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Sexual harassment in the Norwegian theatre world

Bård Kleppe

Telemark Research Institute, Phone: +47 911 97 543, Mail: kleppe@tmforsk.no

and

Sigrid Røyseng

Department of Communication and Culture, BI Norwegian Business School

Sexual harassment in the Norwegian theatre world

The aim of this paper is to provide insight into the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the theatre world. The paper asks how prevalent sexual harassment is in this part of work life. A survey among Norwegian actors is presented and the main finding is that sexual harassment is much more prevalent in the theatre world than in Norwegian work life in general. Further, the paper aims at understanding why the prevalence is as high as it is. Based on qualitative interviews the paper points out some risk factors that shed light on the high prevalence of sexual harassment. Lastly, the risk factors are related to charismatic authority as an important power base in the theatre world.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, art organizations, theatre, gender roles, mixed methods, charismatic authority.

Introduction

Sexual harassment has been so common in my work environment that I previously almost didn't reflect on it as strange. It just was there all the time, as a law of nature.ⁱ

The quote above is from an interview with a female actor in a documentary program published by Radio Sweden in February 2010. Using the expression 'law of nature' she indicates that sexual harassment is something that is tightly interwoven in the working environment of the theatre world. An article in the New York Times, 15 March 2015, strengthens the impression that sexual harassment is commonplace in the theatre world. In the article, it is underlined that it is difficult to pin down exactly how common sexual harassment is, but the article uncovers first-hand experience with harassment and unwelcome behavior by fellow production members.ⁱⁱ

While the media has focused some attention on the problem of sexual harassment in the theatre world, little scholarly research has been done. However, a study of bullying behavior in theatres and art centers more generally in the United Kingdom concluded

that the theatre had the highest incidence of bullying behavior in any employment sector (including prisons, the health service and the armed forces) (Quigg 2007).

The aim of this paper is twofold. In part one, we ask how prevalent sexual harassment is in the theatre world. In order to answer this question we will present a survey conducted among Norwegian actors. In part two of this article, we ask how the prevalence of sexual harassment among actors can be understood.

The second part is based on qualitative interviews and the open answers in the survey. Before we present the empirical findings from our study, we will discuss the concept of sexual harassment.

How to study sexual harassment

The term 'sexual harassment' came into the language in the 1970s (Pringle 2005:292) and the definition of sexual harassment has been a topic of controversy ever since (Nielsen et al. 2010). In harassment research as well as in the practical work of preventing harassment it is common to distinguish between harassment and (innocent) audacity. Making such a distinction is difficult but often necessary, especially in legal contexts, for instance in order to enforce occupational safety and health regulations.

As a consequence, a distinction between sexual harassment as a legal concept and sexual harassment as a phenomenological experience of the victims has been established. In Norway, sexual harassment is forbidden by law and the legal framework for preventing sexual harassment includes the *Working Environment Act*, the *Sexual Orientation Anti-Discrimination Act* and the *Gender Equality Act*.

In psychological studies of sexual harassment, however, it is most common to focus on the phenomenological experience of the victim and his or her interpretation of

it, regardless if such action would be convicted in court. In such studies, the term “unwanted sexual attention” is commonly used (Nielsen et al. 2010). Consequently, it is thus important to distinguish between unwanted and wanted sexual attention. While wanted sexual attention denotes positive experiences where equal parties both have an interest, unwanted sexual attention denotes negative, unsolicited and unilateral attention (Frøberg and Sørensen 1992).

Studies aiming to explain sexual harassment in work life often rely upon psychological and behavioral conceptualizations (Keyton and Menzie 2007:88). Such studies have pointed out that age, gender, gender roles, and the character of the work place influence the prevalence of sexual harassment (Terpstra and Baker 1991, European Commission 1998, O’Donohue, Downs, and Yeater 1998). However, there are also important cultural aspects of sexual harassment (Keyton 1996, Keyton and Menzie 2007, Luthar and Luthar 2008, Merkin 2012). Organizational culture and norms influence the likelihood of sexual harassment (Pryor, Giedd, and Williams 1995, Paetzold 2004:167). Gutek and Morash (1982) find, for example, that sexual harassment is more common in organizations where sexual-based behavior is integrated in the job or in organizations based on traditional gender roles. Joann Keyton claims, however, that sexual harassment is most of all a communicative *phenomenon* (Keyton and Menzie 2007, Keyton 1996). “The locus of power exists within the contextualization of the work environment, and the relationship through which power is expressed exists within the interaction” (Keyton and Menzie 2007:96).

