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The Reputation Economy
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The Reputation Economy

Creative Labour and Freelance Networks

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INTRODUCTION

The economic crisis we have been experiencing since 2007-2008 has triggered a period of recession which has dramatically affected the context of western society at many levels. The evolution of the crisis is unveiling a restructuring of the whole system of accumulation based on financial capital, that has shown its limits and dangers in full extent. Among the different instances that are profoundly involved in this transformation, a central position is occupied by the issue of labour.

The question of work and employment in western society is probably the most crucial problematic in the socio-economic and political agenda. It is true in the US, where President Barack Obama won a second term in 2012 promising he would “put America back to work”. And it is true also in the European Union, where unemployment rates are rising in many countries and particularly in Southern Europe, with fewer exceptions. More so, the high unemployment figures in Europe, especially those concerning youth unemployment, combine with the staggering emergence of the NEET population (Not in Education, Employment or Training), an ensemble of mostly young, discouraged individuals who are fit to work but have simply given up both looking for a job and expanding their qualifications. This is a matter of serious concern for governments both at the local level as well as at the level of the Union.

The issues of work and employment, however, do not emerge out of the blue. The crisis comes after a couple of decades where discourses on an increasing *devaluation of labour* have proliferated across different fields, especially those which locate halfway between critical theory and political antagonism. I refer here to what a wide literature dealing with these issues defines, generally speaking, with terms like *precarity* or *precariousness* of work. The phenomenon of uncertain and unstable career paths made of temporary and nonstandard forms of employment inserts into a bigger transformation towards *flexibility* that is visible at the level of relations of production as a whole, which is going on for a long time now.

This transformation originates in the evolution of *postindustrial society* (Bell 1973) and *postfordism* (Arrighi 1994). These terms describe the set of instances concerning the emergence, across the decades 1970s-1980s, of a paradigm of accumulation based on financial capital that brought information production and consumption at the centre of the socio-economic processes. This combined with a set of policies we know as *neoliberalism* (Harvey 2005, 2011) which have put individual entrepreneurial initiative at the centre of an 'ideology of the free market', essentially

consisting in the loosening of the regulatory framework for economic activities and, as a consequence, in the liberalization of employment regulation towards nonstandard and temporary, *flexible*, forms of work.

The set of these instances resulted in a transformation in the nature of work and labour as a whole, and especially in the morphology of the workforce, bringing *knowledge workers* in a newly central position. The importance of knowledge work, that was envisioned by thinkers like Peter Drucker and Daniel Bell in their early accounts, developed in full throughout the past decades and intertwined with the implementation of neoliberal policies across the West. These brought along an increasing *individualization* and *entrepreneurialization* of the workforce as a result of politics of *flexibilization* of employment relations. The effects of this movement reflected in the contemporary diffusion of narratives of professionalism, self-organization, *self branding*, liberation and freedom at work, which popularized across mass media and also at the level of the collective imaginary. These represent what may be called a *neoliberal culture*, that enhances a lifestyle based on economic success through entrepreneurial activity, individual talent and creativity. And here we come to the central topic of this work.

The context just described is the setting where the myth of the *creative class* grew up between the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s as a narrative of self-realization by means that combine social recognition, lifestyle and creative entrepreneurial activity across media professions and the 'new economy'. The most famous and controversial standpoint in this context is the 'manifesto' of "The Rise of the Creative Class", published by innovation evangelist and creative guru Richard Florida in 2002.

Florida's widely influential and debated work on the 'creative class' is now a decade old. After all this time, it may be reasonably argued that Florida's book pictured with exaggerated emphasis the coming of an era of economic growth based on the proliferation of communication and media-related occupations. This movement should have fostered the development of *creative cities* where workers employed in the knowledge economy, the so-called 'creative class', were supposed to live and prosper with successful careers. A decade later, it is now visible how those promises went largely unfulfilled. The crisis especially hit knowledge professions resulting in high unemployment rates and diffused precarity, also unveiling the fallacies of Florida's work as a socio-economic analysis and cultural policy, that were covered by the author's celebratory framework.

Actually, there's more to the picture than meets the eye. Inside the Pandora's box of the creative class lies a controversial social context with many different problematic instances. For instance, a plethora of highly-skilled, college educated professionals enrolled in higher education programmes of 'creative training' with the promise of getting out of their degrees and quickly get a job, to then soon become successful, *cool* professionals in the arts, media and communication. This movement was largely sustained by families who dipped into lifetime savings or got indebted to pay university fees, with the expectation of a rewarding career that would have repaid the investment.

This scenario was, indeed, largely neglected. The number of jobs available substantially diminished over these years as a consequence of the combination of both neoliberal policies of flexibilization and a dramatic technological advancement brought along by the boom of the Internet, which offered new professional opportunities but also shrank the existing demand. The context that graduates encounter when they are getting out of universities to enter the job market is, indeed, a largely fragmented and precarious one, where families also represent the primary source of welfare assistance. This results in a diffused instability of living that derives from professional careers made of nonstandard and insecure forms of employment. This condition connotes both the young and the more aged professionals throughout a wide range of sectors, but seemingly affects knowledge and creative work to a greater extent.

The other side of this story is that creatives accepted this situation with unpredictable levity. Especially early-career professionals were largely contented with the rewarding symbolic satisfaction of being able to participate in the media scene, notwithstanding they were often working for free, largely relying on family support for housing and living, with low or no income, sometimes forced to move from the countryside or provinces to creative cities to pursue their careers.

In other words, the increase in the overall supply of creative workers paired up with neoliberal policies on work and employment which fostered project-based work and short-term arrangements of different kinds, reducing the general amount of earnings potentially available. At the same time, the parallel 'technological revolution' brought along by digital technologies was dramatically reconfiguring the processes of production in the industry, together with the nature of the demand. Creative jobs were, *de facto*, both decreasing and changing as a result of the integration of digital technologies and practices into the working routine, such that it may be argued a transition or shift towards the integration of digital-based production within processes of accumulation is taking place

with several and somewhat contradictory effects on labour relations and processes.

The rise of social media platforms and social network sites of any kind has had effects at many different levels, such as the commonality of information, issues of privacy and control, the potential for new business to emerge and grow. The process of digitalization of society has inevitably and substantially affected also the practices and dynamics of employment and recruitment. Social media are now a privileged platform for job search. One of the most important and popular social network sites is an employment-oriented social network, LinkedIn¹ which consents to upload a profile with all professional information and to connect with other professionals all over the world. A plethora of similar websites, dedicated to different kinds of businesses and also to market niches, proliferate on the web.

Also, the most famous 'generalist' social network sites like Facebook and Twitter are increasingly used for professional image management. This has two implications. On the one hand, these tools are massively utilized as professional instruments for purposes of self-marketing and self-branding, networking, visibility and 'getting known'. Professionals use SNS and also blogs to develop a personal brand, establish a career or a business and expand the marketability of their profile by showing their skills, competences and taste. On the other hand, we may say as a result of this use, social network sites are also among the first places where recruiters go and look for preliminary information over a job candidate, often assessing a potential employee or collaborator on the basis of the information that is publicly available. The management of a personal profile on social network sites is therefore becoming crucial for professional advancement, as recruiters increasingly evaluate candidates by screening their social media profiles.

At the same time, devices such as the 'social buttons' – 'likes', 'shares', 'mentions', 'retweets' – made the online activity of an individual potentially measurable in order to calculate and individual's 'influence', meaning the capacity to successfully spread informational content across one's personal network. We are witnessing the emergence of Google-like algorithms, the most famous of whom is Klout², that claim to calculate one's ability to be influential across the personal network of contacts, though with somehow controversial implications and severe measurement issues. This has become a specific skill for certain professions, especially in the creative and cultural industries.

1

Full website URL: www.linkedin.com

2 Full website URL: www.klout.com

In other words, it may be argued that the structural individualization and entrepreneurialization of the workforce that is taking place since the 1980s, has evolved into the rise of a *mediatized independent professional* who is necessarily confronted with the use of digital platforms for recruitment and career advancement. This 'mediatized independent professional' is ever more a *self-enterprise* that is required to entertain self-management practices that include and combine job accomplishments, networking and personal branding. This movement is fuelled by an ideological stance towards individual entrepreneurial activity within a narrative of personal success and self-organization that is visible at many levels. LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman, together with startup evangelist Ben Casnocha, wrote in the recent editorial success “The Start-up of You” (Hoffman and Casnocha 2012) that “we are all entrepreneurs” since “your career” is “the most vibrant and dynamic startup you can manage”.

The creative industries are an excellent example in order to study these process of individualization and entrepreneurialization. The instances here outlined get together in the essentially project-based nature of creative labour, and result in a diffusion of freelancing and self-employment as these become the most – sometimes the only – suitable options for establishing a creative career. To make an example, in the 2012 Freelance Industry report that accounts for North America freelance economy, it is shown how half of the freelancers reported are into writing, copywriting or editorial work (Gregg 2013).

The rise of the 'mediatised independent professional' as a subject across the emergent social media scene intertwines with creative labour to a greater extent, as networking and personal connections are widely acknowledged in the literature to be decisive for career advancement and recruitment. Through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and similar services, one's professional networks and connections become visible, and the management of connections and networking becomes ever more crucial.

These instances, taken as a whole, unveil the decisive role played by the personal *reputation* across these professional networks as a determinant element for career success in the creative world, where social interaction intrinsically connects with economic outcomes across networked environments. This is why reputation is the main object of study at stake with this work. The diffusion of independent freelancing pairs up with a literature, that on knowledge work, which has extensively underlined the role of reputation across networked creative labour markets without nevertheless

focusing specifically on a peculiar analysis over the functions and the role played by reputation across these environments – and, to a certain extent, somewhat underestimating the effects that reputation may generate over these networks.

This work has the aim of fulfilling this gap by discussing the existence of a *reputation economy* across networked labour markets of independent professionals in the creative industries. The idea of a *reputation economy* describes a social system where reputation operates as a capital or asset in a context of networked and *newly-mediatised* social interaction where individuals pursue economic outcomes by leveraging on social relations through making use of their *reputational capital*. The study of the reputation economy will be done by looking at informal networks of freelance creatives within two traditionally considered 'creative cities', Milan and London, taken as emblematic examples of this category. This will get together with the study of creative contractors on Elance, a world-leading online international marketplace specifically oriented to freelancers. The hypothesis that will be discussed in this work is that reputation is the determinant element for the income of freelance professionals in the creative scenes here studies. More specifically, it is argued that reputation is more important than trust, skills and education in the contexts considered.

We have seen the overall context where this hypothesis originates. If we look at the last thirty to forty years, we could argue that the transformations taking place at the level of production affect labour relations and employment possibly as much as ever since the Industrial Revolution. The nature of labour in this period seems to evolve in parallel and symbiotic trajectory with the development of media, communication and culture. I believe it is no longer possible to deal with questions of work, labour and employment without taking into consideration this contiguity, together with the impact that the diffusion of digital technologies is having at all levels in society. Within this work I will try to devise a picture of these transformations, using creative labour as a privileged observatory.

The present thesis is structured in the form of an article-based work that aims at dealing with the most important aspects at stake from the perspective just outlined.

I will begin my dissertation with a chapter of Literature Review (p. 9) where I will outline the theoretical framework adopted in this work, which finds roots in the literature on knowledge work. I will revise the most important contributions in this field, discussing the issues and questions that arise in relation to creative labour taken from this perspective. This will take into a discussion of the

literature on social capital and networks from a socio-economic and organizational angle. I will focus on reputation and trust to discuss the role of networks for the extent of capital accumulation and social production of value.

This will be followed by a chapter that discusses the methodological strategy adopted in this work (p. 38). I will extensively describe the research design and the different techniques used during data collection and fieldwork. I will explain the necessity of adopting a mixed methods research design able to entail quali-quantitative techniques such as interviews, social network analysis and statistical elaborations in an overall ethnographic perspective, discussing critical instances and potential shortcomings.

Then I will move on to the core of this work, which is made of three sections devised in the form of three articles. Each section is essentially a specific paper that outlines an argument on a single relevant issue. The three papers have been put together through an editing that aims at showing the element of continuity which essentially consists in the role and extent of reputation in the context considered.

Section 1 (p. 59) deals with the main concept of 'reputation economy', looking at the role of reputation and trust in the networks of freelance creatives here studied. With the help of essentially quantitative empirical evidence I will show how reputation is the determinant element for the income of freelance creatives in the cases considered. I will argue that reputation can be empirically distinguished from trust on the basis of reciprocity and mutuality, and I will discuss the implications of such a statement especially in relation to the open-ended debate on social capital.

Section 2 (p. 103) discusses to what extent creative work can be considered a kind of 'extreme work' by looking at the work practices of networked self-employed, to devise 'conditions of extremity' that peculiarly connote creative work as such. I will focus on freelance creative work and extremity by studying the indicators of job quality and job satisfaction. These, I will argue, can be interpreted through the crucial role played by reputation in these environments.

Section 3 (p. 129) looks at the role and meaning of creative networks in organizational perspective. The argument I will bring along is that the practices of social interaction and self-management entertained across these networks unveil the existence of a 'mode of production' where reputation operates as the source for trust to be built for purposes of economic transactions. I will show the

most common 'organizational patterns' I have found in the networks here studied, and I will discuss the implications of these findings. This analysis in fact calls into question the role of the network as a specific form of organization that integrates elements of both markets and hierarchies to the extent that a 'freelance mode of production' seems to be emerging across such contexts.

I will then conclude this dissertation by discussing the main findings of this work and reflecting on some of the instances that emerge out of this study, which may be of interest for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decades we have witnessed the rise of what we know as “creative” and “cultural” industries (CCIs), flourished in full bloom all over Western neoliberal economy. CCIs can be defined as industries where value is generated through mechanisms of valorisation of knowledge, innovation and creativity (DCMS 1998, 2001; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Florida 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005; Pratt 2008). CCIs include media-based industries such as television, print and ICTs, but also advertising, public relations, communication and design. These are constituted of a creative labour market made of knowledge workers employed at all levels with different degrees of experience, independence and autonomy (McKinlay and Smith 2009). An extensive international literature has looked at creative and cultural industries dealing with numerous critical aspects from various perspectives including sociology, cultural studies, cultural and economic geography, media studies. To get across this literature in full extent is the purpose of this chapter.

The evolution of creative industries over the last years resulted in the expansion of a project-based creative labour market increasingly leaning on *freelance work* (Christopherson 2002, 2008; Neilson and Rossiter, 2005; Barley and Kunda 2001, 2006; McKinlay and Smith, 2009; Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012). With the term “freelance” is to be intended a form of contract-based, self-organized work, not subject to a formally stable and continuous dependent relationship with a single firm or employer (Christopherson 2002, 2008). The diffusion of freelance work in the creative industries finds roots in two different but compatible instances. On the one hand, the actual practice of a wide range of 'creative jobs' fits well within project-based arrangements that imply nonstandard forms of employment, given the nature of the tasks requested to creative workers. On the other hand, we have witnessed the diffusion of a “neoliberal culture” that promotes economic success and individual entrepreneurship with the aim of 'liberating' creative talent. This resulted in a tension towards labour autonomy and independence across knowledge work as a whole (Christopherson 2002, 2008; Florida 2002; McRobbie 2002, 2004).

The way in which creative workers, especially self-employed, operate across creative labour markets is essentially by cultivating relationships and creating *networks* (Blair 2001, 2009; Christopherson 2002, 2008; Pratt 2008; Gill and Pratt 2008; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012). In such a scenario, a worker's *reputation* appears to become a newly relevant element, the importance of whom has been often underestimated or taken for granted by the existing literature. The emergence and diffusion of social media platforms has ever more enhanced the

importance of connections, relationships and personal reputation within these labour markets since, under certain conditions, reputation across social media platforms becomes visible and potentially measurable. As a result, it can be questioned to what extent the reputation of an individual within a professional network might lead to certain outcomes by leveraging on the nature and intensity of these newly-mediated social relations.

It is from here that the idea of a 'reputation economy' (Bolton, Loebbecke and Ockenfels 2007; Botsman 2010, 2012; Hearn 2010; Masum and Tovey 2012; Arvidsson and Peitersen 2013) emerges in this context to describe the role of reputation as a capital or 'asset' managed across networked environments with the instrumental aim of accessing resources, goods and income. In the next section I will look more in depth at the theoretical framework that sustains this hypothesis, to enquire what are the most relevant aspects which emerge from the existent literature in relation to this issue.

Theoretical framework. The literature on knowledge work

Creative and cultural work should be taken here as a peculiar kind of 'knowledge work'. This term defines those jobs connoted by freedom and self-organization in the context of postindustrial, information society (Drucker 1942, 1957; Bell 1973; Reich 1992, 2000; Pratt 2008). The early pioneering vision of an economy based on knowledge and information dates back to the writings of management guru Peter Drucker. Drucker (1942, 1957) imagined a future where management is the centre of production thanks to a growing number of workers who are able to capitalize on knowledge and information. On a similar line, Daniel Bell (1973) imagined a 'postindustrial society' where accumulation and economic development were information-based and service-driven. More recently, Reich (1992, 2000) brought along similar visions on the future of work focusing on 'new media workers' as 'model entrepreneurs' in a knowledge economy that is quickly shifting towards digital-based accumulation.

The creative class. An influential and controversial contribution to this debate is the work by Richard Florida, "The Rise of the Creative Class" (2002). The more recent literature on knowledge work intervenes to discuss the role and extent of work in the creative and cultural industries (Pratt 2008; Gill and Pratt 2008; Pratt et al., 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008, 2013; McKinlay and Smith 2009) elaborating on Florida's theses with substantial criticism. I will use this as the starting point for discussion.

Florida sustained that a widespread diffusion of jobs based on creativity and individual talent was destined to bring a new era of economic development and prosperity based on the rise of a new socio-economic subject, the 'creative class'. This term was coined by Florida with staunch enthusiasm to identify the undistinguished ensemble of urban, young knowledge workers employed in widely different jobs across media-based industries, from journalism to advertising and marketing. These professionals, in Florida's view, share a common ethos for creativity, innovation and individualism.

Despite becoming a quickly fashionable concept for policy makers and city planners, who were intent to project for the development of 'creative cities' (Landry 2000; Power and Nielsen 2010; Musterd and Murie 2010), the idea of the creative class emerged also as a very questionable one. Peck (2005) sustains that Florida's argument is both attractive as quite elusive in that the celebratory framework of the creative class neglects social inequalities and class divisions that are diluted within the 'coolness' of the emerging economy. Pratt (2008) et al. (2007) challenge the idea of class applied to creative workers pointing out that Florida is not using any Marxian or Goldthorpean approach in his work, thus reducing his categorization to a mere taxonomy. In Pratt's view (2008), Florida's concept of creative class appears to be more of a list of professional figures rather than a class as traditionally conceived in sociological terms. Both Peck (2005) and Pratt (2008) underline the ambiguity of such concept. Storper and Scott (2009) take on Florida's claim that the presence of creative talent in a region is functional to economic development in that it generates growth and jobs. On the contrary, they argue, individuals endowed by such human capital are likely to move only where employment opportunities are already available, in order to profit on their investment in higher education and professional skills.

The account outlined by Florida is connoted by a generally enthusiastic mood which, after years from that book, seems largely overcome. The many forms of "flexible exploitation" that are visible in creative labour (Neilson and Rossiter 2005; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008, 2013; Gill and Pratt 2008; McKinlay and Smith 2009) have proved Florida's argument to be substantially oversimplistic in that it simply ignored many of the critical aspects at stake with creative jobs, especially the diffused precarisation and instability. Some of these accounts, especially Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008, 2013) and Gill and Pratt (2008), undertook a critique of creative work using in different ways the Autonomist Marxist notions of 'immaterial' and 'affective' labour (Lazzarato 1996; Hardt and Negri 2000, 2005).

Immaterial labour and subjectivity. The concepts of 'immaterial' and 'affective labour' can be located in the context of the Autonomist Marxist critique to the increasing informationalization and cognitivization of late capitalism (Moulier-Boutang 2007). These views represent a central element in this work as they stress a particular emphasis on the role and extent of *subjectivity* in the processes of late capitalist production. Lazzarato defines 'immaterial labour' as the labour that produces 'the informational and cultural content of a commodity' (Lazzarato 1996, p. 133). The concept of immaterial labour defines the new status of commodities as informational and cultural objects, being the outcome of activities that no longer pertain to the domain of 'material' industrial production, rather to the valorization of cognitive and cultural features. On a similar line of thought, Hardt and Negri (2000) elaborate on this idea to argue about the 'affective labour' that connotes production of immaterial goods as knowledge, communication and services. This concept is particularly useful since it introduces the element of 'affectivity' and 'affect' as increasingly important to assess knowledge work across digitalization. According to Paolo Virno (2004), the essential trait of the 'immaterial worker' is what he calls *virtuosity* – meaning the a-productive, self-referential activity of the postfordist knowledge worker whose labour shares characteristics with the 'performance' and the 'score' of an artist (Virno 2004).

This theoretical approach has widely influenced the critique of creative labour in the anglo-saxon literature over the last decades. In an influential article, Gill and Pratt (2008) describe creative work using the metaphor of the 'social factory', a concept derived from autonomist Marxists accounts by Tronti (1966) and, more recently, Negri (1989). The concept of the 'social factory' or 'factory without walls' describes a kind of labour that is dispersed, deterritorialized and decentralized, where all traits of social life, subjectivity and social relations are put at value (Gill and Pratt 2008). The notion of 'passionate work' (Arvidsson et al. 2010; McRobbie 2002, 2004) locates 'passion' at the centre of value production in creative environments showing how valorization processes leverage on the symbolic status of individuals employed in creative 'scenes'. Here, it is shown how the lifestyle of creative knowledge workers is connoted by a "bright side" made of "coolness", social recognition and symbolic satisfaction (McRobbie 2002, 2004; Ross 2009; Arvidsson et al., 2010) that covers for a "dark side" made of alienation, anxiety for the future and diffused precarity (Lazzarato 1996; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008; Gill and Pratt 2008; Ross 2004, 2009).

Neilson and Rossiter (2005) suggest how the status of autonomy and self-organization on the job that connotes contemporary creative work is often paired with unstable income and a precarious

lifestyle made of “freedom without security” (Neilson and Rossiter 2005). In their view, the consistent precarisation and instability in cultural labour is a response of global financial capital to the rejection of 'jobs for life' occurred in Late Capitalism. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2008), in a critique to the autonomist Marxists' concepts of 'immaterial' and 'affective' labour, assimilate media work to the 'more sociological' concept of 'emotional labour' outlined by Arlie Hochschild in the work on airline staff (1983) as creative work elicits appropriate emotional responses by inducing or repressing feelings. In their most recent work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2013) they elaborate on this idea to provide an account of creative work across three media industries that shows how the instances of self-realization, self-exploitation and precarity have now deeply got together to embrace different fields as journalism, music and television to shape the notion of 'good' work within these environments.

The emphasis on subjectivity and 'passion' in the 'social factory' from this perspective calls into question the notion of class in a way that goes well beyond the autonomist Marxist approach. The idea of the 'multitude' (Virno 2004; Hardt and Negri 2005; Gill and Pratt 2008) represents the attempt to describe (and to a certain extent, to reconcile) the fragmentation and individualization of knowledge work which reflects in the dispersed class composition and the demise of a class consciousness able to mobilize collective action. Similar attempts on this line point at what, with different nuances, both Andrew Ross (2009) and Guy Standing (2011) call 'the precariat'. This term broadly indicates the common element of precarity and instability of work and life that creative and cultural workers share with other service-based work as retail or low-end service. Ross (2009) underlines how the elements of commonality between these groups are hidden behind the discourses of 'liberating talent' in the 'new economy' regime that substantially affect the creative sector. These stress autonomy and self-organization, neglecting the undermining of quality of life and establishing an arbitrary opposition between autonomy and solidarity.

Standing (2011) defines the status of the precariat as a 'class in the making' as it was for the proletariat in the early days of industrial production. This is composed by different kinds of individuals, from post-working class to migrants and creative class workers, who flock to urban environments to compete for insecure jobs, housing and social entitlements with no defined occupational identity. These instances find partial confirmation in the 'new model for social class' that emerges from the study of Great British BBC Class Survey by Savage et al. (2013). Among the seven classes outlined, the 'emergent service sector' essentially coincides with the urban knowledge workers here at stake, being largely composed of a highly-skilled, college-educated young

workforce living in urban environments, entangled in many social relations. On the other hand, what Savage et al. (2013) call 'the precariat' is a number of low-skilled, low-end manual service occupational categories connoted by conditions of extremity. Nevertheless, the emergent service class and the precariat are the two lowest layers in the stratification and share traits of insecurity and instability. These aspects of class composition and redefinition appear to be a promising terrain for further research.

The contradictory aspects just outlined call into question the practices and processes that connote creative labour. In their edited book on this topic, McKinlay and Smith (2009) present a comprehensive account of work and employment in the creative industries from various perspectives, essentially kept together by a labour process framework. In this context, two trends seem to emerge as prominent. These are the diffusion of project work and the rise of independent forms of professionalism.

The diffusion of project work. A crucial element to be taken into consideration in the study of employment in the creative and cultural industries is given by the essentially *project-based* nature of creative work, whereby positions are increasingly available on single projects on a temporary basis. The project-based nature of creative labour enhances the role of networks and the practices related to the management of relationships for recruitment purposes. Christopherson (2002, 2008, 2009) highlights that the growing demand for low-budget production is causing a split between the core and the periphery of media workforce. In her recent work, she shows how media firms in the US are limiting their employed workforce to a core staff and substantially rely on temporary workers and self-employed on an as-needed basis (Christopherson 2008, 2009).

This appears to be the result of a longer process that finds roots in the neoliberal policies of 'flexible accumulation' of the 1980s that fostered outsourcing and short-term contracts for essentially budget reasons (Harvey 1990, 2005, 2011). It appears as though it is a peculiar characteristic of many forms of creative work, to be structurally organized on more or less consistent portions of project-based work (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008, 2013; McKinlay and Smith 2009; Gill and Pratt 2008; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012).

The result of these processes is the emergence of a large individualized and entrepreneurialized workforce grown up in the myth of self-organization, being highly flexible and strongly motivated to undertake also low-paid or unpaid jobs. As mentioned in the introduction, the expansion of

labour supply has seemingly been stimulated by the fashionable diffusion of higher education 'creative training'. This has caused a change in the professional and craft identities giving rise to a workforce that is essentially *hybrid* and *multi-functional* in competences (Christopherson 2008, 2009). There seems to be general recognition among creative workers themselves that skills are substantially learned 'on the job' (Randle and Culkin 2009).

These processes of transformation of the 'creative subject' into a strongly individualized entity institutionalized precarity and instability as a 'natural' condition. This enhanced the role of *networks* as socio-technical relations of production in this context. Christopherson shows how the practices of recruitment in the creative sector increasingly take the shape of 'exclusionary networks' where gatekeepers mediate the competition for jobs (Christopherson 2008, 2009; Lee 2011). Similarly, in their study on skills in the UK film and TV industry, Grugulis and Stoyanova (2009, 2011, 2012) show how contacts are crucial to 'get a foot in the door' (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009). They argue that social capital is seemingly essential to ensure quick and flexible arrangements in terms of recruitment and behavioural norms, nevertheless often reiterating forms of especially gender-based inequalities (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012).

The importance of *networking* as a practice for job search and recruitability becomes 'naturally' central within an individualized and fragmented labour market where professionals capitalize on their personal connections and the only thing that matters is 'who you know' (Blair 2001, 2009; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2009, 2011, 2012; Lee 2011). Creative workers seem largely evolving towards a kind of workforce essentially made of highly-skilled individual professionals who compete against each other in a labour market which asks for low labour cost (Christopherson 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008).

To sum up, this seems to configure a setting where there is a growing prominence of *free agents* (Pink 2001), *boundaryless* and *portfolio* careers (Platman 2004; Barley and Kunda 2001, 2006; Donnelly 2009) where knowledge workers are freelancers, consultants or self-employed professionals outside organizations who operate, as suggested by Christopherson (2008), in *interdependent relationship* with firms in the industry. Randle and Culkin (2009) show how project-based work induces into freelance careers where practices of network management are so crucial that 'doing the work is fun, finding the work is the job' (Randle and Culkin, 2009).

Self-employment. There are many different nuances that can be given to the word 'self-employment'

in the creative sector. First, it is one of the different types of jobs that go under the definition of 'contingent work' (Barker and Christensen 1998) This term, though often associated to low-end service jobs, here comprises of all employment categories based on conditional and transitory arrangements (Barker and Christensen 1998). The workers at stake with this research are an undistinguished and blurred ensemble of contractors, consultants, freelancers, free agents, portfolio workers, agency workers. I here use these terms interchangeably given that the boundaries between different definitions are substantially overlapping as a result of the 'multi-functional' and 'hybrid' nature of creative jobs (Christopherson 2008). This is a general trend confirmed by several recent cross-country contributions as, among many, those by Dex et al. (2000), Baumann (2002), Benner (2002), Platman (2004), Barley and Kunda (2001, 2006), Eikhof and Haunschild (2006), Kirkpatrick and Hoque (2006), Antcliff et al. (2007), Christopherson (2008, 2009) Donnelly (2009), Dekker (2010), Lee (2011).

The element that is shared by the different professional definitions listed above lies in the temporary, contract-based and independent, self-organized form of work, not subject to a formally stable and continuous dependent relationship with a single employing entity (Christopherson 2002, 2006). Self-employed are defined as those individuals who run a self-enterprise with no formal employees (Pedersini and Coletto 2010; Dekker 2010). The trend of expansion of this kind of workforce in the last decades is widely visible in the available data, though with context-dependent differences (Christopherson and Storper 1989; Barker and Christensen 1998; Benner 2002; Nies and Pedersini 2003; Arum and Muller 2004; Pedersini and Coletto 2010; EEOR 2010).

Arum and Muller (2004) show how non-agricultural self-employment in OECD countries has tended to increase over the past decades, particularly between 1979 and the early 1990s when it showed an average growth rate of 2.3 % per year, compared to 1.4 % of general employment. Nies and Pedersini (2003) in a study on journalistic professions account how nonstandard forms of journalistic employment increased across Europe around the 2000s, posing particular attention to those hybrid figures that stand midway between self-employment and dependent employment. These are formally self-employed who are actually economically dependent from a single employer – what Haunschild and Eikhof (2009) label under the name 'self-employed employees' – though their diffusion is difficult to account in terms of figures as a specific category.

In a recent EU-based industrial relations report, Pedersini and Coletto (2010) discuss more recent data that show how self-employment rates are increasing or decreasing in a context-specific

manner, with figures varying from country to country. They also show how quantitative data collection over non-employees is largely complicated given that most of these workers do not have formal statuses, and their professional status is easily influenced by qualitative dimensions as skills, working conditions and the actual degree of independence. Nevertheless, they highlight the existence of important reasons to devote specific attention to self-employment, as a tendency to polarization of earnings, the diffusion of non-standard working arrangements and conditions, and the under-representativeness of unions (Pedersini and Coletto 2010).

To a larger extent, the international crisis has affected a significant amount of creative professionals working in firms, who have been downsized or made redundant because of budget cuts. Many former dependent employees were more or less induced into becoming freelancers in the recent past, not by opportunity or choice, rather as an effect of the shrinking of an already fragmented labour market. The emphasis on these figures is such that a specific name, 'necessity entrepreneurs', was coined on purpose (Clark 2013). This may be the reason why in the 2010 European Employment Observatory Review self-employment demonstrates a degree of resilience to the economic crisis, with a limited fall in figures of only 1% compared to a 2% drop in the number of dependent employees (EEOR, 2010).

Self-employment accounts for nearly 15% of total employment in Europe (one job in seven). In terms of perceptions, the EEOR survey found that 45% of European citizens would prefer self-employment to dependent jobs; these figures are inverted only in Greece. More so, the preference for self-employment appears to be rooted within a set of specific socio-demographic characteristics; men, younger interviewees with higher levels of education and an entrepreneurial family background are more likely to prefer self-employment. Its main attractive features appear to be freedom, independence and self-fulfilment (EEOR, 2010). It is also shown that there are different understandings of self-employment varying from country to country.

Milan and London. As noted in the introduction, this work focuses on three case studies that reflects different types of contexts. Two of these case studies, Milan and London, are to be taken as emblematic examples of creative industries in creative cities (Landry 2000; Power and Nielsen 2010; Musterd and Murie 2010). The available data and the literature on self-employment and freelancing concerning Italy and the United Kingdom show how both countries have done very few in terms of specific labour market legislation in the recent years. However, the United Kingdom seems to have a more favourable regulatory system with a simple set of criteria to be fulfilled in

order to be legally considered self-employed. A set of small legislative initiatives and tax schemes cuts have been taken in both countries over the last decades to create favourable conditions for individual entrepreneurial initiatives, with disputable success.

The decade 1979-89 has seen a general growth of self-employment in the UK with an overall rate that rose from 7.3 % to 13.1 % which is mostly due to the service sector and a looser regulatory framework for business startups (Meager and Bates 2004). Recent data show how the United Kingdom presents a number of non-employees (13.6%) that is in line with the EU average number (17%). However, over 70% of the non-employees is self-employed, which is a consistently high figure if compared to other EU countries (Pedersini and Coletto 2010). Self-employment in the UK, though considered a nonstandard form of employment, indeed appears to be a widely-established career path both in figures as well as in terms of social recognition, especially at an advanced stage in the career (Platman 2004; Meager and Bates 2004). These data, combined with the literature on creative labour and creative cities discussed above, make London a sort of 'control case' in this argument.

As concerns Italy, many studies (Barbieri 1999; Barbieri and Bison 2004; Accornero and Anastasia 2006; Murgia 2008; Ranci 2012) show how the country is historically characterized by high rates of self-employment overall, especially concerning the service sector in the last decades. Nevertheless, the most recent major legislative intervention concerning self-employment dates back to the year 2000 (EEOR 2010). Self-employed are known in Italy with the name 'partite IVA', which recalls the VAT number assigned to each self-employed for fiscal procedures ('IVA' is VAT in Italy). The most recent labour reform has acted on self-employment at a superficial level, such that it remains a nonstandard and costly alternative to dependent work within a widely complicated legislative scheme made of a large number of different types of employment contracts.

However, in contrast with these problematics, the number of self-employed in Italy remains significantly higher (26%) than the EU average. This may also be due to the high number of 'self-employed employees' that connotes Italy, which figures are difficult to be collected (Ranci 2012; Bologna and Banfi 2011; Maestriperi 2012). The widespread diffusion of 'false' self-employment in Italy can be found in all areas of work, whilst in the UK for instance seems to be mostly limited to the construction sector (EEOR, 2010). The interest towards Italy is also given by the fact that a recent debate has involved 'partite IVA' to call for a discussion on a new, major legislative intervention in favour of self-employed in order to simplify the legislative schemes and to reduce

the number of 'false' self-employment, that is usually an arrangement used by many employers to reduce labour cost (Bologna and Banfi 2011).

Implications: entrepreneurialization of society, job quality. To a larger extent, the complex set of issues just outlined seems to show that we are witnessing a consistent *entrepreneurialization* of the knowledge workforce (Lazzarato 1996; McRobbie 2004; Barley and Kunda 2001, 2006). The combination of the elements just described gets along well with a 'neoliberal culture' enhancing individual economic action, resulting in a tension towards autonomy and a strong identification of work with self-identity. McRobbie warns on the risks related to the fact that the participants of such an “independent urban underground economy” seem to evaluate work in non-monetary terms and 'coolness' (McRobbie 2002, 2004). In this sense they have also been called 'urban Bohemia' (Ross 2009) or 'Bohemian entrepreneurs' (Eikhof and Haunschild 2006). In contrast, similarly to Florida's approach (2002), the literature on 'free agents' (Pink 2001; Knell 2000) hails this trend of entrepreneurialization as a sign of economic development, stressing the role of free professionals as model entrepreneurs within contemporary capitalism.

However, the present work distantiates from the literature just mentioned, that substantially neglects the negative aspects of these career pathways (Kunda et al. 2000) The framework that makes the core of the theoretical approach here adopted looks at the growing independent forms of labour within creative industries with a critical stance, to intervene on some of the numerous controversial junctions that appear to emerge especially at the level of employment and labour process.

First, the set of issues here at stake seems to pose questions of *job quality* (Kalleberg 2003, 2011; Kalleberg, Reskin and Hudson 2000; Atkinson 1987) and *job extremity* (Hewitt and Luce 2006; Granter et al., 2009). With the term *extreme jobs* are defined those jobs made of practices that substantially require a life-dedication to work, essentially consisting of long hours, unpredictability of the flow of work, tight deadlines, work-related events outside working time and a scope of responsibility for profit or loss that amounts to more than one job (Hewitt and Luce 2006). These conditions are generally accepted in reason for the stimulating and challenging nature of these kind of jobs, often discarding economic compensation and quality of living as seemingly less rewarding (Hewitt and Luce 2006). The emphasis on subjectivity that connotes creative labour (Lazzarato 1996; Virno 2004) makes it an interesting object for the study of contingent work and extremity. It may be hypothesized that such conditions of job extremity apply to creative work, especially as self-employed (cfr. Section 2 for a discussion on this matter).

More so, in terms of employment in the creative sector, beyond the instances of instability, precarity and 'structural uncertainty', the issues at stake include:

- unbalanced dynamics of work-life relation, including the alienation of teleworking and homeworking (Hochschild 2001; Gregg 2011);
- practices of *free* or *invisible* labour through networking that especially involves professions within digital media through dynamics of unpaid exploitation of labour-power (Terranova 2000; Hardt and Negri 2000, 2005);
- a trend towards a general polarization of earnings as emerges in the account on 'lousy and lovely jobs' (Goos and Manning 2003), which casts a new light on the issue of 'degradation of skills' (Braverman 1974).

Such entrepreneurialized knowledge workers are to be taken as economic actors who sell their knowledge as a commodity on a labour market that considers such labour-power as a 'cold commodity', whose circulation is connoted by high supply and low demand. This brings us to a core notion that permeates this work. It seems as though the ensemble of these instances, which occurs in a context where professional networking is strongly important, requires workers to undertake practices of *self branding* and *reputation management*, that are growingly important as digitalization extends (Peters 1999; Christopherson 2002, 2008; McRobbie 2002, 2004; Benkler 2006; Boyd 2006, 2011; Hearn 2008, 2010, 2011; Marwick 2010; Hoffman and Casnocha 2012). The freelance creative workforce essentially appears to be a multitude of individual economic actors who are requested to engage in self-branding and reputation construction across both offline and online environments for purposes of recruitment. Also, their job satisfaction may be hypothesized to be associated to a mixture of economic and symbolic instances, such as being well reputed or participating to influential or 'cool' professional networks.

Social media are increasingly used for recruitment and labour purposes. Most sorts of social network sites are being instrumentally utilized by professionals and other subjects involved in labour relations at all levels, not only to create and maintain professional networks and ties. A recent Italian-based research shows how social media are increasingly utilized by recruiters and HR Managers as 'preliminary filter' for job candidates across a wide range of professions (Pais 2012).

The proliferation of 'professional SNS' – of whom the most famous is the already mentioned LinkedIn – and digital marketplaces demonstrates this trend of evolution.

As a result of these instances, it is becoming crucial for creative professionals to be able to operate within SNS to manage their identity and cultivate a *personal brand* (Hearn 2008, 2010, 2011; Schaefer 2012; Hoffman and Casnocha 2012). This term became fashionable in the late 1990s in the guise of the success of Tom Peters's book “The Brand Called You” (1999). Self branding, self marketing or personal branding are terms that indicate those practices that are entertained by individuals in order to generate a reputation around themselves and establish professionally on the market, in a way that is similar to the role of brands for firms. Soon after, Moor (2003) warned how these new practices of marketing are increasingly taking place through new media platforms in a context of multiple media and fragmentation of audiences, resulting in the expansion of their social and emotional trait. Hearn (2008, 2010, 2011) drawing from the Autonomist Marxist approach argues that the contemporary forms of self branding have become forms of labour in postfordist capitalism as practices of construction of a 'branded persona' across several kinds of media. These practices, Hearn argues, have disrupted the boundaries of production and consumption playing on the role of identity that is ever more central across social media platforms (Hearn 2008).

The issues emerged within the theoretical framework opens up the set of questions that constitute the core of this work. In such a context, in fact, it appears as though reputation and the management of social capital across networks becomes central especially for creative freelancers, to the extent that the meaning of the network as an organizational entity comes under a new light.

Reputation and social capital

The sociological meaning of reputation is from years now a debated issue. A recent publication suggests the rise of a *reputation society* (Masum and Tovey, 2012), with this term meaning that reputation is acquiring a central role within increasingly digitalized societies. Indeed, many different accounts have posed a renewed attention to reputation in the recent years, looking at its role, measurement and extent in different contexts. How to articulate such claims in a coherent framework remains controversial, though, given the different readings and approaches attached to the concept at stake.

