzlab has many collaborators and trainees. This part is in charge to another member of the cooperative. For what concerns her personal business, she coordinates other professionals (graphics, other experts involved in the communication projects). Today her work is enough to delegate other people, and be able to pay them, so she takes care of supervising some of the jobs she delegates to others. However, she says, being able to give work to others is still a great satisfaction.

Management style

Management for her is not a question of gender. She met various type of managers where the stereotypical roles are mixing. The size, the hierarchy and the level of formalization of specific industries makes the difference, as in these cases procedures prevail on alternative arrangements. She met very often women in directorial position, specifically in the fashion and cultural field.

Working time and organization

As regards the organization of work, it is quite rigid, from 9 to 18, always. Although it is a creative work, it is very structured, even if it follows her family needs and coincides with family schedules. The work of 8 hours allows her to finish the work and then devote herself to her private life. She also shares part of the work with her husband, and therefore after 6 p.m., while relaxing, some phases of reflection continue. But after 6 p.m. the office, the emails, the contacts with clients are closed. She does not work on the weekend, she does not work from home, except for extraordinary situations.

Career

CW6 is a free lance as mindset. Money are relevant as they represent a result of her job, and apart from the economic stability, what is also relevant is the possibility to develop an investment attitude. Money are relevant if you want to have great ideas and realize them.

“To earn money also allows investing, thinking bigger”.

“The world of “high culture and art” has understood that money is important and also represents a point of arrival, it is part of the artistic affirmation. Who continues to assert that he/she works for art and for the ideas, underneath it he/she has not done it. Everyone could be happy to become a Cattelan”.

“Success is often measured also through the economic wealth that generates, we think of Steve Jobs, Satchi & Satchi, or Bottura the superstar of the moment in the world of cooking, all of them have also broken down economically. Then the interesting thing is that they reinvested them”.

She says she's not that good at doing money, but it's a goal for her, specifically because she wants to invest in her activity, she wants to grow. “I always say that there are “good rich” and “bad rich”. The first ones are those that invest on young people, on their own activity, on social projects, they take on, they also improve their creative potential. The bad rich are those who tend to enrich themselves and that's it.”

Maternity

What happens when in a small organization someone is going on maternity leave? One of the three members of the cooperative had two children in the last years, and this was a problem for such a small company, because her competencies could not be immediately substituted. The “mother” was specifically the project manager. There is not a specific rule for the maternity leave, but the personal responsibility towards the work is the key. There is a very high tolerance and a good climate internally, no one is judging the others, but they tend to the problem solving and to find informal solution rather than developing a formal policy. For instance, they try to internally ensure a small budget for every member, taken from the richest projects, so that if someone is actually not working, could have a small coverage. Personally she’s actually not thinking to the maternity, and the very reason is that she is very involved and committed to her projects, and, at this point of her career, having a child means to change her actual lifestyle.

Caregiving

The work- life balance is based on the relationship with the husband and her family context, which is a fundamental support. In general, she thinks that the CCIs are a more supportive sector towards this aspect. This relies on the mindset, which is more open and flexible, and informal. The greater flexibility and informality of the working environment make work-life balance easier. Many creative people work from home and organize themselves accordingly. Another form of help with regard to work life balance, is based on collaboration with the closest work colleagues, who are able to partially replace the temporary absence for problems of various kinds (team work).

The most difficult obstacle

Two main obstacles, surely one is economic security as a limit to one's creativity and respect for the low budget; secondly, here in South Tyrol, being Italian is a penalty to gain access to certain positions or to some works of a certain importance. This is a consequence of the enduring division of this territory.

The most important conquest

“Having created a kind of brand, today quite recognizable despite the difficulties. What I got is mainly due to myself”.

The biggest failure

On the business level there have been failures, but most of them have been taken as an experience. Perhaps one element that can be mentioned is that she could not make the international leap, perhaps today this is no longer possible. Being a woman does not play any specific role. Today she perceives that the most important market for her will be substantially local or regional. But in general, the satisfaction of her life compensates this little frustration.

The most beautiful project

The most beautiful perhaps remains the first (Kuehlschrank), after 10 years, which was the seed of all that came later, and that was done by her alone. It is still actual and she is very proud of it, the first free press fashion magazine in South Tyrol.

The future

Long-term planning has never been a priority for Franzlab, they have always followed events a lot. She thinks that some of the most important projects of today cannot have a very long future, but the organizations, Franzlab and her personal company, these have been designed to last for the chance to grow and grow, to have more and more customers. Consequently, also many more collaborators.

Does the workplace context matter?

The management of personal work-life balance is influenced by the urban or rural area. Living in a town of medium size helps for the practical personal life, but probably is a disadvantage for the work inputs.

7. CW7

Graduated in Translation at the University of Innsbruck, she made a specialization course in Journalism. She's still enrolled in another course of study in Comparative Literature. She is always open to further training. She is 41 years old and has actually no children.