In explaining harassment in the performing arts, it is thus relevant to include both the organizational culture and the communicative aspects when exploring what may influence the risk of harassing behavior.

Part one: Uncovering harassing behavior

In part one of this paper, we will present the results of a survey on sexual harassment among actors that we conducted in collaboration with the Norwegian Actors' Equity Association among Norwegian actors in 2010.

Survey method

Sexual harassment has been a subject for research since the late 1970s (Wiener and Gutek 1999). A wide range of studies have been conducted, using several different methods. Most important, perhaps, is that the questionnaire differs; some studies use a single-item question about self-labeled exposure to sexual harassment, other studies use an extensive list covering a wide range of potential harassing behavior (Nielsen et al. 2010). It has also been an issue that some of these studies focus predominantly on women. These factors have made it difficult to make good comparisons and therefore to assess whether sexual harassment in some occupations (e.g. among actors) are more frequent than in other occupations.

In this study, our main comparative ambition was to compare sexual harassment among actors with other Norwegian employees. Methodologically, we therefore based our survey on a large research project on bullying, harassment and destructive leadership in Norwegian working life where one part focused particularly on sexual harassment (in the following referred to as the Bergen study (Einarsen et al. 2007)). The basis for this study was a validated methodological work (Nielsen et al. 2010). The Bergen study was based on a survey sent to a random sample of 4500 employees that were drawn from the Norwegian Central Employee Register by Statistics Norway (SSB) with a response rate of approximately 50% (Nielsen et al. 2010). Although this study was conducted five years earlier, we consider it highly suitable for comparisons. There are few indications

that the prevalence of sexual harassment as a phenomenon has changed substantially over some few years.

The study of sexual harassment among actors was designed as a digital survey sent out to all the members of the Norwegian Actors' Equity Association with an operative e-mail address (945 out of 1114 members). Union membership is generally high among Norwegian artists, estimated at approximately 75% among actors (Heian, Løyland, and Mangset 2008, Mangset et al. 2016). Our selection thus covers a large share of Norwegian actors, and especially those working as professional actors. Out of these 945 members, 536 persons answered the survey, giving us a response rate of 57%. We further limited the selection to those actors working more than 15 hours per week (in line with the Bergen study). We found an accordance between the age and gender of the respondents and the whole population and thereby indications of representativeness. Due to the sensitiveness of the topic, there is reason to believe that sexual harassment may be under reported in a survey like this.

The questionnaire of our study was developed based on the Bergen Sexual Harassment Scale (BSHS: Einarsen and Sørnum 1996) and similar questions and response options were used. In part one of the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they considered themselves to have been exposed to sexual harassment during the last six months without being presented with a certain definition of sexual harassment. The response alternatives were "no", "yes, to a certain extent", and "yes, to a large extent". In part two they were asked to report on exposure to sexual harassing behavior through an inventory consisting of 11 different incidents that may be defined as unwanted sexual attention (see table 2). In part three of the survey, the actors were asked if, when, how often and from whom they had experienced different incidents that could be defined as

unwanted sexual attention throughout their whole career. In addition, the actors were asked some questions concerning social life at their workplace, and questions concerning if and how they had reported harassment. In the end, they were asked some open questions on harassment, the answers to which we have included in the qualitative analysis in part two of the paper. In addition to this, variables on age, sex, seniority and work form were included.

The data has been analyzed both descriptively and through the use of a Latent Cluster Analysis (LCA), a method frequently used in later analyses of violence and harassing behavior (Nielsen et al. 2010, Giang and Graham 2008, Lee et al. 2007, Berkowitz, De Pedro, and Gilreath 2015). Through the use of LCA one is able to identify and classify similar individuals into latent classes based on a statistical analysis of patterns and relations among a set of variables (Giang and Graham 2008:205). In this survey we have performed the LCA on the eleven different incidents of unwanted sexual attention providing us with three latent clusters with common levels of exposure to sexual harassment. For more detailed descriptions of LCA, see Giang and Graham (2008).

Both the quantitative and the qualitative study were approved by the Norwegian Data Protection Official.

Sexual harassment of Norwegian actors

When asking whether the actors had been subjected to sexual harassment during the last six months, 5% of the actors answered to “a certain extent” while 0.4% answered to a “high degree”. The similar percentage for the population in general was 1.1% to “a certain extent” and 0.1 to a “high degree” (see table 1). The majority (77%) of this subsample were female, $\chi^2(1, N = 476) = 6,135, p < .01$.