This paragraph looks at reputation with the aim of situating the concept within the theoretical

framework of knowledge work and creative industries. Nevertheless, there is a number of questions to solve in order to manage this task. How can we define reputation in sociological terms in the context considered? How does reputation effectively function within creative labour markets? How can we *distinguish* reputation from other neighbouring concepts such as prestige, popularity or influence? What are its interrelation with other aspects such as *social capital* and, as a consequence, also human and cultural capital?

Corporate reputation. Reputation is here conceived as a type of capital, an *asset*. The historical view on reputation in late capitalist corporate economy treats it as an *intangible asset* of frequently underestimated importance. Almost two decades ago, Fombrun (1996) already underlined the extent and importance of intangible assets in corporate economy. However, he also remarked how managers, despite admitting their relevance, were often reluctant to effectively develop concrete practices to valorize reputation and intangibles for economic return. Broadly at the same time we can witness the emergence of an interest about the social and ethical impact of a business. This translated into what we now know as the heterogeneous stream of research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), that aims to explore the different aspects of what is a business for and what it does for society (Crane et al., 2008).

Reputation in corporate terms is intended as a particular form of social capital among firms, that corporations develop in order to build relationships and grow their organizations. It is strictly connected to identity and constitutes of a combination of performance, behaviour and communication (Dorley and Garcia, 2008). In this sense, the concept of corporate reputation intertwines with the scope and role of the *brand* within the information economy as a strategically relevant asset in terms of business success (Arvidsson 2006).

As Marwick et al. point out (2010) quoting Solove (2008), reputation should be seen as the collective or shared perception about one another, which is crafted over the judgements made upon the mosaic of information publicly available (Solove 2008). The role played by reputation in society is as important as we depend upon others to engage in transactions to employ us, to befriend us, and to listen to us (Solove, 2007). Post (1986) outlines a taxonomy of reputation based on US defamation law, distinguishing among reputation as property, honour and dignity. Reputation as property is essentially defined as 'reputation in the marketplace', and it is akin to goodwill. It is exemplified by the carpenter who strives to achieve a good name in the quality of workmanship. For the purposes of this work, this definition seems to be useful as it considers reputation as a form

of “intangible property” that can be acquired through labour or talent (Post 1986; Rolph 2008). Rolph (2008) underlines how this notion implies the presence of a 'market of reputation', which is what provides the value of the property (Post, 2006). On the contrary, reputation as honour is premised upon inequality and therefore seems to be contiguous to the notion of prestige, that implies hierarchy and class stratification (Lin 2002). Reputation as honour is given by the different role and status occupied by individuals in given contexts in society (Post 1986; Rolph 2008). Third, reputation as dignity essentially coincides with the nature of reputation as image or good name that connects with discourses on privacy and defamation (Post 1986; Rolph 2008; Solove 2008).

The Reputation Economy. More recently, the notion of reputation has come back to the forefront of social science research through more complex analysis of economic performance of individuals and firms in different context, especially across online environments (Bolton et al., 2004; Bolton et al 2007). As seen, it is from here that the idea of a *reputation economy* arose in the terms here conceived. This insight dates back to the sort of pioneering example of reputation-based ranking system that is the Google PageRank algorithm, which represents a metric for the evaluation of webpages as it allows the more relevant websites to appear at the top of the search results on the basis of incoming links. PageRank in fact accounts for the number of in-links coming from other websites that point at that page in relation to a keyword which is conceived as a measure of relevance and reputation.

Following the emergence of PageRank, Masum and Zhang (2004) argue that reputation is to become the standard measure concerning value production in qualitative terms. Adopting a Marxist framework, they sustain that reputation is a form of use-value that indicates qualitative value production in contrast to exchange value, that is value production for quantity and profit. Reputation is here considered to be the central feature of contemporary network-based market structures that rely on use-value production across widely connected Internet environments (Masum and Zhang 2004). Martin (2005) argues that the role of reputations for managers in organizations is to become increasingly important as a source for influence across firms, as 'organizational assets' deriving from prominent structural positions within firms are becoming less relevant. In the argument on “the long tail”, Wired magazine editor and innovation evangelist Chris Anderson (2006) sustains that the emerging digital economy is essentially a 'reputation economy' since word-of-mouth and reputation are able to foster differentiation among online businesses. Botsman (2010, 2012) in the discussion on collaborative forms of production and consumption argues that the role of reputation across the online sphere configures the existence of a 'reputation economy' whereby

online ratings and reviews are instrumental for the emergence of collaborative practices of production and consumption, where reputation functions as a form of currency enabling trust among strangers.

In other words, it may be argued that through the evolution of digital platforms reputation has increasingly become visible and, under certain conditions, even potentially measurable. This is made possible by measures that aggregate calculations over as feedbacks, reviews and “social” tools or “buttons”, “likes”, “followers” within Online Reputation Systems (Bolton et al. 2004; Bolton et al. 2007). Hearn (2010) sustained the existence of an emergent 'digital reputation economy' based on the 'flexible' and 'branded' self that inhabits offline and online environments (Peters 1999; Moor 2003; Hearn 2008, 2010). Arvidsson and Peitersen (2013) argue that reputation should be considered as a sort of general equivalent on the basis of which a new definition of value, coherent with the emerging 'ethical economy' based on affectivity, can be built.

These insights on reputation and digital society – that I will discuss later on in larger extent – call for a renewed attention towards reputation pointing at a redefinition of the concept in sociological terms. In order to do so, I will now turn my attention to the debate on *social capital* as the territory where reputation, trust, networks and the job market get together.

Social capital and network studies. A large literature has dealt with the concept of social capital in the history of sociology (Granovetter 1973, 1985, 1995, 2005; Bourdieu 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986; Coleman 1988, 1990; Lin 1999, 2002; Putnam 2001; Burt 1992, 2005; Pizzorno 2007). It is traditionally conceived as a mainly trust-based form of capital (Coleman 1988, 1990; Lin 2001; Putnam 2001; Burt 1992, 2005) often employed for the study of social and economic dynamics and especially in relation to labour markets and recruitment (Granovetter 1973, 1985, 1995, 2005; Bourdieu 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986; Pizzorno 2007).

Following Portes (1998), it may be argued that the first definition of social capital as conceived in contemporary times is that by Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1986). In his 'theory of capitals', that includes also human capital, cultural capital and economic capital, social capital is defined as a more or less institutional relationship of mutual acquaintance or recognition among social actors (Bourdieu 1984, 1985, 1986). Bourdieu's notion of social capital focuses on the instrumental benefits an individual can achieve by being part of social networks and solidarity groups. The element that characterizes Bourdieu's view of social capital is *mutuality* (1984, 1985, 1986),

whereby social capital implies reciprocity in order to connote the quality and nature of the social relationship at stake.

However, as said, there are numerous different interpretations of the concept of social capital in the sociological literature. A first strand, to whom we might also associate Bourdieu's definition, sees social capital as a group feature (Borgatti, Jones and Everett 1998). Among the key theorists we can ascribe to this approach we have Robert Putnam (2001) who defines social capital as a form of public good that has positive externalities that affect the wider community (Putnam 2001). On a similar line, Coleman (1988, 1990) argued that social capital consists of a variety of entities that contribute to the creation of human capital in relation to the structure of social action, that facilitates certain actors over others (Coleman 1988, 1990; Portes 1998). Borgatti and Foster (2003) refer to Putnam's and Coleman's theories of social capital as 'topological', meaning that they look at the shape an actor's ego network can take on the basis of social capital relations that may deploy in the context of a group or public.

In a similar but different view, Ronald Burt sustains that the most important feature for the creation and leverage of social capital is the presence of 'structural holes' (Burt 1992, 2005). Burt distantiates from Coleman in that he argues it is not the presence, rather the absence of ties in an actor's ego network, that he calls 'structural holes', to provide facilitations to mobility and access to resources to the actor. Burt's and Coleman's approaches may nevertheless be considered similar in that both notions of social capital are founded on the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership to social networks (Portes 1998). Particularly, Burt highlights the potential of social capital whereby an actor is able to get opportunities to use financial and human capital by friends, colleagues and contacts (Burt 1992).

In this sense it is useful to distinguish also between 'bridging' views, that consider social capital for achieving benefits by connecting between different groups, and 'bonding' views that reinforce the internal structure of a group and the benefits for its members in terms of accessing resources (Putnam 2001). The 'bonding' view looks at social capital emphasizing trust as a resource that generates communitarian relationships of solidarity among members of the network or group (Fukuyama 1995, 1997). The 'bridging' view, on the other hand, stresses the importance of 'brokerage' as the form of intermediation that generates resources by connecting different clusters or groups (Burt 2005). The notion of 'bonding' also unveils a possibility for 'negative social capital' that reflects in the closure of social groups that might be called 'clientelism' (Putnam 2001).

A different body of theory looks at the individual perspective of single actors and their attributes, to define social capital as the source for potential benefits that an actor can obtain by leveraging on social relations. Views of this kind distance from those above in the sense that social capital is here considered as an essentially individual feature that plays a role within contexts where social interaction is related to economic action. Such an approach dates back to the influential work by Mark Granovetter on the importance of weak ties and the implications of social relationships for economic outcomes (Granovetter 1973, 1985, 1995, 2005) that remains a milestone in the literature on networks and labour markets. Granovetter argues that individuals involved in job search practices are more likely to succeed if they leverage on weak ties (friends of friends, recommendations) rather than strong ties (close friends and family) since weak ties are more likely to create profitable bridges across different networks. Strong ties, on the other hand, suffer of redundancy in that the amount of information shared within such networks is less differentiated, and therefore less likely to open up for different kinds of job opportunities. Both Granovetter (1985) and Burt (2005) treat social capital as an explanatory variable to the behaviour of actors.

Within this frame, an important contribution is that by Nan Lin (1999, 2002), who sustains that social capital is an *investment* into social relations. Lin argues that social capital consists in the possibility to access to, and use of, resources embedded in a social network. Thus, social capital is an investment in social relations whereby individuals expect some form of return by gaining access to socialized resources embedded in a network. Lin underlines the nature of social capital as a *relational asset*, that is both an individual and a group feature. In this context, Lin locates reputation among the different dimensions that pertain to the construction of social capital, in a position that can be assimilated to that occupied by *trust*. In Lin's account, trust appears to have a primary role as the most important of the collective assets at stake, since building trust is instrumental to the pursuit of the embedded resources (1999, 2002), whilst reputation is the aggregate asset of social recognition received in a social network (Lin, 2002). Reputation and trust in Lin's perspective are collective assets which essentially make part of social capital as a multi-dimensional object, as they enable the accessibility and mobilization of network resources.

The relationship between reputation and trust within social capital is widely debated in the literature. Lin sustains that collective reputation is the effect of both micro and macro dynamics, as it acts as a complementary element in the relationship between economic transactions and social exchange (Lin 2002), differing from prestige (which implies hierarchy) and esteem (which stands as

a purely social process). Lin argues that reputation is an indicator for social gain as the extent of favourable / unfavourable opinions about an individual in a collective (Lin 1999, 2002). Lin's views on reputation and trust are here taken as the main reference for the operationalization of the variable in the overall research design with the aim of trying to capture a potential empirical distinction between the concepts of reputation and trust (cfr. Methodology and Section 1).

Yet, the distinction between reputation and the other neighbouring concepts already mentioned remains to be discussed. It may be argued an element that distinguishes reputation from all the other elements at stake is the presence of a 'good' and a 'bad' degree of differentiation, whereby a subject can be connoted with a reputational status both in positive and negative terms. This feature seems to be peculiar to reputation in comparison with trust, prestige and other forms of social recognition. Through Post (1986) and Lin (2002), though with different articulations, we have seen how reputation differs from prestige that implies class status and hierarchy. Also, reputation can be distinguished from celebrity in that being 'famous' does not imply being connoted with a good reputation or the possession of certain 'intangible capital'. From Lin we also get that reputation is different from esteem as the latter implies a much morally infused nuance of meaning (Lin 2002). An individual who is worth of esteem is generally considered morally sound, whilst an individual can have a good reputation about something, without being morally worth of esteem. Having said that, in this work I will essentially look at the possession of 'good' reputation as a form of capital that enables to achieve professional outcomes and income.

Indeed, the boundaries between reputation and trust within the debate on social capital are much more blurred. The claim I will bring along (cfr. Section 1) is that, at least in the context taken into consideration, trust *is not* reputation. Or, else, having in mind the contiguity between the two concepts, I would argue there can be an empirical and theoretical distinction that can be made which arises from the newly-mediatised contexts of social interaction in the guise of digitalization on the basis of *mutuality* and *reciprocity*, which we have seen are very much at stake with the notion of trust-based social capital especially for Bourdieu. I would expect the degree of mutuality and reciprocity that connotes trust to be stronger than that which connotes reputation. When a bond of trust is in place, it is likely that both partners trust each other, whilst when someone has a good opinion of one another, it may well be that the latter does not have the same opinion of the former. This may become visible when it comes to economic and labour interaction, where trust is proved to be an essential feature that is needed in order to entertain business relationships. More so, trust seems to imply social interaction to a greater extent if compared to reputation, which may not imply

social interaction per se. Drawing from Chiesi (2007), in this context reputation is conceived as a good operating at the micro level, that pertains to the conditions and consequences of social capital. Section 1 and 3 will be devoted to disentangle this ambiguity.

The literature on reputation and social capital just discussed gets together with the role of reputation within the context of creative labour to suggest that reputation among individuals may be considered a *networked asset*, a form of capital on its own that possessing specific features which are different from those pertaining trust. Networks are here to be taken as the *milieus* where market relations based on reputation and trust are entertained.

The role of networks and the extent of social interaction among network-based environments in this context calls into question to what extent these should be considered as *forms of organization* (cfr. Section 3). There is an extensive body of literature which has looked at the role of the network as a form of organization in relation to the hierarchy and the market (Williamson 1973; Powell 1990; Podolny and Page 1998; Granovetter 1985, 1995; Uzzi 1996; Fourcade 2007). The main claim brought along in this context is that the embeddedness of social relationships within networks is functional to the achievement of economic outcomes that can be obtained by leveraging on social interaction. Here, I would argue that the extent and importance of such a dynamic in the networking-intensive context of creative labour may be visible studying the role played by *alters* in the network, where *ego* is the individual under observation. If reputation is as an asset for resource allocation in the network, the transfer of resources across two alters sharing a same ego would probably take place through ego's reputation playing an intermediate role. The study of the role of an ego between shared alters in a creative network may then unveil the nature and quality of the resources embedded in the network, as well as the role of reputation in the transfer and allocation of these resources.

Reputation and social capital in digital society. We have seen how reputation is traditionally considered an “intangible asset”, which means it is difficultly measurable. However, as suggested, with the emergence of Web 2.0 and the proliferation of Social Network Sites (boyd and Ellison 2008), thanks to devices for online social activity - 'likes', 'tweets', 'shares' individual reputation becomes increasingly objective and potentially measurable (Gerlitz and Helmond 2011).

Reputation seems to be a crucial concept for *digital sociology*, and a matter to deal with more accuracy as digital society spreads. Reputation is increasingly used as a form of capital through

which individuals are able to obtain advantages or disadvantages according to a more or less skillful reputation management. Particularly, it is worth noting the proliferation of Online Reputation Systems (ORS) which are at the heart of social interaction practices within websites devoted to buying and selling online. ORS are in fact algorithms that aggregate feedbacks and reviews of users to calculate a reputation score that functions as a proxy for trust, as in the cases of eBay or Amazon (Masum and Tovey 2012; Bolton et al. 2004; Bolton et al. 2007).

Online Reputation Systems have been adopted by many e-commerce sites and have a specific design that grants their functioning on the platform according to the nature of the interaction involved (for a detailed review see Farmer and Glass 2010). Design choices concerning the ORS profoundly affect the life and culture of its “community” (Dellarocas 2012). Resnick (2001) sustains that reputation systems are important to construct socio-technical capital which builds up the common ground of trust in a network through persistent interaction (Lampe 2012). As shown by the already mentioned cases of eBay and Amazon, when economic exchange is involved the ORS operates as the main device by which buyers and sellers can reciprocally trust each other in a digitally-mediated economic transaction (Bolton et al. 2004). Dellarocas, drawing from an earlier argument (2003) shows how reputation across online environments should be seen as the digitalization of word of mouth (Dellarocas 2003, 2012)

Reputation systems are nevertheless also increasingly subject to potential gaming. The risk of cheating and manipulation affects all ORS (Dellarocas 2012). The main remedy to avoid this damage is to enhance transparency of algorithms and aggregation rules by enhancing “metamoderation” to “rate the raters”. This is considered as an effective tool to reduce the bias (Farmer and Glass 2010) through practices of user-generated reputation that is preferable to system-generated reputation (Lampe 2012).

An example of such system-generated reputation can be found in the number of algorithms which have surfaced online, that claim to elaborate a coefficient or score for reputation and *influence* across social media platforms – as the already mentioned Klout (Schaefer 2012; Messias et al. 2013). As hinted in the introduction, Klout³ claims to be able to elaborate an individual 'influence score' by scraping each user's activity on a plurality of SNSs, including Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram and Wordpress. The most advanced competitor to date is Kred⁴ which is essentially a

³ Full website URL: www.klout.com

⁴ Full website URL: www.kred.com

Twitter-based application. Similar services are performed by PeerIndex⁵ which claims to “understand your online social capital”. Here, the focus is on authority rather than on influence.

It is worth noting that the concept of *influence* in this context is often arbitrarily and deceptively overlapping with that of reputation. It may be argued that the kind of influence calculated by Klout is more a result of intense online activity (Messias et al. 2013) rather than a proxy for reputation in a field or sector. An intense debate has ignited out of the diffusion of Klout and its competitors, both in and especially out of the academia through magazines and blogs. This nevertheless resulted in a polarized confrontation between those who see the potential benefits conveyed by the diffusion of such services, and those who look at these instances with various degrees of criticism. Among those who argue about influence metrics in positive terms, Schaefer (2012) sustains that the emergence of such algorithms is to bring a new era of democratization of influence, where one does not need to be a celebrity in order to become an influencer. He argues that influence metrics are leading to the rise of a “citizen influencer”, implying a third age of the Web. As happened with Web 2.0, when everybody became a publisher by producing and consuming online cultural products, now everybody will be able to pave their way through social success by what he calls a return “to the very roots of influence: conversations between real people that make something happen” (Schaefer 2012).

The numerous critical accounts, on the other hand, generally take into consideration the nature of essentially private businesses that connotes these services, especially Klout which does not release publicly available information on the way influence rankings are constructed. The 'secret' algorithm that lies beyond the most common influence metrics precisely configures those risks of cheating and manipulations that we have seen concerning ORS. Such rankings, according to Krotoski (2012), are also quite far from being democratic: high scores reward merely those who spend more time and money to manipulate the algorithm and generate traffic around his or her profile. As Marwick and boyd similarly argued (2011), online practices of celebrity-construction are theoretically open to all, but do not actually outline any equalizing or democratizing discourse and, on the contrary, seem to enable newly-articulated forms of power and hierarchy.

In addition, it seems that a semantic distinction between reputation and influence is required to disentangle this ambiguity. In order to discuss influence and its potential measurement one cannot do away without a discussion on reputation; influence seems in fact to be the (seemingly

⁵ Full website URL: www.peerindex.com

measurable) outcome of reputation or, better, the outcome of practices that leverage on the 'reputational capital' acquired in a network. An influencer, by definition, should also generally be reputed as such. More so, the existing algorithms do not distinguish if the user is a human being or an automated machine, a 'bot', (Messias et al. 2013) thus indirectly confirming critiques which accused them of confuse influence with recurrent activity. There seems however to be the necessity to take influence seriously as a sociological concept, shifting from a media-based to an actor-based perspective of social media devices and platforms, in order to avoid for potential distortions of this concept.

To sum up, SNS stand in this context as the linking element between the offline and the online realms, functioning as productive *associated milieus* (boyd 2006, 2011; boyd and Ellison 2007; Hearn 2010, 2011) whereby individuals associate with others on the basis of affectivity forming networked, productive publics (Boyd 2011; Arvidsson and Peitersen 2013) to establish what I have called *newly-mediatized* forms of interaction that integrate offline and online practices in a continuum.

Analogously, creative freelancers are experiencing such a transformation as concerns their professional and craft identities, as a consequence of technological specialization and the diffusion of social media. Practices of self branding are functional to the establishing of the self-enterprise as social media become relevant (and somewhat potentially exclusionary) tools for getting jobs. The possibility to reach wider and diversified audiences that may be directly involved or interested in the individual's activity is among the positive features of this trend. Freelance workers cultivate their working activity, exchange job contacts, get work projects as well as develop their personal brand through social media platforms in a horizontal, *not purely hierarchical* dynamic. The hierarchical dynamic may be created *throughout* the process by the members of the network according to the nature of their relationships – and, peculiarly, as a result of their reputations.

Reputation is seemingly becoming a 'digital currency' in the sense of the 'proprietary' trait discussed above (Post 1986). It is of no surprise that Klout and the others are trying to capitalize from the notion of influence given the ambiguity it has with the contiguous but not completely overlapping notion of reputation.

Macro-perspective: the 'wealth of networks' and the Marxist heritage

The role of reputation in a micro-perspective study on the increased connectivity of creative individuals – who use digital tools and online environments to associate, exchange information and get access to resources, jobs and contacts – goes together with a discussion on the existence of a *network model of organization* in the productive processes. Long since Manuel Castells's first theorisation of the 'network society' (1996) we have assisted at an expansion of those theories which discuss the role of networks within the productive system. Among them, the idea of the 'actor-network theory' (Latour 1999, 2005) became the most fashionable approach to look at the network as a socio-semiotic structure for social action where material and cognitive elements (actors and the structure) live together in reciprocal interaction.

However, the idea of network that lies behind this study goes well beyond that of the actor-network theory, to embrace the perspective of the 'networked information economy' (Benkler 2006) whereby network formations function as economic structures of socialized value production. The present work owes to Benkler and his approach the intuition of conceiving networks as organizational entities operating by the means of social production of value. This results in the idea that, blurring the boundaries of offline and online realms, networks emerge as the potential architecture for a mode of production able to coherently function across value-chains where value production is a schizophrenic mechanism – that is, when intangible assets and different forms of capital are involved (cfr. Section 3).

In line with this approach, theories of alternative modes of production have emerged in the past decade (Bauwens 2006; Botsman 2010, 2012) focusing on open source communities, collaborative consumption and peer-to-peer networks. Bauwens (2006) argues that processes of peer-to-peer production (P2P) take place when the free cooperation of producers generates use-value and makes this use-value accessible on a universal basis. These occur across distributed networks where autonomous agents can freely determine their behaviour and linkages without intermediaries. These processes are still nevertheless largely dependent on market-based models and governed by the same producers in the community. However, theorizations of this kind show how a certain restructuring of capitalism is taking place below the 'ashes' of financial capital accumulation, in the shift towards digital-based forms of production. The emergence of different kinds of reputation economies is to be framed within this restructuring as it brings use-value back into a central position for capital accumulation.

Neoliberalism. These movements are taking place in inextricable relation with the hegemonic position of neoliberalism in the socio-economic and political context over the past two decades. We have come across neoliberalism every now and then already in this review. Harvey (1990, 2005, 2011) shows how neoliberal forms of 'flexible accumulation' have affected both models of work organizations and cultural attitudes towards entrepreneurship and success in society. We have seen also how these inextricably intertwine with creative labour and the dynamics of entrepreneurialization here at stake.

Nevertheless, it may be argued that the recession and the international crisis have unveiled what I would call 'the aftermath of neoliberalism'. Such a statement finds roots in Giovanni Arrighi's model of accumulation cycles (1994) which suggests that the international crisis we have been experiencing since 2007 should be seen as the terminal crisis of a period of capital accumulation based on financialisation. If admittedly so, what we may imagine is a long transition from the neoliberal vision to a model which profitably integrates social and cultural forms of value production centred around *affectivity* (Negri 1999). The dynamics involving work and labour, entailing knowledge, networks and socialized production, seem to be the territories where this movement may be well observed.

In this regards, Suarez-Villa calls 'technocapitalism' (2004, 2009) a model of development where innovation and creativity play a very central role in the emergence of a visible, increasing interdependence between technology and capital accumulation. This is what, in a different context, McRobbie (2002, 2004) describes as the marriage between counterculture and the financial economy realized throughout the narratives of self-realization. Through Christopherson (2002, 2008) we have seen how the radical flexibilization brought along by neoliberal policies (Harvey 1990, 2005) led to a significant hybridisation of working practices and the socialization of the enterprise. Freelancers in this sense can be hypothesized to be the new economic protagonists of this development, being hybridized forms of entrepreneurs in hybridized cultures who operate half-step between the firm and the market, part employers and part employees, having interiorized the characteristics of the market to perform them in their daily working practice, as it is for the traders described by Knorr-Cetina and Bruegger (2002).

Critical management and LPT. Within such a context, the restructuring of capitalism and labour production transforms employment relations and labour processes. Thus, such an argument on

reputation as networked capital requires to confront with the wider approach known as Critical Management Studies (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, 2003; Willmott 2010) that looks at the organizational and managerial evolution in critical perspective. Critical management adopts a multidisciplinary view towards managerial research entailing culture as a key element in the discourse on the social evolution of capitalism, heavily drawing from the heritage of Karl Marx's reflections on political economy.

The discourses on the implications at the level of labour made earlier in this chapter are present in the CMS debate in the tradition of Labour Process Theory (LPT). This approach originates from Harry Braverman's "Labor and Monopoly Capital" (1974) and looks at the evolution of labour focusing essentially on processes, skills and relations of production. The assumption is that the key to understand work organization lies in the broader structure of the society in which it is embedded (Adler 2007). Critical management and labor process theory will prove useful in many parts of this work, though diluted within the theoretical framework on knowledge work which substantially reflects on subjectivity more closely than what especially CMS, and especially LPT, have historically done (Adler 2007)⁶.

Particularly, an influential contribution in this field that will be taken as a standpoint for the present discussion (cfr. Section 3) is Heckscher and Adler's idea that firm cooperation models are evolving towards the form of a *collaborative community* (2006). The 'collaborative community' is conceived as a next stage in social organization after hierarchy and market. The community is here postulated as the dominant organizing principle based on trust within and between firms, with the purpose of creating shared value in a context of socialized production where knowledge has become central. The study discusses different cases of networks of firms which operate in a framework where shared creation can be pursued thanks to the contribution of networked social selves in interdependent relationships. The context of creative labour here studied seems to resemble that of the collaborative community, though with substantial differences that will be discussed later in full extent (cfr. Section 3) and which essentially concern the role of reputation and its prominent position over shared trust.

Marxism and this study. The theoretical approach here outlined is infused of influences from the Marxist tradition, as shown by the many dimensions of creative labour outlined in this literature review, where a prominent role is given to 'capitals' of different kind. The ever-more importance of

⁶ For an extensive discussion on this point, cfr.: Thompson (2010), O'Doherty and Willmott (2009), Smith (2006).

Karl Marx's thought for contemporary social theory is visible in the wide and rich set of insights dispersed across Marx's books and writings, especially the *Capital* (1976) and the *Grundrisse* (1973) which seem to be still very important contributions for an understanding of the contemporary relations of employment, production and labour.

After a few decades of early and untimely dismissal the heritage of Karl Marx is now seemingly resurging under a new light. It is not by any chance that the illuminating but controversial legacy of Karl Marx is being rediscovered in contemporary times, in the middle of a financial crisis which is calling into question some of the fundamental pillars of capitalist-based western economy, if not its mere existence. Even thinkers and writers from different, sometimes very distant approaches tend to revisit Marx's work. In an article appeared on the *Harvard Business Review* (2011), author Umair Haque indulges in the analysis on Marx's critique to capitalist contradictions. Though very carefully signalling his distance from Marx beforehand, he argues on the fact that there might possibly be "a tiny mote of insight or two hidden in Marx's diagnoses of the maladies of industrial age capitalism" (Haque, 2011).

As concerns this work, there are essentially two elements worth accounting in this sense. A first element of Marxian heritage here to be taken into consideration is the idea of a progressive socialization of skills as a consequence of machinery, that we can find in the *Grundrisse* (1973) writings that preceded the *Capital* (1976). This idea fits well within the context of knowledge work, whereby the presence of a growing number of people having skills implies a general undermining of the value of skills overall. This insight brings with itself the idea of a progressive devaluation of labour as the origin of wealth, leading to a resurgence of use-value over exchange-value, and brings us to the second instance, that is the notion of the Labour Theory of Value (Marx, 1976).

The LTV is here addressed in two main meanings. On the one hand, due to the nature of job tasks and duties, we can arguably say that the equation for which the value of a commodity depends on the duration and intensity of the labour performed by a worker is not a valid paradigm for creative industries, inasmuch a creative worker's productivity is not directly related to the time spent working (Arvidsson and Colleoni, 2012). Again, the idea of immaterial labour as *virtuoso* (Virno 2004), thus operating through an aesthetic logic where subjectivity plays a large role (Lazzarato 1996), implies it cannot be constrained into traditional time-bound parameters. More so, the evolution in the role played by exchange- and use-value in the paradigm of the networked information economy describes the increasingly socialized value production at stake within open

source and P2P organizations which nature is detached, at least in purely theoretical terms, from exchange value (Bauwens 2006).

However, according to Ferrarotti (2005), what Marx did not understand, differently from Weber, is that capitalism is not merely the bourgeois mode of production, rather it bears a determinant function for social agency and lifestyle that inevitably affects the whole system. In his view, Marx substantially anticipated the evolution of capitalism but did not forecast the logics of a development that has seen the figure of the owner of the means of production separating from that of the 'functional controller', the manager. This separation seems to be living a new kind of articulation in the role of the freelancer, who embodies both figures in a unique subject, posing different critical issues, as those here discussed.

Conclusion

This literature review has shown the complex set of issues at stake with the study of reputation and networks of independent professionals within creative labour. This was done by first outlining the theoretical framework of knowledge work and then focusing on issues of social capital and digitalization in micro- and macro-perspective. What seems to be at the centre of the notion of reputation economy is the supposed *performative* role of reputation as a form of capital in that it functions as a regulatory element in the allocation of resources within networked systems of generalized connectivity. The idea of the 'network sociality' (Wittel 2001) seems to grasp well this movement in that the subjects and technologies of the information age put their social capital at value not in the reproduction of traditional social relations, rather in the *production* of social relations across practices of networking.

To conclude, this research presents different three dimensions of analysis, all of which I am going to outline in the next sections. These essentially involve creative labour through instances of *casualization* and *affect* (Lee 2013) and consist in:

- a) the definition and the extent of reputation and trust across creative environments and especially the networks of freelancers and independent workers;
- b) the discussion of the practices and processes that connote freelance creative work, with a view of reframing the instances of instability and precarisation within the discourse on job extremity and

job quality;

c) a reflection on the role and extent of networks as organizational structures, in terms of the capacity to act as *milieus* whereby social interaction and economic outcomes are in functional relation.

These dimensions intersect with the cross-cutting instance of digitalization that brings along those forms of *newly-mediatized* interaction that have implications at all levels of the analysis. In the three sections that constitute the core of this work I will discuss these dimensions in full extent. Before that, in the next chapter I will devise a methodological note to discuss the research design of this work and the instances at stake from a methodological perspective.

METHODOLOGY

Research question

This chapter provides a discussion on the methodological strategy adopted to conduct the present research. The main objective of this work is that of understanding and assessing to what extent reputation can be considered the determinant element for job search, recruitment and income among freelance professionals across creative networks in Milan, London and online. Income is taken as the dependent variable and reputation is the independent variable. 'Online' here refers to Elance,⁷ one among the digital platforms and social network sites that allow freelancers to get contacted by hirers for contract jobs. Reputation is hypothesized in all contexts to be more influent than professional skills, education title and social capital, this conceived as an essentially trust-based resource to be taken as a distinguished stance in relation and in comparison with reputation (Lin 1999, 2002).

The research design comprises of a combination of different methodological techniques. This was constructed in such manner in order to fully develop the research question and to comply with a number of problematic instances concerning data collection. As seen in the Literature Review, networking is a defining practice for creative workers (Blair 2001, 2009) and freelancers are expected to devote a major importance to this practice, given the individual nature of self-employment (Christopherson 2002, 2008). As a result, this work takes the individual freelancers as the unit of analysis to then look at the web of relationships entertained in association with other peers or colleagues across the network. These are the 'milieus' where individual freelancers are expected to cultivate practices in order to achieve and maintain a reputation.

The first step was to define and operationalise reputation, taken as a specific asset (for a complete discussion on this point, see Literature Review and Section 1). This implies three different aspects. Firstly, there is a 'quantitative' element of reputation that can be 'measured' as a scale variable in a network dataset. Secondly, there is a 'qualitative', socio-cultural dimension of reputation which concerns the role and the function of reputation across networks as well as the practices entertained by individuals for reputational purposes. Lastly, there is a 'digital' element of reputation, by which a plurality of online resources and services are now able to aggregate data on the activity of individuals across SNS and establish 'online reputation systems' (Masum and Tovey 2012).

⁷ Full website URL: www.elance.com

As a result of this complexity, I decided to undertake a mixed methods research based on a case study approach, pointing at an *extended ethnography* of creative networks. The concept of 'extended ethnography' here outlined is functional to comply with all the different layers of understanding concerning reputation, and to profitably combine qualitative, quantitative and digital methods in a coherent research design, maintaining an ethnographic perspective.

Research design and case selection

As said, the individual freelancer is here taken as the unit of analysis as a socio-economic actor operating across networked structures. These are here conceived as complex units made of individual *nodes* in interdependent relationship. In the early stages, an entirely quantitative study seemed to be favourable, heavily relying on traditional social network analysis techniques. This was originally conceived as a large -N network survey administered to formally established networks of creative freelancers. However, the survey was designed to be non-anonymous in order to include also relational 'name generator' questions where respondents are asked to name some of their peers according to given attributes (in this case, reputation and trust).

Indeed, in order to have a deeper knowledge of such complex landscapes and to prevent for potential shortcomings, a focus group with 5 creative freelancers in Milan was conducted to gather information that could be useful to the construction of the research design. This preliminary enquiry resulted to be decisive in the articulation of the research since it highlighted a plurality of potential shortcomings attached to a 'purely quantitative' approach, mostly concerning the 'offline' fields.

Firstly, it emerged the difficulty in getting reliable data through a vast survey-like research. The collection of personal sensitive data through a network survey which, per se, could not be anonymous, posed privacy issues and raised concerns in term of response rate. Such a large-N dataset without a consistent response rate would have significantly affected the conclusions of the research. On the contrary, the same questions seemed to be less sensitive when posed in a face-to-face setting. The interviewer was much more able to explain the purposes of the research, thus being perceived as less intrusive. In other words, the face-to-face setting seemed to be preferable in order to establish a relationship of trust with the respondent.

Secondly, thanks to the preliminary enquiry it quickly became clear that an entirely quantitative

strategy was unable to grasp the qualitative and socio-cultural dimension of reputation, meaning the mechanism of its 'flow' across the network and the practices related to its construction and management. This could only be obtained through interviews where participants could provide narrations and anecdotes to elaborate on the meaning of the object of study.

Thirdly, it also emerged that the existent 'formal' creative networks, especially in Milan, were not entirely suitable for the purposes of the research. The various composition of these formal networks and the relationships among members that make these organizations similar to formal associations with hierarchical structures could have affected the overall research purpose and results. In this sense, it resulted that the study of an informal network with no fixed boundaries and rules for inclusion or affiliation, 'natively' mapped following the flow of interaction through snowball sampling, was more appropriate for the aims of this work, in order to dwell into the professional connections of the individuals.

As a consequence, considering advantages and disadvantages, I decided to craft a mixed methods research design in order to better accomplish with the diversity and richness of data available, as well as with their collection on the field. Having all this in mind, the idea of an *extended ethnography* shaped on the model of the 'extended case method' (Burawoy 1998) became the frame to construct a mixed method strategy with the idea of a triangulation between qualitative, quantitative and digital data.

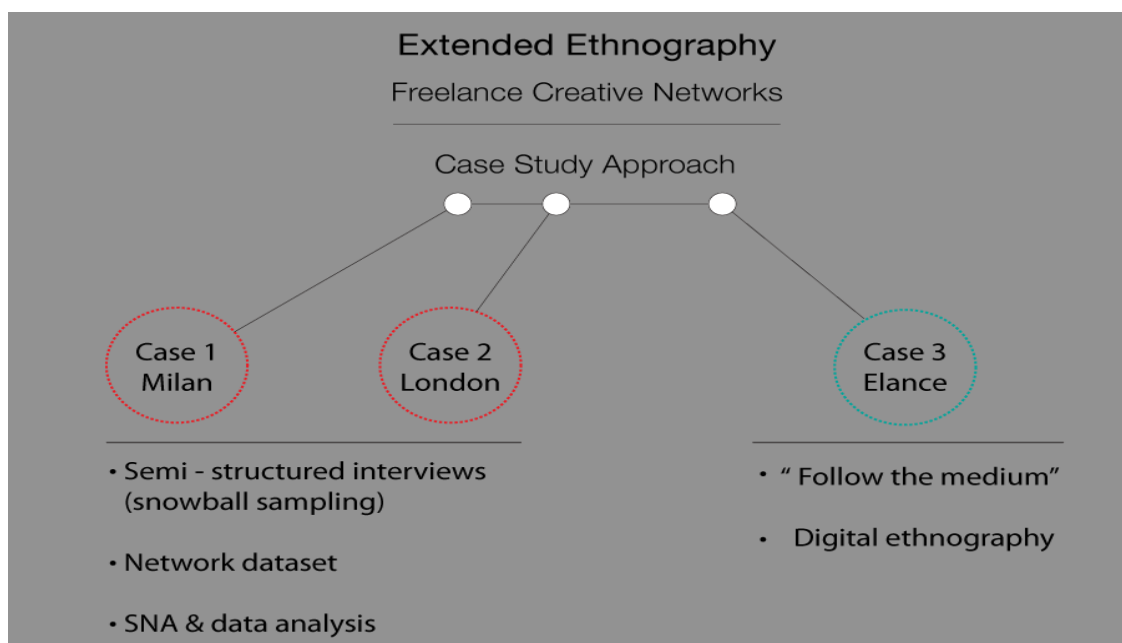
'Extended ethnography' in the present case draws from Burawoy's 'extended method' and refers to different layers of methodological strategy, concerning:

- a) an overall ethnographic approach whereby the researcher immerses in the web of relationships of the units of analysis in order to understand the flow of information across the networks;
- b) the possibility of 'extending the limits' of the ethnographic approach by implementing different techniques that are instrumental to study the main variables of this work. Among these we can find for instance the recourse to a 'social network analysis' approach to enquire for reputation and social capital, and also the approach that is peculiar to the study of digital environments known as Digital Ethnography, that elaborates on the idea of Digital Methods in a qualitative framework (Caliandro 2011; Marres 2012; Cossetta and Caliandro 2013).

The 'extended case method', in Burawoy's words, applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique and to move from the micro to the macro level (Burawoy 1998). This allows to point at a deeper understanding of singular contexts at the micro level *as well as* to devise a more general understanding of macro-dynamics. The necessity of such an approach is given by the nature of fieldwork and data collection that requires a research design able to be consistent and coherent across both offline and online environments.

This approach shares an element of contiguity with the idea of the 'network ethnography' (Howard 2002) intended as 'a synergistic research design for the study of organizational forms built around new media', that envisages a methodological approach to the qualitative study of social interaction across the offline and the online. Here, however, differently from Howard's approach (2002), Social Network Analysis is used as a technique for sampling and analysis rather than a method for case selection.

The 'extended ethnography' of freelance creative networks has the following structure (Table 1):



a) General frame. An overall case-study approach seemed to be the more appropriate starting point given the purpose of rich descriptions of specific phenomena. The logic of this choice lies also in the necessity to construct the variable 'reputation' as a multi-dimensional element as well as, at the same time, to isolate the effects of reputation among all the other elements considered. A major strength of using a case study approach is that it enables to entertain an exploratory analysis able to

unveil analogies and differences that might arise among similar structures across different contexts. More so, a case study approach results to be helpful in order to generate theory from data analysis, since it can provide evidence by allowing a fruitful combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques (Eisenhardt 1989; Della Porta 2008).

b) Case selection. Networks are here considered as structures of information flow. The cases here chosen should be seen as emblematic for the purposes of this research, given the peculiar traits that connote each of the fields studied in relation to self-employment and creative labour. These are to be considered as follows:

- b1) the primary case (labelled also "Case 1" or "C1") is the city of Milan, that is known as an international creative environment especially for fashion, design and media (Landry 2000; Musterd and Murie, 2010; Power and Nielsen, 2010) with peculiar characteristics in terms of self-employment (cfr. Literature Review for a discussion on this point);

-b2) the second case (labelled also "Case 2" or "C2") is London, a field where we can find a solid tradition of self-employment and creative labour studies (Christopherson 2002, 2008; Ross 2004; Neilson and Rossiter 2005, Gill and Pratt 2008; McKinlay and Smith 2009). The choice of London is conceived as a "control" case, due to the established nature of freelance creative work that makes it a perfect case for potential comparison in relation to Milan, where the dimensions under enquiry are hypothesized and expected to be more similar to emerging realms;

-b3) the third case (labelled "Case 3" or "C3" from now on) is represented by one among those online marketplaces where freelancers and clients can entertain market relationship for the hiring of services on a non-permanent basis. More specifically, the platform chosen was Elance,⁸ world leader in the service provided. Elance was preferred to its main competitors, Freelancer⁹ and Guru¹⁰ because of a wider availability of data¹¹. The study of Elance, an international digital marketplace for contractors, has the purpose of focusing on those platforms and websites that offer the possibility to freelancers to connect with clients through the intermediation of an Online Reputation System (ORS). The emergence of these platforms represents an element of novelty that deserves peculiar attention (Bolton et al. 2004; Masum and Tovey 2012).