Her current activity

She is co-art director, together with a colleague, of a small creative industry, in the form of a cooperative, called Franzlab, which includes three women, specialized on Communication, event organization and publishing. She defines herself as an entrepreneurial creative. She's specialized in writing texts. In Franzlab she's also responsible for the managerial and financial aspects of the cooperative. She's also working for a newborn co-working, Basis, localized in Silandro, in the mountain in the Province of Bolzano. In Basis she's responsible for the communication and the event management. She is journalist, belonging to the order of journalists.

How CW7 got there

She has liked to write about language and languages— in German Sprache und Sprachen-. Since she was a child she studied languages, even if she came from a rural reality. She remembers that as a child she translated songs from English into German; then she wanted to enroll in the linguistic high school, but it was not possible and she turned to classical studies. She realized that even the study of ancient languages was interesting, it was a kind of discovery. Subsequently he studied simultaneous translation in Innsbruck. CW7 made her first work experiences in a public relation office of a political party. This was a great start for her experience, she learned a lot. The political world was very interesting, dynamic and challenging, nevertheless this was not her field. But this was the access to the field of communication. She worked then in different communication agencies, changing very often her job. She was staying no more than one year in each position, as she wanted to accumulate experiences in order to find the most suitable job for her. No fear of self-firing.

Her talent

CW7 best talent is writing. She defines the writing as “handwerk”, like an artisan work: “a craftsman, like a shoemaker who knows how to make different types of shoes, some like them more and others less, but he knows how to make them a little bit”. Today she has different styles and approaches. Another talent is the networking, the capacity to bring together different profiles and skills.

Being a professional woman in the creative field

She defines her creative work as a for profit-oriented business. She wants to live out of her work. Being an independent worker, a free-lance even if she works for a cooperative, has advantages and disadvantages. She thinks being a woman doesn't make the difference. But she experienced some differences connected to the age: when she was younger, she was given less credibility. Sometimes she has even thought about how she should dress in relation to some meetings she would have had. She thinks this is an issue: the young interns sometimes face the same situation today. But this could be taken as a gender difference. She's a well convinced free-lance, but she thinks that being a free-lance could have an impact for both women and men as there is more insecurity. At the question if there more feminine tasks and roles, she thinks that there is a general idea that organizational aspects are more for women. She disagrees, but this is a common societal idea. In the CCIs, she observes a very traditional divide between jobs that require physical strength, manpower and other roles as secretaries, administrative roles are more in charge to women. But a positive element is that more and more there are female team, women that works together despite the saying "too many women do not get along". Male team are more regular, but female team not. She thinks Teams should not be mixed anyway.

Budget responsibility

CW7 has budget responsibility, dealing with an annual budget of 100.000 Euros. She shares this task with another member.

Human resources responsibility

In Franzlab CW7 coordinates a team of two to six collaborators, together with the other member of the coop. In Basis she's also following the other collaborators.

Management style

If they are women who take decisions, there are differences. In the creative world the manpower prevails, even if creativity has no gender. But the hierarchies are present also in this world in favor of men. She has a direct experience of male direction in one of the two main organization (Basis).

Working time and organization

She has a flexible working time, she needs to have this flexibility because she has more than one job. Of course, flexibility is possible for collaborators too, even though with a previous agreement. Flexibility is based on agreement. She tries to regulate the working time from 9-9,30 a.m. to 5 p.m. but she is not rigid. At this regard, she discovers herself as less creative than the other colleague which are very organized. The idea that creative people are also chaotic is not true.

Career and vision of the future

Career means not to become the head of an organization, but managing more projects, people, plans. She is very convinced to remain a free-lance for the freedom she has. She cannot think to work as employee somewhere. Even if being a freelancer also has disadvantages, after many years in which she has invested and worked to reach a certain solidity, leaving at this point to get a steady job in a larger company would be a contradiction. She gives value to the economic stability, money is important. She wants to live through her work, not to have a second job and then be able to dedicate herself to writing. The goal is not to become rich, but to reach stability and give the right value to the creative job.

Maternity

The condition of free-lance in the perspective of motherhood does not help. being an employee puts you in the most suitable condition to think about having a certain evolution of things, work, family, children. But being a freelancer requires a lot of work and concentration. in fact, she likes this job and this form of work, so maternity is not something that is on her path at the moment. In fact, having a child today would be a renunciation of work. From the point of view of the organization, there is no specific policy but they try to find a solution with clear agreements between people.

Caregiving

Work-life balance is an issue. Being a freelancer at this regard is an advantage, because she can manage the time according to her necessities.

The most difficult obstacle

Indulge in creative breaks, where you can refocus your inspiration.

The most important conquest

To have reached a certain degree of experience and therefore of relaxation in dealing with things

The worst defeat

She has no signs of pain from the past.

My best project

The working harmony that she has managed to reach with her working partner, in 10 years of experience together.

Places

She has her office in the urban center of Bolzano, and then she reaches the different work and life places. She needs to stay in the center for the work. Basis which is located in Silandro needs a connection with the center. If connections (transport, internet, infrastructure) are good, also more rural/remote places work well.