TABLE 1

When reporting on specific incidents that may be defined as sexual harassment, we see an even clearer picture. 45% of the actors claimed that they have experienced at least one of these eleven behaviours over the last six months. Among employees in general, 18% reported the same. Actors report a larger frequency of harassing behaviour in all subcategories. The largest difference between actors and general employees we find in the subcategory “Unwanted enquiries/demands of sexual services with promise of rewards” (2.8 % vs 0.5 %) and “Unwanted telephone calls, text messages, or letters with sexual suggestions” (9.9 % vs 1.7 %).

In general, female actors are much more exposed to sexual harassment than their male colleagues. While 34% of the male actors reported exposure to one or several incidences of harassing behavior within the last six months, 53% of the women reported the same. If we compare gender differences among actors with gender differences among employees in general, we see that female actors are much more exposed to sexual harassment than females in general. Between male actors and men in the general, the difference is less prominent.

TABLE 2

In order to analyse differences in experience of harassing behaviour between subsamples, we conducted a Latent Class analyses (LCA). Similar to the Bergen study, a three-cluster solution yielded the best fit to the data (BIC = 3601.817; AIC = 3602.817; df = 383). The first cluster included 78.2 % of the respondents. The

respondents in cluster 1 were characterized by a mean conditional probability (CP) of 0.97 that they were “never” subjected to any sexually harassing behaviour during the last six months. The second cluster included 19.1 % of the respondents. The respondents in this cluster were also characterized by a high mean CP (0.70) that they were never subjected to any sexually harassing behaviour. The respondents in the third cluster consisted of 2.7 % of the respondents and were characterized by a mean CP of .25 of answering “2-5 times” and a .23 mean probability of answering “six times or more” on the questions about exposure to sexual harassment. The three clusters were labeled “Not sexually harassed”, “Unwanted sexual attention” and “Sexually harassed”. Gender differences were found in all three cluster (table x). However, the differences were only significant within the not sexually harassed cluster where women constituted 45.8% of the cluster ($\chi^2(2, N = 477) = 37,6, p < .01$) and within the unwanted sexual attention clusters where women constituted of 80 % of the cluster ($\chi^2(2, N = 477) = 32,8, p < .01$).

TABLE 3

We further examined possible effect of age (u29), relationship status, and forms of occupations (stage actor and screen actor) without finding significant differences.

In part three of the survey, we asked from whom the harassing behaviour had been addressed. When actors experience sexual harassment the harassing behavior mainly comes from either colleagues equally ranked or superior to them. 31.6% of those who have experienced some kind of sexual harassment during their whole career reported that other actors were responsible for this harassment. The respondents also reported that they experienced sexual harassment from non-artistic colleagues, such as technical crew and administrative employees (15.4%), and from the audience (15.4%). In particular, many actors experience “Unwanted telephone calls, text messages, or letters

with sexual suggestions” addressed from the audience.

When looking at harassment from a superior person, we find that 21% of those who reported to be subject of one or several harassing behaviors had experienced this from a director. 8.2% had experienced this from the artistic director, while respectively 22% and 2.8% had experienced this from a casting agent or a film producer.

TABLE 4

The actors who had experienced harassing behaviour were also asked if, and to whom, they had reported this incident. A striking result was that only 3.7% of those who had experienced some kind of sexual harassment had reported this to either the management (2.8%) or the union representative (0.9%). None of the respondents had been in contact with their personal safety representative, even though such a representative exists in all the institutional theatres in Norway. Besides keeping quiet about it (22.6%), most of the actors told one or several of their colleagues about such incidents (56.9%). This indicates that sexual harassment for the most part is a phenomenon that is not notified to responsible persons of the theatre organizations. However, this is not unique to the theatre world; the same tendency has also been found in studies of sexual harassment in other occupations (Benavides Espinoza and Cunningham 2010, Knapp et al. 1997).

The survey has given us a clearer picture of the prevalence of sexual harassment among actors. Actors are more exposed to sexual harassment than the general population.

Compared to the general population female actors are more exposed than their male colleagues. The harassing behaviour is addressed primarily by peer actors and superiors, such as directors or theatre managers. However, the quantitative data tell us little about *why* sexual harassment is so much more common among actors than among employees in general, and why female actors are more subjected to sexual harassment than their

male colleagues. Based on the qualitative interviews and the open answers in the survey we will now look at some aspects of the theatre culture and working processes that may help us to better understand the prevalence of sexual harassment in the theatre world.