⁸ Full website URL: www.elance.com

⁹ Full website URL: www.freelancer.com

¹⁰ Full website URL: www.guru.com

¹¹ See www.elance.com/trends for more information.

The 'offline fields'. Methodological strategy and data collection.

Case 1 and Case 2 consist in the mapping of an informal network of freelance creatives starting from single freelancers and their ego-networks, conducted through snowball sampling. The process of data collection began with identifying and interviewing a limited number of 'gatekeepers' (five for each field). In order to count on a more reliable and objective set of data, gatekeepers were selected among professional contacts with no direct relationship with the researcher.

Gatekeepers comply with the following criteria:

- being freelancers or independent professionals
- working in the area of media and communications / creative industries / arts professions
- being different professional figures among each other (to avoid overlapping)
- active in Milan/London
- gender balanced
- ranging between 25 and 40 of age

Gatekeepers were required to answer 'name generator' questions in relation to their peers or colleagues concerning reputation and social capital. The names provided by gatekeepers then became the new potential participants. This choice of adopting a snowball sampling technique was mainly due to the necessity to extract a sample of a hidden population with no fixed boundaries (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981), and was also instrumental to the necessity of delimiting the field. The existing literature shows how snowball sampling is particularly useful for the study of social capital across highly relational environments, and is frequently used in Social Network Analysis (Carrington, Scott and Wasserman 2005).

The interviewees were kept free to nominate up to five names for each of the variables under enquiry – reputation and social capital – putting a specific emphasis on the fact that the names provided should have been also freelancers. This allowed to snowball up to two degrees including in the sample only those with a freelance status, resulting in two small-size networks. The interview setting helped in providing more information to participants such that a good number of contacts was still available. Fieldwork clearly showed that the interview setting was decisive in the construction of the sample and in reducing at minimum the risk of missing data.

Anonymity was granted to participants both in relation to the release of personal and sensitive data, as well as concerns the results emerging from relational questions. The necessity of providing names was presented to participants as crucial for the pursue and success of the study in terms of sampling, without going into further detail on the application of Social Network Analysis techniques to the information provided. This had the intention to prevent from answers where respondents, being aware of the aims of the study, could instrumentally alter the nature of data, for instance attempting to get to a more central position in the network or a better 'reputational ranking'.

Participants were interviewed through a semi-structured interview in the form of personal biographies. The anecdotal and biographical approach was able to put the interviewee at ease and allow the establishment of a bond of trust with the researcher. This was instrumental to outline the more sensitive and personal questions, generally posed in the second half of the interview, concerning their income and their professional network of working peers. The semi-structure of the interview was constructed having in mind the idea of the 'conversational survey' and the 'interviewee-centred approach' (Gobo 2006, 2011; Gobo and Mauceri 2013). This technique takes inspiration from Max Weber's study on agricultural workers in rural Germany in the 1890s and draws from Galtung's methodological insights to develop a mixed method interview approach that focuses on the subjective attitudes of the interviewees. The structure of the interview is that of a questionnaire-like set of questions that is not visible to the interviewee. The interviewer is required to 'conversationalise' the questions without modifying their meaning, and then allocating the answers in the grid. The conversational setting releases the interviewee from the researcher's schemes, enhancing data reliability and avoiding the cognitive laziness that is typical of questionnaire respondents (Gobo 2006, 2011; Gobo and Mauceri 2013).

This technique seemed to be the most appropriate for the mixed methods 'extended ethnography' here developed, since it enabled to combine the interview setting with a survey-like data collection, thus reducing potential shortcomings, quickening data collection and improving the quality of data overall. As said, it also favoured the necessity to establish a bond of trust between the researcher and the interviewee, giving room to an anecdotal approach that was instrumental to understand the qualitative role played by reputation across the participants' professional networks. The main disadvantage of this approach lies in the varying order of questions, that often changes from an interview to another according to the flow of conversation. This results in a certain heterogeneity of stimula, that may have affected respondents to a certain degree.

However, the adoption of a pre-structured, survey-like interview scheme pointed at the construction of a small dataset originating from data collected in the interviews. The presence of a questionnaire-like grid of questions in the hands of the interviewer made quicker, more efficient and homogeneous the transformation of qualitative insights into quantitative data. A set of basic analyses were then performed using techniques pertaining to statistics and Social Network Analysis, especially looking at correlations among the main variables in point. This does not represent an attempt of universalisation and generalization of results, rather a support for the qualitative insights that could enrich the overall discussion of the hypothesis and show tendencies that might be of interest for further research.

Main variables:

- reputation
- social capital as trust
- income (gross annual)
- skills
- education title

Other variables included in data collection:

- demographics (age, gender, nationality)
- number of clients per year
- usage of online resources
- job satisfaction
- familial background (education, profession)

Variable construction. a) Reputation and Social Capital. The construction of reputation as a measurable scale variable goes back to the literature on social capital and, from a methodological point of view, is founded on the techniques of Social Network Analysis. However, the operationalisation of reputation and trust as variables is a debated issue (Granovetter 1973, 1995, 2005; Bourdieu 1980, 1984, 1986; Coleman 1988, 1990; Lin 2001; Putnam 2001; Burt 1992, 2005; Pizzorno 2007; Chiesi 2007) and is here to be taken as an open debate with different approaches and views (cfr. Literature Review).

The questions asked in the interviews on reputation and trust (Lin 1999, 2002) had the purpose of enquiring a potential difference between the two concepts in this regard (cfr. see Literature Review and Section 1). As seen, for the purposes of this study reputation and trust are conceived as relational features embedded within social networks, implying both qualitative and quantitative traits. As concerns reputation, the qualitative enquiry looks at how it is constructed, focusing also on the patterns and organizational arrangements that pertain to reputation management. Similarly, from a qualitative point of view trust is taken in a symmetric view with the purpose of enquiring on the relationships between the two concepts and the role it plays within the contexts considered. The qualitative research questions that pertain to the study of reputation and trust in this work essentially investigate under which conditions reputation and trust interrelate and have an impact for the extent of social interaction for economic outcomes (Granovetter 1985; Podolny and Page 1998; Uzzi 1996).

From a quantitative point of view, the construction of reputation and trust as variables to be used for statistical elaboration is based on the measure of the 'indegree' that pertains to Social Network Analysis. The 'indegree' calculates the number of incoming ties pointing to a node. As a consequence, two similar 'name generator' questions (one for each variable) were crafted in order to outline the very basic structure of the ego-network of the interviewee. As concerns reputation, the question pointed at knowing who were the working peers that the interviewee regards highly, independently from the degree of intimacy of their relationship (if any), and was formulated as such:

“Could you please list a maximum of five names of independent creative professionals that you consider highly in their job, notwithstanding if a) you're friend with them or not, or b) you know them personally?”

As concerns trust, the question aimed at enquiring those working peers that have a higher degree of intimacy with the interviewee. It was formulated likewise:

“Could you please list a maximum of five independent creative professionals like you, that you would get in touch with, if you're in need of professional advice?”

This strategy resulted in the construction of a dataset where each participant can be inserted in a network according the number of 'mentions' received in the name generator questions, on the basis of reputation and trust. The choice of giving priority to the measure of the indegree lies essentially in the limited sample size and intertwines with the use of snowball sampling to enquire for populations with unknown boundaries (Valente et al. 2008). The 'indegree' measure allows to perform basic quantitative elaborations looking for the most important nodes in the small-size networks that emerge out of such a data collection considered. Data have been elaborated using the softwares SPSS for statistical analysis and Ucinet for network analysis and visualization.

b) Income. Data on income refer to gross annual income deriving from professional freelancing in creative industries in the 12 months precedent to the interview. It is constructed as a scale variable.

c) Skills. In order to collect data on job skills, the question was purposely kept open to participants' self-definition since skills are hypothesized to be 'flat' and hybridised. Data show the existence of such a plurality of various different skills for each participant, to the extent that it was not possible to construct a single variable and perform quantitative analyses in this regard.

d) Education title. The participants were largely expected to be highly skilled creative professionals, mostly graduates (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012). The question on the education title aimed also at knowing more on its relevance in the access to job opportunities (cfr. Section 2). Data concerning this item were aggregated and transformed in various variables to perform basic statistical analyses (cfr. Section 1).

e) Demographics. Questions on gender, age and nationality of the participants were included in the enquiry.

f) Number of clients per year. The construction of a variable on the number of clients per year has a double purpose. On the one hand, it is helpful to know how many clients per year a freelancer has in order to assess the professional status of the participant and to have a deeper knowledge of the network structure. On the other hand, it was conceived as a question able to unveil 'dependent freelancers' that have a single employer, a phenomenon that is frequent in the UK (Haunschild and Eikhof 2009) as well as in Italy where it is known as 'false partite IVA' (Bologna and Banfi 2011). It was constructed as a scale variable.

g) Usage of Online Resources. Data on usage of online resources was obtained through a set of questions with different levels of depth. The first one was a positive-negative question enquiring whether the participant usually makes use of digital resources and especially social media for professional purposes. If the answer was negative (which happened very rarely) a question followed requiring to motivate the lack of use. If the answer was positive, as in the vast majority of cases, a question followed on which resources (blog, personal website, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or else) the participant regularly uses and whether these have brought along job opportunities. A third and final question concerned the perceived importance of these tools and especially how much the participants think the usage of online SNSs is perceived as professionally relevant. The whole amount of these data on online resources has originated into a specific small dataset regarding the use of Twitter, LinkedIn and of a personal blog or website for professional purposes.

h) Job Satisfaction. The variable 'job satisfaction' was constructed starting from the traditional question 'All in all, how satisfied would you say you are in your job?'. To support and complete this answer, the interviewee was requested to position across a basic Likert-scale ranging from: 1 (totally unsatisfied); 2 (unsatisfied); 3 (average); 4 (satisfied); 5 (totally satisfied). Respondents were requested to motivate the choice, which led to contradictory evidence (see Section 2 on job quality).

i) Familial background. The collection of data concerning the familial background of the participants in professional and educational terms is motivated by the idea of enquiring whether creative professions are effectively prominent across middle class in Milan and London as some of the existing literature on the topic suggests (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011; Bologna 2007). The questions showed a minor degree of sensitivity consisting in a few participants who were not keen to provide information on this issue.

Case 1: Milan – Specificities

5 gatekeepers / 3 males, 2 females

A network of 93 potential participants contacted

47 accepted to participate for a response rate of 50.5 %

5 were excluded because they did not belong to the population considered (not freelancers, not creatives)

42 nodes were included in the final sample size (network size: 42)

Among the 42 nodes:

31 were interviewed in person or skype

1 was interviewed on the phone

10 were interviewed via email

Overall: 25 males, 17 females

Among the 46 who were not included in the research:

25 never replied to emails / messages / connections

9 replied once, but did not reply ever since

2 explicitly declined to participate

5 accepted a connection on LinkedIn but did not reply to messages and emails

5 were excluded because they did not belong to the population considered

Case 2: London – Specificities

5 gatekeepers / 2 males, 3 females

A network of 70 potential participants contacted

38 accepted to participate for a response rate of 54,2%

Overall: 19 males, 19 females

38 nodes were included in the final sample size (network size: 38)

Among the 38 nodes:

25 were interviewed in person or skype

8 were interviewed on the phone

5 were interviewed via email

Among the 32 who were not included in the research:

11 never replied to emails / messages

5 replied once but did not reply ever since

5 explicitly declined to participate

4 accepted a connection on LinkedIn but did not reply to messages / emails

7 were excluded because they did not belong to the population considered

Fieldnotes. The main issue emerged during fieldwork in both Milan and London was the difficulty to access the field and get in touch with interviewees. The most common techniques used to approach participants were emails and, in a good number of cases, messages through the professional SNS LinkedIn that is used by almost all respondents as the reference for professional networking online. The large majority of interviewees were interviewed in person. Where this was not possible, the second-best option was to conduct the interview via Skype using audio and video interaction. A minority of interviews (15 over 80) were conducted via email, attempting to replicate at best the 'conversational survey' approach adopted for the research. This was a 'forced' option that was taken only in the extreme cases when the interviewee was keen to participate but refused to provide any suitable alternative. The necessity to snowball through participants across a limited range of names posed the necessity to gather as much data as possible within the sample with no feasible possibility to find substitutes to the names provided.

The other main issue at stake with fieldwork, that is strictly connected to the one just discussed, is the matter of time. Almost all freelancers declared having a tight schedule that did not allow them to meet me for long interviews. No more than 30 minutes were offered for the interview in the majority of cases. Most of the interviews were therefore conducted within this limit, often in public places since most of the freelancers interviewed do not have offices or meeting rooms and frequently establish workstations at home. It was common practice to undertake 'bargains' with participants about interview setting, time and place, and the sharing of professional and personal contacts. Such agreements were a strict necessity to guarantee a sufficient amount of data in a suitable interview setting. More so, despite the attempt of getting five names from each interviewee, it resulted that most interviewees were not generally keen to share their working contacts. The average response rate to the name generator questions is 4,6 names in Milan (of whom 2,7 for the reputation question and 2,8 for the trust question) and 3,7 in London (2,3 for the reputation question and 1,2 for the trust question).

Fieldwork in Milan started in February 2012 and lasted for 7 months until September 2012. A quite long period was needed to access the field. This is also affected by very long waits for responses from potential interviewees. On the contrary, fieldwork in London benefited of a previous experience of the researcher living in the area in the years 2008-2009, which guaranteed a shorter period of time to access the field. Preparation to access was conducted from Italy in September 2012, whilst data collection in London lasted between October and December 2012. The average interview time was consistently shorter than in Milan, with few exceptions.

Discussion. Potential shortcomings and further research. A major issue that may be raised in relation to such a research strategy concerns the combination of different methods and especially the validity of quantitative analysis in this context, given the limited sample size. However, snowball sampling configures a non-probabilistic approach able to operate inference in hard-to-reach hidden populations with an acceptable degree of reliability. In a 'network analysis' context where the independence of the sample is naturally violated, snowball offers a suitable alternative to provide a certain degree of randomness, considering also that the interviewees were kept free to provide names that are not suggested in advance by the researcher (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981).

Issues of potential endogeneity and homophily may also arise. As concerns endogeneity, networks are assumed to be exogenous, which means they neither originate from the dependent variable (in this case, income) nor they are correlated with unobserved attributes of actors that could affect the overall work (Stuart and Sorenson 2007). The research design is constructed on the independent variables, reputation and social capital as trust; more so, the interview setting allowed the researcher to enquire for unobserved attributes and to establish a bond with the interviewee that helped in reducing the risk of missing data. As concerns homophily, research on social networks demonstrates how actors frequently tend to entertain relationships with 'similar' peers. Nevertheless, as Stuart and Sorenson suggest (2007), this drawback can be reduced by knowing as much as possible of the dimensions along which actors prefer to match in the networks considered. The overall ethnographic approach and the use of qualitative interviews provides also a significant reduction of this potential bias.

The ethnographic frame made possible to collect data with a satisfying degree of reliability, considering that the response rate can be located around a satisfying 50% of the 163 people contacted. It should be furthermore remarked, however, that there is no assumption of generalization or universalisation of results rather, as said, an attempt of devising general trends of macro-dynamics and insights also for the benefit of further research.

The 'online field'. Methodological strategy and data collection.

The study of the 'online case' C3 was conceived in order to be coherent and in line with the other two cases. It was conducted following the principles of 'digital ethnography' (Caliandro 2011; Cossetta and Caliandro 2013), an approach which draws from the emerging stream of research

known as 'digital methods' (Rogers 2009; Marres 2012). The idea of 'digital methods' as a methodological stance for the study of digital social environments was developed in recent years by the Dmi (Digital Methods Initiative) at the University of Amsterdam¹². 'Digital methods' are conceived as an alternative to the superimposition of traditional 'offline' research techniques to the digital environment, taken as a specific and unique object of study needing specific methods.

'Digital ethnography' tries to apply digital methods within a more qualitative frame. It elaborates on the idea of 'virtual ethnography' (Hine 2000; Dirksen et al., 2010) looking at online behaviour through the cultures, the discourses and the narrations of the self that users entertain onto digital platforms (Caliandro 2011; Cossetta and Caliandro 2013). 'Virtual' here means the approach that applies techniques that are typical of traditional social research (for instance, questionnaires) to the online environments. This is considered detrimental by digital methods theorists who believe the 'virtual' approach negatively influences the research results, given the adaptation of the technique to a different environment. In fact, according to the principles of 'digital methods', the most efficient way to study the online environment is to extract data natively from the digital sphere. This can be summed up in the motto 'follow the medium' (Rogers 2009), that indicates how data collection should follow the flow of information available on the platform studied and extract data natively, also using softwares or 'scrapers' when possible (Rogers 2009; Marres 2012). Being 'natively digital', digital methods offer a structural, 'ethnographic' approach to collect data in a digital environment. The present work has attempted to realize an integration of these principles within the idea of 'extended ethnography', in order to study the dynamics of social interaction that natively appear on the platform selected.

This was done in three steps:

- a) data collection on the platform was exerted natively, according to the motto 'follow the medium', on the platform selected for the research. Data were therefore collected as they were available on Elance following the flow of information natively present on the platform;
- b) a specific look to single individual platform users (that are the unit of analysis) was provided through the principles of digital ethnography by looking at the profiles and the narration of the self that was provided by each user on the platform together with professional information;

¹² For an extensive bibliography on digital methods and Dmi cfr. <https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/PapersPublications>

c) a portion of the data collected on the platform was anonymised and transformed into a small dataset to perform basic quantitative analyses on the main variables concerning the overall research. At the same time, a set of interviews was conducted with a small number of the same participants with the principle of saturation of information, in order to complete the study with information from users that could not be collected elsewhere.

Elance, the platform selected for this case study, is a world-leading digital marketplace explicitly dedicated to freelancers, operating as intermediary between clients and potential contractors working in many different areas, including what is here referred to as 'creative'. It was preferred to its main competitors, Freelancer and Guru, because of a wider availability of data, especially the revenues that contractors have earned by jobs obtained on the platform. After having subscribed to the website in order to have access to the database, data collection started by searching for contractors. The categories available for the search were: IT & Programming; Design and Multimedia; Writing and Translation; Sales and Marketing; Admin Support. The categories IT & Programming and Admin Support have been excluded because the contractors belonging to these categories did not belong to the population considered.

Data on users were collected with the following criteria:

- individuals / self-employed (no companies)
- with at least 10 jobs and 10 reviews
- with visible 'earnings'

Variable construction. a) Reputation. On Elance, reputation is elaborated as a ranking system weighting feedbacks, recommendations and reviews of the contractor's work. These are aggregated into a score, called 'Level', that represents the reputational ranking of the contractor on the site.

b) Earnings. Revenues are shown on the contractor's profile only if the user explicitly releases this information. If so, they can be accessed both in terms of the earnings of the last 12 months, or as total earnings on the site. As for the present work data were collected on earnings on Elance in the last 12 months.

c) Repeat. The entry 'repeat' on Elance explicitly refers to the percentage of work that was done with same clients. This can be taken as a significant proxy for trust relationships that can be established between a client and a contractor. This variable is here hypothesized as playing a role that is similar to the one played by social capital as trust in the 'offline' field.

d) Skills. Similarly as for the 'offline' field, the boundaries of professional skills in this context are very much blurred. The definition of skills here adopted essentially reflects the self-definition of the freelancer on the user profile, that can be assimilated to the professional self-definition in the offline field.

Other variables included in data collection are:

- e) Education title
- f) Demographics (gender, nationality)
- g) Seniority on the platform (based on date of subscription)
- h) Number of jobs per year
- i) number of clients

Data on Elance users were anonymised and aggregated into a dataset to perform basic statistical analyses looking for correlations among the main variables. The interviews conducted at the end of digital data collection had the purpose of going more in depth within a few 'obscure' aspects emerged during the process, such as: a) the absence of networking relationships among peers on these platforms; b) the motivations that lead to subscribe to the site, especially in relation to recession and global crisis or alternative forms of recruitment; c) the relationships with the clients, looking for potential mediation and recommendations of any kind between clients and contractors. Differently from interviews in C1 and C2, these were traditional, qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with the principle of saturation of information, that went on until no new data emerged.

Case 3: Elance – Specificities

59 profiles / 34 males, 25 females

5 interviews (4 skype interviews, 1 email interview)

Fieldnotes. Online data collection was realized in the period January-March 2013 and was divided essentially in two phases. The first phase was devoted to access the online field, study the functioning of the platform and collect data on the members' profiles according to the criteria listed above. The second phase consisted in the interviews, which were conducted essentially on skype (with only one exception). In order to get in contact with potential interviewees I sent out an email outlining the purposes of the interview and the time needed. The email was sent to all members in the sample who displayed a valid email address on the profile. The members who responded positively to this request were interviewed with the principle of saturation of information, until no new data emerged.

Discussion. Potential shortcomings and further research

As for C1 and C2, a number of potential shortcomings are to be taken into account as possible biases. In the initial phase of the research, as it was also for C1 and C2, the idea was to outline a large-N quantitative study consisting in the mapping of a large formal network (such as LinkedIn or Facebook pages or groups with a large number of users) in order to look at vast connections in quantitative terms. A number of issues for data collection arose in relation to this instance, essentially concerning the availability of information through the scraping of 'big data' on SNSs, the delimitation of the field and the research coherence overall. More so, the same problems encountered for formal networks in C1 and C2 in terms of privacy and sensitivity regarding income and personal information applied.

As a result, in order to maintain a closer focus on individual freelancers as for C1 and C2, it was decided to look at Elance and entertain a digital ethnographic study on the platform. The choice of Elance was instrumental to include an 'income' variable since, differently from the other platforms considered, it is possible on Elance to publicly show the amount of revenues obtained on the site in the previous 12 months. This nevertheless represents also a possible drawback as the collection of information on the platform was limited to those users who had visible data on revenues. This significantly reduced the number of profiles available for sampling, since only a limited number of users share this information; however, at the same time, this allowed to get to a manageable sample size that can be assimilated to C1 and C2.

Another element of difference among the 'offline' and the 'online' lies in the quantitative analysis performed to the datasets. Though maintaining the overall assumption that quantitative analyses are

performed to devise general trends without claiming for generalization or universalization of results, it may be argued that the results concerning the online case show a higher degree of reliability. This is due to data collection that, differently from C1 and C2, was not conducted using 'name generator' question and therefore there is no violation of the assumption of the independence of the samples.

Digital data collection opened up interesting reflections on the label 'network', often improperly attached to these sites, as well as on the nature of social interaction across digital marketplaces. Before fieldwork, a certain degree of sociality on the platform was expected among freelancers. However, it emerged that users are strictly divided in two groups: the contractors, on the supply side; the clients, on the demand side. Clients interact with contractors only in the 'work room' or through feedback forms after the delivery of the job, and no social activity internal to the groups is reported. This is both a shortcoming as well as an element of strength of the present research. In fact, it is the online reputation system that stands here as the centre of social interaction on the platform, the one and only instance both clients and contractors pay attention to, thus emerging as the mechanism that operates as intermediary between the groups in terms of allocation of resources and jobs.

The presence of the ranking system suppresses the networking activity that is at the heart of the 'offline' cases with the aim of achieving and maintaining a reputation, which is here absent because considered unnecessary. The system of feedbacks and rankings guarantees reputation management to the extent that no need for direct interaction especially among peers in the same group (contractors and clients) is required. The interviews conducted on a small sample of Elance users had precisely the purpose of looking more in depth on these issues, and confirmed this intuition.

In terms of further research, it would be interesting to go more in depth along this line in order to see whether there are non-visible connections between contractors mediated by common clients that are not 'natively' on the platform, although interviewees who participated to the study denied this hypothesis. Indeed, from a methodological point of view, this study shows the advantage of having adopted an ethnographic perspective as well as a 'digital methods' approach.

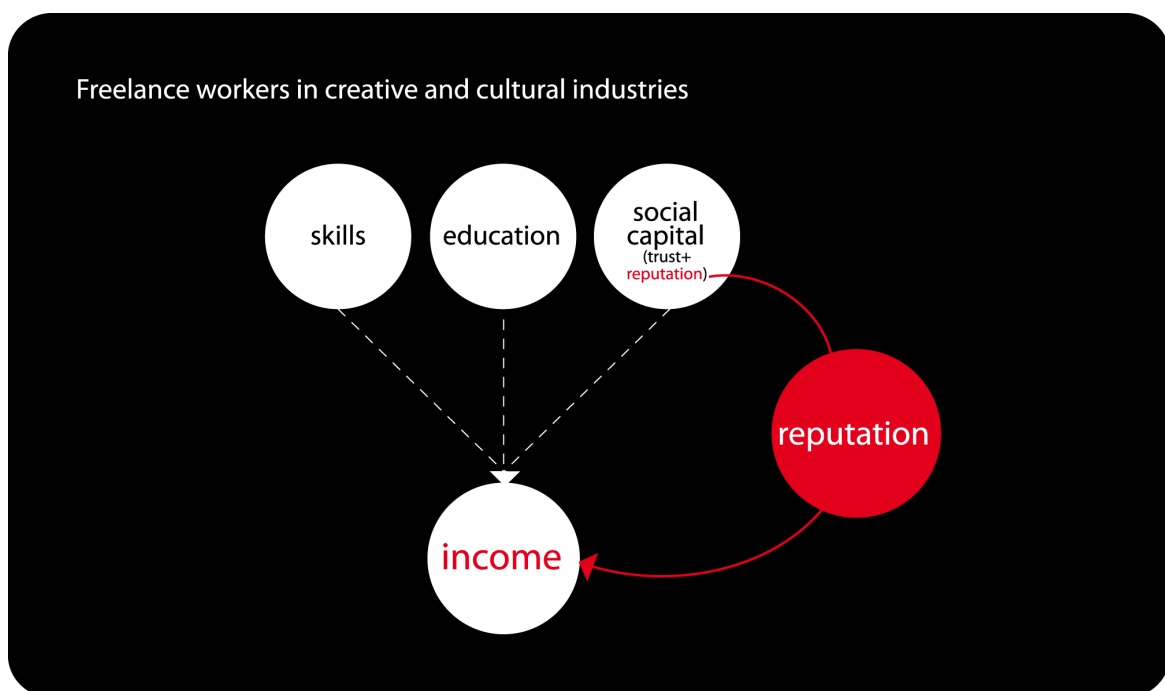
In fact if 'virtual methods' were superimposed on the platform chosen, for instance reproducing the same research design and techniques used in C1 and C2 (using gatekeepers and snowball sampling through interviews) data would have reported a set of results with scarce relationship with the 'real'

practices and usage performed by the same users of such a platform. The adoption of a 'digital methods' approach through digital ethnography effectively made possible to cast a light on the specificities of social interaction on these sites and to understand their functioning in greater detail.

SECTION 1: THE REPUTATION ECONOMY

REPUTATION AND TRUST ACROSS FREELANCE CREATIVE NETWORKS

This section looks at the concepts of reputation and trust across networks of freelance creatives in Milan, London and online. Using quantitative fieldwork data, I will show how reputation can be considered the determinant element for the income and professional success of freelance creatives in the contexts considered. The study shows the existence of what may be called a *reputation economy*, whereby reputation results to be more important than trust-based social capital, skills and education title for the professional success of freelance creatives.



We have seen how a plurality of contributions (cfr. Literature Review) looked at creative and cultural work in the past decades, focusing on the nature of labour and employment in these industries (Pratt 2008; McKinlay and Smith 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008, 2013; Christopherson 2002, 2008; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012). This literature largely emphasizes the role of networking as a key practice to be entertained within labour markets that are increasingly freelance-based and networked, where the only thing that matters is 'who you know' (Blair 2001; Randle and Culkin 2009; Lee 2011).

However, the extent and importance of reputation within these environments remains largely understudied. It may be hypothesized that, in a labour market where the management of networking

and contacts is perceived as key practice for professional success, the personal reputation of independent freelancers becomes central in terms of career advancement, earnings and job opportunities (Pratt 2008; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012). This chapter aims at providing an understanding of these dynamics.

In this section I will try to devise three main outcomes: a) an empirical analysis of the role of reputation in the transition between offline and online networked environments, using the cases of freelance creatives at stake with the present research; b) a definition of reputation that takes into account the different empirical and theoretical issues that emerge in this context; c) a discussion that elaborates on the consequences of reputation management and construction across networked environments in relation to social capital and trust in the context of social networks and economic sociology (Granovetter 1973, 1985).

This will be done through a set of quantitative elaborations concerning data collected on networks of freelance creatives. The results that emerge from this analysis open up a discussion on the notion of reputation as a sociological object in relation to trust, across newly-mediatised contexts of social interaction that integrate digital practices within networked professional environments. We will see how an *empirical distinction* between reputation and trust seems to emerge in these contexts on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity, calling into question the meaning of these concepts within the open-ended debate on social capital.

Reputation in this account is taken as a peculiar form of capital or asset. In the Literature Review we have seen how reputation as a scholarly concept finds roots in the economic literature on corporate management and intangible assets that dates back to the 1980s and the rise of financialization (Fombrun 1996; Dorley and Garcia 2006). The definition that seems to be more useful for the approach adopted in this work is that provided by Post (1986) who defines reputation as a form of “intangible property” that can be acquired through labour or talent (Post 1986; Rolph 2008). With the expansion of the Internet and the diffusion of social media platforms, reputation became object of a renewed attention by disciplines like sociology and media studies as it appears to be increasingly visible and potentially measurable under certain conditions (Arvidsson and Peitersen 2013; Hearn 2010; Botsman 2010, 2012). In the following pages I will show how the complex set of these issues can be called a *reputation economy*, providing a definition of this concept.

Reputation and trust

Among the many readings of social capital outlined in the literature (cfr. Literature Review for an extensive discussion), the work by Nan Lin (1999, 2002) appears to be the most adequate for the purposes of this study, as it is the one which more explicitly connects social capital to network-based individual action (Lin 1999, 2002).

Social capital for Lin is 'an investment in social relations with expected returns' (Lin 1999, p. 31). 'Returns' here consist in those outcomes achieved through gaining access to resources embedded in a network. Lin considers social capital a *relational asset* that consents to mobilize and access resources embedded in a network (Lin 1999, 2002). It is both an individual and a group feature which originates from the combination of a number of different elements. The different dimensions which pertain to Lin's theory of social capital (1999, 2002) include the capacity to mobilize contacts across the network, as well as the accessibility to network locations. In this context, a prominent position is given to trust.

Lin (1999, 2002) locates trust among the different 'collective dimensions' that pertain to the construction of social capital, together with reputation. In Lin's view, trust is an essentially collective asset that promotes social relations and sustains social capital as a public good together with sanctions and norms. On the other hand, reputation is the aggregate asset of social recognition in a social network (Lin 2002). Lin sustains that reputation is both a collective as well as an individual asset that differs from prestige (which implies hierarchy) and esteem (which stands as a purely social process). It is an indicator for social gain in a group, deployed as the extent of favourable or unfavourable opinions about an individual in a collective (2002). In this regard, reputation emerges as the effect of both micro and macro dynamics, acting as a complementary element in the relationship between economic transactions and social exchange (Lin 1999, 2002).

The definition of trust within the literature on social capital is widely debated. As noted by Adler and Kwon (2002), some authors equate social capital with trust (Fukuyama 1995, 1997), whilst others see trust as a form (Coleman 1988) or source (Putnam 1993, 2001) of social capital. Fukuyama (1995) sustained that 21st Century economies will be ones with higher levels of trust. As seen, Lin (1999, 2002) considers trust to be at the heart of the concept of social capital and action inasmuch it enables accessibility and mobilization of resources in a network as a collective asset. Luhmann (1979, 2000) defines trust in relation to familiarity and intimacy. For Luhmann, trust is

the element that reduces the risk of social interaction and economic transactions entertained by an actor with 'strangers', with whom the actor does not have familiarity or intimacy.

Human and cultural capital. As stated in the introduction, the empirical analysis that follows takes into consideration also instances of skills and education. This brings us to the concepts of *human capital* and *cultural capital*. For Becker (1962), *human capital* is conceived as the set of education, training and skills that an individual puts at value within the labour market as a resource to influence future income. Coleman (1988, 1990) sustains that social capital essentially functions as a source for the creation of human capital conceived as the set of skills possessed by an individual. On the other hand, Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1986) sustains that social capital interrelates with *cultural capital*, meaning those skills and knowledge possessed by a social actor. The concept of human capital differs from that of cultural capital in that the former results from a process of training.

Bourdieu's 'theory of capitals' (1984, 1985, 1986) is particularly important for this discussion. Bourdieu defines social capital as the combination of network size and the assets (cultural, economic and symbolic capital) possessed by its members, with a prominent role given to economic capital. Particularly, the element that characterizes Bourdieu's social capital is *mutuality*. For Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1986) social capital is characterized by mutual recognition and reciprocity to connote the quality and nature of the social relationship. Bourdieu does not get much into a definition of trust within his notion of social capital. However, if we combine Bourdieu's definition with Lin's approach, that links social capital to action, we may say that Bourdieu's vision of social capital is in a problematic relationship with Lin's 'operational' definition of social capital across networks. This element will be developed further through the empirical analysis.

Drawing on these insights, it may be hypothesized that reputation and trust are two *empirically distinct* entities. These instances in fact seem to suggest that if we look at the nature and quality of social interaction in relation to the outcomes that may be achieved by operating within a network, a distinction between reputation and trust can emerge on the basis of *mutuality* and *reciprocity*. We may imagine that trust implies a greater extent of mutuality and reciprocity over reputation, which seems to be a more individualized feature that implies social interaction to a lesser extent.

Reputation in fact, differently from trust, is characterised by *a degree of opinions* for which an individual may have a good or a bad reputation. Indeed, from the perspective of this work it is the

possession of a 'good' reputation that is hypothesized to be the driver for economic success. Such a definition of reputation does not imply a great extent of social interaction in that it may be possible to have an opinion about someone without being in direct interaction. Thus, in order to make reputation and trust empirically observable in comparable terms, here I will essentially look at the 'positive' trait of reputation in comparison with the generally connoted, positive trait of trust.

It is now time to look more closely to these dynamics. In the following paragraph, with the help of empirical findings, I will try to outline the role played by trust and reputation in the context of creative labour from an essentially quantitative perspective, to disentangle their ambiguity.

Empirical findings: Milan and London

Before looking at the networks and the quantitative data, it is here useful to briefly summarize the main methodological steps that were adopted to get to the quantitative data (cfr. Methodology for an extensive discussion). The starting point has been a set of interviews to 5 'gatekeepers' for each city, employed in the creative sectors with supposedly different sets of skills. Each interviewee was asked to nominate a maximum of 5 peers in their professional network on the basis of two 'name generator' questions enquiring for reputation and trust. The 'nominated' ones were then contacted for interview, thus adopting a snowball sampling procedure.

The variables 'reputation' and 'trust' were constructed on the basis of the 'indegree' measure, that calculates the number of ties pointing to a node in a social network structure (Valente 2010). The 'name generator' question concerning reputation aimed at obtaining the names of those professionals the interviewee regarded more highly in their professional environment, notwithstanding a personal or direct knowledge. The question on trust pointed at getting the names of those colleagues and peers the interviewee would get in touch if in need of professional advice. The two different questions have the purpose of highlighting the degree of potential difference in the definition of the two concepts.

[Name generator question on reputation: “Could you please list a maximum of five names of independent creative professionals that you consider highly in their job, notwithstanding if a) you're friend with them, or not / b) you know them personally?”]

[Name generator question on trust: “Could you please list a maximum of five independent creative professionals that you would get in touch with, if you're in need of professional advice?”]

Two networks made of 42 (Milan) and 37 (London) nodes originated from this work. Also, interviews were conducted through a semi-structured biographical approach, using the methodological technique of the 'conversational survey' (Gobo 2006, 2011; Gobo and Mauceri 2013). This consented to generate a dataset that includes quantitative data on the main variables at stake with this work: reputation, trust, income, skills and education title, in order to perform basic statistical and network analysis elaborations on the data collected.

Case 1 – Milan

5 gatekeepers / 3 males, 2 females

A network of 93 potential participants contacted

47 accepted to participate for a response rate of 50.5 %

5 were excluded because they did not belong to the population considered (not freelancers / not creatives)

42 nodes were included in the final sample size (network size: 42)

The average response rate to the 'name generator questions' is 4,6 names, of whom 2,7 for the reputation question and 2,8 for the trust question

Average number of clients per year: 7,6

Number of freelancers with a single employer: 7

Table 1. The freelance creative network – Milan

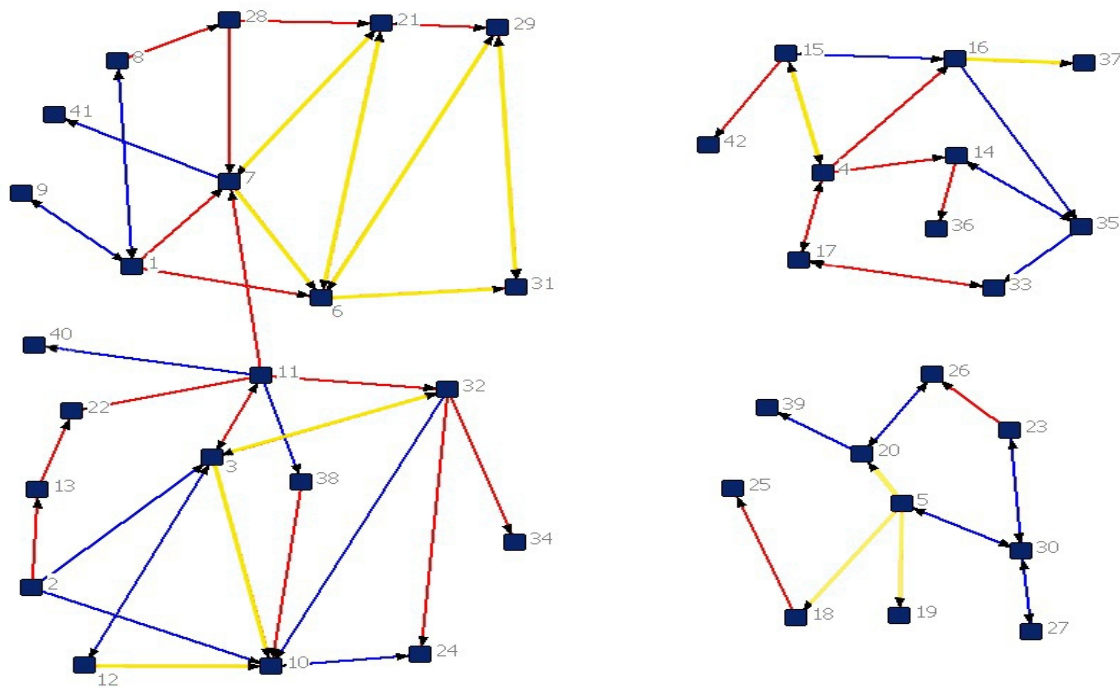
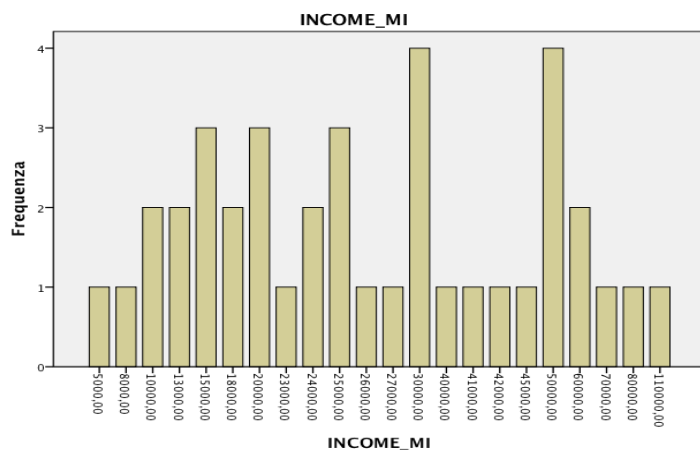


Table 1 (above) shows the overall network that emerges from the mapping of the connections revealed by creative freelancers and independent professionals in Milan. The network is made of 42 nodes and 96 ties overall; 43 are reputational ties (in red), 53 are trust ties (in blue). Yellow ties indicate multiplex ties (i.e., the presence of both a reputation and a trust tie). A basic observation of the graph tells us that the network seems to be quite neatly divided in for clusters, with node 11 being a bridge between the two left clusters, thanks to a reputational tie going from 11 to 7. The left aggregation seems to be bigger and denser than those on the right.