Part two: Risk factors for harassing behaviour in the theatre world

In part two of this paper, we will present the main tendencies from the qualitative part of the study. More specifically we will point out some aspects of the work environment of theatre that seem to act as risk factors that possibly contribute to the high prevalence of sexual harassment.

Method

The qualitative interviews were planned in order to be able to elaborate on the results from the survey and to get a deeper understanding of the processes that shape the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the theatre world. In order to follow up one of the main findings from the survey – the finding that the harassing behavior primarily came from peer actors and superiors, such as directors and artistic directors – we limited the qualitative part to the artistic work environment of the theatre world.

In order to get access to the field and since the topic is quite sensitive, we had informal conversations with actors in the field before we started doing interviews. It turned out that it was relatively easy to recruit informants. We had to use some time to build a relationship of trust with each informant in advance of the interview. We decided to choose a small and “random” sample of actors in the field and not look for persons known for having specific experience with sexual harassment.

We chose a sample of seven informants for in-depth interviews. We wanted mainly to

interview actors and to include some informants with experience as directors and artistic directors. All informants except one are educated as actors. The last person is educated as a director. It is not uncommon to work in different positions during a professional career in the theatre field. Among our informants we have actors who have additional experience as directors, authors, and teachers of acting, and one who is also an experienced artistic director. The sample consists of four women and three men. The youngest informant was in the beginning of the thirties and the oldest in the beginning of the seventies at the time the interviews were conducted, which was in 2011 and 2012. In order to ensure anonymity, we will not give any further information about the informants. The interviews were conducted as semi-structured following an interview guide with reflections on the survey results, gender and culture and working processes of theatre as central topics. The length of the interviews varied between one and two hours.

All interviews have been recorded, transcribed and systematically analyzed. We conducted a thematic analysis of the interviews and the open answers from the survey. This means that the material was categorized in accordance with the main themes that appeared in the interviews. This made up the basis for looking for patterns of meaning that could shed light on the high prevalence of sexual harassment in the theatre world. The patterns of meaning that were found in the thematic analysis are presented in the next sections as *risk factors* for sexual harassment. These factors do not in themselves explain the high prevalence of sexual harassment in the theatre world, but they can help us to better understand how different aspects of the theatre context produce grey zones in which sexual harassment can be an outcome.

The working processes

A main point from the qualitative material is the emphasis put on attraction, intimacy and eroticism as key aspects of the work of actors. These aspects are seen as driving forces in the creative processes in which theatre performances are created. On this background, it is underlined that it is hard to draw a clear distinction between the positive and productive aspects of intimacy and eroticism, on the one hand, and violations to the trust that is established through the intimate work on the other. One of the informants expresses this in the following way:

What is so difficult about this subject is the attraction – you get into very intimate relations all the time when you play theatre or film. So you are very intimate, very close. You go beyond the normal limits in your private life. And when it is over you are supposed to turn it off. In a way it is a fictional world where eroticism, attraction, love, infatuation are driving forces. In a way it is a driving force to love your co-actor when you play an intimate couple.

According to our informants, intimacy and eroticism have to do with the work actors do and the roles and relations they play. A central part of the job of actors is to portray intimate couples and passionate love in ways that are authentic and compelling. In order to achieve this they underline that they relate to each other in ways that normally would be typical of private rather than professional life.

We are friends, we work together and we become fond of each other. This is related to how we work together. We play parents and children, we play lovers, we play very intimate roles. We play a lot during the rehearsals, we laugh a lot, we touch each other, we kiss, we hug, we cry, we do things other people don't do at work. (...) This means that the intimate boundaries are very different.

The intimate relations actors have to develop in their work are not only restricted to co-actors. The informants also emphasize the intimate relation to the director. One

informant puts it like this:

This is an erotic and thriving work place. If not sexuality in a very evident form, but the whole work situation is characterized by eroticism. It has to do with the way in which you cooperate with other actors. And more importantly it has to do with the relation between the director and the actor.

When the actors form their roles and search for their particular way of doing certain parts of plays, they rely heavily on input from the director. One of the informants describes this in a very interesting way:

It is the desire for another person. You think that the director or the co-actor, mostly the director, it is almost always he who has the power. You want the director in a way to give you pixie dust that enables your success, that releases you in your role.