Table 2. Income – Milan

Statistiche		
INCOME_MI		
N	Validi	39
	Mancanti	3
Media		32487,1795



In terms of gross annual income in the sample (Table 2, above), we can observe an average value of 32487 euros that is nevertheless largely produced out of two median values (30000 and 50000). We can observe a tendency to polarization considering the high frequency of values 25000 or lower, on the one hand, and 50000 or above. Average income is surprisingly higher for females (37562) than males (28956). This may be due to a plurality of factors, including the specificity of the sample at stake – I will come back later on this point.

As concerns human and cultural capital, 'skills' and 'education title' are to be taken in this context as *flat* variables. As concerns skills, data collection highlights how interviewees substantially have similar competences. The multi-functional trait theorized by Christopherson (2008) emerges clearly as it was not possible to generate a quantitative variable 'skills' given the consistent overlapping of competences among different professionals. A set of 'socio-technical' skills concerning computer programmes and basic communication is largely diffused, mostly as a result of the multi-functional skills learned in graduate creative training programmes.

In terms of education title we can observe a similar homogeneity (Table 3, below). The large majority of interviewees (37 over 42) has a 'Laurea' (Bachelor Degree) or a 'Laurea + master' (Postgraduate degree). Of these, 29 over 42 possess a degree in a discipline that is relevant to the creative world (Table3, bottom; value 1 = relevant, value 2 = non relevant). Only 5 over 42 participants do not have an academic qualification.

Table 3. Education title – Categories and relevance – Milan

EDU_MI					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	altro	1	2,4	2,4	2,4
	Diploma	4	9,5	9,5	11,9
	Laurea	27	64,3	64,3	76,2
	Laurea + Master	10	23,8	23,8	100,0
	Totale	42	100,0	100,0	

EDU_REL					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	1,00	29	69,0	69,0	69,0
	2,00	13	31,0	31,0	100,0
	Totale	42	100,0	100,0	

If we operate a comparison in the means of income on the basis of the education title (Table 4, below) we can observe how having a greater income appears to be unrelated to the possession of a higher qualification in the sample considered. This is shown by the figures concerning 'Diploma' (high school qualification) which, though considering the small number in the sample, are slightly

higher than those of 'Laurea' (Bachelor Degree) and consistently higher than the rest. A Postgraduate qualification (Laurea + Master) does not seem to provide a significant chance to get higher earnings.

Table 4. Compare means. Income and education title – Milan

Report

INCOME_MI

EDU_MI	Media	N	Deviazione std.
altro	20000,0000	1	.
Diploma	37333,3333	3	6429,10051
Laurea	34240,0000	25	24883,5287
Laurea + Master	27900,0000	10	17521,0984
Totale	32487,1795	39	21896,7335

Table 5. The reputation network - Milan

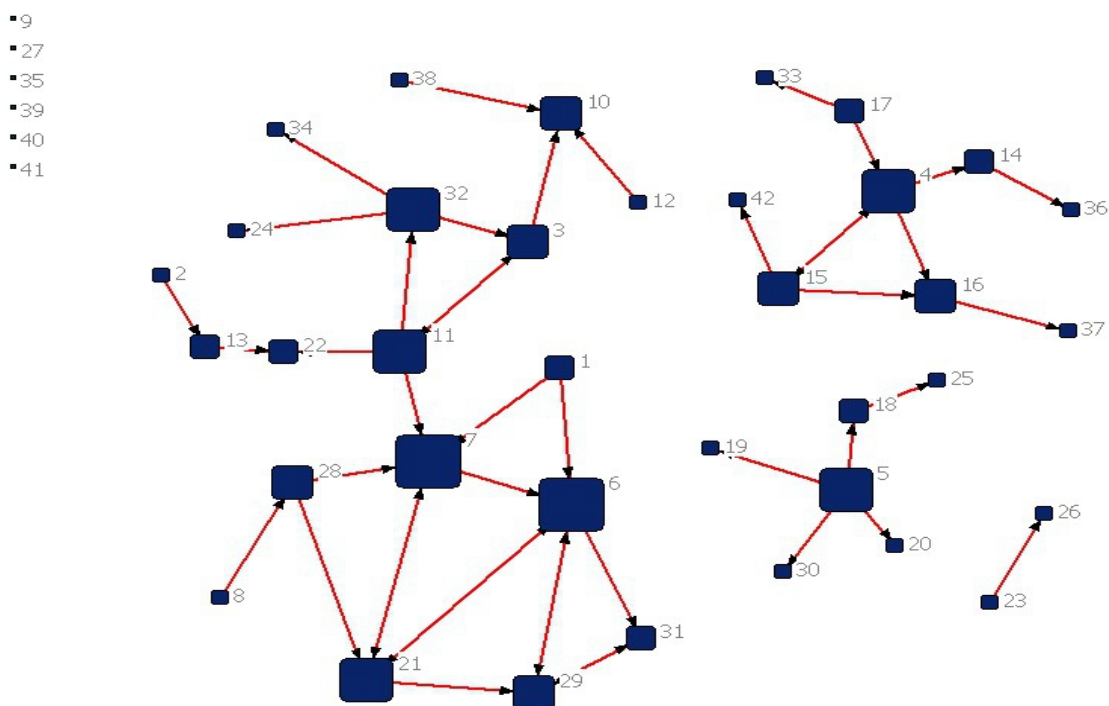


Table 5 (above) shows the network of creative freelancers in Milan constructed on the name generator question on 'reputation'. The size of nodes is based on the measure of degree centrality associated to each node. There are 6 isolates (top left of the graph). The aggregation on the left remains denser than those on the right. The bottom right cluster divides in two, with nodes 23 and 26 becoming a dyad, and effectively shows no reputational meaning as such, with central node 5

receiving no incoming ties. The aggregation on the top right also emerges as quite dense, with nodes 4 and 16 in central position.

I will now analyze the reputation network in a systematic way by looking at some of the indicators that provide information on the centrality and importance of nodes. As said, the most important measure in this sense is the 'indegree' that looks at the number of incoming ties pointing to a node (Valente 2010). In this case it essentially indicates the number of 'mentions' received in the name generator question on reputation. This is the measure upon which the network is constructed as a larger number of 'mentions' in the name generator question indicates greater reputation in this sample.

Data on the indegree measure based on reputation (Table 6, below) show a stratification among the nodes within a range of values 0 to 4, with nodes 6 and 7 having the highest indegree (value 4). If we look at the other values, also nodes 11, 21 and 32 appear to have a significant position in the network and they are likely to be key players in terms of information control. Significantly, all these ties are located in the left cluster. As concerns the top right aggregation, the most important member in relative terms is node 4. Also, an important relative role is played by node 22, whose position is that of a broker and a gatekeeper between nodes 2-13 and the rest of the left cluster. Node 32, though having the same size in the graph, does not play a similar role as the connection with 24 and 34 is only outgoing, and not incoming.

As concerns the other centrality measures which are not directly at stake with the scope of this work, 'betweenness' seems to be a good 'control measure' in that it calculates the frequency a person lies in the shortest path connecting everyone else in the network. In other words, it may be a good proxy to indicate the strategic position occupied by a node (Valente 2010). Data on betweenness (last column on the right, Table 6 below) confirm the insights concerning nodes 6 and 7 and also highlight the strategic position of node 11 as the one who can potentially connect the two clusters.

Table 6. Indegree values, reputation network – Milan

MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	OutDeg	Indeg	OutBonPw	InBonPwr	Out2Step	In2Step	OutARD	InARD	Between
1	2.000	0.000	553.922	0.000	5.000	0.000	3.500	0.000	0.000
2	1.000	0.000	1.467	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	0.000
3	2.000	2.000	200.877	4.635	5.000	2.000	5.333	2.000	9.000
4	3.000	2.000	7.101	3.155	6.000	2.000	4.500	2.000	8.000
5	4.000	0.000	4.467	0.000	5.000	0.000	4.500	0.000	0.000
6	3.000	4.000	576.119	1094.079	4.000	7.000	3.500	6.417	14.333
7	2.000	4.000	605.847	314.752	4.000	7.000	3.000	6.417	14.167
8	1.000	0.000	290.384	-0.000	3.000	0.000	2.917	0.000	0.000
9	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
10	0.000	3.000	0.000	5.164	0.000	5.000	0.000	4.000	0.000
11	4.000	1.000	425.904	3.164	9.000	2.000	7.167	1.500	15.000
12	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
13	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
14	1.000	1.000	1.000	2.473	1.000	3.000	1.000	2.000	3.000
15	3.000	1.000	6.703	2.473	5.000	2.000	4.333	1.500	2.000
16	1.000	2.000	1.000	4.628	1.000	3.000	1.000	2.500	3.000
17	2.000	0.000	5.316	-0.000	5.000	0.000	4.500	0.000	0.000
18	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
19	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
20	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
21	3.000	3.000	717.044	661.325	4.000	7.000	3.500	5.917	9.333
22	0.000	2.000	-0.000	3.944	0.000	4.000	0.000	3.333	0.000
23	1.000	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
24	0.000	1.000	0.000	2.157	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.833	0.000
25	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.467	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000
26	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
27	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
28	2.000	1.000	619.728	1.000	4.000	1.000	3.333	1.000	5.000
29	2.000	3.000	347.191	1358.371	3.000	6.000	2.833	5.617	4.167
30	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
31	1.000	2.000	163.122	1147.180	2.000	5.000	2.003	4.867	0.000
32	3.000	1.000	96.800	2.477	5.000	2.000	5.567	1.500	4.000
33	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000
34	0.000	1.000	0.000	2.157	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.833	0.000
35	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
36	0.000	1.000	-0.000	2.155	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.167	0.000
37	0.000	1.000	0.000	3.161	0.000	3.000	0.000	2.333	0.000
38	1.000	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
39	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
40	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
41	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
42	0.000	1.000	-0.000	2.155	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.833	0.000

Similarly for reasons of control, I have looked also at the values of 'personal network density' (Table 7, Column 4, below), which calculates the degree of connectivity among the alters nominated by ego (Burt 1992; Valente 2010) to 'constrained egos' – meaning those whose alters are connected to each other. Data show how the most constrained node is number 31 whose density measure is double than the second best. This is confirmed by the graph, where we can notice how node 31 is connected to nodes 6 and 29 which are densely connected among each other, also through node 21.

Table 7. Personal network density – Reputation – Milan

EGO NETWORKS

Input dataset: MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON (E:\dati\RAW\Milano Excel e Quotes\MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON)

Density Measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Size	Ties	Pairs	Densit	AvgDis	Diamet	nWeakC	pWeakC	2StepR	ReachE	Broker	nBroke	EgoBet	nEgoBe
1	1	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00									
2	2	1.00	0.00	0.00										
3	3	3.00	1.00	6.00	16.67									
4	4	4.00	1.00	12.00	8.33									
5	5	4.00	0.00	12.00	0.00									
6	6	5.00	6.00	20.00	30.00									
7	7	5.00	4.00	20.00	20.00									
8	8	1.00	0.00	0.00										
9	9	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00									
10	10	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00									
11	11	4.00	1.00	12.00	8.33									
12	12	1.00	0.00	0.00										
13	13	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00									
14	14	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00									
15	15	3.00	1.00	6.00	16.67									
16	16	3.00	2.00	6.00	33.33									
17	17	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00									
18	18	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00									
19	19	1.00	0.00	0.00										
20	20	1.00	0.00	0.00										
21	21	4.00	4.00	12.00	33.33									
22	22	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00									
23	23	1.00	0.00	0.00										
24	24	1.00	0.00	0.00										
25	25	1.00	0.00	0.00										
26	26	1.00	0.00	0.00										
27	27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00									
28	28	3.00	2.00	6.00	33.33									
29	29	3.00	3.00	6.00	50.00									
30	30	1.00	0.00	0.00										
31	31	2.00	2.00	2.00	100.00									
32	32	4.00	2.00	12.00	16.67									
33	33	1.00	0.00	0.00										
34	34	1.00	0.00	0.00										
35	35	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00									
36	36	1.00	0.00	0.00										
37	37	1.00	0.00	0.00										
38	38	1.00	0.00	0.00										
39	39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00									
40	40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00									
41	41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00									
42	42	1.00	0.00	0.00										

If we operate a bivariate regression having reputation / indegree as the independent variable, and income as the dependent variable, we can see that reputation can be considered a good predictor for the earnings of freelance creatives in the sample considered (Table 8, below).

Table 8. Bivariate regression. Reputation / indegree and income – Milan

Variabili inserite/rimosse^a

Modello	Variabili inserite	Variabili rimosse	Metodo
1	REP_INDEGREE		Per blocchi

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI
b. Tutte le variabili richieste sono state immesse.

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,614 ^a	,377	,361	17509,3920

a. Predittori: (Costante), REP_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Anova^a

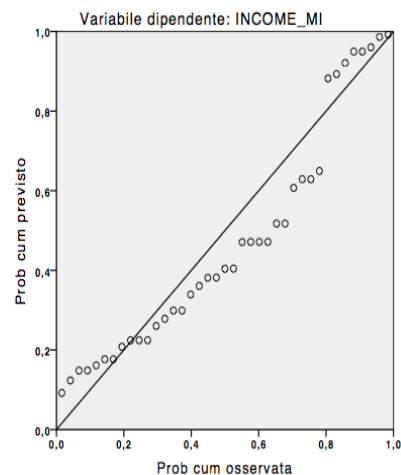
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	6,876E+9	1	6,876E+9	22,429	,000 ^b
	Residuo	1,134E+10	37	306578809		
	Totale	1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI
b. Predittori: (Costante), REP_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

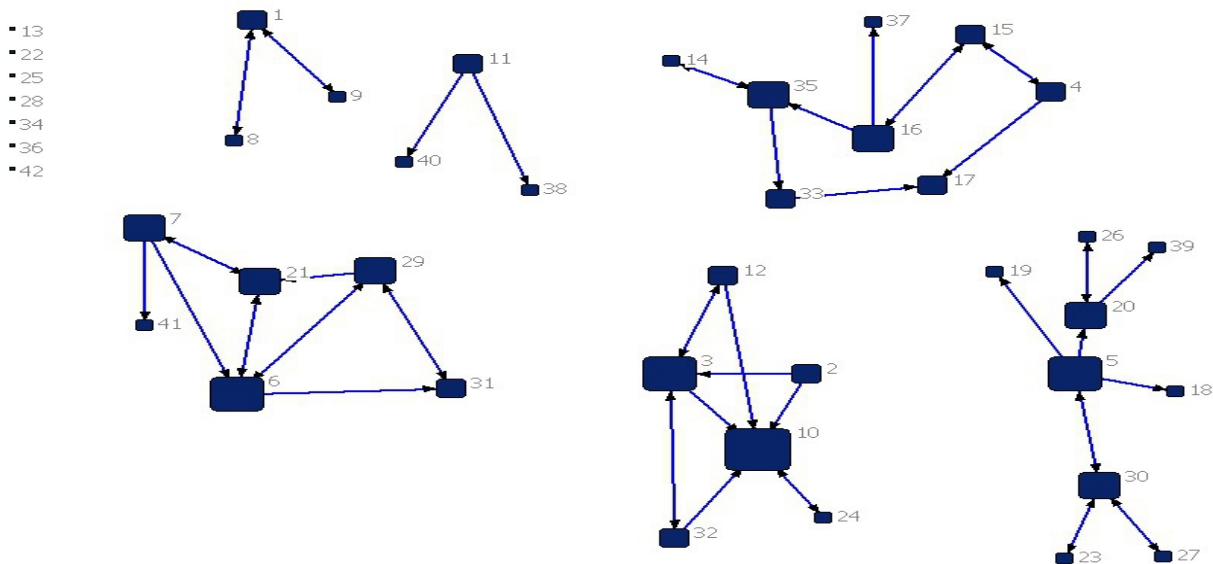
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B
		B	Deviazione standard Errore				
1	(Costante)	19233,836	3961,356		4,855	,000	11207,366
1	REP_INDEGREE	12020,474	2538,133	,614	4,736	,000	6877,728

Grafico di normalità P-P di regressione Residuo standardizzato



However, if we construct the same graph using trust instead of reputation, we can see that the picture and the results significantly vary. Below is the trust network within the sample considered.

Table 9. The Trust Network – Milan



As we can observe in the graph, the clusters become more scattered and two triads (1-8-9 and 11-38-40) remain separate from the rest. By looking at the picture, the most important node in the trust network seems to be node 10, with nodes 3, 5 and 6 also in a key position. The cluster in the top right seems to be quite homogeneous with similar values among the members.

The indegree matrix (Table 10, below) confirms that node 10 is largely a trust hub, with an indegree value of 5, as are nodes 3 and 6 in relative terms. Nodes 21 and 30 have the same trust value of nodes 3 and 6, and seem to be also in a key position for information control in the network. Node 21 in fact is a broker between 7, 29 and 41 in relation to the top node in the cluster (node 6). Node 30, on the other hand, shows its relative importance as it is in direct connection with node 5, the trust hub in the bottom-right cluster, and is also a gatekeeper for nodes 23 and 27. The betweenness values (Table 10, last column on the right) confirm the relative strategic position of node 30 and unveil the role of node 5 in being the element that connects the otherwise dispersed aggregation on the bottom right.

If we operate a regression having trust as the independent variable we can see how the correlation between trust and income is not significant in the sample considered (Table 12, below).

Table 12 – Regression – Income and trust – Milan

Modello	R	R-quadro	R-quadro corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,323 ^a	,104	,080	21003,1064

a. Predittori: (Costante), TRUST_INDEGREE

b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.	
1	Regresione	1,898E+9	1	1,898E+9	4,302	,045 ^b
	Residuo	1,632E+10	37	441130478		
	Totale	1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

b. Predittori: (Costante), TRUST_INDEGREE

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	24057,243	5275,256		4,560	,000	13368,559	34745,927
	TRUST_INDEGREE	6575,350	3170,034	,323	2,074	,045	152,251	12998,450

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

The larger importance of reputation over trust in relation to income in the sample becomes more evident if we operate a multivariate regression having both reputation and trust as independent variables, and income as the dependent variable (Table 13, below). The variable trust, in particular, substantially modifies its significance value. This seems to indicate that, though trust is seemingly an important element in this network, its importance decreases when reputational ties are at stake.

Table 13 – Multivariate regression – Income, Reputation and Trust – Milan

Modello	R	R-quadro	R-quadro corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,619 ^a	,383	,349	17668,6751

a. Predittori: (Costante), REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.	
1	Regresione	6,981E+9	2	3,491E+9	11,181	,000 ^b
	Residuo	1,124E+10	36	312182081		
	Totale	1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

b. Predittori: (Costante), REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	17800,189	4700,863		3,787	,001	8266,397	27333,982
	TRUST_INDEGREE	1696,970	2928,000	,083	,580	,566	-4241,289	7635,228
	REP_INDEGREE	11347,538	2812,120	,580	4,035	,000	5644,293	17050,783

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Network structure. If we compare the measures concerning the structure of the two networks (Table 14, below), we can observe how the trends observed so far in terms of the structural differences between the reputation and trust networks emerge also in the quantitative elaboration. The trust

network (Table 14, left column) is slightly denser and more connected, whilst the reputation network results to be more fragmented and close, showing a higher average distance among the nodes and a lower clustering coefficient. It may be argued that the slight percentages that make these differences could have been more solid and visible with a large sample available.

Table 14 – Network measures – Milan

Measures		1	2	
		MILANO	MILANO	
		1 Ret	1 Ret	
		e-SC_A	e-REP_	
		NON	ANON	
1	Avg Degree	1.238	1.071	Relation: MILANO 1 Rete-SC_ANON
2	H-Index	3	3	-----
3	Density	0.030	0.026	Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.226
4	Components	26	35	Weighted Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.220
5	Component Ratio	0.610	0.829	Relation: MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON
6	Connectedness	0.067	0.060	-----
7	Fragmentation	0.933	0.940	Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.208
8	Closure	0.259	0.288	Weighted Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.200
9	Avg Distance	1.819	1.903	
10	SD Distance	0.896	1.000	
11	Diameter	4	5	Network Transitivity
12	Breadth	0.954	0.960	
13	Compactness	0.046	0.040	

		1
		Transi

1	MILANO 1 Rete-SC_ANON	9.211
2	MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON	10.714

Density here describes the degree of interconnectivity among alters. Denser networks provide reinforcement to norms and practices and effectively consist into higher bonding (Valente 2010). This is compatible to the definitions of trust given in this work. Diameter is significantly higher than average distance in both networks, with the reputation network showing higher values. The presence of a large diameter and a low average distance indicates scarce cohesion and the presence of unaccessible branches (Valente 2010). This is compatible with the theory of reputation here given as this trend shows that reputation is largely an individual trait which functions as a capital deploying unequal transactions. Clustering is the average value of each node's personal network density (Watts and Strogatz 1998). High clustering indicates how nodes connected to a third person are more likely to be connected to each other. Low clustering on the other hand shows how it is less likely to know one another when connected to the same third party (Valente 2010). In relative terms, the clustering coefficient is higher in the trust network.

This indicates that in a trust network the likelihood that two nodes connected to a third person also have a tie that connects to each other is higher than in a reputation network. However, data on transitivity, the measure which calculates the potential to form triads (Valente 2010) show a higher transitivity value for the reputation network (line 2, Rete REP_ANON) over the trust network (line 1, Rete SC_ANON).

Reciprocity. As seen in the discussion on social capital, the element of tie reciprocation was hypothesized to be a distinctive element between reputation and trust in empirical terms. This intuition seems to be confirmed. If we operate a calculation by hand on the percentage of reciprocated ties, that is made possible by the small size of the sample and the manageable number of ties, we can observe how in the reputation network we have 12 edges over 43 that are reciprocated, which makes a 'reciprocity rate' (RR) of 27, 9%. Conversely, in the trust network we have that 31 over 53 edges are reciprocated, with a RR as high as 58,4%.

If we perform this analysis using Ucinet reciprocity measure (Table 15a, below), similar results apply. We can conclude that in the sample considered, trust is more reciprocated than reputation.

Table 15a – Reciprocity – Milan

RECIPROCITY	RECIPROCITY
-----	-----
Input dataset: MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON (E:\dati\RAW \Milano Excel e Quotes\MILANO 1 Rete-REP_ANON)	Input dataset: MILANO 1 Rete-SC_ANON (E:\dati\RAW \Milano Excel e Quotes\MILANO 1 Rete-SC_ANON)
Method: Hybrid	Method: Hybrid
Diagonal valid? No	Diagonal valid? No
Output dataset: GroupReciprocity (E:\dati\RAW \Milano Excel e Quotes\GroupReciprocity)	Output dataset: GroupReciprocity (E:\dati\RAW \Milano Excel e Quotes\GroupReciprocity)
Hybrid Reciprocity: 0.1538	Hybrid Reciprocity: 0.4444

The sociographs (Tables 15b-15c, below) have been rielaborated to show which ties are reciprocated in the two networks (indicated by a red line).

Table 15b – Reciprocation, Network Graphs – Reputation

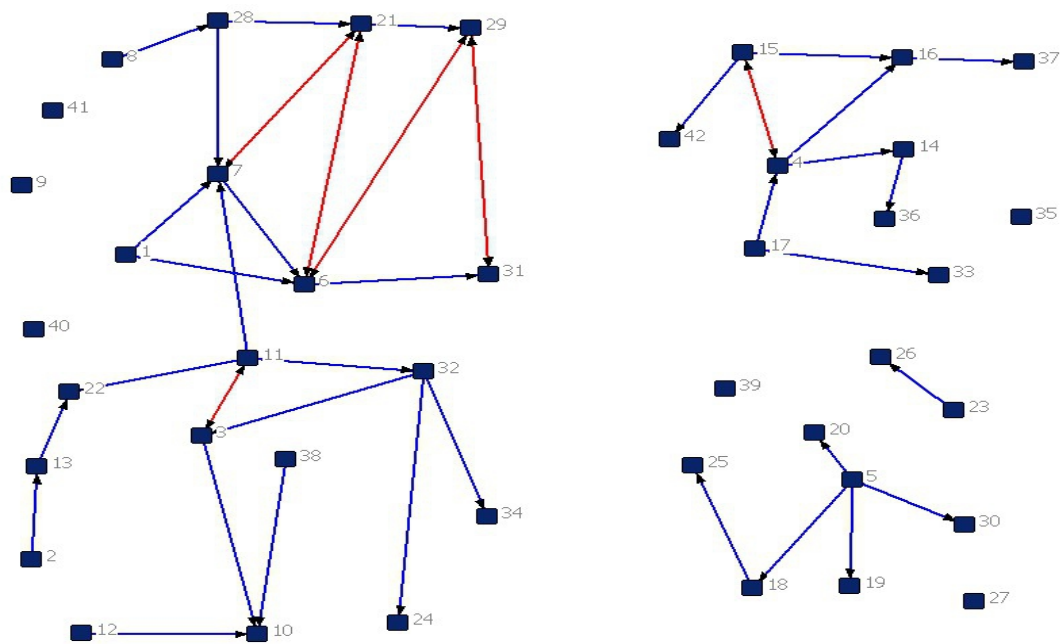
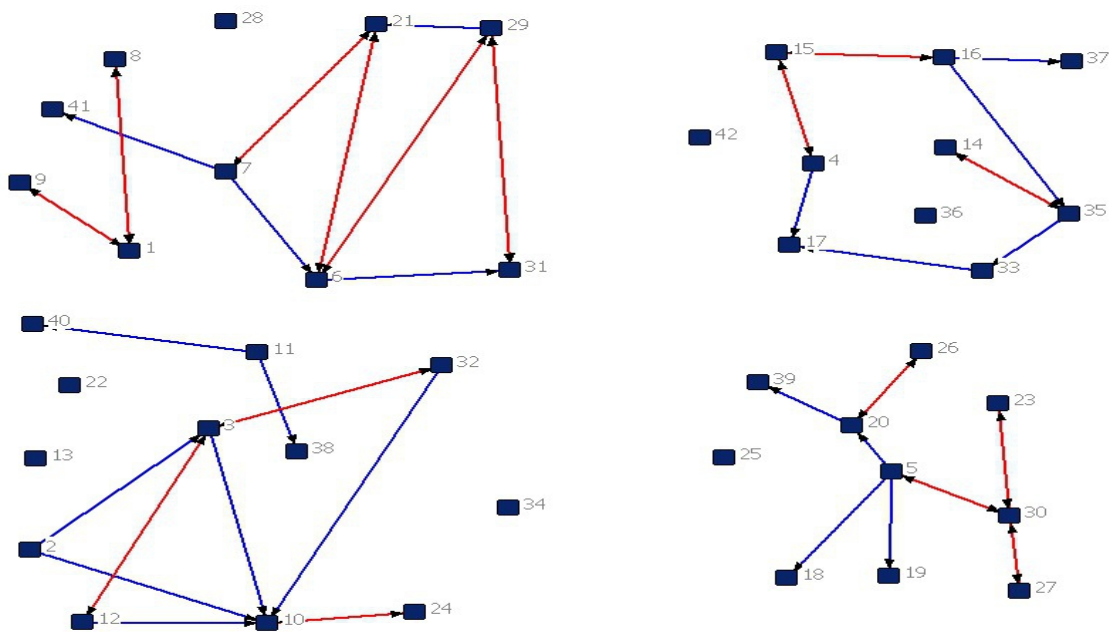


Table 15c – Reciprocation, Network Graphs – Trust



In other words, data seem to show that trust is connoted by a stronger element of mutuality and reciprocity if compared to reputation. This shows that reciprocity may effectively be an important

element that allows to distinguish between trust and reputation whereby trust-based networks have a higher reciprocity rate. If an actor trusts another actor in a professional network, it is likely that the trust bond is reciprocated, revealing friendship and familiarity. Reputation on the other hand is less likely to be mutually reciprocated. If an actor regards highly another actor, it does not imply that the same occurs in the opposite direction.

In order to strengthen this finding and highlight this difference, a calculation can be made looking at the percentage of overlapping ties – when a tie is present both in the reputation as well as in the trust network. Such an 'overlapping rate' here indicates how much the bond of trust between an ego and its alter coincides with the presence of a high professional reputation. Of the 96 edges that can be accounted in the sample, only 21 are present in both networks, which makes an 'overlapping rate' (OR) of 21,8%. This allows us to conclude that, in the sample considered, reputation coincides with trust only in around 20% of cases.

Multivariate analysis with other variables. To complete the quantitative elaboration, it remains to be seen whether the inclusion of other variables in the multivariate analysis modifies the overall trend. The first elaboration (Table 16, left) includes in the statistical analysis the factor 'education title' transformed in a quantitative scale variable by assigning Likert-like values to the different categories. This was done by giving value 1 to the high school diploma, value 2 to the non-academic professional qualification, value 3 to the Bachelor Degree, value 4 to the Postgraduate degree. The second elaboration (Table 16, right) includes the variable “Edu_Rel” transformed in a dummy variable on the relevance of the education title. The overall results shows that reputation remains significant in this model, with education title that does not affect its strength.

Table 16 – Multivariate analysis – Income, reputation, trust and education title - Milan

Riepilogo del modello ^b				
Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,641 ^a	,411	,361	17506,4454

a. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_QUANT, REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Anova ^a						
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	7,493E+9	3	2,498E+9	8,150	,000 ^b
	Residuo	1,073E+10	35	306475630		
	Totale	1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI
b. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_QUANT, REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti ^a					
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore		
1	(Costante)	31788,324	11783,004	2,698	,011
	TRUST_INDEGREE	2510,649	2968,644	,123	,403
	REP_INDEGREE	11300,285	2786,540	,578	,000
	EDU_QUANT	-4868,244	3766,816	-,172	,205

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Riepilogo del modello ^b				
Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,621 ^a	,385	,332	17891,7944

a. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_REL, REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Anova ^a						
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	7,016E+9	3	2,339E+9	7,305	,001 ^b
	Residuo	1,120E+10	35	320116308		
	Totale	1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI
b. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_REL, REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti ^a					
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore		
1	(Costante)	16457,914	6275,744	2,622	,013
	TRUST_INDEGREE	1624,414	2973,204	,080	,588
	REP_INDEGREE	11366,402	2848,212	,581	,000
	EDU_REL	2043,161	6225,105	,044	,745

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

To a general extent, I have also considered age and gender to be variables that might affect the overall research substantially. In terms of gender, the network observed is slightly unbalanced in favour of males (value 1, Table 17, left) over females. The average age in the sample is 37.

Table 17 – Gender and age – Milan

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	1,00	25	59,5	59,5	59,5
	2,00	17	40,5	40,5	100,0
Totale		42	100,0	100,0	

N	Validi	Mancanti	Media
	42	0	37,6429

If we operate a regression including age in a multivariate elaboration with reputation and trust as independent variables, maintaining income as dependent variable, we can see how age is not directly related to reputation (Table 18a, left) but nevertheless is somehow connected to the construction of income in combination with reputation (Table 18a, right).

Table 18a – Reputation, income and age – Multivariate analysis – Milan

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,189 ^a	,036	,011	1,08456

a. Predittori: (Costante), AGE_MI
b. Variabile dipendente: REP_INDEGREE

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,681 ^a	,464	,418	16700,9809

a. Predittori: (Costante), TRUST_INDEGREE, AGE_MI, REP_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Modello	Regressione	Residuo	Totale	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1				1,735	1	1,735	1,475	,232 ^b
				47,050	40	1,176		
				48,786	41			

a. Variabile dipendente: REP_INDEGREE
b. Predittori: (Costante), AGE_MI

Modello	Regressione	Residuo	Totale	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1				8,457E+9	3	2,819E+9	10,107	,000 ^b
				9,762E+9	35	278922763		
				1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI
b. Predittori: (Costante), TRUST_INDEGREE, AGE_MI, REP_INDEGREE

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore			
1	(Costante)	,266	,684		,388	,700
	AGE_MI	,021	,018	,189	1,215	,232

a. Variabile dipendente: REP_INDEGREE

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore			
1	(Costante)	-7520,037	11869,088		-,634	,530
	AGE_MI	746,214	324,358	,294	2,301	,027
	REP_INDEGREE	10194,121	2704,972	,521	3,769	,001
	TRUST_INDEGREE	1171,581	2777,042	,058	,422	,676

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

As concerns gender, since income is higher for women than for men, I have tested whether being a woman in this creative environment may affect this analysis by generating and including a new dummy variable based on gender. Data show there is no such incidence of gender in this elaboration. The difference in income therefore is probably due to the specific sample observed and its significance should be tested in larger samples.

Table 18b – Reputation, income and gender – Multivariate analysis – Milan

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,642 ^a	,412	,362	17490,1867

a. Predittori: (Costante), GENDER_DUMMY, REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	7,513E+9	3	2,504E+9	8,187	,000 ^b
	Residuo	1,071E+10	35	305906630		
	Totale	1,822E+10	38			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

b. Predittori: (Costante), GENDER_DUMMY, REP_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1	(Costante)	15620,709	4938,238		3,163	,003
	REP_INDEGREE	11744,820	2799,972	,600	4,195	,000
	TRUST_INDEGREE	545,967	3027,025	,027	,180	,858
	GENDER_DUMMY	7841,673	5947,298	,178	1,319	,196

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Case 2 – London

Specificities

5 gatekeepers / 2 males, 3 females

A network of 70 potential participants contacted

38 accepted to participate for a response rate of 54,2% (network size: 38)

Overall: 19 males, 19 females

Among the 38 nodes:

25 were interviewed in person or skype

8 were interviewed on the phone

5 were interviewed via email

The average response rate to the 'name generator questions' is 3,7 names, of whom 2,3 for the reputation question and 1,2 for the trust question

Average number of clients per year: 15,4

Number of freelancers with a single client: 4

Table 19. The freelance creative network – London

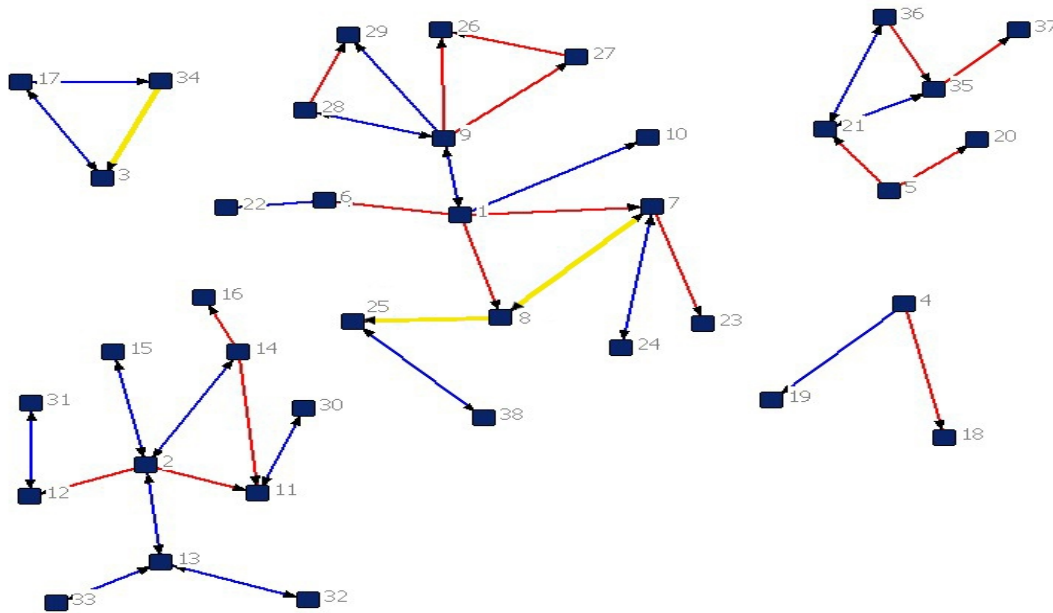


Table 19 above shows the overall network of freelancers in London. Similarly as for Milan, red ties indicate a connection based on reputation, blue ties indicate a trust bond and yellow ties indicate multiplexity (i.e., a tie that is present both in the reputation as in the trust network). The network is slightly smaller in size, being made of 38 nodes and 79 ties. There are 43 reputational edges and 36 trust edges. The picture appears to be quite scattered and dispersed. A preliminary analysis of the graph suggests that there are two main clusters, on the centre and bottom left of the picture. These are surrounded by a clique (top left, nodes 3-17-34), a small-size cluster on the top right, and a triad on the bottom right (4-18-19).

Table 20. Income – London

Statistiche		
INCOME_LON		
N	Validi	33
	Mancanti	5
Media		38257,5758

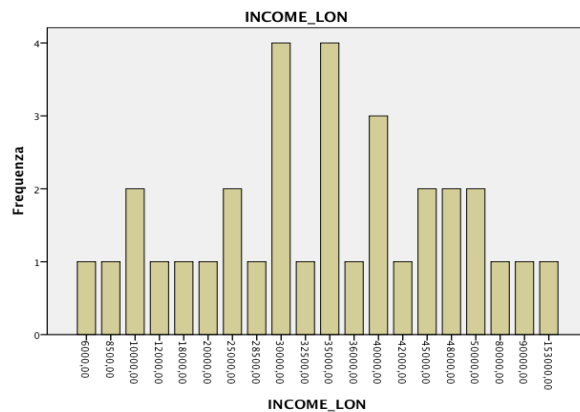


Table 20 (above) shows the overall values for income in the sample. The average gross annual income among freelancers in London is 38257 pounds, that is significantly higher than in Milan. Values are less polarized overall. The graph shows a tendency towards a normal distribution with 30000 and 35000 pounds as median values. The average income is higher for men (41562 pounds) over women (35147 pounds)

Also for London, human and cultural capital seem to be 'flat'. The analysis of skills in the London sample, similarly as in the case of Milan, shows the diffusion of multi-functional competences possessed as common knowledge by the interviewees involved. This did not allow to construct a quantitative variable given the dispersion and overlapping of skills among the participants. Data on the education title show even more neatly that interviewees are largely highly-skilled graduates (35 over 38, Table 21, top) with academic degrees in disciplines that are relevant to the creative and cultural sector (value 1 = relevant, value 2 = non relevant, Table 21, bottom).

Table 21. Education title – Categories and relevance – London

EDU_TITLE					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	A Levels	1	2,6	2,6	2,6
	BA	12	31,6	31,6	34,2
	Phd	3	7,9	7,9	42,1
	PostGrad	20	52,6	52,6	94,7
	Professional Course	2	5,3	5,3	100,0
	Totale	38	100,0	100,0	

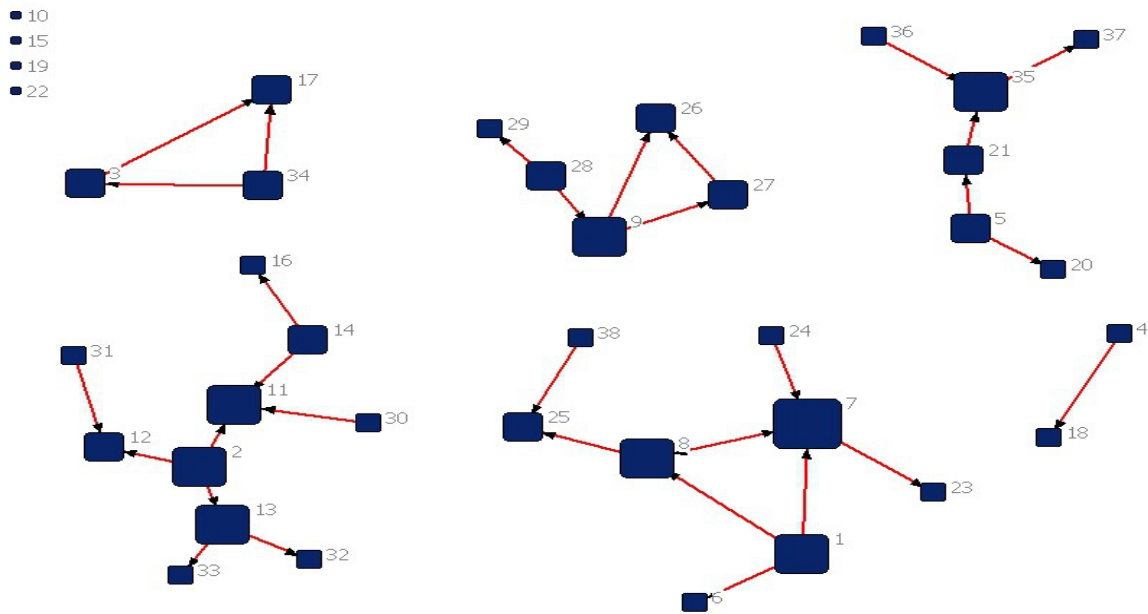
EDU_REL					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	1,00	34	89,5	89,5	89,5
	2,00	4	10,5	10,5	100,0
	Totale	38	100,0	100,0	

If we operate a comparison in the means of income on the basis of the education title (Table 22, below) we can observe how revenues are substantially similar among the different categories, with the exception of the Ph.D. qualification that seems to be able to lead to higher earnings, though considering the limited number of observations.

Table 22. Compare means – Income and education title – London

Report			
INCOME_LON			
EDU TITLE	Media	N	Deviazione std.
A Levels	35000,0000	1	.
BA	39312,5000	8	21025,3886
Phd	43500,0000	3	32430,6953
PostGrad	37236,8421	19	32135,2906
Professional Course	37500,0000	2	3535,53391
Totale	38257,5758	33	27341,3381

Table 23. The Reputation Network – London



The table above shows the reputation network of creative freelancers in London. The size of the nodes is again based on degree centrality. The graph appears to be clustered in four aggregations, plus a dyad (4 connecting to 18, bottom right) and a triad (3-17-34, top left). Nodes 11 and 13 seem to be quite important and reputed in the bottom left cluster, whilst on the bottom right node 7 seems to be the more relevant one. The clusters however appear to be neatly separated among each other.

Data on the indegree values based on reputation (Table 24, below) show the details of a widely dispersed network, with indegree values ranging between 0 and 3. Nodes 7 and 11 present the highest indegree and therefore confirm to be the most important ones in their own cluster. In the bottom right, node 8 is in a strategically important position in relative terms, as shown by values of betweenness. Node 35 is the central member in the top right cluster and also has an important strategic position. If we look at the personal network density measures (Table 25, below) we can see that nodes 3-17-26-27-34 have the highest values associated to redundancy and closure. That is confirmed by the graph where 3-17-34 are a clique, that is detached from any other aggregation, and 26-27 are in a clique with 9, being part of a small cluster (top centre of the graph).

Table 24. Indegree values, reputation network – London

LONDON – NET – FULL-R-ANON-L											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	OutDeg	Indeg	OutBonP	InBonPw	Out2Ste	In2Step	OutARD	InARD	OutEige	InEigen	Between
1	3.000	0.000	98.998	-0.000	5.000	0.000	4.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
2	3.000	0.000	4.990	0.000	5.000	0.000	4.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
3	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
4	1.000	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
5	2.000	0.000	3.985	0.000	3.000	0.000	2.833	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
6	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	-1.000	0.000
7	2.000	3.000	99.999	500.249	3.000	3.000	2.500	3.000	0.000	0.000	5.000
8	2.000	2.000	99.999	499.748	3.000	3.000	2.500	2.500	0.000	0.000	3.000
9	2.000	1.000	2.995	1.000	2.000	1.000	2.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	2.000
10	0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
11	0.000	3.000	0.000	3.000	0.000	3.000	0.000	3.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
12	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
13	2.000	1.000	2.000	1.000	2.000	1.000	2.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	2.000
14	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
15	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
16	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
17	0.000	2.000	-0.000	2.995	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
18	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
19	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
20	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
21	1.000	1.000	1.995	1.000	2.000	1.000	1.500	1.000	0.000	0.000	2.000
22	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
23	0.000	1.000	-0.000	498.748	0.000	4.000	0.000	2.500	0.000	1.000	0.000
24	1.000	0.000	98.999	-0.000	3.000	0.000	2.333	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
25	0.000	2.000	-0.000	499.249	0.000	4.000	0.000	3.333	0.000	0.500	0.000
26	0.000	2.000	-0.000	4.988	0.000	3.000	0.000	2.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
27	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.995	1.000	2.000	1.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
28	2.000	0.000	4.988	0.000	4.000	0.000	3.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
29	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
30	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
31	1.000	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
32	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.995	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
33	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.995	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
34	2.000	0.000	2.995	0.000	2.000	0.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
35	1.000	2.000	1.000	2.995	1.000	3.000	1.000	2.500	0.000	0.000	3.000
36	1.000	0.000	1.995	-0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
37	0.000	1.000	-0.000	3.988	0.000	3.000	0.000	2.333	0.000	0.000	0.000
38	1.000	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 25. Personal network density, reputation – London

Density Measures														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Size	Ties	Pairs	Densit	AvgDis	Diamet	nWeakC	pWeakC	2StepR	ReachE	Broker	nBroke	EgoBet	nEgoBe
1	1	3.00	2.00	6.00	33.33									
2	2	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			2.00	66.67	16.22	75.00	2.00	0.67	0.00
3	3	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00			3.00	100.00	21.62	100.00	3.00	1.00	0.00
4	4	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	50.00	5.41	50.00	0.50	0.50	0.00
5	5	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			1.00	100.00	2.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	6	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		2.00	100.00	8.11	100.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
7	7	4.00	1.00	12.00	8.33			1.00	100.00	8.11	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	8	3.00	1.00	6.00	16.67			3.00	75.00	16.22	75.00	5.50	0.92	4.00
9	9	3.00	1.00	6.00	16.67			2.00	66.67	18.92	77.78	2.50	0.83	2.00
10	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.00	66.67	18.92	77.78	2.50	0.83	2.00
11	11	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			2.00	66.67	18.92	77.78	2.50	0.83	2.00
12	12	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	16.22	100.00	3.00	1.00	0.00
13	13	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	16.22	100.00	3.00	1.00	0.00
14	14	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			3.00	100.00	13.51	100.00	3.00	1.00	0.00
15	15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
16	16	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	17	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00			1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
18	18	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
19	19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
20	20	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
21	21	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	13.51	100.00	1.00	1.00	50.00
22	22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		2.00	100.00	13.51	100.00	1.00	1.00	50.00
23	23	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	24	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
25	25	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			1.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
26	26	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00			2.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
27	27	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00			1.00	50.00	8.11	60.00	0.50	0.50	0.00
28	28	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
29	29	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
30	30	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
31	31	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
32	32	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	8.11	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
33	33	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	8.11	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
34	34	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00			1.00	50.00	5.41	50.00	0.50	0.50	0.00
35	35	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			3.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	3.00	1.00	2.00
36	36	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	8.11	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
37	37	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	8.11	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
38	38	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00		1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

If we operate a regression with income as dependent variable and reputation as the independent variable we will see there is a significant correlation between reputation and income (Table 26, below). Also for London, reputation can be considered a good predictor for income in the sample considered.

Table 26 – Regression – Income and reputation – London

Variabili inserite/rimosse ^a			
Modello	Variabili inserite	Variabili rimosse	Metodo
1	R_INDEGREE ^b	.	Per blocchi

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON
b. Tutte le variabili richieste sono state immesse.

Riepilogo del modello ^b				
Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,555 ^a	,308	,286	23101,7887

a. Predittori: (Costante), R_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Anova ^a						
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	7,377E+9	1	7,377E+9	13,823	,001 ^b
	Residuo	1,654E+10	31	533692640		
	Totale	2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON
b. Predittori: (Costante), R_INDEGREE

Coefficienti ^a							
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B Limite inferiore
		B	Deviazione standard Errore				
1	(Costante)	24710,586	5426,717		4,554	,000	13642,724
	R_INDEGREE	16557,432	4453,445	,555	3,718	,001	7474,571

Gráfico di normalità P-P di regressione Residuo standardizzato

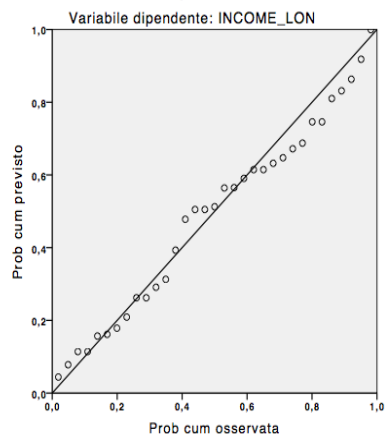
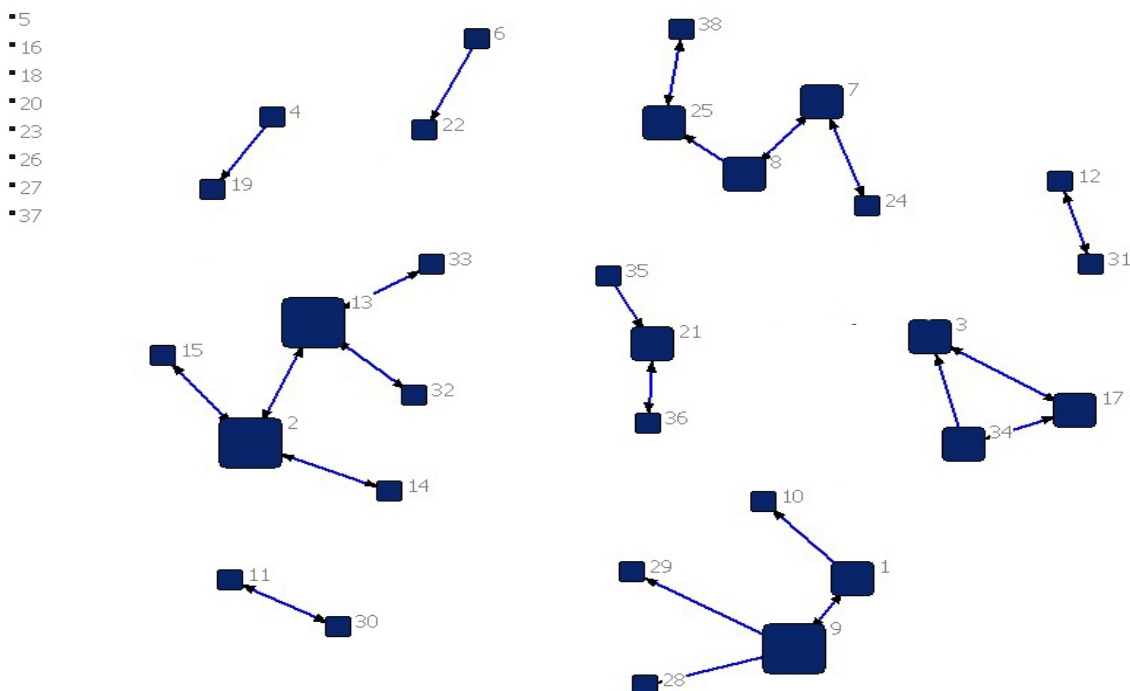


Table 27 – Trust network – London



We can see how the picture changes if we shift from a reputation network to a trust network, also in the London sample. The trust network is significantly scattered among several dyads (4-19 / 6-22 / 11-30 / 12-31) and triads (35-21-36 / 3-17-34) with only three aggregations having more than three nodes. The most trusted members of this network seem to be nodes 2 and 13. However, they are located in the same cluster, which makes node 9 the most trusted node of its own aggregation. As concerns the cluster at the top of the graph, nodes 7 and 25 are the most central ones whilst node 8 has a strategically important position.

The indegree matrix (Table 27) shows a range of values between 0 and 3 with nodes 2 and 13 confirmed as those with the highest indegree values. Overall, the network seems to have no diffused trust, with small aggregations to be prominent. Betweenness values show also a strategic position of node 25, which therefore should be considered the most important member in its own cluster. Personal density (Table 28) shows values only for 3, 17 and 34 which are in a clique.

Table 27 – Indegree table, trust - London

LONDON - NET - FULL-SC-ANON

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	OutDeg	Indeg	utBonP	InBonPw	Out2Ste	In2Step	OutARD	InARD	OutEigs	InEigen	Between
1	2.000	1.000	4.641	1.990	4.000	1.000	3.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
2	3.000	3.000	33.552	533.552	5.000	5.000	4.000	4.000	0.000	-0.066	14.000
3	1.000	2.000	5.873	9.794	2.000	2.000	1.500	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
4	1.000	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
5	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
6	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
7	2.000	2.000	7.891	5.931	3.000	2.000	2.833	2.000	0.000	0.000	4.000
8	2.000	1.000	6.916	3.951	4.000	2.000	3.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	4.000
9	3.000	1.000	5.389	1.990	4.000	1.000	3.500	1.000	1.000	1.000	2.000
10	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.990	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	1.000	0.000
11	1.000	1.000	1.990	1.990	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	-0.077	0.000
12	1.000	1.000	1.990	1.990	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	-0.268	0.000
13	3.000	3.000	33.552	533.552	5.000	5.000	4.000	4.000	0.000	0.066	14.000
14	1.000	1.000	66.442	266.442	3.000	3.000	2.667	2.667	0.000	-0.066	0.000
15	1.000	1.000	66.442	266.442	3.000	3.000	2.667	2.667	0.000	-0.066	0.000
16	0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
17	2.000	2.000	9.794	9.794	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
18	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
19	0.000	1.000	-0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
20	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
21	1.000	2.000	1.990	3.319	1.000	2.000	1.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
22	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
23	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
24	1.000	1.000	4.926	3.951	2.000	2.000	2.003	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
25	1.000	2.000	1.990	5.931	1.000	3.000	1.000	2.833	0.000	0.018	3.000
26	0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
27	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
28	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.990	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	1.000	0.000
29	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.990	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	1.000	0.000
30	1.000	1.000	1.990	1.990	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	-0.077	0.000
31	1.000	1.000	1.990	1.990	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	-0.268	0.000
32	1.000	1.000	66.442	266.442	3.000	3.000	2.667	2.667	0.000	0.066	0.000
33	1.000	1.000	66.442	266.442	3.000	3.000	2.667	2.667	0.000	0.066	0.000
34	2.000	1.000	9.794	5.873	2.000	2.000	2.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
35	1.000	0.000	1.990	0.000	2.000	0.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
36	1.000	1.000	1.990	2.651	1.000	2.000	1.000	1.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
37	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
38	1.000	1.000	1.990	3.951	1.000	2.000	1.000	2.003	0.000	0.018	0.000

Table 28 – Personal network density, trust – London

Density Measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	Size	Ties	Pairs	Densit	AvgDis	Diamet	nWeak	pWeakC	2StepR	ReachE	Broker	nBroke	EgoBet	nEgoBe	
1	1	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	50.00
2	2	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			3.00	100.00	13.51	100.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	100.00
3	3	2.00	2.00	2.00	100.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	50.00	5.41	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	4	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
5	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	6	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
7	7	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	100.00
8	8	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	50.00
9	9	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			3.00	100.00	10.81	100.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	33.33
10	10	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00		0.00	
11	11	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
12	12	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
13	13	3.00	0.00	6.00	0.00			3.00	100.00	13.51	100.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	100.00
14	14	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	0.00		0.00	
15	15	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	0.00		0.00	
16	16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
17	17	2.00	1.00	2.00	50.00			1.00	50.00	5.41	50.00	0.50	0.50	1.00	50.00
18	18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
19	19	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
20	20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
21	21	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	5.41		1.00	1.00	1.00	50.00
22	22	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
23	23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
24	24	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00		0.00	
25	25	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00			2.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	50.00
26	26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
27	27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
28	28	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	0.00		0.00	
29	29	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	0.00		0.00	
30	30	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
31	31	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	2.70		0.00		0.00	
32	32	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	0.00		0.00	
33	33	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	6.11	100.00	0.00		0.00	
34	34	2.00	2.00	2.00	100.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	50.00	5.41	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
35	35	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00		0.00	
36	36	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00		0.00	
37	37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
38	38	1.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	1.00	100.00	5.41	100.00	0.00		0.00	

If we operate a regression using trust instead of reputation (Table 29, below) we can see how trust does not play a determinant role in the sample considered.

Table 29 – Regression – Income and trust – London

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,152 ^a	,023	-,009	27457,9206

a. Predittori: (Costante), TRUST_INDEGREE
 b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	549501155	1	549501155	,729	,400 ^b
	Residuo	2,337E+10	31	753937402		
	Totale	2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON
 b. Predittori: (Costante), TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore				Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	43833,841	8093,813		5,416	,000	27326,402	60341,281
	TRUST_INDEGREE	-5257,622	6158,468	-,152	-,854	,400	-17817,900	7302,656

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

If we include reputation and trust in an overall multivariate regression maintaining income as the dependent variable, we can see that reputation confirms to be the strongly significant in the

elaboration, and trust remains a non significant value. More so, trust shows a negative coefficient that seems to indicate not only even greater distance between reputation and trust in this sample, but also a strongly individualized labour market, whereby it appears as though the more reputation one can get, the less trusted one becomes.

Table 30 – Regression – Trust, reputation and income – London

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,585 ^a	,342	,299	22897,6529

a. Predittori: (Costante), R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	8,192E+9	2	4,096E+9	7,813	,002 ^b
	Residuo	1,573E+10	30	524302508		
	Totale	2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

b. Predittori: (Costante), R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	31249,133	7511,402		4,160	,000	15908,803	46589,463
	TRUST_INDEGREE	-6415,724	5144,607	-,185	-1,247	,222	-16922,413	4090,965
	R_INDEGREE	16882,554	4421,785	,566	3,818	,001	7852,064	25913,043

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Network measures. The analyses performed on the cohesion of the networks in London (Table 31) show similar results to those performed in Milan. The trust network (Table 31, right column) is slightly denser and less fragmented than the reputation network (left column), showing also a lower average distance and a higher clustering coefficient.

Table 31 – Network measures.

Measures	1	2	
	LONDON	LONDON	Relation: LONDON - NET - FULL-R-ANON-L
	- NET	- NET	-----
	- FUL	- FUL	Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.171
	L-R-AN	L-SC_A	Weighted Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.132
	ON-L	NON	
			Relation: LONDON - NET - FULL-SC_ANON

1 Avg Degree	0.842	0.947	Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.227
2 H-Index	2	2	Weighted Overall graph clustering coefficient: 0.147
3 Density	0.023	0.026	
4 Components	37	24	
5 Component Ratio	0.973	0.622	Network Transitivity
6 Connectedness	0.033	0.048	
7 Fragmentation	0.967	0.952	
8 Closure	0.235	0.125	
9 Avg Distance	1.362	1.647	
10 SD Distance	0.562	0.781	
11 Diameter	3	4	
12 Breadth	0.972	0.964	
13 Compactness	0.028	0.036	

This elaboration provides a picture that is quite similar to the case of Milan. Density is a feature of trust based networks which provide reinforcement to norms and practices and effectively consist into higher bonding (Valente 2010). However, the much scattered graph induces into thinking that the nature of the kind of trust here at stake is a much more private one, restricted to few selected members. This is nevertheless compatible to the definitions of trust given in this work. Diameter is significantly higher than average distance in both networks, but differently from Milan, the trust network shows higher values. The presence of a large diameter and a low average distance indicates scarce cohesion and the presence of unaccessible branches (Valente 2010), as shown by the graph.

Clustering is relatively higher for the trust network, as it was in Milan. This confirms how, in a trust network, two nodes connected to a third person are likely to be connected to each other more than in a reputation network. Data on transitivity show a higher value concerning the reputation network (line 1, Full_R_Anon) over the trust network (line 2, Full_SC_Anon).

Reciprocity. In terms of reciprocity, we can observe a difference in values between trust and reputation in the London sample that is stronger than that observed in the case of Milan. As concerns reputation, only 2 ties are reciprocated over 43, which makes a 'reciprocity rate' of 6,25%. The reciprocity rate for trust is, conversely, very high with 28 reciprocated ties over 36, for an overall RR as high as 77,7%. The data that emerge from the reciprocity elaboration in Ucinet (Table 32, below) show this same difference. As concerns overlapping, there are 12 over 79 edges that are present in both networks, to make an overlapping rate as high as 15,7%. We can conclude that the London networks confirm how reciprocation of the tie is more likely to occur in trust relations over reputational ones.

Table 32a – Reciprocity – London

RECIPROCITY	RECIPROCITY
<pre> ----- Input dataset: LONDON - NET - FULL-R-ANON-L (E: \dati\RAW\LONDON - NET - FULL-R-ANON-L) Method: Hybrid Diagonal valid? No Output dataset: GroupReciprocity (E:\dati\RAW \GroupReciprocity) Hybrid Reciprocity: 0.0323 In the hybrid method, the overall and node-level reciprocity values are the same as in the dyad-based model. I.e., Num(X_{ij}>0 and X_{ji}>0)/Num(X_{ij}>0 or X_{ji}>0) Node-level Reciprocity Statistics -- All values are Proportions </pre>	<pre> ----- Input dataset: LONDON - NET - FULL-SC-ANON (E: \dati\RAW\LONDON - NET - FULL-SC-ANON) Method: Hybrid Diagonal valid? No Output dataset: GroupReciprocity (E:\dati\RAW \GroupReciprocity) Hybrid Reciprocity: 0.6364 In the hybrid method, the overall and node-level reciprocity values are the same as in the dyad-based model. I.e., Num(X_{ij}>0 and X_{ji}>0)/Num(X_{ij}>0 or X_{ji}>0) Node-level Reciprocity Statistics -- All values are Proportions </pre>

Table 32b – Reciprocity – Reputation

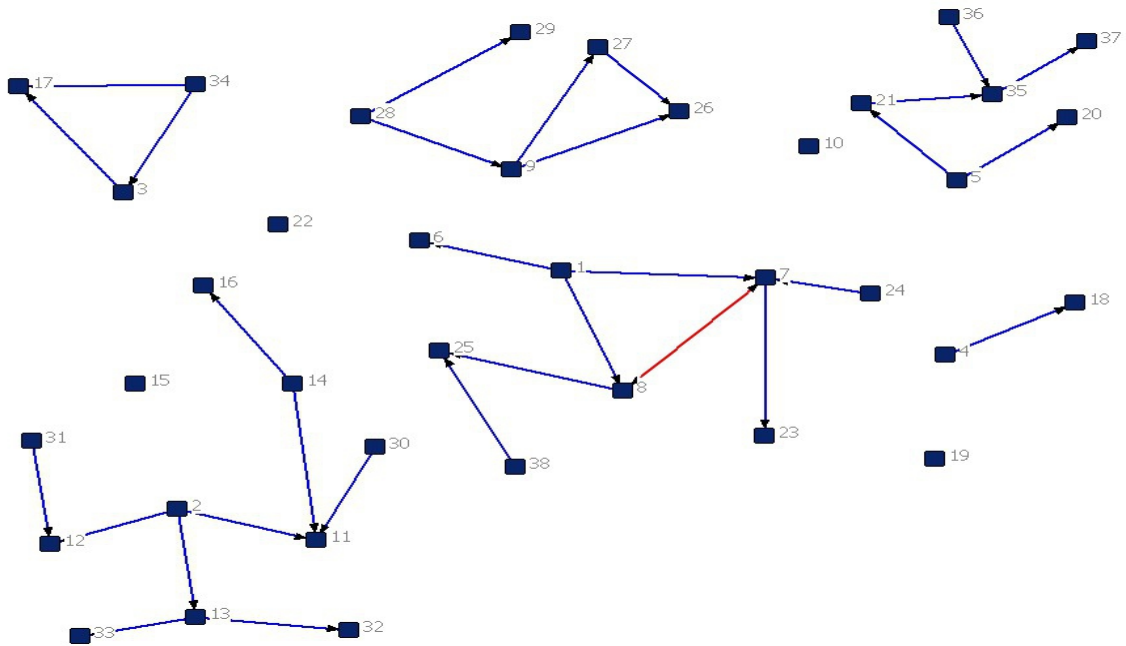
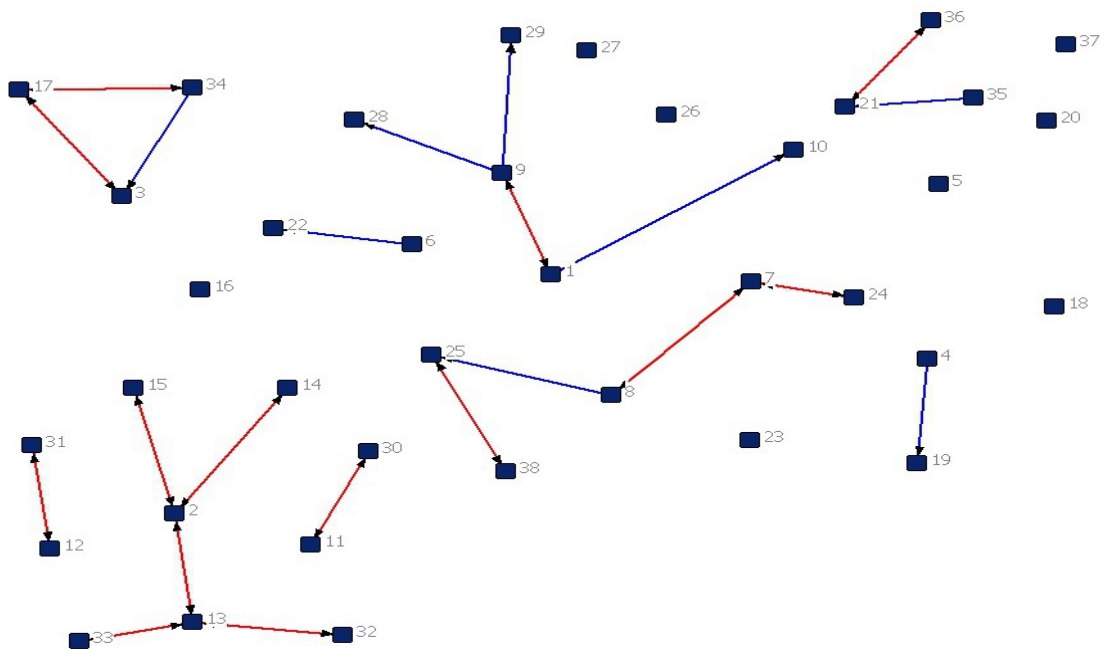


Table 32c – Reciprocity – Trust



Multivariate analysis with other variables. If we transform 'education title' in a scale variable by assigning value 1 to the high school diploma, value 2 to the non-academic professional qualification, value 3 to the Bachelor degree, value 4 to the Postgraduate qualification and value 5 to the Ph.D. we can observe that there is no significant correlation with income when inserted in a multivariate analysis with trust and reputation (Table 33, left). The latter, on the contrary, maintains its prominent role. A similar tendency can be observed including the relevance of the education title (Table 33, right)

Table 33 – Multivariate analysis – Income, reputation, trust and education title - London

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,586 ^a	,343	,275	23282,1369

a. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_QUANT, R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	8,202E+9	3	2,734E+9	5,044	,006 ^b
	Residuo	1,572E+10	29	542057897		
	Totale	2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

b. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_QUANT, R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati		t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			
1	(Costante)	33663,458	19864,497			1,695	,101
	TRUST_INDEGREE	-6522,525	5293,515	-,188		-1,232	,228
	R_INDEGREE	16907,376	4499,984	,567		3,757	,001
	EDU_QUANT	-638,374	4848,655	-,020		-,132	,896

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,585 ^a	,343	,275	23287,8342

a. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_REL, R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	8,194E+9	3	2,731E+9	5,036	,006 ^b
	Residuo	1,573E+10	29	542323220		
	Totale	2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

b. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_REL, R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati		t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			
1	(Costante)	31885,419	13688,531			2,329	,027
	TRUST_INDEGREE	-6442,946	5254,790	-,186		-1,226	,230
	R_INDEGREE	16891,018	4499,671	,567		3,754	,001
	EDU_REL	-699,076	12479,379	-,008		-,056	,956

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Other factors that may be observed are, as for Milan, gender and age. Table 34 (below) shows that the sample is perfectly gender balanced and the average age is 38.

Table 34. Gender and age – London

GEND_LON

	Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	1,00	19	50,0	50,0
	2,00	19	50,0	100,0
Totale	38	100,0	100,0	

Statistiche

AGE_LON

N	Validi	38
	Mancanti	0
Media		38,9211

Also in London, we can see there is no significant correlation between age and reputation (Table 35, left). If we perform a multivariate regression that includes reputation trust, and age as independent variables, maintaining income as dependent variables (Table 35, right) we can see how reputation remains significant whilst the other variables are not. Differently from Milan, there seem to be no

connection between reputation and age in the London sample. Concerning gender, we may hypothesize that being a man has an effect on income in relation to reputation and trust in the sample considered. However, the elaboration with gender as a dummy variable (Table 36) shows the correlation is not significant.

Table 35. Multivariate analysis. Income, reputation, trust, age - London

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadro	R-quadro corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,042 ^a	,002	-,026	,89754

a. Predittori: (Costante), AGE_LON
b. Variabile dipendente: R_INDEGREE

Anova^a

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione ,052	1	,052	,064	,802 ^b
	Residuo 29,001	36	,806		
	Totale 29,053	37			

a. Variabile dipendente: R_INDEGREE
b. Predittori: (Costante), AGE_LON

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1	(Costante)	,631	,846		,747	,460
	AGE_LON	,005	,021	,042	,253	,802

a. Variabile dipendente: R_INDEGREE

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadro	R-quadro corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,595 ^a	,354	,288	23078,5829

a. Predittori: (Costante), AGE_LON, TRUST_INDEGREE, R_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Anova^a

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione 8,476E+9	3	2,825E+9	5,304	,005 ^b
	Residuo 1,545E+10	29	532620988		
	Totale 2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON
b. Predittori: (Costante), AGE_LON, TRUST_INDEGREE, R_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1	(Costante)	12010,702	27454,193		,437	,665
	TRUST_INDEGREE	-6102,496	5203,029	-,176	-1,173	,250
	R_INDEGREE	16525,514	4483,554	,554	3,686	,001
	AGE_LON	502,415	689,172	,110	,729	,472

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Table 36. Multivariate analysis. Income, reputation, trust, gender - London

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadro	R-quadro corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,593 ^a	,352	,284	23127,9757

a. Predittori: (Costante), GENDER_DUMMY, R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE
b. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Anova^a

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione 8,409E+9	3	2,803E+9	5,240	,005 ^b
	Residuo 1,551E+10	29	534903260		
	Totale 2,392E+10	32			

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON
b. Predittori: (Costante), GENDER_DUMMY, R_INDEGREE, TRUST_INDEGREE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1	(Costante)	28192,875	8977,716		3,140	,004
	TRUST_INDEGREE	-5900,740	5258,917	-,170	-1,122	,271
	R_INDEGREE	16873,995	4466,283	,566	3,778	,001
	GENDER_DUMMY	5191,448	8152,967	,096	,637	,529

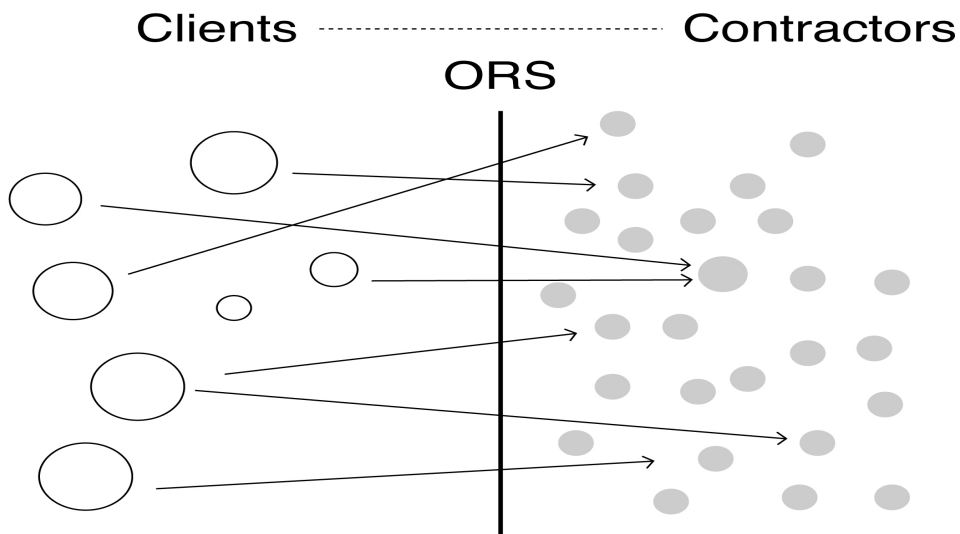
a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Empirical findings: Elance.

Elance¹³ is an international online marketplace dedicated to contractors of different sectors and skills. The purpose of this platform is to connect individual freelancers and potential clients through a website that operates as a market intermediary. Clients can browse for contractors or cast a competition for a job, whilst contractors can set up a public profile filled with personal information, portfolios and a presentation of themselves, and compete for jobs.

The first element that can be seen when navigating on the website is that there is no social networking involved between clients and contractors. The structure of Elance is that of a two mode network whereby clients and contractors are two rigidly separated groups and the main form of interaction takes place through the Online Reputation System (Table 37, below).

Table 37. Elance two-mode network (sketch).



The ORS is an algorithm that aggregates all feedbacks and reviews of each single client or contractor and elaborates a score (called Level) that functions as the rating of each member of the marketplace. In other words, the Level on Elance represents the reputational ranking that a contractor has achieved while entertaining professional relationships with clients with the intermediation of the platform. A similar dynamic applies also for clients. The study of such a marketplace becomes therefore particularly pertinent for the purposes of this research, since it configures as an invaluable source to enquire for the role of reputation in this context.

¹³ www.elance.com

A set of 59 profiles was mapped following the principles of digital ethnography (Caliandro 2011; Cossetta and Caliandro 2013) to then generate a dataset containing variables that can be assimilated to those at stake in the cases of London and Milan. Data were collected 'natively' on the platform 'following the medium' (Rogers 2009), in other words collecting all information that was publicly available on the platform at the moment of data collection. Figures concern the 12 months previous to fieldwork. The geographical distribution of participants shows a consistent majority of US-based contractors (35 over 59), followed by Europe and the South-East Asia (8 contractors each). The sample is completed by South Africa (3), Oceania (4) and South America (1).

The variables observed are:

- reputation (here proxied as 'Level');
- income (here proxied as 'earnings');
- education title and skills;
- trust (proxied as 'repeat', a number that accounts for the percentage of jobs that have been repeated with the same client);
- age, here taken as the number of years of subscription to the platform;
- gender.

Table 38 (below) shows that the average number of jobs for each client in the last 12 months is 46 (left) and the average number of clients for each contractor in the same period is 28 (centre). The average amount of earnings made on the platform (right) is as high as 16095 USD.

Table 38. Number of jobs and clients. Income – Elance

Statistiche			Statistiche			Statistiche		
JOBS			CLIENTS			EARNINGS		
N	Validi	59	N	Validi	59	N	Validi	59
	Mancanti	0		Mancanti	0		Mancanti	0
Media		46,7288	Media		28,3559	Media		16095,0678

As concerns skills, in a similar but different dynamic it was not possible to outline a variable concerning this aspect. Contractors present themselves through profiles and outline biographies that are substantially similar among each other, with competences that essentially consist of a mixture of aesthetic taste, self branding and capacity to work with certain computer programmes – that is

nevertheless diffused knowledge. As regards the education title, the majority of the contractors included in the study did not show any information concerning this aspect, probably considering it irrelevant and not important for the purpose of recruiting (Table 39, below, value “n/a”).

Table 39. Education title – Elance

Statistiche

EDU_TITLE

N	Validi	59
	Mancanti	0

EDU_TITLE

	Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi BA	22	37,3	37,3	37,3
n/a	29	49,2	49,2	86,4
PostGrad	4	6,8	6,8	93,2
Prof. course	4	6,8	6,8	100,0
Totale	59	100,0	100,0	

Table 40 (below) shows the means of earnings for the limited data available on the education title. Though the sample is non-representative, given the number of missing data, the information at disposal in this regard shows that those contractors with a postgraduate qualification seem to be consistently better off than colleagues possessing only a BA or a professional course qualification.

Table 40 – Income and education title – Elance

Report

EARNINGS

EDU TITLE	Media	N	Deviazione std.
BA	12724,0455	22	12154,8197
n/a	18673,7586	29	24655,6017
PostGrad	22416,5000	4	22777,3269
Prof. course	9618,7500	4	4852,86124
Totale	16095,0678	59	19705,2516

The Level, as said, is the proxy for reputation in this environment. The average Level score reported is 8, with a maximum value of 12 and a minimum value of 7, equally distributed in terms of gender. As said, it is the score that aggregates all feedbacks and reviews that have been collected by a contractor after delivering a job. If we operate a regression with Earnings as the dependent variable, and Level as the independent variable (Table 41, below) we can observe that there is a strong significant correlation between the two factors. The Level a contractor achieves is a determinant element in getting income from transactions on the platform.

Table 41. Regression – Elance – Earnings, Level

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,821 ^a	,673	,668	11359,0041

a. Predittori: (Costante), LEVEL
b. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Anova^a

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.	
1	Regressione	1,517E+10	1	1,517E+10	117,547	,000 ^b
	Residuo	7,355E+9	57	129026974		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

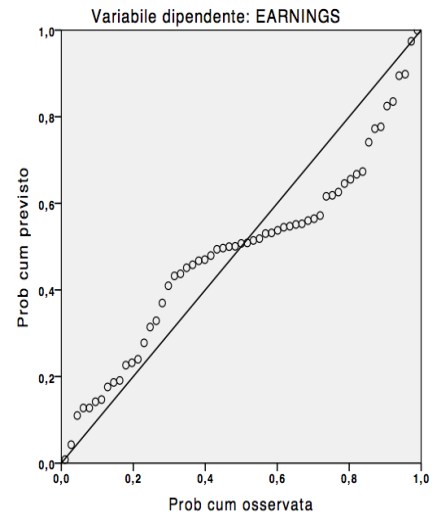
a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS
b. Predittori: (Costante), LEVEL

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati		Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B		
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta	t	Sig.	Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	-86621,715	9588,785		-9,034	,000	-105822,93	-67420,505
	LEVEL	12839,598	1184,258	,821	10,842	,000	10468,162	15211,034

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Grafico di normalità P-P di regressione Residuo standardizzato



As a proxy for trust, I have used the variable Repeat, that shows the percentage of jobs that have been done with the same client, as a predictor for trust in reason for the fact that a high number of Repeats is likely to configure as an existing familiarity or bond of trust between the client and the contractor. If we operate a regression using Repeat instead of Level (Table 42) we can see results are not significant. It may also be argued that the variable Repeat is not a good proxy for trust in this environment.

Table 42. Regression – Elance – Earnings, Repeat

Riepilogo del modello

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,013 ^a	,000	-,017	19875,7449

a. Predittori: (Costante), REPEAT

Anova^a

Modello	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.	
1	Regressione	3644107,07	1	3644107,07	,009	,924 ^b
	Residuo	2,252E+10	57	395045236		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS
b. Predittori: (Costante), REPEAT

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati		Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B		
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta	t	Sig.	Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	15698,843	4869,789		3,224	,002	5947,260	25450,427
	REPEAT	11,573	120,495	,013	,096	,924	-229,715	252,860

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

As it was for Milan and London, also in the case of Elance a final elaboration was conducted including reputation, income and trust in a multivariate regression (Table 43, below). Data show results that are similar to the other cases, with reputation maintaining its importance and trust remaining a secondary factor. However, Repeat (here taken as proxy for trust) shows an increasing importance when in combination with reputation. Indeed, the coefficient is negative, meaning in other words that as reputation increases, earnings increase but the level of repeated transactions on the platform diminishes. This insight could unveil the dynamic by which repeating clients over time does not lead to have high earnings as it is likely to negatively affect the ORS.

The algorithm that regulates the ORS in fact generally calculates more positively those actors with a larger and differentiated amount of positive feedback by different clients. In other words, it seems as though on Elance, shifting from client to client has the advantage to get to a higher Level (a large number of positive feedbacks is weighted more by the algorithm than a small number of them, coming from same clients) and therefore to higher earnings, that are dependent on the Level achieved on the platform, thus generating a positive loop.

Table 43. Regression – Elance – Earnings, Level, Repeat

Riepilogo del modello^b

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,836 ^a	,698	,688	11012,4011

a. Predittori: (Costante), LEVEL, REPEAT

b. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	1,573E+10	2	7,865E+9	64,853	,000 ^b
	Residuo	6,791E+9	56	121272977		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

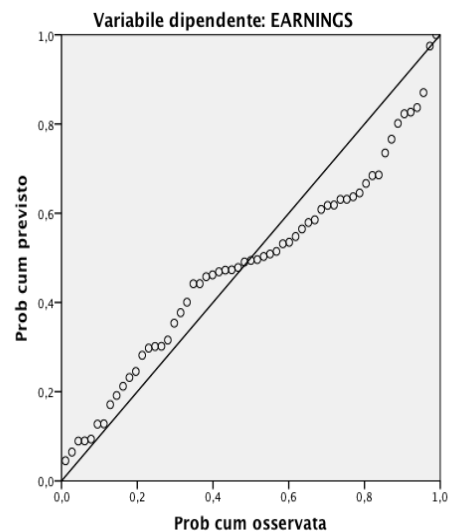
b. Predittori: (Costante), LEVEL, REPEAT

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	-85717,774	9305,655		-9,211	,000	-104359,24	-67076,307
	REPEAT	-146,974	68,198	-,162	-2,155	,035	-283,592	-10,357
	LEVEL	13355,606	1172,823	,854	11,388	,000	11006,159	15705,052

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Grafico di normalità P-P di regressione Residuo standardizzato



Multivariate regression with other variables. If we operationalize the education title in a quantitative scale variable as done with London and Milan, though having in mind the lots of missing data, an interesting insight arises (Table 44). The importance and significance of Level is

even expanded and also the variable Repeat becomes significant, though the education title variable is not. Nevertheless, the introduction of the education title in the model seems to substantiate the role of the Level and to provide significance to the negative relationship between income and repeat, by which a low number of repeats induces in lower income.