From this quote, the director is almost understood to be a magician. The director is seen as a person with extraordinary abilities to release the potential of the actor and to create real art. The actors believe in the director. This means that an intimate relation between the director and the actors is established.

It is underlined in the interviews that the intimate and emotional relation between the actor and the director leads to situations where the border between positive and productive interventions from the director and violations is a floating one. One of the informants illustrates this point with the film 'Black Swan'ⁱⁱⁱ. Even though the film is about another art form – classical ballet – the informant points out what she finds is a similarity between the relation choreographer/dancer and director/actor:

Another example is the film Black Swan, where you have the vulnerable relationship between the choreographer and the dancer and where she puts her fate in his hands and where he asks her to be sexy. In a way, he asks her to be at his disposal. And there the borders are completely... because maybe, what I find so

uncomfortable with the film is that he might be right. She needs it, but then he crosses the border and abuses the situation. And there are countless examples of the floating borders. After all, what is harassment? I think that 'Black Swan' is a very good reference. It illustrates that the want and need to be seen by the director is double-edged.

Eroticism seems to be an ambiguous aspect of the theatre world. On the one hand, eroticism is acknowledged as a driving force of the creative processes within the theatre world itself. Eroticism is seen as a decisive aspect of theatre – without eroticism theatre would not be theatre. On the other hand, the erotic character of the work makes actors vulnerable to possible violations. This is especially related to the perception of sexual harassment being a phenomenon that is difficult to define. The floating borders and the grey zones that this erotic aspect of the work process of theatre produce represent what we want to highlight as one of the risk factors of sexual harassment in the theatre world.

In order to understand the prevalence of sexual harassment in the theatre world, the informants not only point out the working processes of theatre, but also the recruitment processes.

The recruitment processes

According to our informants, the recruitment processes for acting jobs in Norway are very much of an informal nature. Acting jobs are mostly not announced in formal channels although auditions are arranged from time to time. Further, our informants underline that you have to be present at events and parties and you have to develop good relations with potential employers, such as directors and artistic directors, in order to build a career in the theatre world. When asked how you should proceed if you want theatre jobs, one of the informants answers: "Actually, you have to go to opening nights, meet the directors, sit on their laps." Another informant points out that the

relationship with the artistic directors is crucial:

Traditionally, the artistic directors have been very supreme persons on the top of the organization. And where you do all you can to win the favor of the artistic director. This has been the way to build a career, to get a good relationship with an artistic director.

In addition to the informal character of the recruitment processes, it is underlined that there is hard competition for acting jobs and that this means that actors have to be willing to go to great lengths in order to succeed. One of the informants says:

In addition, the acting occupation is... many want to be an actor and there are many actors, few jobs. You have to go to great lengths in order to get these jobs. This means that you feel in one way or the other obliged or forced to..., that you are in a situation where you easily can be subjected to sexual harassment without reporting it.

The informant specifies that this is particularly the case for female actors who have to work hard to get jobs because their career is much shorter than the careers of male actors. This is related to an established pattern in the theatre world that women are less attractive for acting jobs when they enter their forties. As a woman you have to make sure not to squander your chances:

And this desperation for getting a job, because there are few jobs. It is extremely difficult to make a living as an actor. You have to, especially if you are a woman, because your career is maybe only ten years long. You have the years from your graduation from the theatre school until you are 40. It is in those years you have the possibility to get a breakthrough. And I suppose many women go to great lengths in order to get jobs. And this is a situation men utilize with sexual advances or harassment.

The different career patterns and possibilities for female and male actors are emphasized both in the interviews and in answers to the open questions of the survey.

The following quote from the survey is typical:

There exists another type of harassment which has something to do with sexuality=age / gender discrimination. You should pursue young sexuality, not experienced and purposeful femininity, to be an object of attraction on stage.

Quite similarly, another informant from the survey underlines that there are different rules for male and female actors regarding the ideal look.

I think the question of the body is interesting. I experience that it is more allowed for male actors to be corpulent and out of shape than for their female colleagues.

The view that the (sexual) attractiveness of the actors is an important criterion in the recruitment processes is confirmed by the informants with experience as directors and artistic directors. The informant who works as a director explains:

You can talk very degradingly about actors with artistic directors for example. (...) Talk about their looks, for example, in a very very explicit way. (...) You can often hear things like 'She's not sexy'. You hear that a lot. It is common. And it is an argument against using that person in a role. (...) It can be descriptions of why he or she (it can be a he too), won't succeed in the role. That they lack the... And it is also usual to say: 'Yes, but she is so lovely. She is so pretty.' And it is said as something positive in terms of whether she should be given a particular role.

In a similar way, the artistic director tells that eroticism is important in the casting process:

I also find myself talking about the actors who are totally missing sex. The sexual charisma, meaning the erotic power that an actor MUST have in order to make (...) Eroticism is a strong and very important means in the theatre process.

The expression 'sexual charisma' is interesting here. The celebration of the charisma of the actors seems to be related to what is perceived as the reproduction of stereotypical gender roles in the theatre world. As one of the informants puts it: "Theatre cultivates

the stereotypical understanding of gender.”

The qualitative material indicates that the sexual attractiveness of the actors is important in recruitment processes. Further, this aspect seems to make the competition for female actors harder than for male artists since it weakens their career opportunities after they have reached the age of forty. The hard competition, the emphasis on sexual attraction and the practice of going to great lengths in order to get jobs seem to make the recruitment process into a risk factor for sexual harassment in the theatre world.

Related both to the working processes and to the recruitment processes, we have seen that actors should do whatever possible to accomplish their goals. This leads us to the third risk factor that the qualitative analysis revealed.

The rules of art

The ideal for the actors seems to be to sacrifice whatever is necessary to succeed in their role. In order to create great theatre there seems to be an acceptance for behaviors and attitudes that would be seen as violations in other parts of work life. One of our informants tells us that performing your role as well as possible takes precedence over almost everything else:

I think that all actors feel that the theatre performance and your role is the most important. And it means that we are willing to sacrifice a lot of our own integrity if it is for the best of the performance.

The informant underlines that when you work with theatre, the artistic quality of the performance should be the number one priority of all involved. Other considerations should not be brought into focus. Art itself is the value that is

celebrated. The informant continued to underline that focusing on art alone is important to secure good relations in the theatre world:

In addition, you want to have a good relation to the director in order to contribute to a good atmosphere at the rehearsals.

According to our informants it is an unwritten rule that, in order to be seen as a valuable contributor to the working process and the atmosphere, you should be docile and pleasant.

You do your best to show your best sides. And in theatre it is often about being sexy and pretty and performing your tasks. You should not be difficult.

The informants also tell about uncomfortable incidents that they claim are quite common, but that this is a part of their work life that seldom is cracked down on.

If the director pinches the girls on the buttocks or the breasts. It is quite common in situations where the director explains a stage or something. Those types of things. And I suppose many women feel uncomfortable. (...) There is an acceptance for it. (...) At the theatre school I also saw the same thing. Teachers who were physical with the students in a way I considered to be unnecessary.

In this way, it seems as if art casts a shadow under which many difficult situations arise that actors more or less feel doomed to live with. This means that addressing formal rules and ethical standards might be risky if you are a part of a work culture where art is celebrated as the highest value. The lack of attention to other values than art in this way also seems to be a risk factor for sexual harassment in the theatre world.

Discussion

In the research literature on sexual harassment in work life, organizational culture has been emphasized as important. In particular, it has been underlined that sexual harassment is more likely when sexual-based behavior is integrated in the job or when

we have to do with traditional gender roles (Gutek and Morash 1982). This study substantiates these relations. Theatre is described as a work environment in which eroticism and stereotypical gender roles are core characteristics. Further, we want to discuss the possible relation of the identified risk factors for sexual harassment in theatre to charismatic leadership.

Previous research underlines that the organizational culture of art organizations in general (Nisbett and Walmsley 2016, Bourdieu 1993) and theatre organizations in particular (Mangset, Kleppe, and Røyseng 2012, Røyseng 2007, 2008) is characterized by charismatic leadership. In this research, it has been underlined that charismatic authority is the most important power base in the theatre world. The most influential treatment of the concept of charismatic authority is inevitably to be found in the work of the classic sociologist Max Weber.

Weber applied the term charisma to “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, and at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities” (Weber 2013 [1922]:241). Artistic leaders in the theatre world such as directors and artistic directors seem to be treated as charismatic in this sense. Especially, this seem to be important in the working processes of theatre productions where actors put their trust in the input they get from the director.