Table 44. Income, Level, Repeat and Education Title – Elance

Riepilogo del modello

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,862 ^a	,743	,713	7120,19126

a. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_QUANT, LEVEL, REPEAT

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	3,803E+9	3	1,268E+9	25,003	,000 ^b
	Residuo	1,318E+9	26	50697123,5		
	Totale	5,121E+9	29			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

b. Predittori: (Costante), EDU_QUANT, LEVEL, REPEAT

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore			
1	(Costante)	-70208,682	10193,099		-6,888	,000
	REPEAT	-253,907	69,713	-,399	-3,642	,001
	LEVEL	10508,207	1271,394	,905	8,265	,000
	EDU_QUANT	4235,645	2573,459	,167	1,646	,112

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Another factor observed is the year of subscription to the platform, that substitutes in this case for age (which is not publicly released in the majority of cases). This provides insights on whether time spent on the platform plays a role in terms of level and income. Statistical elaborations with age are not significant, and we should conclude that the seniority on the platform is not a predictor of income and level (Table 45, below).

Table 45. Income, level and year of subscription - Elance

Riepilogo del modello

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,152 ^a	,023	,006	1,25572

a. Predittori: (Costante), SUB_AGE

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	2,120	1	2,120	1,344	,251 ^b
	Residuo	89,880	57	1,577		
	Totale	92,000	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: LEVEL

b. Predittori: (Costante), SUB_AGE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore			
1	(Costante)	7,700	,306		25,166	,000
	SUB_AGE	,082	,070	,152	1,159	,251

a. Variabile dipendente: LEVEL

Riepilogo del modello

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,176 ^a	,031	,014	19565,7864

a. Predittori: (Costante), SUB_AGE

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	700482728	1	700482728	1,830	,181 ^b
	Residuo	2,182E+10	57	382819997		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

b. Predittori: (Costante), SUB_AGE

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore			
1	(Costante)	10643,871	4767,419		2,233	,030
	SUB_AGE	1482,123	1095,678	,176	1,353	,181

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Table 46. Gender - Elance

Report

EARNINGS

GENDER	Media	N	Deviazione std.
1,00	13526,5294	34	12094,6657
2,00	19588,2800	25	26743,0498
Totale	16095,0678	59	19705,2516

Data on gender show a slight majority of men over women (Table 46). Similarly as for the case of Milan, the higher average income value that connotes women induces into hypothesizing that being a woman in this context has an effect on income and Level on the platform. The elaboration (Table 47) however shows that the correlation is not significant.

Table 47 – Gender, Level, Income – Elance

Riepilogo del modello

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,821 ^a	,674	,662	11454,0844

a. Predittori: (Costante), GENDER_DUMMY, LEVEL

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	1,517E+10	2	7,587E+9	57,830	,000 ^b
	Residuo	7,347E+9	56	131196049		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

b. Predittori: (Costante), GENDER_DUMMY, LEVEL

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore			
1	(Costante)	-86549,738	9673,696		-8,947	,000
	LEVEL	12791,703	1210,726	,818	10,565	,000
	GENDER_DUMMY	734,382	3059,542	,019	,240	,811

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Finally, since there is a large majority of members included in the sample who come from the USA, it may be possible that the geographic provenience has an effect on the values of Level and income on the platform. Again, results are not significant and confirm the central importance of the Level ranking on the platform (Table 48, below).

Table 48. Nationality on Elance – Multivariate analysis

Riepilogo del modello

Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,821 ^a	,675	,663	11440,5834

a. Predittori: (Costante), NAT_DUMMY, LEVEL

Anova^a

Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	1,519E+10	2	7,596E+9	58,033	,000 ^b
	Residuo	7,330E+9	56	130886948		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

b. Predittori: (Costante), NAT_DUMMY, LEVEL

Coefficienti^a

Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore				Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	-87556,530	9892,906		-8,850	,000	-107374,40	-67738,658
	LEVEL	12867,969	1194,538	,822	10,772	,000	10475,022	15260,916
	NAT_DUMMY	1305,086	2994,077	,033	,436	,665	-4692,771	7302,943

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Discussion. The Reputation Economy

The data just shown demonstrate the importance of reputation across knowledge-intensive professional environments where networking is an essential practice for job search and recruitability. Reputation across networks of freelance creatives emerges as a *networked asset* by which individuals can leverage on their *reputational capital* to mobilize resources for the purpose of achieving defined outcomes, in this case jobs and income.

The statistical elaborations show that reputation is more relevant for the income of freelance creatives in Milan, London and online, than the other variables considered. Skills and education title confirm to be 'flat', multi-functional traits that do not consent a distinction between different professional identities. The quasi-irrelevance of such instances is evidently shown by the online case where education title and skills are more frequently 'hidden' than shown by contractors on their public profile. The statistical and network analysis concerning reputation and trust demonstrates the prominence of reputation and shows how there seems to be no sense either of diffused 'community', or of 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1998; Wenger 2000) at stake in these environment. Trust networks are no less clustered and fragmented than reputation networks, especially in London, where the individualization of the freelance labour market plastically shows in the picture of trust.

More so, there seem to be consistent elements of contiguity that allow to assimilate the cases of London and Milan. Both knowledge labour markets here at stake appear to be strongly individualized and fragmented. Income in London is consistently higher than in Milan, as it is the number of clients of each contractor per year; this is possibly due not only to the difference in currencies and cost of living, but crucially in the nature of freelancing that is peculiar to Milan which often associates freelancing to precarity. The element of trust in relative terms appears to be stronger in Milan rather than in London; in the next sections I will enquire whether this element is present in qualitative terms by looking at the nature of relationships among the freelancers who participated to this study (see Section 2 and 3). Finally, reputation seems to be quite neatly disjointed by gender and age, such that we may conclude that reputation management across networked environments does not depend from the experience acquired in the field or by ascribed features, rather from the entertainment of specific practices – such as networking and reputation management. The consequences of such an important status of reputation across professional networks of freelance creatives are multiple.

First, I would argue we are here witnessing the existence of what may be called a *reputation economy*. A 'reputation economy' may be defined as that social system which occurs whenever reputation functions as a networked asset deploying unequal transactions in the allocation of resources, information and goods among actors within a social network. Elaborating from Lin (1999, 2002) I would argue that in a reputation economy, reputation has a *performative* function since actors instrumentally operate across the network using reputation as a capital to bridge and connect economic exchange (where money is the core asset) and social relations (where trust is the core asset). There seems to be no distinction in this regard between the 'offline and 'online' dynamics whereby in both contexts reputation operates according to the logic just described. The only difference lies in the fact that reputation across online platforms such as Elance becomes visible and measured. The intangible capital that is reputation in face-to-face interaction functions across digital platforms in a symmetrical and identical dynamic through the Online Reputation System (ORS) which regulates social interaction on the platform operating as an intermediary.

Second, the element of *reciprocity* and *mutuality* seems to differentiate reputation from trust. The network analysis shows how trust ties are more reciprocated than reputation ties or, else, how reciprocated ties suggest the presence of a bond of trust. This is a confirmation of traditional network theory in that it generally associates reciprocation to the existence of friendship networks (Valente 2010). Trust as here conceived and operationalised appears to be a feature of social interaction connoted by a specific trait of mutuality and reciprocity (Bourdieu 1984, 1985, 1986). Reputation, on the other hand, appears to be disjointed by such dynamics of mutuality in that the existence of a reputation tie may occur independently from the reciprocation of such a connection. In other words, a reputation tie can emerge independently from an existing relationship of trust.

Reputation networks are connoted by minor values of connectedness, whilst trust networks are connoted by relatively higher connectivity. The capacity to bargain across networks by mobilizing *reputational capital* seems therefore to be more associated with practices of brokerage and bridging (Burt 1992, 2005), whilst trust seems to be connoted by bonding and closure (Putnam 2001). These instances seem to suggest that reputation appears to achieve an autonomous form in the context of such a 'networked information economy' (Benkler 2006) to become the element that regulates socialized value production across productive networks. In this sense we can consider reputation not merely as a key element in the formation of traditional trust-based social capital, rather as a capital with specific features.

The analysis of transitivity seems to cast a new light on Granovetter's discourse on 'the strength of weak ties' (1973, 1985). Granovetter sustained that 'strong ties' – essentially family and close friends – are detrimental in job search as they are redundant in information and do not consent to open up different channels of information across different networks. On the contrary, weak ties – low-intensity connections – are more beneficial in that they can give access to different networks, thus expanding the number of potential job opportunities available. In this sense, following this approach, we may associate strong ties to trust ties, and weak ties to reputation ties. If we accept this hypothesis, Granovetter's argument seems to be here confirmed in that 'the strength of weak ties' reflects here in the prominent role of reputation over trust.

Nevertheless, if we look at data on transitivity, other hypotheses may apply. In network analysis, higher transitivity values are associated with the presence of 'strong' ties, whilst low transitivity values indicate the existence of 'weak' ties (Valente 2010). However, the elaboration here outlined in relative terms between the reputation and trust networks in Milan and London shows higher values of transitivity for the reputation networks in both cases, thus suggesting a 'stronger' nature of reputation ties over trust ties, thus deploying the following inconsistency:

[Strong ties (family, close friends) → are weaker ties → trust ties → BUT low transitivity]

[Weak ties → are stronger ties → reputation ties → BUT high transitivity]

Different interpretations to this issue may apply. On the one hand, we may imagine that the transitivity measure here used is not representative to draw consistent conclusions on strong and weak ties in these samples, given the research design and the limited sample size which poses questions of validity and reliability of the transitivity measurement. But, if we accept the elaboration on transitivity as valid, together with the primary hypothesis of strong/trust ties and weak/reputation ties, what is called into question is the same nature of these ties. As a result, it may be argued that the transitivity measure in these cases shows a 'trend' that indicates which kind of ties that are effectively 'stronger' in a context-dependent manner – in this case, reputation/weak ties. In other words these data may suggest that the notion of strong and weak ties should not be associated to the nature of the connection involved (close friends, family) rather to the capacity of the tie in being *performative* within a network – in other words, in being able to access embedded resources and lead to certain outcomes.

This gets back to the idea of 'investment in social relations with expectations of returns' outlined by

Lin (1999, 2002) as a definition of social capital. This approach conflicts with the characterisation of social capital as 'mutual' or 'reciprocal' recognition by Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1986) by which it may be argued that social capital – as also other accounts seem to suggest on a similar line – is an essentially trust-based resource. This incongruence reinforces the hypothesis of a distinction between reputation and trust in these contexts as they may be seen as 'two different kinds' of relational assets. If we accept both readings it may be argued that trust, which is characterized by mutuality and reciprocity, is a *pure* form of social capital; on the other hand, reputation, which is characterized by performative mobilization of resources, is a form of *performative capital* that, when mobilized, may generate other forms of social and economic capital – including trust. The definition of 'reputation economy' outlined above catches this dynamic in that the mobilization of reputational capital in a network is conceived as the *trait d'union* between business transactions (where money is the core asset) and social relations (where trust is the core asset).

This seems to be confirmed by the networking attitude that we have seen in the literature as strongly connoting creative labour markets. Independent actors within networked creative labour markets seem to operate according to a specific logic that 'naturally' integrates these instances. This logic consists in the acknowledgement that in order to pursue an individual perspective that points at external individual outcomes (jobs and income), it is necessary that freelance creatives entertain *performative practices of sociality* which essentially involve the management of relational resources and reputational capital across different offline and online contexts. This seems to bring the argument on networking and social capital across creative labour a step further, in that practices of mobilization of social capital as traditionally intended are seemingly insufficient if not supported by a certain degree of reputational capital which enables trust to be built on more solid foundations.

The online case makes this dynamic visible. Social interaction on Elance is regulated by the Online Reputation System and seems to be quite similar to the interaction patterns entertained by sellers and buyers on eBay or Amazon (Bolton et al. 2004; Bolton et al. 2007) in the form of a 'digitization of word of mouth' (Dellarocas 2003). This expands the role of reputation within these markets even further, as data show, and has consequences on trust whereby strangers entertaining business transactions can trust each other on the basis of the ORS (Bolton et al. 2004). It appears as though, across such networked environments, independently from the offline or online nature of interaction, reputation operates as the source for the establishing of trust. I will dedicate Section 3 to the discussion of this instance.

SECTION 2

CREATIVE WORK AS EXTREME WORK: JOB QUALITY ASSESSMENTS OF FREELANCE CREATIVE JOBS IN MILAN, LONDON AND ONLINE

“You start freelancing because you want to give your life another sense of priority. In Italy there is still this perception of the freelancer as a loser, not one who wants the job to be that way. I also observe a lot of people who are forced to freelance. I see a lot of people who are not able to set up their priorities outside a firm setting, they are not able to find jobs, to maintain their networks. These are not specific competencies. So they find themselves being precarious, that is the B-side of freelancing, you can be a happy independent freelancer or an unhappy precarious freelancer. It's not everyone's condition, but it's what everybody should look at, because there are no permanent jobs anymore, not to mention the editorial and creative sector, the Web... I mean, you have to work really hard at the beginning; when I left my editorial job I had to reconstruct myself professionally, and I'm not ashamed to say that in the first six months I haven't earned much despite my 15 years experience and a good network. Nevertheless I have made a big effort to reconstruct a decent network and a professional dignity not to be seen as the loser precarious. You have to be very flexible because sometimes your work is 'piecework'; in an office you can hide, let's say; you can pass some work to your teammates. If you are alone, you only deliver, you are a work-machine, so forget about weekends or night-outs. But, and this is fundamental to me, if on a wednesday morning I don't feel like working I go to the gym, and nobody tells me what I have to do”

(S., editorial consultant, Milan, 40, F)

This section intends to combine the strand of research on *extreme jobs* (Hewitt and Luce 2006; McCann et al. 2008; Granter 2009) and the body of work concerning creative labour that is at stake with this dissertation (Gill and Pratt 2008; Pratt 2008; McKinlay and Smith 2009; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008, 2013). The purpose of this work is that of discussing if, and to what extent, contemporary independent creative professions can be considered extreme jobs. This will be done by studying creative freelancing through the notion of *job quality* (Kalleberg 2003, 2011; Kalleberg, Reskin and Hudson 2000; Atkinson 1987) that serves here as a model to assess the inherent characteristics of this peculiar type of jobs.

Self-employed creative professionals working in Milan, London and online offer a special point of observation to look at the relationships between job extremity, job quality and creative independent employment. This article dwells upon the essentially contradictory nature of a job that combines independence and autonomy with high levels of precarity and instability, as shown by the literature. I will show how the emerging digital media enhance the importance of networking that is peculiar to creative jobs and cast a renewed light on the role of personal *reputation* as the object of practices of management for recruitment purposes.

Theoretical framework: job extremity and job quality

We have seen how the international crisis and the economic recession have particularly affected creative and cultural industries in western economies. The downsizing of firms and the increasing number of redundancies among staff employees have caused a renewed diffusion of freelance work, with individual workers increasingly establishing their own businesses to undertake careers as independent professionals in a fragmented labour market. As a consequence, being a freelance creative seems to be a very particular kind of job. These professionals embody contradictory characteristics made of a mixture of entrepreneurship, individualization, self realization and 'californian ideology' (Barbrook and Cameron 1996) combined with high levels of anxiety, stress and precarity (McRobbie 2002, 2004; Gill and Pratt 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2008, 2013).

This section focuses on creative freelancing in relation to *job extremity*. The complex set of issues at stake calls into question whether we might consider this kind of creative work as 'extreme work'. Hewitt and Luce (2006) sustain that certain industries breed a kind of professional that is connoted by a life-dedication to work. They describe the nature of 'extreme jobs' as those possessing long hours of work in combination with a number of other characteristics; among them, the unpredictability of the flow of work, tight deadlines, work-related events outside working time and a scope of responsibility for profit or loss that amounts to more than one job (Hewitt and Luce 2006).

The definition provided by Hewitt and Luce (2006) is particularly useful since it stresses the elements of affectivity that connote extreme jobs. The most common reasons for accepting 'extreme' working conditions are in fact the stimulating and challenging nature of these kind of jobs, and the possibility to entertain relationships with high-quality colleagues. Economic compensation is seemingly less rewarding and proves to be more important for men than for women. Hewitt and Luce call this combination 'an extreme ethos' by which competitive, high-pressure jobs are not only more frequent, but also more attractive (Hewitt and Luce 2006).

As concerns 'contingent labor' (Barker and Christensen 1998) and extremity, Kunda et al. (2002) show how two competing approaches may apply. The 'free agent' perspective (Pink 2001; Knell 2000) promotes a vision by which entrepreneurialism liberates the independence of workers who 'successfully integrate the demands of their work and the needs of their family'. The shortcoming of

this literature is that it is largely non-empirical and underestimates instances of pressure, uncertainty and alienation (Kunda et al., 2002 p. 238). A competing approach draws from the employment relations tradition to claim that the expansion of a contingent workforce is a threat to the stability of the system in a dual labor market approach (Piore and Sabel 1984), highlighting the potential for exploitation this kind of movement bears. However, both these visions fall short in capturing the essential nature of this kind of job that is made of a compresence of instances that get together in the territory of self-reliance and identity (Kunda et al. 2002).

The emphasis on subjectivity and affect that connotes creative labour (Lazzarato 1996; Virno 2004; Hardt and Negri 2000, 2005) makes it an interesting object for the study of contingent extreme work through the concept of *job quality*. Questioning whether creative freelancing is a good or a bad job, having in mind its own specific contradictory nature, I would argue is essential to devise an argument on the extremity of creative work and the intensive entrepreneurialization it bears with it. The study of job quality across freelance creatives will be done by using Arne Kalleberg's conceptual model (2011) that draws a typology of the characteristics by which jobs can be defined as good or bad. If we apply this model to creative freelancing, we will see how the inherently conflicting characteristics shown above become an excellent observatory for job extremity.

In Kalleberg's perspective (2011) job quality is a multi-dimensional issue that can be addressed from different angles. Economists focus on earnings; sociologists associate job quality with desirability. Psychologists, indeed, pay attention to control and autonomy on the job, pointing at the 'affective' element that is at stake in the more general notion of 'job satisfaction'. However, assessments on job quality via job satisfaction are often highly context-specific and therefore unable to be a reliable measure of job quality alone (Kalleberg 2011; Llorente and Macias 2005). This occurs since the majority of job satisfaction indicators originate from the question 'All in all, how satisfied would you say you are in your job?' whose results are essentially subjective and context-dependent (Kalleberg 2011).

Nevertheless, according to Kalleberg (2011) job quality can be assessed using job satisfaction as an important, though partial, aspect of job quality which is conceived as a more objective and rounded notion. The benefit of looking at job quality through Kalleberg's model lies in the possibility to include other dimensions which pertain to this issue and which may not be part of a self-reported assessment, thus leading to more reliable conclusions.

The 'conceptual model' of job quality developed by Kalleberg (2011) includes:

- workers' evaluation of overall job quality, which is made of a) assessment of the rewards provided by their job, and b) work values, i.e., the importance workers place on these rewards;
- macro-factors, the stability or change in work structures at the organizational level;
- demographic factors (gender, race, education) which affect the kind of jobs people choose (Kalleberg 2011).

The key point which Kalleberg puts more emphasis on is the issue of rewards (Point 1 above). These consist in:

- the workers' degree of control and autonomy, especially over tasks and schedules;
- economic compensation (wages, earnings);
- non-economic compensation, meaning a) job security and b) opportunities for advancement in the career (Kalleberg 2011).

This model and its features, in Kalleberg's view, should serve as guidelines for empirical assessment. In the following paragraphs I will try and apply Kalleberg's model to freelance creatives.

Main findings

Milan and London. In the following lines I will take into consideration the cases of Milan and London to enquire for job quality and job extremity. Using Kalleberg's model (2011), the variables observed and discussed in this section are: a) overall job satisfaction; b) control and autonomy on the job; c) income; d) job security; e) opportunities for advancement; f) macro-factors (employment structural change); g) demographic factors.

a) Job satisfaction. The variable 'job satisfaction' was constructed in both contexts starting from the traditional question 'All in all, how satisfied would you say you are in your job?'. The interviewee was requested to position on a Likert scale ranging across: 1 (totally unsatisfied); 2 (unsatisfied); 3 (average); 4 (satisfied); 5 (totally satisfied).

Table 1. Milan – Overall job satisfaction

SAT_MI		
N	Validi	37
	Mancanti	5
Media		3,9459

SAT_MI					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	3,00	11	26,2	29,7	29,7
	4,00	17	40,5	45,9	75,7
	5,00	9	21,4	24,3	100,0
	Totale	37	88,1	100,0	
Mancanti	Mancante di sistema	5	11,9		
	Totale	42	100,0		

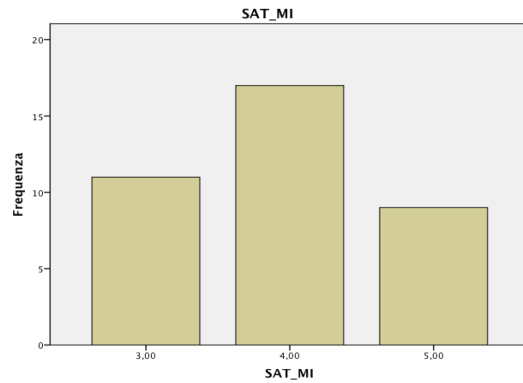
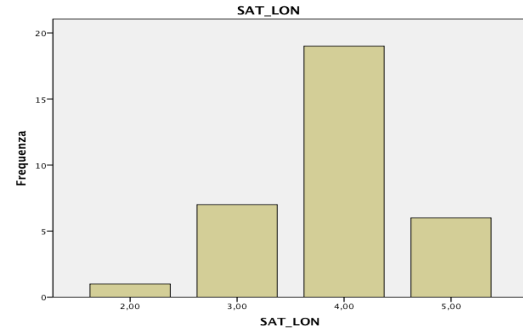


Table 1 (Milan) shows a considerably high job satisfaction value of 3.9 in Milan. Value 4 is the mostly selected option. Values 1 and 2 were not selected by any interviewee, whilst a slight majority chose 3 (average) over 5 (totally satisfied). Data on the London sample (Table 2, below) show a substantially similar situation.

Table 2. London – Overall job satisfaction.

SAT_LON		
N	Validi	33
	Mancanti	5
Media		3,9091

SAT_LON					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	2,00	1	2,6	3,0	3,0
	3,00	7	18,4	21,2	24,2
	4,00	19	50,0	57,6	81,8
	5,00	6	15,8	18,2	100,0
	Totale	33	86,8	100,0	
Mancanti	Mancante di sistema	5	13,2		
	Totale	38	100,0		



We could argue there is a quite high level of satisfaction overall among the freelance creatives who participated in this study. On the one hand, this could have been expectable given the high levels of identification and subjectivity involved in creative work, that make very difficult for a creative professional to easily declare being 'unsatisfied'. On the other hand, it emerges the existence of an 'affective' element attached to freelance creative work that seems to be in line with the discourse on creative 'passionate work' in Milan (Arvidsson et al., 2010) and London (McRobbie 2002, 2004), whereby the elements of 'passion' and social recognition or 'coolness' fulfil symbolic needs notwithstanding the conditions in which jobs usually take place.

b) control and autonomy on the job

Control and autonomy on the job are distinctive elements for creative freelancers in both contexts. A freelancer's autonomy on the job is framed into a narrative of 'liberation' that puts emphasis on the release from the constraints that are typical of office work. Independent creative professionals work with a high degree of autonomy and self-organization within a system of temporary job-by-job agreements, detached from office presence and other traditional 'fordist' arrangements. Many participants underline the importance of what they call 'a reappropriation of time', that is especially felt when the interviewee switches to freelancing after working as staff – more frequently in London than in Milan.

This is usually paired with a somehow 'neutral' description of long hours of work and long series of working days without a day off, which are naturally perceived as job duties. Critical perceptions are nevertheless largely present, underlining a decay of day-by-day quality of living together with a strong feeling of a precarious lifestyle connoted by high levels of stress and pressure that is in line with findings by Lee (2011) as well as with Neilson and Rossiter's 'freedom without security' (2005). However, the element of reappropriation and liberation largely seems to be more important in these sample, over the other elements at stake.

“The great advantage is that you work whenever you want to, maybe on a Sunday afternoon, or very early in the morning. The possibility to work in reverse trend in relation to office hours is fundamental. You can work at lunch breaks, or going to the gym when all others are closed in their offices. The disadvantage is that sometimes you may work for 12 hours a day. But the key is that you can decide when and how”

(D., communication consultant, Milan, 42, F)

The issue of control and autonomy for a creative freelancer is essentially linked to questions of reliability and trustworthiness for the delivery of a high-quality job at a distance. There is a diffused awareness that working in the creative industries is largely a matter of networking via recommendations and referrals, which is both critically or enthusiastically embraced (Lee 2011). This informal recruitment system is summed up in London by the common sayings “It is all about who you know” and “you are as good as your last job” (Baumann 2002; Blair 2001; Ursell 2000; Dex et al., 2000). This unveils the importance of a freelancer's *reputation* across the professional network. Reputation is largely perceived as the way through which a client can safely trust a contractor. Data in this sample show how reputation has a direct correlation to income in the

networks under consideration (cfr. Section 1). This dynamic effectively reduces the importance of human and cultural capital as significant elements for recruitment. Reputation across networks of creative freelancers becomes 'fetishized' and managed as a form of capital on its own.

“The thing is that if somebody calls you at 11pm in the night, they need to trust that you are going to deliver the job done by 8am tomorrow, cos they can't stop shooting. That's why they go to someone they know. (...) I know I will do it, they know I will know it. And when you do something wrong, is exactly the same. (...) So, the biggest thing of my work is reputation, that's why you work so hard....they don't ever go into “what degree have you got?” bla bla bla, no, it's more like “so you've worked in that show? Oh, and if you did that, and it looked that good, so you can come in this show” or “somebody else has said you performed really well and if you actually do what you say you gonna do, so I trust you. Therefore recommendation is my biggest thing, being a director or producer who gets you into your next job.” (L., visual designer, London, 37, F)

A freelancer is usually required to deliver a job the client is not able to accomplish via internal resources or personal competences. The degree of autonomy on the job depends on the specific agreements taken with the client. The delivery of a creative job seems to be a mixture of a number of tasks provided by the client, who wants the job to be delivered in a certain manner, combined with the aesthetic taste and style of the freelancer. The contractor needs to be in line with the client's requirements and also to deliver a job that is able to maintain his/her own reputation. The possibility to bargain for autonomy and control is granted by reputation management. The importance of this *reputation economy* is increasingly perceived also in Milan.

“By the end of last month I was called up by a freelancer who was director of an important PR agency here in Milan. She called me because she knew me, though I have never directly worked with her before. It happened we met once, actually, when I called her up to do agency work while I was working PR for other people. I believe the reputation you have in the sector is very important nowadays.” (L., PR Manager, Milan, 38, F)

c) income

Data on gross annual earnings declared by freelance creatives in Milan (Table 3) show an average income of 32,487 (euros). If we operate a regression between income as independent variable and job satisfaction as dependent variable in the sample considered (Table 4) we can observe a positive correlation. The trend shows that income seems to be an important factor for the satisfaction of creative freelancers in Milan.

Table 3. General statistics on gross annual income – Milan

Statistiche		
INCOME_MI		
N	Validi	39
	Mancanti	3
Media		32487,1795

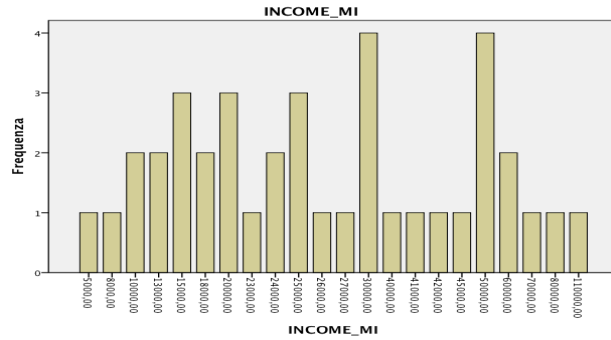


Table 4. Correlation and regression between income and job satisfaction – Milan

Riepilogo del modello ^b				
Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,525 ^a	,275	,254	,63221

a. Predittori: (Costante), INCOME_MI
 b. Variabile dipendente: SAT_MI

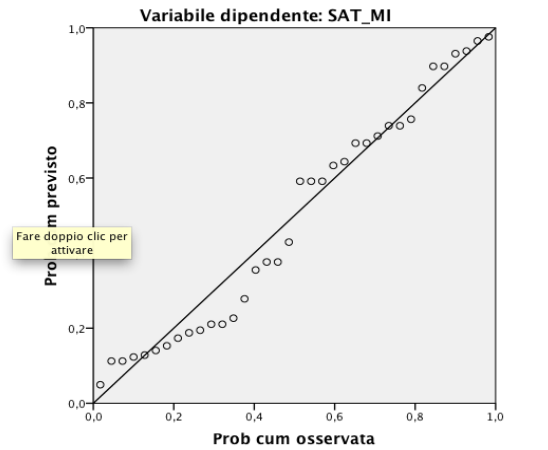
Anova ^a						
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	5,161	1	5,161	12,911	,001 ^b
	Residuo	13,589	34	,400		
	Totale	18,750	35			

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_MI
 b. Predittori: (Costante), INCOME_MI

Coefficienti ^a								
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	3,336	,193		17,290	,000	2,944	3,728
	INCOME_MI	1,726E-005	,000	,525	3,593	,001	,000	,000

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_MI

Grafico di normalità P-P di regressione Residuo standardizzato



Data on gross earnings in London (Table 5) show that the average income is notably higher than in Milan (38257 pounds). This can be explained by a higher cost of living and also by a much stronger tradition in creative freelance work that characterizes the UK (Stanworth and Stanworth, 1997; Fraser and Gold 2001; Barley and Kunda 2006; Pratt et al., 2007; Antcliff et al. 2007; Lee 2011). However, the regression (Table 6) shows that income does not seem to predict job satisfaction in the London sample.

Table 5. General statistics on gross annual income in the sample - London

INCOME_LON		
N	Validi	33
	Mancanti	5
Media		38257,5758

INCOME_LON					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	6000,00	1	2,6	3,0	3,0
	8500,00	1	2,6	3,0	6,1
	10000,00	2	5,3	6,1	12,1
	12000,00	1	2,6	3,0	15,2
	18000,00	1	2,6	3,0	18,2
	20000,00	1	2,6	3,0	21,2
	25000,00	2	5,3	6,1	27,3
	28500,00	1	2,6	3,0	30,3
	30000,00	4	10,5	12,1	42,4
	32500,00	1	2,6	3,0	45,5
	35000,00	4	10,5	12,1	57,6
	36000,00	1	2,6	3,0	60,6
	40000,00	3	7,9	9,1	69,7
	42000,00	1	2,6	3,0	72,7
	45000,00	2	5,3	6,1	78,8
	48000,00	2	5,3	6,1	84,8
	50000,00	2	5,3	6,1	90,9
80000,00	1	2,6	3,0	93,9	
90000,00	1	2,6	3,0	97,0	
153000,00	1	2,6	3,0	100,0	
Totale		33	86,8	100,0	
Mancanti	Mancante di sistema	5	13,2		
Totale		38	100,0		

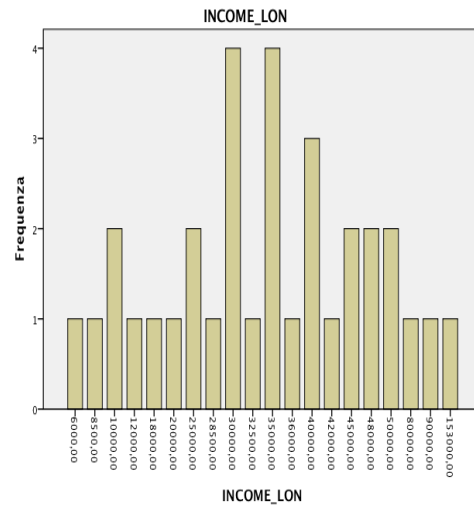


Table 6. Correlation and regression between income and job satisfaction – London

Riepilogo del modello ^b				
Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,345 ^a	,119	,087	,72501

a. Predittori: (Costante), INCOME_LON
 b. Variabile dipendente: SAT_LON

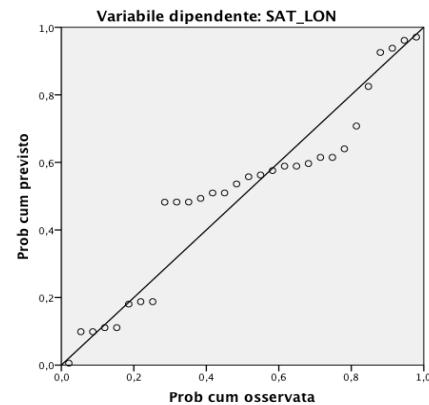
Anova ^a						
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	1,982	1	1,982	3,771	,062 ^b
	Residuo	14,718	28	,526		
	Totale	16,700	29			

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_LON
 b. Predittori: (Costante), INCOME_LON

Coefficienti ^a								
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.	Intervallo di confidenza 95,0% per B	
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta			Limite inferiore	Limite superiore
1	(Costante)	3,545	,226		15,721	,000	3,083	4,007
	INCOME_LON	9,718E-006	,000	,345	1,942	,062	,000	,000

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_LON

Grafico di normalità P-P di regressione Residuo standardizzato



Data on income and satisfaction in the samples, taken as a whole, seem to show a trend by which economic compensation is not a distinctive priority for freelancers, rather a basic need. In London, earnings do not correlate with satisfaction. In Milan, on the contrary, though income seems to predict satisfaction, it is not so high to imagine it is really significant – rather, it seems as it becomes satisfactory inasmuch as it gets *very* high, showing a consistent polarization (Goos and Manning 2003).

More so, these data seems to confirm Kalleberg's claim (2011) that limiting job quality to job satisfaction via economic compensation does not take the whole picture. The issue of income also attaches to the difficulty of being regularly paid. This happens, quite unexpectedly, not only in Milan, but also in London. Given that there are no fixed tariffs and prices for creative jobs, each payment is the result of a bargain between the contractor and the client.

“We generally do things, I wouldn't say for free, but in exchange, with projects that we like: it's not always about money, the less of the cases until now. It should be something that really has a value for us, creative or cultural or business side, expanding technology, etc. We have other jobs that pay us, and we sustain our small enterprise with this, and we fear we might go into full time job at some point and go back to this sometime. (...) Especially for communication and marketing, not all people is keen on paying for your work. They pay for the venue, if it is an event, they will pay artists, but your work, you know... There is the false perception of everybody can do it, and second, it is not a tangible thing, it's not quantifiable” (M., project manager, London, 28, F)

Also, there is no direct relationship between working time and payments: the nature of creative tasks does not imply that labour is valued in terms of hours spent at work. Especially in London, this is evaluated more in terms of working days, meaning that freelancers maintain a daily rate for the hiring of creative services. Indeed, it appears as though having a good reputation can guarantee the power for bargaining a higher fee, as well as more autonomy on the job.

“Income kind of varies a lot... the really difficult thing which I think a lot of freelancers find themselves in... is how much to charge for your own time. What do I charge? I mean I want to be respected in the field, I think I'm a professional in the field... and you can get free jobs like a gate to have other jobs in in the future” (S., arts professional, London, 34, M)

d) job security

The issue of job security seems to be a crucial junction to understand job quality across freelance creatives. Freelancing is inherently unstable and insecure, as well as widely perceived as such. The problematic of payments intertwines with the necessity to entertain relationships in a professional network and manage the reputation in order to maintain a regular flux of incoming jobs. Both in Milan and in London, interviewees put a significant stress on this matter, although articulated in different ways.

It may be argued there are two different approaches that are somewhat simultaneously present in these contexts. On the one hand we have those professionals who feel extremely enthusiastic about their job and overemphasize the positive features. On the other hand we can find those who assimilate their working conditions to highly precarious statuses, such as temporary dependent employees in agencies. This occurs independently from seniority; there are junior creatives in the first group, as well as senior professionals in the second group. We could call the first type, 'the enthusiast', and the second type, 'the frustrated'.

The enthusiast

“(working freelance means) getting back your time, and looking for a balance between personal and professional life. I would never go back, I got a second life” (S., communication consultant, Milan, 40, F)

“It's not a matter of money, it's the need of autonomy, I couldn't go into a “sausage factory”, data in data out” and do the same process, on the same file, all the time” (L., marketing consultant, London, 38, F)

The frustrated

“We seem supercool but nobody upholds us. It's just a way for employers to pay less their employees. How come tax offices do not see that thousands of people like me send invoices to one client only? If you have the Partita IVA, 60% of your revenues go into taxes and expenses. The rest is for a living.” (G, PR agent, Milan, 34, F)

“People think that you will be paid by status, they say “I'm working in London” (for free) and I say no, you are a slave in London, let's be honest. They're not working in the strict sense. I'm not here to make money, but I won't be here if I wasn't making money. If you have to work six months for free, it's better you work six months for free for you and not for someone else, if you have ideas...the new working class, you see what I mean? Guys who struggle to live in London doing their own work: artists, actors, writers, and so on” (P., videomaker, London, 38, M)

As suggested above, the main antidote to prevent job insecurity is networking and the management of reputation in the professional network. Having a good network of contacts is perceived as a form of job security that can guarantee a regular flow of incoming jobs (Blair 2001, 2009). This is nevertheless a difficult 'skill' to manage. Data seem to confirm Randle and Culkin's insight that 'doing the work is fun, finding the work is the job' (Randle and Culkin, 2009).

“Make sure you have as many people that hire you as possible. If you have only two clients and one of those goes bust, or stops using freelancers, you're more or less redundant. If you have 15 clients and one or two go quiet for a year or two, you still have 13 that can make you work. It's better to have more people that use you less, than a few people that use you a lot” (S., copywriter, London, 47, M)

e) opportunities for advancement

Inextricably related to job security there is the issue of career advancement. This generally occurs through recommendations and referrals that are common practice both among clients and contractors. As said, interviews show a diffused perception that in creative industries is 'all about who you know', though with different nuances. In London, 'who you know' means strategic networking is perceived as an essential, though sometimes critical, practice required in order to construct a reputation in the field. In Milan, conversely, there is a recurrent discourse giving to the 'who you know' a negative connotation, being associated to clientelism perpetrated through non-professional networks that are detrimental to competence and skills.

“Non-professional networks matter a lot in the way you can get in touch with people, confidential information, events, opportunities...” (B., media professional, Milan, 44, M)

f) macro-factors (employment structural change)

Structural changes at the level of employment, as seen, are quite a major factor affecting work in the creative industries. In terms of organizational model, the crisis has furthermore enhanced the recourse to policies of radical casualization and flexibilization through project-based arrangements and non-standard forms of employment (Christopherson 2002, 2008; Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012). However, it seems worth noting the phenomenon of small 'freelance agencies' that operate on the market as 'professional firms' (Barley and Kunda 2006). These consist in the association of a small number of independent professionals with different skills, strategically working both as freelancers on their own as well as business partners, to build up network relationships with other agencies, firms or single contractors (cfr. Section 3).

“I began with a famous advertising agency here in Milan, active nationwide. Then in the early 2000s I opened a small agency together with other two colleagues, we were born as a graphic design agency then we opened up to communication services overall, from strategy to positioning, branding, etc... We are three associates, and we lean on a network of external freelancers. It's the digital technology that has changed the working practices: up until 4-5 years ago you had to be in an office, now you can work on the Web, so our collaborators develop their jobs externally, we talk with them through emails or skype. Let's say there is a logo to be designed. We go to our network, call those we consider more suitable for the job, and who's available gets the work. These young guys are used to work at a distance, with digital technologies. Of course, costs and reductions in revenues have forced us to take this way. Our sector is what firms cut first off their budgets. This new organizational system works, anyway.” (F., creative project manager, Milan, 45, M)

Second, the use of digital forms of intermediation emerges as an important macro-factor in this context. Green (2004) noted that technological and organizational changes are an important source of work intensification having brought new arrangements in terms of working hours and places. The diffusion of mobile technologies has made feasible to work whenever and wherever is possible, simply having a wi-fi connection at disposal, often in the domestic domain (Hochschild 2001; Gregg 2011). A large number of interviewees in both cities declared working from home, having set up an office in their flat or house. The attitudes towards homeworking are also essentially contradictory. Though economically convenient, as it limits travel expenses and office rentings, homeworking is also perceived as an element of alienation and frustration since it emphasizes the individualization of freelance work. It is also connoted by the impossibility to knock off work, as boundaries between professional and personal spaces are blurred, thus making work effort intense.

“I've been working from home for some time, but I hated it. It's boring, and you end up working from 8 am to 3 in the morning” (K., event manager, London, 28, F)

More so, freelancers instrumentally use digital resources for recruitment purposes to an unprecedented extent. Practices of management of a *personal brand* (Peters 2001; Haunschild and Eikhof 2009; Hearn 2008, 2010) through blogs and social media like Twitter or LinkedIn are largely perceived as very important to 'get known' and acquire a visibility in the professional environment. Especially for younger professionals, the 'reputation economy' demands for a certain amount of 'invisible labour' to be performed through self branding practices in order to establish a career in a gift economy-like system (Barbrook 1998). These practices imply sharing a consistent portion of subjectivity with an audience, and configure as a *performing ritual* that is instrumental to professional recognition and participation to a professional environment.

“Social media are fundamental, not simply for direct advantages, I don't generally get work directly from Facebook or LinkedIn... but it's true that if I have to meet someone, I will look at the social networks. Maybe we are meeting because someone recommended you, or I met you somewhere, but social media are a portfolio and I want to know how you work. Through social media I look for information and I use them as a 'shopping window', also on my side. If I have to work with you and I can't find you, I won't hire you”
(M., communication consultant, Milan, 24, M)

Here, the kind of self branding practices in place across freelance creatives in London and Milan are characterised by a diffused attention to reputation construction and management in terms of 'investment' in line with the idea of social capital and action devised by Lin (1999, 2002) and discussed in Section 1. These creatives have interiorized that self branding, especially online, is a mandatory practice to entertain in order to establish a successful and profitable professional profile. We can devise a typology of the more frequent practices of self branding in Milan and London:

1- emotional labour production: display your taste, ideas and aesthetics

(content management and networking – publish content that is interesting and in line with the aesthetics of the self – be ironic, produce a coherent public image)

“It was my blog that got me recognized, if you like. You know, as a freelancer you have to have something to offer, you have to be good enough, you know? There's a lot of people who aren't, and there's a lot of people who are. First of all you have to have something to offer that is at the right standard, of the right quality. And then you have to let people know, that you've got it, that you're out there. So my blog was a very big thing, it got me noticed, but the thing that was the actual key was joining Twitter. And that was... I think without Twitter it would have taken me longer and I'm not sure if it would have worked (to move freelance, ndr). Twitter allowed me to get my blog out there, it allowed me to publicize my blog to exactly the client group who I wanted to read it, who were in the position to give me work. So I used Twitter to market myself and I still use it as a professional tool. I don't use it as a kind of casual personal kind of game, or fun. I see it very much as part of my professional persona and I'm very conscious about what I tweet about. (...) It was from my blog and projecting myself through my blog and projecting myself through Twitter, as a professional persona. Which is very close to who I am, it's not a mask. I wanted to position myself to get the work that I want” (L., 45, writer/consultant, London, Female)

On social media I can't write what I think. Now I care about what I write, these are tools that I use as a legitimation of my professionalism. Both in terms of jobs and contacts, as well as an intermediary for new people, Twitter is a very useful tool. These are proofs of existence, they are shopping windows...”
(B., 27, journalist, Milan, Male)

“I got onto Twitter about 5 years ago. I joined not because I was looking for friends, but I thought that was something that as a writer you had to know about it. And it has grown and grown and grown, and now I have over a thousand copywriters that follow me. That means that if I have a question, or I have a dilemma, but I want some copywriters that I can ask on Twitter and they will give me feedback. I also built up some freindship with writers I didn't know before Twitter came along... and I got work from that, and we met through that. (...) LinkedIn is kinda like the professional Facebook, isn't it? It's Facebook for professional people. I think it's ok, I think it's useful if you look for a full time job, and for looking for information about what people do. That's what I do, if I meet somebody I'll look at their LinkedIn profile. People all the time contact me on LinkedIn for work...people I never met” (F., 52, copywriter, London, female)

“(social media) if you use them well enough to create a diffused reputation, then they're useful. Make people laugh, comment, inform others. It's the best investment you can do. If you deserve it, jobs will come, because social networks are meritocratic and bring out of anonymity those who do not deserve to be unknown”
(C., 35, radio author/journalist, Milan, Female)

2- Recurrent/regular activity: it brings influence and awareness / visibility

(paraphrasing the old advertising adage: “Any publicity is better than no publicity”, that may be reframed as: “Any activity is better than no activity)

“I have a LinkedIn profile very well curated and updated, I have been on LinkedIn for a long time. Through this profile and the contacts I have generated, and numerous endorsements, I have been often contacted by headhunters for job proposals, this is why they have trusted what is on my profile and what people say about me. For instance X has got to me to deal with online content, a permanent job, and they have contacted me on LinkedIn through an agency” (B., 40, journalist/videomaker/consultant, Milan, male)

“Professionally I tend to use LinkedIn a lot, I usually write a lot of editorials on the creative industries and post them on LinkedIn to give them a better audience. I am on Facebook cos I have a couple of clients who insisted contacting me on Facebook but it hasn't done really that much for me. And I use Twitter a lot, not under my own name, but under the name of the website I run. I don't have particular time or chance to tweet under my own name as well. Social media pay back in terms of awareness to people that you're out there, visibility, credibility and people having an understanding of what is it that you're doing. (...) I mean, people have found me on the Internet, looked at my profile on LinkedIn and then sort of feel the deal to phone me and ask to do something. There has been no work “flooding” in, but it's a good way to let people know you're out there really”
(S., 47, copywriter/writer, London, Male)

“I do use social media to sort of make people aware that you are still there, you are working, you are active (...) Sometime people see I'm at X, checking in on location (on Foursquare, ndr) and then phone me to have lunch, and then I might get a job from that” (B., 34, art director, London, Male)

3- Reputation show-off: “influential” contacts bring influence. Participating into conversation with influential and reputed contacts is a “*performing ritual*” to show closeness and affiliation:

“LinkedIn to me is very important as you can show how much you are into a sector; for instance, someone who goes into my profile can see who I know. And there you can find names that can make you say “oh, he's really into this sector”. And then, second step, maybe I go to some of my contacts “...so you know about this guy? Have you worked with him?”, or I can write a private message saying “I've seen you're friend with... what do you think about him?” It's all a big phonebook. If my contacts are qualified, you can see that.”
(S., 48, copywriter, Milan, Male)

“Journalists on Twitter are present and talk with each other, but only if they have previous relationships, let's say they are part of the same circles. Twitter is perfect to show out your relationships, and especially to enforce them...those who are influential show their influence” (S., 32, journalist, Milan, Male)

4- Combine offline and online networks

“There are websites, like Monster or others, where you compete for jobs... there are recruitment agencies mailing lists, updated by recruitment consultants... and of course there's LinkedIn, where agents put jobs up. But the thing is: a lot of jobs don't actually get advertised. So what's very important is to network. (...) As soon as you finish a contract it's important that you let everybody know that you are available. What I do is that I have a whole list of agents in my email file so I send out a mass email saying I'm available...and I network all the time. A lot of people get shy, like don't bother me or something, but yeah you do people a favour letting them know. Yeah, I mean, I am a brand, you know” (B., digital content manager/copywriter, 40, London, Female)

I've been recently trying to work on TV and you actually need contacts to work in there, and I managed to build up a set of contacts through LinkedIn, getting in touch with people saying “can I meet you?”. So, it's becoming more and more useful. I'm really surprised how many people have agreed to link up with me on LinkedIn, which I didn't expect, and once they know I'll be finished with my actual job they're all potential people I can get in touch with for my next job” (M., 35, PR consultant, London, male)

“Social media are essentially lucky gates for communities, you choose your own networks, you choose who to broadcast your information out to, and then you can get better results. For me they're brilliant, job boards get me upset cos you can't update. With social media you can get people up to date in a way job boards don't. For me social media have been an absolute force... it's also very good for your perspective clients to get yourself known, be on LinkedIn, see your background, can recommend them through that, it's far more appealing... it really does help with your authenticity, you're more transparent, keep everything connected”

(H., 32, creative recruiter, London, Female)

g) demographic factors

Table 7. Data on gender, income and satisfaction – Milan

Report			
INCOME_MI			
GENDER MI	Media	N	Deviazione std.
1,00	28956,5217	23	16578,9523
2,00	37562,5000	16	27657,3528
Totale	32487,1795	39	21896,7335

Report			
SAT_MI			
GENDER MI	Media	N	Deviazione std.
1,00	4,0000	22	,75593
2,00	3,8667	15	,74322
Totale	3,9459	37	,74334

Quantitative data on gender show that earnings in Milan are significantly higher for women (value 2, Table 7, left) though job satisfaction is slightly higher for men (value 1, Table 7, right). In London (Table 8, below) men earn more (Table 8, value 1, left) whilst in terms of job satisfaction there is an almost perfect equality (Table 8, right). Tables 9 and 10 (below) show how the variable 'age' does not seem to be a relevant factor in the assessment on income and job satisfaction in both the samples considered.

The higher earnings of female freelancers in Milan are likely to be due to this specific sample and its own characteristics; however, it is worth noting that freelancing is often highlighted by the female interviewees as a choice that is able to better comply with work-life balance, therefore more suitable (and, as a result, more successful) for women than for men, as shown also by Craig et al. (2012).

“You can easily find more women than men because freelancing is a dimension which allows to live family and maternity in a different way” (S., communication consultant, Milan, 42, F)

Table 8. Data on gender – London

Report

INCOME_LON			
GEND_LON	Media	N	Deviazione std.
1,00	41562,5000	16	35518,4811
2,00	35147,0588	17	17064,0015
Totale	38257,5758	33	27341,3381

Report

SAT_LON			
GEND_LON	Media	N	Deviazione std.
1,00	3,9375	16	,68007
2,00	3,8824	17	,78121
Totale	3,9091	33	,72300

Table 9. Data on age – Milan

Coefficienti^a

Modello	Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
	B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1 (Costante)	-7127,630	14156,303		-,503	,618
AGE_MI	1084,195	377,325	,427	2,873	,007

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_MI

Coefficienti^a

Modello	Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
	B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1 (Costante)	2,944	,547		5,380	,000
AGE_MI	,027	,014	,302	1,874	,069

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_MI

Coefficienti^a

Modello	Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
	B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1 (Costante)	3,044	,487		6,255	,000
AGE_MI	,009	,014	,105	,654	,518
INCOME_MI	1,585E-005	,000	,482	2,988	,005

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_MI

Table 10. Data on age – London

Coefficienti^a

Modello	Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
	B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1 (Costante)	6617,189	31263,329		,212	,834
AGE_LON	828,020	808,630	,181	1,024	,314

a. Variabile dipendente: INCOME_LON

Coefficienti^a

Modello	Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
	B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1 (Costante)	3,591	,711		5,048	,000
AGE_LON	,008	,018	,081	,455	,652

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_LON

Coefficienti^a

Modello	Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
	B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1 (Costante)	3,476	,859		4,045	,000
AGE_LON	,002	,023	,016	,084	,934
INCOME_LON	9,622E-006	,000	,341	1,842	,077

a. Variabile dipendente: SAT_LON

Table 11. Data on education title – Milan

Report				Report			
INCOME_MI				SAT_MI			
EDU_MI	Media	N	Deviazione std.	EDU_MI	Media	N	Deviazione std.
altro	20000,0000	1	.	altro	4,0000	1	.
Diploma	37333,3333	3	6429,10051	Diploma	5,0000	4	,00000
Laurea	34240,0000	25	24883,5287	Laurea	3,9091	22	,75018
Laurea + Master	27900,0000	10	17521,0984	Laurea + Master	3,6000	10	,51640
Totale	32487,1795	39	21896,7335	Totale	3,9459	37	,74334

EDU_REL					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	1,00	29	69,0	69,0	69,0
	2,00	13	31,0	31,0	100,0
Totale		42	100,0	100,0	

Concerning the relevance of the education title, Table 11 (Milan) and Table 12 (London) show that most interviewees have an academic degree that is related to the creative environment, obtained in the field of arts, design or media and communication courses (centre; 1=related; 2=unrelated). Similarly, it might be argued that possessing a higher education title does not consist in a significant advantage for earnings, nor it leads to more satisfactory jobs. As concerns London (Table 12) though bearing in mind the small sample size it can be observed there is a tendency by which having a Ph.D. consists into a significantly higher income and job satisfaction.

Table 12. Data on education title – London

Report				Report			
SAT_LON				INCOME_LON			
EDU_TITLE	Media	N	Deviazione std.	EDU_TITLE	Media	N	Deviazione std.
A Levels	4,0000	1	.	A Levels	35000,0000	1	.
BA	3,7000	10	,67495	BA	39312,5000	8	21025,3886
Phd	4,6667	3	,57735	Phd	43500,0000	3	32430,6953
PostGrad	4,0000	17	,70711	PostGrad	37236,8421	19	32135,2906
Professional Course	3,0000	2	,00000	Professional Course	37500,0000	2	3535,53391
Totale	3,9091	33	,72300	Totale	38257,5758	33	27341,3381

EDU_REL					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulata
Validi	1,00	34	89,5	89,5	89,5
	2,00	4	10,5	10,5	100,0
Totale		38	100,0	100,0	

More so, it seems as though the role of the CV in creative worlds is often discarded and perceived as not important, as a result of the 'multi-functional' set of skills possessed as diffused knowledge by most creatives as a result of similar academic training (Christopherson 2008). This process results in a significant hybridization of skills that, de facto, configures a *de-skilling via upskilling*. Professionals are required to be highly skilled and college educated but at the same time their

specialization and recruitability are not given by the educational background or the possession of specific competences, rather by professional practices that take place in the form of networking and reputation management.

“If you are a freelancer your education title does not matters much, whereas if you want to compete for a permanent job it matters more. Some of my colleagues did not even finish university, and they can easily live out of their freelance work. For firms, however, it matters, it is an old requisite for recruitment”

(C., designer, Milan, 27, M)

“Creative world works through personal relationships, and to a certain extent it has to do with your CV. But the most of it is what job is this person doing here and now and what they would be interested to do in the other job that's comfortable. In other sectors the whole CV matters.” (L., creative manager, London, 45, F)

The 'online' case: Elance. As expectable, Elance does not display job satisfaction assessments by users. The amount of data available on job satisfaction concerning this case comes from the interviews conducted to Elance users who accepted to participate in the research. However, though we are confronted to limited evidence, it is striking to note how all interviewees show a significant enthusiasm about working through the digital marketplace. There is an outstanding emphasis on the 'liberating' narrative such that, differently from the other contexts taken into consideration, it substantially overshadows the negative traits – that are generally absent from the discourses of Elance users. Participants do not show instances of insecurity and pressure that pertain to the other cases. The answer they provide when solicited on this matter stress further emphasis on autonomy and self-organization as extremely valuable assets for job quality.

“I really love it ! I can work from any place in the world , we travel a lot and I just carry on working like I would at home... if we go out during the day I work at night and the other way around. At home I have a small office”

(L., graphic designer, 25 SA, female)

Another recurrent trait is that the choice of joining Elance frequently came after a redundancy or as a consequence of the shrinking of revenues caused by the recession.

“I started my own business when I was 23 years old, and I was of course living in South Africa, my work was going very well when three or four years ago the recession in SA was quite bad, so I lost a lot of my business. At the time I was only working for clients in SA. So I had to look to other ways through which I could earn money from graphic design, or else I would, you know, I would have failed. In that moment I went onto Elance. I think it was three or 4 years, I went online and gave it my best shot.” (I., graphic designer, SA, 43, F)

“My career had been into local advertising in Ohio. In 2007 I was downsized and I was looking for something to do. What I was doing was art direction, more design, I didn't get to do the illustration and the more creative work. So I started looking around for something different to do, and found online work“Directly, perhaps 75% of my work comes from Elance. (M., illustrator, US, 50, M)

Concerning data on the 59 profiles mapped, average earnings obtained from the activity on the platform emerge as quite low (13332 dollars), being slightly higher for women over men as it was for the case of Milan (Table 13, below). Data on age (Table 14) concern only the number of years of subscription to the platform, and do not seem to be a good predictor for revenues. Education title (Table 15) is rarely displayed (29 over 59 members do not release information on their education title) and therefore emerges as largely insignificant in this account. Data show that, taken as a whole, demographics (education title, gender and age) do not play a relevant role in this environment.

Table 13. Gender and earnings on Elance.

Statistiche			Report			
earnings_elance			earnings_elance			
N	Validi	54	Gender Elance	Media	N	Deviazione std.
	Mancanti	0	1,00	12929,1212	33	11761,7402
Media		13332,5185	2,00	13966,4286	21	15550,6841
			Totale	13332,5185	54	13230,2664

Table 14. Age and Earnings – Elance

Riepilogo del modello				
Modello	R	R-quadrato	R-quadrato corretto	Deviazione standard Errore della stima
1	,176 ^a	,031	,014	19565,7864

a. Predittori: (Costante), SUB_AGE

Anova ^a						
Modello		Somma dei quadrati	df	Media dei quadrati	F	Sig.
1	Regressione	700482728	1	700482728	1,830	,181 ^b
	Residuo	2,182E+10	57	382819997		
	Totale	2,252E+10	58			

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS
b. Predittori: (Costante), SUB_AGE

Coefficienti ^a						
Modello		Coefficienti non standardizzati		Coefficienti standardizzati	t	Sig.
		B	Deviazione standard Errore	Beta		
1	(Costante)	10643,871	4767,419		2,233	,030
	SUB_AGE	1482,123	1095,678	,176	1,353	,181

a. Variabile dipendente: EARNINGS

Table 15. Education title and Earnings – Elance

Report

EARNINGS

EDU TITLE	Media	N	Deviazione std.
BA	12724,0455	22	12154,8197
n/a	18673,7586	29	24655,6017
PostGrad	22416,5000	4	22777,3269
Prof. course	9618,7500	4	4852,86124
Totale	16095,0678	59	19705,2516

Table 16. Jobs and Clients – Elance

Statistiche			Statistiche		
CLIENTS			JOBS		
N	Validi	59	N	Validi	59
	Mancanti	0		Mancanti	0
Media	28,3559		Media	46,7288	

In terms of jobs and clients, each profile shows the number of transactions entertained by each member in the precedent 12 months. We can note how the number of clients and jobs is considerably higher than the offline cases. This seems to configure the traits of an 'Elancer' business model that resembles that of the Long Tail, 'selling less of more' (Anderson 2006) which consists into getting multiple different jobs of generally low average value. This is especially true when the activity on the website begins, as professionals have to establish and get a set of feedbacks to be visible and marketable.

“I started working on Elance while I was studying graphic design, I came across the site on an online search for part time work so I registered and uploaded my portfolio. After getting my first project I bought connects with all my money and since then I have been getting more and more projects. (...) I do think all work that you can do from a distance (so not onsite) is heading in this direction. It cuts costs (travelling, office space) but it does take some getting use to. You have to have self-discipline to tell yourself I have to sit and work now...but I do think it is where it is all heading for creatives and consultants alike, the tools are easy to learn and work well“

(L., 25, graphic designer, SA, Female).

The most important element to underline is that networking on Elance is largely limited since there is no direct interaction among contractors and clients. The competition for job calls and contracts occurs on the basis of the Online Reputation System, through the Level, as we have seen (cfr. Section 1) the score that aggregates the precedent performances of the contractors in a score that originates from the quality of feedbacks given by previous clients. The Level is visible on each member's profile through a box on the contractor's page and substantially functions as the landmark

for employability. The overall data on Elance confirm that there is a solid link between one's reputation on the website and the amount of revenues one can earn (cfr. Section 1, page 97). Pressure and anxiety for employment flow and revenues get back in this picture in the form of a 'reputation fetishism' over the Level and the system of reviews and feedbacks obtained on the platform. It is fully acknowledged by 'elancers' that a high reputation score guarantees for competitiveness on this market, similarly as it happens in the cases of vendors and buyers on Amazon and eBay (Bolton et al. 2004).

“When you got a bad review, other clients will think about your credibility to do a job. At Elance we need client's trust to do the work. Because, you know, Elance provides the job and the freelancer online, we don't meet with the person. Sometimes clients include the criteria that you need to have more than 4 stars to put a bid.”

(P., graphic designer, Indonesia, Female)

Discussion.

The analysis of creative freelancing in Milan and London confirms a substantially contradictory scenario. The affective elements that connote creative work, which for many participants is sometimes not even perceived as a job, significantly influence job satisfaction assessments diminishing the perception of unfriendly, context-specific working conditions that inhabit their daily lives. In terms of job satisfaction, more than economic compensation, other elements seem to apply. These call into question the role of reputation, which seems to operate in these contexts at three different levels:

- a) it is the element around which recruitment occurs through the mobilization of network resources via recommendations and referrals, that allow for supply and demand to meet;
- b) it functions as a guarantee for control and autonomy in a context where there is no regular office presence, whereby achieving and preserving a good reputation allows a contractor to be trusted by a client and be more autonomous;
- c) it is a powerful symbolic machine operating in creative 'scenes', since the participation to creative environments brings social recognition and 'reputational capital' that translates into job satisfaction and the relative perceptions of unfriendly conditions.

Creative freelancing seems in other words to possess significant traits of 'extremity'. The freelance creatives here studied seem to blur the traditional limits of job satisfaction, working with high levels of pressure and stress, often low paid and sometimes even for free, indeed with high levels of happiness. The 'narrative of liberation' and release which connotes the lives of 'immaterial workers' in terms of time, place and control is 'balanced' with an often 'invisible' set of instances which include diffused pressure, long hours of work and the anxiety for the unpredictability of the flow of work. Following Hewitt and Luce (2006) it may be argued that the emphasis on deadlines, the work-related duties that completely redefine working times, and the scope of responsibility for profit and loss that extends to personal symbolic success bringing anxiety and competition, make freelancing in the creative industries a typical case of flexible, 'extreme job'.

This description goes well beyond the traditional narrative of 'precarious work' that connotes knowledge workers. It is striking to note that the 'extreme' features of freelancing are often perceived as 'neutral' or 'natural', with few examples of a strongly negative connotation, as if these features were institutionalized in the professional practices as well as in the workers' perception. The presence of such traits is endemic in a labour market where 'you are only good as your last job' (Blair 2001). The structural feature of creative labour as a practice of *intense self branding* are here taken for granted by the same professionals.

The narrative of 'liberation' and independence becomes in this interpretation almost an ideological stance, diluted within a strongly entrepreneurial attitude that substantially anesthetize the negative traits, unveiling a self-exploitative attitude that reminds the notion of 'false consciousness' (Lukacs, 1971). Kalleberg's model of job quality results to be useful in making this controversy visible, though it probably lacks a specific variable for the assessment of job content and practices via symbolic compensations that would reconcile this element within the model as a peculiar feature.

Skills and education title appear to have a particular role. The unproductive meeting of demand and supply in creative industries outlines a fragmented job market that is unable to efficiently allocate the increasing number of creative graduates. Differently from other accounts (Lee 2011), here the possession of a higher education qualification seems to be a mere 'entry ticket' for a labour market where specialization and success occur through practices of 'invisible labour' that are perceived as a sort of 'enduring investment' in the freelance career. This takes the reading of Braverman's work on the progressive degradation of work (1974) under a new lens whereby, as seen, we are confronted to a setting where a process of *deskilling via upskilling* seems to apply. The dynamics of specialization

and learning that once pertained the 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1998; Wenger 2000) now have seemingly expanded to pertain to 'networks of practice' (Barley and Kunda 2006) where human capital and cultural capital are subsumed under the role played by social and reputational forms of capital based on affectivity.

This picture of creative employment fruitfully marries with the use of digital technologies. Not only the most common social media platforms as LinkedIn and Twitter, together with blogs, enlarge the potential of 'portfolio careers' into a permanent practice of personal branding. More so, the online case shows how the mechanisms of word-of-mouth and referrals become visible on the website in the tangible form of 'feedbacks' and the ORS, and how it is crucial to manage 'reputational capital' in order to remain competitive on the job. The Elance case opens up a reflection on the potential for social network sites and, specifically, online marketplaces, to operate as authoritative intermediaries in labour markets in a way that is similar to how Amazon or eBay do with the purchase of goods (Bolton et al. 2004). The role of the Online Reputation Systems across digital platforms and online marketplaces puts affectivity (in the form of reputation) ever more at the very heart of social interaction and makes the processes of socialized value production within these environments visible and objective.

Conclusions

The case of freelance creatives configures as a useful example to show how the implementation of neoliberalism as a political and economic model favouring entrepreneurial activity and flexible accumulation (Harvey 1990, 2005, 2010) has got to transform the attitudes and the practices of the creative labour market. This is seemingly taking the shape of the 'network sociality' shown by Wittel (2001), made of 'urban disembedded subjectivities' with no sense of community. Here, labour becomes a combination of work and play (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2013) and 'sociality' gets restructured in the integration of digital technologies. The functioning of online self branding practices, together with that of the ORS on Elance, precisely show this latter element.

A decade after Richard Florida's creative class manifesto (2002) we can arguably conclude that creative labour markets have become scenese where professionals are required to be increasingly independent and networked. The idea of a 'creative class' fostering entrepreneurial talent and economic prosperity represents indeed a scenario of class fragmentation and diffused exploitation, where the interiorization of the 'neoliberal culture' through the rhetoric of the 'free agent' (Pink

2001; Knell 2000) made 'the precariat' (Standing 2011) almost invisible to itself, given the highly attractive, symbolic and affective elements at stake, configuring the traits of a 'surprising survival' of neoliberalism (Crouch 2011).

Thanks to a plethora of accounts and researches on this topic, we are now fully aware of how much creative labour is precarious, unstable and exploitative, making it 'a very complicated version of freedom' (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011). New modes of resistance are indeed increasingly required in this sector as a consequence of the transformations of subjects and the emergence of new sets of values, calling into questions models of welfare, pensions and the scarce role of unions in these contexts. The focus on intensity here adopted aimed at looking at this issue from a different, though compatible angle, in order to move forward in this debate. It appears in fact it is now time to move beyond these reflections to discuss and question what kind of class restructuring are knowledge workers being part of. Future accounts of creative labour will necessarily have to focus more closely on issues of class composition and restructuring in the transition to digital-based societies, to enquire if and to what extent these may be giving room to something like a 'post-neoliberal' orders of worth.

This statement on neoliberalism brings us straight into the next section, where I will look at the organizational patterns emerging in networked creative labour markets in the age of outsourcing and 'flexible accumulation' (Harvey 1990).

SECTION 3: INTO THE REPUTATION ECONOMY

THE NETWORK AS ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITY. KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY AND NETWORKS: TOWARDS A FREELANCE MODE OF PRODUCTION

Since the publication of “The Rise of the Network Society” (Castells 1996) the term 'network' has acquired renewed fashion and relevance in many different contexts. The diffusion of digital media and the emergence of alternative forms of production based on collaboration and socialized production of value (Benkler 2006; Bauwens 2006; Botsman 2010, 2012) contaminated many spheres of society. One of the most affected environments is the context here at stake, what we know as the *knowledge economy*.

This section dwells upon the findings outlined in the previous pages to discuss the organizational forms that seem to emerge across the networks of freelance creatives here studied. The argument brought along is the existence of what may be called *a freelance mode of production* whereby freelancing, self-employment and project-based work shape the nature of knowledge economy form an organizational perspective by accomplishing networked interaction within the organization of labour through newly standardized forms of socialized value production.

With the idea of 'a freelance mode of production' I here intend that networked forms of highly socialized production of value have established as organizational arrangements across knowledge-intensive, increasingly freelance-based scenarios to allow for a new and potentially more efficient allocation of resources and labour. This could take place thanks to the central role of *reputation* as the source for establishing trust across networked environments.

The nature of creative organization and labour markets is the core issue of this section. We have seen how labour markets within the knowledge economy are increasingly networked and individualized, and how the production of value growingly occurs through investment in social relations, marketization and monetization of relationships, personal ties and 'social capitals' like reputation and trust. Such emphasis on these elements pairs up with (and, to a certain extent, is a consequence of) the 'flattening' of skills and competences shown in this work. We have seen how the kind of 'creative class' (Florida 2002) here at stake gets out of academic degrees in arts and humanities having a similar set of multi-functional kills, being able to work within a wide range of creative disciplines but nevertheless without specific characteristics that allow recruiters and HR divisions to make distinctions among them (Christopherson 2008).

In this context, where skills and competences are merely taken as 'entry tickets' and do not mark out a significant impact, the importance of networks, relationships and personal reputations becomes central also in organizational terms. The transition towards 'digitalized forms of production' that have arisen at the borders of corporate capitalism in the aftermath of neoliberalism is bringing socialized production of value back at the forefront of capital accumulation (Benkler 2006).

Within the knowledge economy, creative industries are a privileged observatory for these dynamics for at least three major reasons:

a) interaction for productive purposes is 'natively' network-based, meaning that networking and connections are acknowledged as extremely valuable assets in these environments (Blair 2001, 2008; Gill and Pratt 2008);

b) the prominence of social and cognitive, 'virtuosic' traits of 'immaterial labour' (Lazzarato 1996; Virno 2004) enhances the importance of reputation that seemingly emerges as a potential 'general equivalent' for value production (Arvidsson and Peitersen 2013), as seen in Section 2 through the practices of freelance creative work emerged in this study;

c) digitalization significantly affects these labour markets enabling relationships, connections and networking to be visible across platforms as Twitter and LinkedIn such that, to a certain extent, reputation can also become potentially objective and measurable, as we have seen in this work through the role played by the ORS on Elance.

The role played by reputation in these environments thus becomes the element around which an argument on the existence of such a 'freelance mode of production' can be outlined.

Theoretical framework: knowledge economy and the network society

Capitalism is undergoing a profound restructuring in the backlash of the crisis. The implementation of neoliberal policies over the past decades has generated a number of consequences at the levels of labour markets, working practices and production overall. The system of 'flexible accumulation' (Harvey 1990) redefined employment relations and organizations, leading to decentralization and outsourcing, individualization, a decline in the power of unions and labour movements (Castells

1996; Harvey 1990, 2005), segmentation and polarization of labour markets (Castells 1996; Goos and Manning 2003). The reconfiguration of the relations of production, power and class connoted to the restructuring of capital after the crisis are calling into question also the nature of the 'mode of production' that originates from the combination of these instances within society.

In this regard, though accomplishing the 'marxian' notion of mode of production as the set of relationships that attain productive forces and socio-technical relations of production involving property, power, labour and control (Marx 1973, 1976), here I will adopt for the purposes of this argument the theoretical framework provided by Castells in the discussion on the idea of the 'network society' (1996). This approach seems to be the most appropriate for the present argument, considering the macro-social context whereby these relations take place.

With the idea of the 'network society', Castells (1996) theorized the emergence of a new social structure whereby network dynamics are situated at the heart of productive organizations. Castells defines production as the action of humankind over nature to transform it into a product and accumulate surplus. In this sense Castells distinguishes between Modes of Production (MOPs) and Modes of Development (MODs). A MOP is the set of interdependent relationships between the social structure and the production processes that determine the existence of classes and rules of appropriation and accumulation, distribution and use of the surplus. On the other hand, a MOD consists of all technological arrangements through which labour acts on 'matter' to generate the product or, else, those arrangements that foster productivity by delivering relationships of production (Castells, 1996). Castells argues that capitalism periodically undertakes restructuring by shifting between different modes of development, and individuates two main MODs: industrialism and informationalism. Particularly, the latter emerges in the last decades, when information becomes the product that is consumed and produced (Castells, 1996).

We have seen how, more recently, theorists like Bauwens (2006) and Benkler (2006) have shown in different modalities the emergence of alternative modes of production arising at the borders of capitalism, often in symbiosis or reciprocal interaction with it (cfr. Literature Review). These practices share the trait of a diffused social production of value that characterizes production processes at many level. The reproduction and restructuring of capitalism in the aftermath of neoliberalism is revealing the existence of new forms of organization and production whereby the idea of the 'network' sits at the centre of economic development, within the relationship between social interaction and economic outcomes.

In this regard, as suggested above, the creative and cultural industries emerge as a unique point of observation for these dynamics, to become also a potential territory where new modes of production can be found. From an organizational perspective, we have seen every now and then during this work how the backlash of the recession has enhanced the 'freelance switch' both in terms of demand and supply to quite an unprecedented extent, as well as the recourse to platforms such as Elance to find new professional opportunities.

On the demand side, freelancing has long been a cost-cutting choice given that the overall cost of hiring staff on a temporary basis is generally higher in the short term, but consists of an effective reduction of fixed costs for employment in the long run (Christopherson and Storper 1989; Blair 2001, 2009; Christopherson 2002, 2008, 2009). Budget cuts over productions and projects have favoured the recourse to temporary and nonstandard forms of employment. Freelancers cost less than permanent employees and offer greater flexibility. The frenzy of outsourcing, both a necessity and a functional option, is acknowledged by the most influential international literature on creative industries over the past decade (Blair 2001, 2009; Christopherson 2002, 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2008, 2013).

On the supply side, freelancing has got to become an alternative option for many workers who have been downsized or made redundant from full-time jobs in firms during the recession. Freelancing lately bounced back both as a favourable option to live off in these markets, as well as often as a 'forced' condition (Lopez-Jimenez 2013) of 'necessity entrepreneurs' (Clark 2013) as a consequence of downsizing. More so, it can be witnessed a move within society towards an entrepreneurialization of the knowledge worker (Lazzarato 1996; McRobbie 2004). The emphasis over self-employment and freelancing in the knowledge economy has been a long-term claim of neoliberal policies, instrumental to the liberation of entrepreneurial talent (McRobbie 2004). This is now reviving in times of crisis through the 'branding' of individual, independent entrepreneurship both as a profitable switch as well as a 'trendy' move that enables to invest time into personal working projects to compensate for the lack of full time jobs.

As seen, this picture is significantly affected by the cross-cut rise of digital social media, which have had a major impact on creative environments. These tools and instruments enable to entertain professional relationships in creative environments with no need for physical presence, allowing to work at-a-distance to an unprecedented extent. More so, they enhance social relations and

connectivity among individuals. Relationships become visible across social media platforms, thus emphasizing the power of networking at all levels, especially in terms of recruitment. The visibility of relations combined with the commonality of information about individuals and their contacts, skills and portfolios, as shown, expands the role of reputation that becomes the element that leverages economic outcomes via the cultivation of social relationships. Also, we have seen how these dynamics take place with no separation between offline and online environments, and offer the possibility to establish personal brands across 'networked publics' (boyd 2011).

The discussion of trust and reputation within networked creative environments and labour markets (Granovetter 1973, 1995; Bourdieu 1984, 1986; Coleman 1988, 1990; Uzzi 1996; Lin 2001; Putnam 2001; Burt 1992, 2005) induces into questioning the implications of such a role, to devise the argument that reputation operates as the source for trust to be built across networks. This necessarily conducts to the study of *network forms of organization* (Williamson 1973; Powell 1990; Podolny and Page 1998; Granovetter 1985, 1995; Uzzi 1996; Fourcade 2007) considered as the territories where these practices take place. It is here, I would argue, that instances of such a mode of production can be visible and discussed.

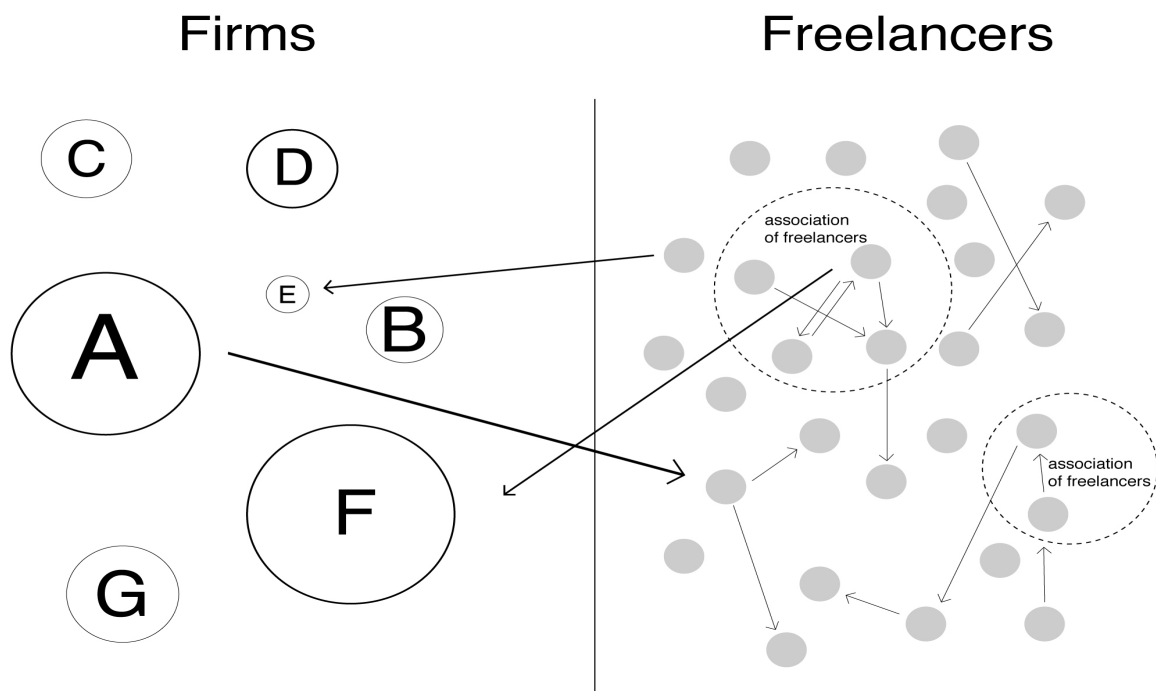
Within the 'freelance mode of production': a networked labour market

Milan and London. The employers' preference in making use of informal information networks for recruitment purposes is widely acknowledged in the employment literature. Informal referrals present benefits for both the recruiter and the applicant (Rees 1966), and most of the existing research on networks shows how weak ties are especially useful for this purpose (Granovetter 1973, 1985, 1995). In this regard, network research looks at relations among actors embedded within networks of interconnected relationships (Brass et al., 2004). I will perform here a similar analysis, to devise the most frequent and productive organizational patterns emerged in this study.

The networks observed in the present work are composed by a fluid aggregation of individuals with different intensity of interaction among each other. I have premised both in the Introduction and the Literature Review how the self-definition of freelance creatives is blurred and swings among: a) freelancers; b) precarious workers who work freelance or shift among short-term contracts and freelancing; c) self-employed; d) independent professionals; e) entrepreneurs. These figures seem to be substantially coincident since all of them operate on the market sharing a same logic, giving birth to a hybrid figure that is essentially entrepreneurial in culture, as these individuals have to perform

personal branding strategies and strategic networking to get jobs throughout processes that are different from a traditional, dependent career-path in a firm, based on hierarchical status. For these reasons I have used (and will use) the terms above almost interchangeably, to define them as a whole under the label 'independent professionals', a term that seems to be able to reconcile the various instances at stake.

Table 1. The organizational model



Independent professionals entertain relationships with people in firms, former employees and other individual self-employed. Firms consistently hire on a temporary basis, through nonstandard forms of employment or contracting. Freelancers can be hired by firms or other freelancers. They instrumentally entertain relationships with peers both working in firms and as self-employed to get new job opportunities. They get contracts from different clients and hire other freelancers to sub-contract work. Most of them act simultaneously as contractors and hirers, depending on circumstances.

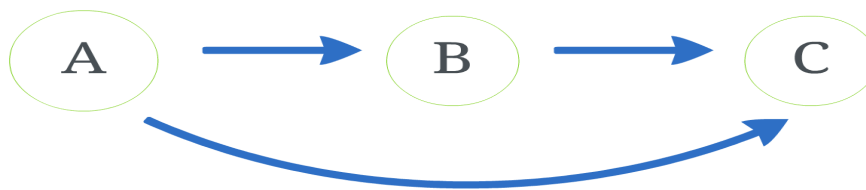
Within this picture, I have found an increasing number of what I have called *associations of freelancers*. These are made of usually two or three independent professionals who get together to combine different specialization and skills. They develop a brand and share their networks of contacts to boost their market potential. Most of these 'associations' are not to be strictly taken as

'small firms' since they often do not have a legal status, rather simply brand themselves with a unique name, especially across social media. Also, the founders remain simultaneously individual professionals who work in parallel on personal projects that are disjointed from the collaborative activity. This arrangement is also a potentially efficient strategy to establish a business model within industries that are deeply in crisis. It seems to be mainly diffused in journalism and graphic design, whereby the 'brand' is able to guarantee for a regular flux of incoming 'small jobs' that are subsequently shared by the associates, for a business model that, again, resembles that of the 'long tail' (Anderson 2006).

I have opened a small enterprise with other two consultants with different skills. We started up essentially as a graphic design agency. Then, because of the demand and of the world that changes, we have soon become a whole-rounded communication agency where we do everything. We follow our clients for all communication-related issues, product placement, online strategy, stuff like that... We present ourselves as communication agency that is able to deal with all media" (F., communication agent, Milan, 45, M)

It is common practice to share portions of work with peers or fellows including former colleagues, now freelancers, and also to outsource work to other freelancers recruited on purpose. The recruitment process shows a different side of that networked 'reputation economy' at the centre of this work, taking place through several recurrent patterns. In the following pages I will show those most frequently encountered.