According to Weber, it is typical for what he called ‘charismatic communities’ that they are developed around the belief in the superhuman abilities of the leader. Being part of such a community means that you should recognize the genuineness of the charismatic leader and act accordingly. Weber underlines that the recognition in question psychologically takes form as a “complete personal devotion” (Weber 2013

[1922]:242). In this way, the relations that are developed in charismatic communities are strictly personal. Emotional ties are characteristic (Weber 2013 [1922]:246). The working processes of the theatre seem to be based on similar principles. Also more recent research (Nisbet and Walsmley 2016) underlines that charismatic leadership causes followers “to become highly committed to the leader’s mission, to make significant personal sacrifice in the interest of the mission, and to perform above and beyond the call of duty” (Fiol, Harris, and House 1999:451).

According to Weber, charisma is related to the body of the bearer of it. He saw charisma as an embodied quality. This is also an interesting aspect related to the descriptions of the working processes in theatre that were given in the interviews. Theatre work is characterized as being more intimate and focused on bodily interaction than other parts of work life. Physical contact is common, also between the director and the actors. Here the charismatic aspect seems to intersect with eroticism as one of the driving forces of theatre work. This intersection is presented both as productive to the performance of those involved and as problematic in that it creates grey zones between what is wanted and unwanted behavior from superior and peer colleagues.

Weber’s concept of charismatic authority contrasts his concept of legal-rational authority which he identified with bureaucratic institutions. He underlined that while bureaucratic organizations put main emphasis on formal competence in recruiting new workers, the opposite is typical of organizations based on charismatic authority (Weber 2013 [1922]:243). The recruitment processes of theatre is described as informal in this study. To make yourself attractive in acting jobs you have to be present at different events (e.g. parties), and you have to make sure to develop good relationships with those in power to hire you.

In addition, Weber claimed that charisma potentially overshadows other value hierarchies:

The bearer of charisma enjoys loyalty and authority by virtue of a mission believed to be embodied in him; this mission has not necessarily and not always been revolutionary, but in its most charismatic forms it has inverted all value hierarchies and overthrown custom, law and tradition (Weber 1978:1117).

In this way, Weber described charismatic authority as a power with the potential of trumping other rationalities. In a similar way, we find that art, i.e. artistic mission and artistic performance, is seen as the highest value in the theatre world. Other values and considerations should be downplayed.

Conclusion

The first aim of this paper was to document the prevalence of sexual harassment in the theatre world compared to work life in general in the Norwegian context. Based on a survey we have shown that sexual harassment has a high prevalence in the theatre world. In addition, we found that female actors are especially exposed to sexual harassment. The survey also uncovers that most of the harassing behavior came from peer actors or from superiors, such as directors and artistic directors.

The second aim of the paper was to explore qualitative aspects that could shed light on the relatively high prevalence of sexual harassment in the theatre world. We found that the eroticism that was emphasized as an important part of the work processes, the hard competition that characterized the recruitment processes (including the emphasis on sexual attractiveness) and the celebration of art as the highest value represent risk factors for sexual harassment in the theatre world.

As we have discussed, we think that our main findings should be seen in the light of

charismatic leadership being a central characteristic of the theatre world. In line with the theory of Weber, charismatic leadership has been associated with change leadership. Charisma has been understood as a revolutionary force and a considerable amount of leadership literature has emphasized the importance of charisma in change leadership (Bryman 1992, Conger and Kanungo 1998). According to Levay (2010), this is a premise that should be problematized. Charismatic leadership should rather be understood as a vehicle for reproduction. Our study indicates something similar. It might be argued that the importance of charismatic authority in the theatre world is producing a work culture in which art overshadows other considerations and in turn reproduces gender stereotypes and gender discrimination. When art is celebrated as the highest value, other aspects of the work culture can continue to exist more or less uninterrupted, also when these aspects are problematic. The high prevalence of sexual harassment seems to be one of the results thereof.

The survey presented in the paper shows that sexual harassment is seldom reported to superiors or other formal representatives. It is something you should keep quiet about. Sexual harassment is an aspect of the work culture that seems to be spoken very little about in the theatre community. In addition, we found that informality is a central characteristic of theatre culture. However, informality literally means that there are no formal rules or procedures you can appeal to in cases of violations. The expectation that you should tolerate harassing behavior is in line with previous studies of sexual harassment that suggest that individuals who need to appear in a socially desirable light will be motivated to ignore sexual harassment (Barak, Fisher, and Houston 1992). This might explain why sexual harassment seems to be a problem that is very seldom spoken about in the theatre world.