A) Outsourcing. It is frequent to deviate work to peers already known and trusted, who have a crystal clear reputation. When this occurs, the delivery of a quality job creates a positive loop that benefits all actors involved. The client (A) hires the contractor B for a job. B needs someone to get part of the job completed on his/her behalf. B outsources to the sub-contractor C that enters the network as a reliable collaborator of B. A does not know C personally but trusts C through B. A new tie is created, so that the sub-contractor (C) is now connected to the main client (A) and his/her network grows. The client (A) has also extended the network of reliable contractors (Table 2, below).



[A gives work to B that deviates work to C

A trusts B

B trusts C

A does not know C personally

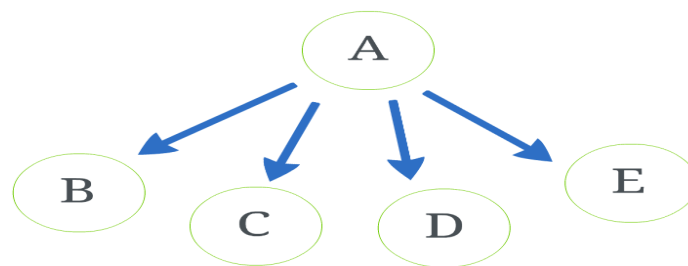
A trusts C via B that provides a guarantee for the reputation of C

A connects with C]

“A friend of mine had a friend who needed to check over the webmasters of his website, because he thought they were pinching on him, charging him more than what was due. So he put me in touch with this guy, I met him, I solved his problem, and I told him that a few things could be done better, technically speaking (...) We got along so well that he recommended me to a colleague, who hired me to design a website, and then again he recommended me to another colleague for another job. All this, in less than 50 days”

(C., communication designer; Milan, 29, M)

B) The job call. A second interaction pattern consists into circulating a job offer that becomes available, among a wide range of potential, 'reliable' contractors already known (Table 3, below). In this case A, the client, has a job to outsource to one of the collaborators of his/her network, and therefore casts a 'competition' among them to get the job. The collaborator who is free to get the contract at the moment the job is called, will get it. The benefit on the demand side relies in the possibility to manage an extremely flexible, independent and less expensive workforce. The burden is much more on the side of contractors, who are required to be in continuous search for job calls and to react almost instantaneously when a job becomes available in their network of clients.



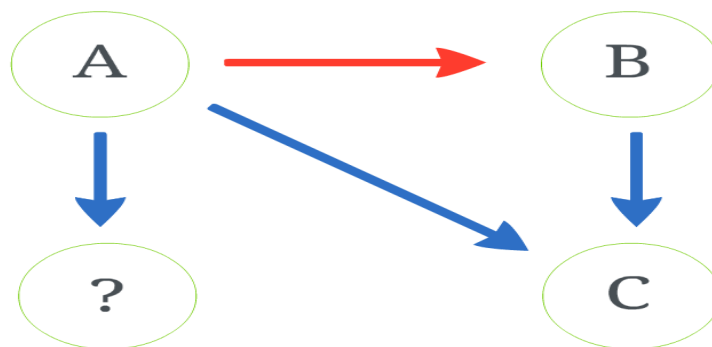
[A has work to give

B-C-D-E are freelancers who can decide to take the job or compete among themselves to get it]

“It's the 3 of us associates, and then we lean on a network of external freelancers. You know, digital technologies have changed the way we work. Up until 4 or 5 years ago you had to be in the office, now you can work at-a-distance, so we lean on collaborators that develop things externally. We speak with them on Skype or via email. For instance, when we have to design a new logo, we call up the freelancers we like the most within our network, and who's available gets the job. The system works quite well, these are young guys that are very good and very much used to these new technologies, they do not need to meet us in person”

(F., communication agent, Milan, 45, M)

C) The referral. When the main client (A) does not have anyone available in his/her network to take the job, s/he has to look for somebody anew. In this case it is likely that s/he will ask someone s/he trusts (B), that is not involved in the transaction as a contractor, to recommend for a suitable sub-contractor available (C, in this case) that s/he does not know directly yet and that s/he will trust thanks to the referral. Similarly to the case above, the delivery of a quality job gets the 'recommender' (B) to maintain or increases the reputation since s/he has provided a reliable collaborator to A, the client. A new tie is created, so that the contractor (C) is now connected to the client (A), has advantages for the personal reputation and his/her network grows. The client (A) has now extended the network of reliable contractors available and will be more inclined to give jobs and recommend those involved in the overall transaction (Table 4, below).



[A has work to give

no one is available

A trusts B (who is not directly involved in the transaction)

A contacts B to get referrals

B recommends C (who does not know C directly)

A trusts C because of the reputation of C via B

A connects with C]

"I'm hiring other freelancers also, as part of my job, and I'm looking for people that do things fast, really organized, get the job done and back there. (...) but it's all a matter of word of mouth, really, cos I'll be asking my mate who's free, who's available, and you tend to trust your old colleagues" (M., designer, London, 34, M)

What we can infer from this observation is that, within freelance-based environments, a reputation economy takes place through word-of-mouth and referrals with different patterns of interaction, whenever someone's reputation in a network triggers a dynamic that is able to get a contractor a job. In this dynamic, an element of novelty is represented by social media. These tools play a crucial role since they have changed the 'public' status of information that is available on someone's reputation. The practices I have discussed in Section 2 here make the essence of this arrangement. The element of visibility of relationships combines with the visibility of interactions and an enhanced possibility of storytelling for self-branding purposes. Social network sites such as LinkedIn are able to operate as 'permanent CVs' to access for information on someone's skills and, crucially, to someone's relationships and connections. This has organizational implications as the visibility of one's connections is acknowledged by professionals in the industry as a proxy for a freelancer's reputation.

“If you want to be well known you need to write into blogs, write into magazines, these are good ways to establish yourself really fast. (...) I signed up for LinkedIn six years ago and then reactivated recently, I thought it was more corporate and stuff...A lot of people contacted me from LinkedIn, “do I want this job, do I want that job”... people contacted me a lot from LinkedIn. You need to make yourself stand out in a way. “ (L., designer, London, 37, M)

Elnance. A different kind of interaction can be found within job-related online platforms. Digital marketplaces consistently grew in figures and members over the past few years. From an organizational perspective, Elnance was described as a two-mode network made of contractors and clients that do not interact significantly among each other (Table 37, p. 93). The nature of interaction on Elnance is very individualized and the recruitment processes are geographically dispersed. We have seen how the element that mediates between the single clients and the contractors is the Online Reputation System (ORS).

The online reputation system can be considered the focal point of the organizational arrangements that take place on the platform. The ORS regulates the functioning of the whole marketplace, enabling social interaction and economic transactions to take place among strangers. Clients and contractors who only know about the opinions and feedbacks that constitute the score that characterize the ORS, utilize the ORS to select the most reliable business partner on the platform. The ranking is the 'reputational capital' that becomes the source for trust to be established between a client and a contractor.

It is very important to achieve a high Level since it is the most important information when it comes to bargaining or getting a job, essentially the only information a client will look at. As seen, contractors see the Level as the most valuable asset on the platform and market their professionalism on the basis of their Level. The Level operates on both sides of the transaction, the client and the contractor. As concerns the contractor, it aggregates mostly data on feedbacks and reviews over the jobs completed. As regards the client, it elaborates on the basis of the reviews made by contractors who have previously worked with that employer, to assess the overall clarity of tasks, job relations and regularity in payments.

On both sides, the ORS and particularly the score that sums up data on feedbacks is 'fetishized' as being the most important element of the whole website. It appears to be the only thing to care about, since it is going to be the element each counterpart will look at, and make evaluations accordingly. More so, it is the element on which the whole search algorithm is based, so having a high score results in appearing in the first position for job searches. Those who have high scores and rankings on Elance generally do not compete for jobs. Rather, they are called up by clients that have searched for them on the site.

“I think that it's a very very good system of ranking that Elance has got going. As a client when you get onto Elance you want to find the best for your project. Obviously they want to find the best... it's like the Google search: they will search for the first two or three pages, to find the best. And nowadays I never go and send proposals, I always get invited, that's how I shifted in my business. Of course at the beginning I was sending proposals, now clients find me very easily, cos I'm rated quite high at the moment, I think I'm number 6... I'm rated quite high considering I'm just one person. (...) It's really important, clients will look at my portfolio, see how professional I am, see the feedback... and also they will look at my previous work as well, so they can make a decision on what people have said about them as well... So I think it tells for the security on both sides, having to work with someone without meeting them, cos this is a brand new way of working. When I started I was going out to meet clients and finally get emailed, but now it's completely through skype or email.”

(I., graphic designer, SA,43, F)

The functioning of the Level makes visible the dynamic of building trust among strangers who only interact having the platform as *milieu* for intermediation. Clients and contractors who do not know each other are able to interact and entertain economic transactions, bargaining jobs and fees on the basis of the Level, that represents the source for trust relationships to be built. The brokerage function played by the Online Reputation System regulates the internal organization of the platform. The most common mechanism for getting jobs on the platform is known as 'bidding'. It essentially

consists of responding to a job call and investing a certain amount of 'virtual money' to access the proposal and compete for the assignment. The client who posted the call, whose score is also publicly accessible by the contractor, selects the most suitable freelancer to hire and assigns the job. This mechanism functions especially for those at an intermediate level, who can leverage on their solid reputation on the site. Entry level freelancers have to struggle a lot to get their first jobs, generally charging low fees or competing in less crowded calls. This is instrumental for them to start the 'loop' of feedbacks and reviews that constitutes the ORS.

“I never work on a single project. I have to make an exaggerate number of bids to get a few projects. My percentage of winning bids is around 5 and 10 %. The client looks at the portfolio and the feedback score, that on Elance is a weighted mean of the reviews of previous works: if I have 5 over 5 in a work that is worth 10000 dollars, and a 4 over 5 in a work worth 4000, my mean will not be 4.5 rather 4.8. Also, having the revenues publicly visible I think is important: for instance if I ask for 130 dollars for a job, on average, I want this to be visible so I don't waste time in refusing 30-dollar piecework”. (T., designer, Italy, Female)

The organizational dynamics here at stake are perceived by members as some kind of 'new modality of work' that will become a sort of standard arrangement in the near future of creative labour. The element of enthusiasm, that was shown in Section 2, here revives through the functioning of these arrangements.

“I think it's absolutely vital, cos thanks to that I haven't been touched by the recession, it has never affected me. And I feel so strongly about it that I set up a programme, an online training programme for people on how to get onto Elance and do what I have done. I've got a formula that's really working. Because I'm always busy all the time I'm clearly doing something right so I would like to train either school leavers, staying-at-home mums, or people who want to get retrained (people that have might been retrenched). Because I don't think people get taught that, and people are not able to work and look after children, get out of college or art schools and then get a job because no one's employing people anymore... I believe the way of the future as a designer or in these kind of creative industries is that you gotta work for yourself, you got to be a business owner. And the young people today aren't being taught that, there's a huge gap. Since I've reached some amazing results with Elance, I wanna share them with other people” (I., graphic designer, SA,43, F)

To conclude, it can be argued there is an element of continuity and commonality throughout the patterns of interaction across the 'offline' networks of Milan and London and the online marketplace of Elance. It lies in the mechanism by which the reputation achieved within professional networks, made of the opinions and beliefs on the contractor, enables trust to be established among business partners on the basis of such reputation. In other words, reputation unveils as the source for trust to

be built within networked environments, as well as the element that allows for organizational arrangements to emerge from networked interactions that do not present pre-established patterns.

The organizational arrangements here shown, taken as a whole, picture the existence of a mechanism of interaction that mirrors the production system. The patterns of interaction described seem to coincide with the 'set of interdependent relationships between the social structure and the production processes' that Castells defines as the Mode of Production in the Network Society (1996). Their very existence and productivity determines the rules of value appropriation and accumulation, distribution and use of the surplus within these networks. They can be defined as a 'freelance' mode of production since the development of such dynamics is enhanced by actors who are 'networked individuals' (Wellman 2001, 2002; Rainie, Rainie and Wellman, 2012) and who operate as such in the context considered, in this case the freelance labour market. This organizational arrangements has implications at the level of network theory and calls into question the role of networks and the extent of social interaction for economic outcomes.

Discussion. Network forms of organizations revisited.

The scenario just outlined has attempted to show the structural and organizational arrangements that emerge within the freelance-based networks of creative and cultural professionals considered. The elements that stand out as prominent are: a) *diffuse connectedness*, that enables to entertain multiple (offline and online) relationships with other freelancers and to maintain contacts, and b) *socialization of value production*, by which independent professionals produce economic outcomes through strategically managed, systematically pursued, recursively repeated social interactions.

The organizational system here shown finds its heart in the role played by reputation as a capital or asset that functions as the source for trust. Reputation locates at the intersection between social interaction and economic transactions to guarantee that the allocation of resources within networked environments is 'regulated' and functions as a sort of 'general equivalent' (Arvidsson and Peitersen 2013). Elaborating from Section 1, I will argue a *reputation economy* occurs when reputation operates as a networked asset deploying unequal and continuously reterritorializing transactions in the allocation of resources, information and goods, such that individuals instrumentally act within networks using reputation as a capital to bridge and connect labour and business relations (where money is the core asset) and social relations (where trust is the core asset). Reputation becomes the source for the establishing of trust that is instrumental to entertain economic transactions.

Given this, the role of networks in the present context seems to open up a discussion over two major issues at stake with organization studies: the network as an organizational entity alternative to the hierarchy and the market (Williamson 1973; Powell 1990; Podolny and Page 1998; Granovetter 1985, 1995; Uzzi 1996; Fourcade 2007) and the extent of social interaction for economic outcomes. As suggested, it appears as though the context here taken into consideration unveils the traits of shift whereby patterns of organizations emerge natively from networks.

Drawing from Podolny and Page (1998), network forms of organization can be defined as organizational entities that do not conform with hierarchies and markets. A network form of organization is “a collection of actors $N > 2$ that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another and, at the same time, lack a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during the exchange”(Podolny' and Page 1998, p. 59).

However, these are considered by Podolny and Page not as a thirds form of organization, rather as a form of governance. They differ from the market since it implies transfer of goods and resources with limited, episodic relations. They differ from hierarchies since they imply longer relationships on the basis of a clearly recognized legitimate authority that is not present within these entities. More so, the 'network form of organization' excludes pure market arrangements as short-term contracts and excludes employment relations (Podolny and Page 1998). Nevertheless, the present case shows an organizational dynamic made of individual actors who interact among each other with firm-like behavior (in fact, most of these freelancers *are* individual firms) in a networked environment. The emergence of network forms of organization among individuals who entertain social and economic relationships on the basis of their individual reputation opens up a space to theorize the role of the network as that of a hybrid organizational form that embodies traits of the hierarchy and of the market.

The transfer of goods and resources in networked environments occurs on the basis of social relations that are mostly enduring and repeated among individual entities. It *is* a market inasmuch it includes, for instance, short contracts and employment relations. At the same time, hierarchical forms emerge and may change or be subverted over time as the status of contractors and hirers may change across different transaction. In other words, markets and hierarchical traits are present as as *transitory arrangements*.

The inclusion of employment relationships of this kind configures a mode of production where such economic outcomes are function of social action and interpersonal relationships. Freelance-based employment appears to be instrumental for a productive and efficient functioning of a system characterized by high socialization, that displays its full potential when labour relations are non-dependent and unstandardized, becoming flexible not only on one side (i.e., demand, the employer), rather on both sides of demand and supply, somehow redistributing and rebalancing (though not suppressing) the elements of one-sided inequality and exploitation that characterize neoliberal, 'flexible accumulation' (Harvey 1990).

The 'distinct ethic or value orientation on the part of exchange partners' (Podolny and Page 1998, p. 60) that connotes this organizational dynamic seems very much at stake in the networked information economy (Benkler 2006) through the role of reputation as affective capital. One can appropriately question why a stronger emphasis is here put on reputation rather than trust, that is acknowledged as a strategic element in such contexts (Granovetter 1985). Fieldwork data on freelance work in the present study show a value chain of networked 'individual firms' that recalls the dynamics of the 'collaborative community' outlined by Heckscher and Adler (2006), though with significant differences. In Heckscher's and Adler's account the main element at stake is trust, that guarantees the establishment of community relationships among firms. Collaboration in the community of firms grows on the common ground of shared values and organization principles. Heckscher and Adler devise the 'collaborative community' as an intermediary form between the hierarchy and the market that heavily relies on social capital and interdependence of firms for the allocation of the resources produced.

However, data at disposal in the present context show the absence of an overall communitarian framework that binds together these networked freelancers. The organizational entities under analysis have no shared values or institutionalized (formalized) organization principles that can assimilate them to communitarian forms of interaction. Trust is a crucial element at stake in the set of relationships among the actors considered; however, across networked environments it bears the limitation that it is not possible to establish a bond of trust with someone you do not know, without an element of intermediation that is the source for trust to be built, and that functions in place for those 'shared values' that permeate collaborative communities.

The notion of trust here at stake differs in this sense from most of the literature on social capital (Bourdieu 1980, 1984, 1986; Coleman 1988, 1990; Putnam 2001; Burt 1992, 2005) to move closer

to the 'functional' definition given by Niklas Luhmann (1979). Luhmann (1979; 2000) distinguishes trust from familiarity and argues that trust is a solution to reduce risk within social systems where familiarity and intimacy are absent. Reputation in this context emerges as the source for trust relationships whereby there is not necessarily a direct knowledge or value sharing between actors involved in the economic intercourse, and essentially operates as regulatory principle. In other words, it consists in a device to create trust that reduces the risk attached to entertaining economic transaction with non-familiar or 'strangers'. It also operates as a guarantee for the delivery of quality work at a distance in the sense that a bad delivery affects the reputation of all actors involved. This is why, in the present work, it can be argued of a 'reputation economy' and not a 'trust economy'.

The 'function' of trust within these environments, in other words, is made possible by reputation. Differently from trust, reputation does not automatically imply reciprocity, rather more transitory and fleeting, somehow self-oriented mutual expectations. In the collaborative community reputation operates as a large system of sanctions for the obligation of mutual trust. What I argue here, differently, is that within these networks reputation is not merely a sanctioning element to wall off trust hackers (Granovetter 1995), rather it is the source for trust as well as a manageable asset instrumental for its achievement through transitory and mediated forms of social interaction for productive purposes. The degree of trust between the parties, that is required in order to entertain economic transactions, is granted by reputation and more or less systematized systems for reputation measurement. Powell (1990) notes that a form of reciprocity is needed as a guiding principle for network organization.

Trust among 'strangers' can be established when, although reciprocity is absent, reputation operates as a mutually recognized valuable asset leveraging market-like interaction. Reputation becomes a kind of immaterial currency to spend within connection such that, through reputation, trustworthy behavior can be expected not merely out of a sanctioning power, rather as an organizational arrangement (Granovetter 1995).

Yet, an important element that networks and the collaborative community have in common is the fact that they emerge as intermediary forms between pure hierarchical and pure market-based arrangements. It could be argued that economic transactions and employment relations taking place within networked (in this case, also creative) environments are function of the direct and indirect connections actors have to one another, that are 'conduits' for reputation and peer control (Podolny

and Page 1998; Gulati 1995). Along this line Granovetter (1985) argues, discussing Williamson on market and hierarchies (1975), that both these models share a common preassumption of atomized actors that underestimates the impact of networks and *embeddedness*.

Granovetter (1985) sustains that economics have outlined an undersocialized conception of reputation as a generalized commodity or 'common morality' to guarantee for trust. The idea of embeddedness, on the other hand, stresses the widespread preference of transacting with individuals of known reputations. The present work shows the degree to which embeddedness within networks has penetrated and affected the organizing principles of highly socialized economic structures. Embeddedness is defined by Uzzi (1996) as the process by which social relations shape economic action. Uzzi sustains that organizational networks that operate in an embedded logic promote economic performance, such that a firm's performance is better off when operating into embedded ties. The kind of embeddedness visible here is similar to what Uzzi found in his research on networked firms, though among 'individual enterprises' to the extent that, thanks to the networked dynamics of the freelance-based creative economy, it is possible to see the 'network effect' given by embeddedness (Uzzi 1996).

Embedded ties have three positive features: they promote trust, facilitate better information transfer and favour joint problem-solving arrangements (Uzzi 1996). These features, in Uzzi's account, derive primarily from the system of third-party referral networks and previous personal relations, that we have seen is institutionalized among creative networks. Embedded networks in Uzzi's account achieve competitive advantages over pure-market arrangements whereby impersonal transactions become a concentrated and exclusive market between sets of partners, forming networks of organization as seen here in the case of the 'associations of freelancers'. Embedded ties provide greater access to resources circulating in the network and are more likely to lead to profitable outcomes (Uzzi, 1996). The network form of organization among freelancers becomes a mode of production since, going back to Castells (1996), the interdependent relationships between the social structure and the production processes here at stake determine:

a) the restructuring of class relationships, that we can witness in the dissolution of the working class and, especially, the middle class (Harvey 2005, 2011) that is where most creatives come from (Grugulis and Stoyanova 2011, 2012), diluted into what was called 'the new precariat' (Gill and Pratt 2008; Ross 2009; Standing 2011) that implies the suppression of class consciousness through the emphasis on individualization and the rise of a new 'entrepreneurial subject' (McRobbie 2004);

b) different rules of appropriation and accumulation, distribution and use of the surplus, that we have seen through the multiple arrangements in place whereby economic outcomes are function of social interaction.

Through freelance-based organizations we are witnessing a restructuring of capitalism based on the idea of embeddedness, that brings us to pre-market societies where economic behaviour was totally subsumed within social relationships (Granovetter 1985). To a larger extent, this situation resembles that of the 'cottage industry' (Houston and Snell 1984) in the pre-industrial era of the late nineteenth century, where the means of production were possessed by individuals working from home prior to the growth of large corporations, where market relationship were developed on the basis of individual entrepreneurship. (Granovetter 1985). The 'associations' of creative freelancers found in this study resemble, in this analogy, new forms of craft guilds within embedded multi-modal networks of contacts and connections.

Digitalization represents a substantial element of novelty whose long-term consequences still remain to be seen. The case of Elance shows how labour markets can outline across digital platforms and emphasized even more the role of reputation, for how it becomes strategically important within highly-digitalized environments. The functioning of the Online Reputation System through the role of the Level on Elance makes visible the dynamics of trust building across networks where participants do not share values or interact significantly in communitarian form, rather a diffused notion of reputation as a public good benefiting all (Bolton et al. 2004).

The visibility of a previously 'intangible asset' shows how, to a larger extent, reputation management becomes decisive due to the direct connection it has towards economic outcomes. More so, the fact that social network sites make all relations and networked connections 'visible' and tangible has the effect to render these features potentially marketable assets as services like Klout already do, though with significant shortcomings given mostly by the secrecy of the algorithms of calculation (cfr. Literature Review). To sum up, in the scenario of the 'networked information economy' (Benkler 2006) digital social media provide the infrastructure and the 'milieu' to devise a sustainable and efficient transition to highly socialized networked forms of value production, towards what we might call 'digital accumulation'.

'Digital accumulation' is quickly establishing in these environments whenever it is able to integrate the offline and online socio-economic interaction in a single territory, putting social relations at the core of economic transactions, as in the case of freelance creative networks. This is another major reason why this work argues not (merely) on the existence of an organizational form based on networked dynamics, rather of a 'mode of production'. The transition towards the institutionalization of such a model appears, however, to be still an ongoing process, whilst income inequality, polarization of work and disgregation of welfare remain crucial issues still to be addressed in the aftermath of neoliberalism.

Conclusion. The autopoieticity of networks

This paper has shown how networked forms of organization across creative environments take place and develop in the backlash of a recession that hit hard on the creative and cultural industries, which have been object of several different approaches and studies over the past decades. These can be considered as 'laboratories' for alternative models to emerge, given the importance of network dynamics and digital media across creative environments, and to a larger extent the emphasis put on creativity for innovation and economic development.

These new arrangements emerging in the aftermath of neoliberalism operate on capitalism and restructure its own nature towards a *hybrid logic* that integrates hierarchies and markets within embedded networks where social interaction takes the shape and practices of what Wittel labelled with the name 'network sociality' (Wittel 2001). Castells (1996) sustained that the observation of organizational changes in the 'network society' did not allow to see the emergence of a new model, rather the crisis of the old one. The new organizational form emerging in the network society, that he calls 'network enterprise', did not represent yet for Castells a mode of production, rather a mere organizational arrangement based on networks, structured around the purpose of achieving specific goals. The participants may be autonomous, dependent, or participating to other networks. Their performance depends on connectedness and consistency, that is sharing of interests. The present study on freelance networks seems to highlight features that are in line with this reflection, though with consistent evolutions that pertain practices and structural arrangements.

The implementation of 'technocapitalism' (Suarez-Villa 2004, 2009) and the transition to digital accumulation results in an evolution of the 'network enterprise' from an organizational arrangement to a mode of production. The importance of network-based organizational arrangements for value

production processes has become a relevant factor that implies a profound transformation also in the morphology of employment. This is why this paper looked with such emphasis to employment relations. As Castells also forecast, “the traditional form of work based on full time employment, clear-cut organizational assignments, and a career pattern over a life cycle is being silently but slowly eroded” (1996, p. 268). The present study seems to show that the process of erosion is now complete, and new arrangements are emerging accordingly. Nevertheless, inequalities and diffused instability in working patterns and careers remain an issue.

The emphasis put by neoliberalism on individual entrepreneurial initiative and private property, that is acknowledged as one of the elements that contributed to the crisis and the widespread unemployment (Harvey 2005, 2011) has posed the seeds for a new wave of independent entrepreneurialism (McRobbie 2004). Creative industries and labour markets are a special observatory for transformations taking place at the level of employment. Among these we have:

- a) new modalities of work that originate from independent entrepreneurship and freelancing, such as nomad working (Eikhof and Haunschild 2006; O'Brien 2011), home working (Hochschild 2001; Gregg 2011) and especially the rise of coworking spaces (Lange 2011) where individual professionals can hire a desk and a wi-fi connection and get into 'connected environments' where relationships and economic partnerships are built on the basis of physical compresence;
- b) the centrality of reputation, emerging out of a shift from a competence-based to a relational-based labour market whereby relationships, connections and previously intangible assets become visible (and potentially measurable) across digital environments;
- c) a 'movement' of individual enterprises and single freelancers that live 'out of firms' and in parallel universe with them, that often associate together to offer different kinds of services and products to be sold contract-based on the market, sharing the burden of employment and welfare;
- d) the integration of the offline and the online in the economic cycle of accumulation, within a continuum.

From a purely theoretical point of view the network-based organizational systems of whom this study is an example can be considered as self-enclosed structures that continuously generate themselves through the construction of overlapping, continuously reterritorializing, communication-

based ties. In this sense these may be seen as autopoietic systems (Luhmann 1986; Maturana 1981), meaning self-organized 'networks of production of components, that recursively, through their interactions, generate and realize the network that produces them' (Maturana 1981:21). These 'produce and eventually change their own structure' through 'communication recursively produced and reproduced (...) which cannot exist outside of such a network' (Luhmann 1986, p. 174).

As a final remark, it can be pointed out that arguing on the existence of a 'freelance mode of production' does not imply, as happened in the past (Florida 2002), that a new wave of economic development is on the horizon. This contribution aimed at devising an objective account of organizational patterns observed across the networked environments studied. A number of contradictions and critical aspects remain, and some of them have been discussed in an attempt for an equilibrated analysis. The freelance mode of production here discussed may be seen, in this regard, as a post-neoliberal, post-entrepreneurial form of organization where collaborative processes (Botsman 2010) and peer-to-peer architectures (Bauwens 2006) may live together with what remains of the neoliberal order of worth in relation to individual action within society and entrepreneurship (Harvey 2005). The 'terminal crisis' of the cycle of accumulation based on financial capital (Arrighi 1994; Harvey 2011) is unveiling transformations we are called to understand in their extent and meaning, and to develop new concepts to describe them. The discussion entertained in this paper was conceived to stay on this line.

CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS

This work has shown the extent to which reputation can be considered as the determinant element for self-employed professionals in creative and cultural industries. Thanks to a complex set of data, it was demonstrated how reputation is more important than trust, skills and education title for the income of freelance creatives in Milan, London and online. The role of reputation also appears also to be crucial in a discussion on freelance work and job quality, showing how reputation has an impact on job satisfaction, job autonomy and recruitment. More so, reputation configures as the source of trust to be established across labour markets where economic transactions are increasingly function of social interaction.

The set of these instances configures what was defined a *reputation economy*. To briefly recall the definition here given, a *reputation economy* occurs when reputation operates as a networked asset deploying unequal and continuously reterritorializing transactions in the allocation of resources, information and goods, such that individuals instrumentally act within networks using reputation as a capital to bridge and connect labour and business relations (where money is the core asset) and social relations (where trust is the core asset). Reputation thus becomes the source for the establishing of trust that is instrumental to entertain economic transactions.

Section 1 has shown how reputation in these contexts functions as a form of performative affective capital with specific characteristics. The role of trust in the networks considered, being connoted with peculiar traits of reciprocity and mutuality, makes it overlapping with Bourdieu's notion of social capital and, at the same time, distantiates it from Lin's definition of social capital as investment with expected returns. *Reputational capital* appears to be closer to Lin's definition in that by leveraging on reputational capital, the networked individual enacts *performative practices of sociality* of managerial nature, which lead to beneficial outcomes.

Though the debate on social capital remains open, this may set an important contribution in the understanding of mechanisms of capitalization of social relations that are furthermore complicated by digital forms of interaction. The importance of reputation ties, combined with the notion of reputation as a capital and a source for trust here outlined in Section 3, seem to show the emergence of a context where social interaction is increasingly mediated by digital technologies that reshape the nature of social capital as we know it.

We have also seen in Section 2 how practices of networking are fully acknowledged by the freelancers who participated in this study in Milan and London. This makes networking to a certain extent also a 'flat' trait, as are skills and education. If everybody networks, the difference on the quality of that networking consists not merely in the practices adopted, but more substantially in the performative traits which are to be exercised in relation to, and as a consequence of, networking. Or, in other words, networking can be more or less successful depending on the quality and nature of the *networked asset* – i.e., reputation – that networking practices are able to mobilize.

The consequences of this dynamic are multiple. Two emerge as prominent. First, reputation configures as the source for building trust among members of a social network where economic transactions are involved. The functioning of the ORS across Elance is a mimicry of what happens 'offline' where the existence of a positive reputational capital makes an individual more trustworthy than others who do not possess this feature. More so, the offline dynamics of reputational capital seem also to function as a mechanism of 'contagion' whereby working with someone with a high reputational capital increases the same asset for the working colleagues.

Second, reputation seems to be object of an extensive 'fetishization' through dynamics that resemble the Marxian's commodity fetishism (1973). We have seen how both in the offline as well as in the online cases the 'reputation' feature is connoted with a major perceived importance, that is also visible in the scarce number of contacts provided in the name generator questions by the participants to this study. This proves how contacts are generally kept hidden, if not secret, as they are the source of this capital and a 'safety box' that needs to be handled with care.

As a result of these two instances, drawing from Granovetter (1973), we can see how the idea of 'strong' and 'weak' ties that allow to bridge across different social networks confirms its positive effect only when actors are able to connect to high-status peers (Granovetter 1985; Lin 1981). Section 1 has also shown how this same argument, that is a milestone in the literature on economic sociology and social networks, seems here to be reconfigured under the light of *performativity*. The networking practices here at stake constitutes a dynamic of 'construction of the tie' that is entertained through the management of personal reputation with the aim of achieving a high status in a network and maintaining the connection with high-status peers. The result of this dynamic is that a connection based on 'reputational capital' is what connotes the presence of a strong or weak tie, as the capacity of that connection to be performative independently from the degree of intimacy at stake. This is due to the key role played by positive reputation as a capital, as well as – on the

contrary – by the strong detrimental effects a reputational damage, or a bad reputation, can have on both partners in the transaction as well as for job autonomy, recruitment and job quality (as shown in Section 2).

Third, the organizational patterns studied within these networks unveil the existence of a mode of production *in fieri*, centred on socialized use-value production. This is constituted of transitory arrangements whose boundaries are continuously bargained and reframed during the practice, changing over time from a transaction to another. As a result, the question of the ownership of means of production seems to be a newly central issue. It would be interesting to look more closely to these instances in further research, especially focusing on a potential definition of knowledge workers as a class, that seems to emerge from accounts like these and which seems to be more appropriate than the vague and simplistic definition of 'creative class'.

Fourth, the discussion here entertained on reputation intersects with the rise of digital media and social network sites used for professional purposes in a crucial way, as shown by the role of reputation and trust in this study as well as by the practices of networking entertained by freelance creatives which extensively take place across both offline and online environments. These newly-mediated forms of social interaction show the problematic nature of arguments based on 'digital dualism' (Jurgenson 2011) that bring along a supposed distinction by nature between the 'online' and the 'offline'. This work has shown how, in the context considered, these instances and the dynamics observed are largely overlapping as actors play by the rule that reputation matters more than anything else, and needs to be 'managed' independently from the offline or online context.

More so, it may well be argued that there seems to be no effective separation between offline and online interaction both in the practices entertained by freelancers, as well as in the dynamics of networking and reputation management at stake. The visibility and 'publicness' of professional networks and individual connections that connote the use of digital technologies as LinkedIn or Twitter, expands the dimension of reputation and has an impact over the professional practices of networking that are deployed indifferently across online and offline environments. The online case also shows the existence of a purely reputation-based dynamic of social interaction mediated by the ORS. The functioning of the ORS and its 'fetishized' value explains why there is no need for social interaction among the actors involved, who see the ORS as a sort of independent regulatory entity. As said, this is also a potentially dangerous dynamic given the issues of manipulation and cheating attached to these algorithms (for a review see Masum and Tovey 2012).

The fetishism for reputation here shown is one among many instances of what may be called 'a *Klout culture*'. With this term I intend that whenever social interaction of any kind is being somewhat measured, as occurs in almost all social media in a more or less explicit manner, a narrative of 'influence' applies with similar traits as it occurs in the measurement of online social influence by Klout (cfr. Literature Review). This means that the algorithms, but also the number of likes, of followers, of connections, are such fetishized to become a sort of ideological narrative that drives social interaction to pursue greater influence. This dynamic appears to have a huge potential for distortive effects and manipulation since, as already said elsewhere in this work, Klout and similar services are private corporations which operate on a for profit basis. The criteria of calculation of these metrics and especially the ownership of these 'means of social production' become an essentially controversial problematic that presents risks and threats for the kind of direct or indirect outcomes it is able to generate.

In the middle of these dynamics and transformations we have 'the issue of labour', as I was referring to in the introduction to this dissertation. Work and employment are being affected significantly and are probably experiencing a restructuring as digitalization extends. New forms of labour and work are emerging from the integration of digital processes of social interaction into the mechanisms of value production. Among the many instances, the emphasis on work at-a-distance and the emerging dynamics of online markets, together with the individualization and entrepreneurialization of the workforce seem to indicate a potential for a reconfiguration of the spaces and places where people work. This is already visible in the emergence across different cities of *coworking spaces* that host independent workers by offering them a desk and a wi-fi connection in exchange of a fee. Coworking spaces enable professionals to participate to a working environment that favours connections and networking, for the benefit of potential new collaborations and business partnerships to grow (Lange 2006, 2011).

This will probably give rise to a new wave of 'professionalism' that seems to be already visible in this study. The reputation economy of freelance creatives unveils the practices of those Lange (2006, 2011) calls "culturepreneurs", the new subjects which originate from the hybridisation of skills in the knowledge economy. Culturepreneurs outline new career paths and new work models within less institutionalized economies (Lange 2006, 2011) and, I would add, open up new managerial perspectives as the boundaries between the firm and the grassroots of peer-to-peer market arrangements are increasingly blurred.

However, it is necessary in this sense not to indulge in the same “staunch enthusiasm” that connoted Florida's work on the “creative class”. We should not underestimate the critical elements that pertain to this context, which we have seen in full extent especially in the Section 2 of this work, as concerns the controversial tension towards autonomy that connotes the freelance workforce.

Two more conclusions in this sense may apply. Firstly, it appears as though it is now time move on beyond the idea of 'precarity' and 'precariousness' of work to embrace discourses which accomplish these traits into a general condition of 'extremity' that connotes creative work, especially freelance. Having this mind, the following step becomes would be on the one hand to imagine new practices of 'resistance' and instances that could ameliorate the working conditions in such a process of restructuring of professionalism. Coworking spaces, for instance, may function in this regard as a fruitful example of networking-based workplace that avoids the alienation and isolation of homeworking and at the same time facilitates the establishment of new connections. Also, digital worklife as emerges from the study of Elance seems to have a lesser extent of extremity in the working condition and, more so, appears to be a niche that is still largely unexplored, therefore worth of consideration.

Similarly, what is striking in this context is the almost complete absence of collective identity and, especially, unions. An experience of the kind of the Freelancers Union in the US should be incentivised in the contexts here taken under consideration, as collective bargaining would lead to more recognition and better conditions both in terms of regulatory framework and pension schemes. The existing examples of BECTU (Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union) in the UK, and especially ACTA (Associazione Consulenti Terziario Avanzato)¹⁴ in Italy are already in line with this claim. These should nevertheless be reinforced and more popularized in order to enhance their still feeble role in the public debate.

A second issue concerns the idea of 'networks' that has been very much at stake of a plethora of studies and reflections in the last decades. Such emphasis on networks has frequently resulted in makin this term a 'flag' to agitate in the discourses on social innovation and economic development, often forgetting to dwell upon what networks, networking and network structures effectively meant in the specific contexts. This study demonstrates how many different and sometimes contradictory instances may emerge in a study of networks that looks both at the quantity and the quality of

¹⁴ “Association of Advanced Tertiary Sector Consultants” (translation of the author)

networked interaction, and how much it is necessary to get into the practices and patterns that connote network structure to fully understand network dynamics and their meaning in the context under observation.

To a larger extent, these instances take place in the context of what I call 'the aftermath of neoliberalism'. This period where social and economic policies have pushed towards individualization, flexibilization and entrepreneurialization leaves us with labour markets strongly affected by these policies. It is here, as seen, that we can find the roots of the expansion in the recourse to freelance careers and self-employment. More so, the crisis has called into question the paradigm of accumulation based on financial capital and intangible assets, unveiling the potential distortions deriving from the implementation of such neoliberal policies over time (Harvey 2011). A new paradigm of accumulation will probably emerge when the transformation occurring at the level of production will find a stable arrangement to integrate networked dynamics and digital technologies in a coherent structure of value production that takes into account its increasingly socialized nature.

In this sense, the landscape we are confronted to brings us back to the 'great transformation' described by Karl Polanyi in his seminal work on the industry in the first half on the Twentieth Century (Polanyi 2001, first edition 1944). The Industrial Revolution initiated a process of separation of work from home residence that is now seemingly coming back to the precedent nature. Digital technologies now seem to allow to move out of traditional workplaces, factories and offices, as practices of homeworking, coworking, 'nomad working' and new forms of artisanship (Sennett 2006, 2008) proliferate. If we combine this instance with the fact that industrial revolutions essentially concern the movement of workforce from a place to another (Ferrarotti 2005) we are possibly witnessing the traits of a big transformation taking place in the implementation of digital production into a new paradigm of accumulation.

Polanyi sustained that modern capitalism is embedded in structures where capital as a relation can be understood in contradiction between material and abstract value aspects, where money is a social relation, a fictitious commodity (Jessop 2007). We have seen how reputation functions as a specific object in the context considered, as it can be substantially assimilated to a form of immaterial currency. The intersection between working practices and occupational identity as here shown unveils the existence of a system that combines the characteristics of the flexible 'spirit of capitalism' outlined by Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) with the traits of Wittel's 'network sociality'

(2001) in a unique territory. This is fascinating since it seems to outline a tension towards a post neoliberal orders of worth with a prominence of use-value over exchange value. This, nevertheless, seems yet to be developed in full, as Crouch (2011) notes when he argues on flexibilization and entrepreneurialization as a 'surprising survival' of neoliberalism in the network society.

To conclude, what seems to be at stake with the notion of reputation economy and the *performative* function of reputation in these contexts, is the idea of reputation as a regulatory element in the allocation of resources within networked social systems made of generalized connectivity and socialized value production. What these systems embody are entrepreneurial models that cannot be perpetrated out of a social structure made of ties and connection and a socio-economic system that effectively consists in the institutionalization of the functional relationship between social relations and economic outcomes.

And here we come to the end of this work. Let me say I have done my best to craft a dissertation that nevertheless presents, inevitably, limitations and shortcomings. There surely are many things that I could have done better. This, of course, is due to the limited experience of the author as an early-career researcher. This goes beyond the complexity of the field and the numerous instances which had to be kept together in a coherent frame, especially from a methodological point of view, that have augmented the level of difficulty of this study.

However, though having in mind its problematic aspects and the mistakes that I have certainly done during the course of this work, I have the humble feeling that this research shed an important light on previously understudied issues, and may be considered both a step forward in the comprehension of work and labour in the creative industries, as well as a potential point of departure for further studies – and also criticism – on these issues.

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