It is not within the scope of this paper to point out how sexual harassment should be dealt with in order to reduce the problem in the theatre world. However, we believe that it is a good starting point to begin to talk about the problem. In line with Nisbet and Walmsley's critique of charismatic leadership in arts organizations (2016) we think that bringing in ethical considerations to balance the power that charisma plays might be fruitful. Another suggestion would be to formalize some of the structures around the work and recruitment processes of theatre. Informality gives the involved no safety net when violations occur.

Sexual harassment is a topic that has been subject to little scholarly research in the area of arts management. This paper has solely focused on the theatre world. Therefore, it is an open question as to whether the relation between charismatic authority and sexual harassment will also be found in other parts of the art world, or outside the art world for that matter. This question might be a topic for further research.

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ⁱ Our translation.

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=3437&artikel=3429689>, downloaded 12 January 2015.

ⁱⁱ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/15/theater/sex-and-violence-beyond-the-script.html?_r=1, downloaded 9 April 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Black Swan is an American psychological thriller film from 2010 directed by Darren Aronofsky.

Table 1: Degree of self-reported sexual harassment within Norwegian employees in general and members of Norwegian Actors Equality Association. Question: During the last six months, have you been subjected to sexual harassment?

	<i>Employees in general</i>			<i>Members Norwegian Actors E A</i>		
	N	Certain extent	High degree	N	Certain extent	High degree
<i>Total</i>	2349	1.1%	0.1%	477	5.0%	0.4%
<i>Women</i>	1233	1.6%	0.1%	254	7.5%	0.4%
<i>Men</i>	1116	0.4%	0.1%	223	2.2%	0.4%

Table 2: Exposure to one or several sexual harassing behaviors within last six month among members of Norwegian Actors Equality Association compared to Norwegian employees in general.

Behavior	Actors (TRI)			General (BBRG)
	Men	Women	Total	Total
Unwanted comments about your body, clothing or way of living	11,3	32,3	22,5	10,8
Other unwanted verbal comments with sexual content	12,1	31,2	22,2	8
Picture or objects with sexual content, which you experienced as undesirable or unpleasant	2,7	7,5	5,3	3,7
Being the object of rumors with sexual content	8,6	23,4	9,0	2,2
Sexual charge staring or glances, which felt uncomfortable	8,6	23,4	16,5	4,4
Unwanted telephone calls, text messages, or letters with sexual suggestions	6,3	13,1	9,9	1,7
Unwanted physical contact with sexual suggestions	6,3	21,7	14,4	4,1
Unwanted sexual approaches that you experienced as uncomfortable, but which did not contain promises of rewards or threats of punishments or sanctions	4,0	12,4	8,5	1,8
Unwanted enquiries/demands of sexual services with promise of rewards	0,9	4,4	2,8	0,5
Unwanted enquiries/demands of sexual services with threats of punishments or sanctions	0,0	1,6	0,9	0,3
Sexual assaults, attempts at rape, or actual rape	0,0	0,8	0,4	0,1
Exposed to one or several of harassing behavior	11,3	32,3	22,5	10,8

Table 3 Gender distribution (%) within Three Latent Class Clusters

	<i>Not sexually harassed</i>	<i>Unwanted sexual attention</i>	<i>Sexually harassed</i>
<i>Men</i>	54,2	19,8	23,1

Women | 45,8 80,2 76,9

Table 4: Reported perceived harasser of different harassing behaviour during their whole career.

	Theatre manager	Director	Actor	Caster	Film producer
Unwanted comments about your body, clothing or way of living	12,44	41,33	57,78	6,67	4,00
Other unwanted verbal comments with sexual content	9,88	29,07	52,91	4,07	1,74
Picture or objects with sexual content, which you experienced as undesirable or unpleasant	4,76	16,67	21,43	0,00	4,76
Being the object of rumors with sexual content	5,95	10,71	61,90	1,19	2,38
Sexual charge staring or glances, which felt uncomfortable	5,96	26,49	52,32	1,99	5,96
Unwanted telephone calls, text messages, or letters with sexual suggestions	1,16	2,33	8,14	0,00	0,00
Unwanted physical contact with sexual suggestions	9,33	23,33	50,67	1,33	3,33
Unwanted enquiries/demands of sexual services with promise of rewards	16,67	55,56	16,67	1,85	7,41
Unwanted enquiries/demands of sexual services with threats of punishments or sanctions	4,55	54,55	13,64	0,00	0,00
Sexual assaults, attempts at rape, or actual rape	11,76	5,88	29,41	0,00	0,00
total	13,5	41,8	64,6	5,8	7,4