



GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR

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Culture Action Europe – www.cultureactioneurope.org - rue Ravenstein 23 – B-1000 – Brussels – Belgium

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Gender Inequalities in the cultural sector

Culture Action Europe

Report compiled by Sandrine Pujar, April 2016

Through its over 130 members Culture Action Europe (CAE) gives voice to about 80.000 cultural organisations active in all disciplines across the EU and beyond, with the aim of putting culture at the heart of decisions-making process and the public debate, both at the European and local level. Since 1992 CAE – previously EFAH - promotes arts and cultural diversity as a cornerstone of the European project and as an essential component for sustainable democratic societies that want to forge a better life for the current and future generations.



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INTRODUCTION

Women are strongly represented and even overrepresented in the cultural and creative sector, or at least in some fields of this sector. However, despite what one could think when looking at their quantitative superiority in public cultural institutions or programmes of higher education in culture management and the arts, the creative sector is far from offering equal opportunities for women and men. The barriers found in the creative sector for women are not different from those observed in other economic sectors.

Such conclusions can look all the more surprising since the commonly shared perception of the culture and arts world might let one think that it is immune to problems of gender inequality affecting other professional sectors. Prejudices about the cultural sphere prevent some from being aware and even imagining the existence of discriminatory practices. According to Fleur Pellerin, former French Minister of Culture and Education, many people “believe that the world of art and more generally the world of culture, is fundamentally based on a spirit of freedom, an opposition to prejudices, and even by a certain taste for contravention” (Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity, UNESCO p.93). The creative sector is commonly and generally perceived as being “more easily accessible and open to all individuals” and as requiring a lower skills threshold.

Over the past two decades a few reports have been published in Europe on the topic, but most of the time at a national scale and in hardly more than one cultural field (public cultural institutions, art museums, heritage institutions, cultural industries) or artistic discipline (performing arts, music production, cinema, etc.) at a time. The first and only large-scale and transversal study conducted so far is UNESCO’s “Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity”, from 2014. My report thus will consist of a synthesis of the observations formulated in this landmark document, with those from the above-mentioned per-discipline analyses by European researchers, since Europe is the focus of this paper. This does not mean however that the present paper will not resort sometimes to examples from other parts of the world when they are particularly enlightening to understand what is at stake. First, it shall be demonstrated why ensuring gender equality particularly in the cultural sector is capital. Then it will be described how gender inequalities manifest themselves on the ground, why, in the way they do and how cultural actors can try to overcome them.

GENDER EQUALITY IN “CULTURE”: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The Human Rights perspective

“At present, gender discrimination is so frequently defended by reference to culture, religion and tradition that it seems safe to conclude that no social group has suffered greater violation of human rights in the name of culture than women.”¹

Farida Shaheed, UNESCO’s Special Rapporteur
in the field of cultural rights

Because access and participation in culture is a fundamental right and fundamental rights apply to everyone “without distinction of any kind” including gender...

Regarding access, participation and contribution to culture, which will be - in what follows -referred to as cultural rights, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 states that *“everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”* (Article 27, paragraph 1).

But this comes only after article 2 of the same text has specified that the “everyone” who is referred to and “is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration”, includes absolutely all individuals, all human beings *“without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”*.

So the gender equality principle – among others – is enshrined in the UDHR like a watchdog set in front of any authority who would be tempted to deprive someone or a particular category of people, man or woman, from the enjoyment of their cultural rights.

¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Gender Equality : Heritage and Creativity, “ Foreword by Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights ”, UNESCO, Paris, 2014

More broadly, one can see in the combination of articles 2 and 27 an early expression and defence of the principle of diversity of cultural expressions, whose recognition would later culminate with the adoption of the **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions** by 140 States in 2005. Gender, which similar to all the criteria mentioned in the UDHR (colour, language, religion, national or social origin, property, etc.) is a form of diversity, can be an unexpectedly complex issue that goes beyond the male/female division. In her chapter of the UNESCO study dedicated to “Gender and Intangible Cultural Heritage”, Janet Blake reports that “some native North American tribal groups recognize up to seven different genders, including transgender and double-spirited people” (UNESCO report, p.51). By virtue of the principle of diversity of cultural expressions, special attention is paid in the Convention to the status and role of women in society. With the aim to contribute to a new international framework for the governance and management of culture, the Convention “ensures artists, cultural professionals, practitioners and citizens worldwide can create, produce, disseminate and enjoy a broad range of cultural goods, services and activities, including their own”², provided that due attention is being paid to “*the special circumstances and needs of women as well as various social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples*” (article 7 of the Convention). This shows awareness of the fact that gender-blind access to human rights, cultural rights in this case, is neither granted nor obvious and suggests that respect for diversity (of cultural expressions) as a norm is less welcome in certain contexts than it is in others.

In this regard, the UDHR was careful to add to its first set of safeguards against potential discrimination (principles of equality between individuals) a second one, not linked this time to social boundaries but related to geopolitical ones:

“Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty”(art.2). Cultural/Human Rights are for anyone (whether women or men) anywhere.

“And therein lies the problem!”, some would say. How can the United Nations advocate for the universal character of what they present as fundamental human rights and recognize at the same time the diversity of cultural expressions, knowing that cultural specificities are often used as a justification to explain and legitimate the existence of human rights violations, among which are gender-based discriminatory practices (especially against women)? When human rights and

²<http://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/about>

women rights in particular are contested for being 'alien', contradictory to, in opposition with particular cultures, what is said to be universal is rejected for being nothing more than 'western' - according to those who don't want to subscribe.

The Universalism vs. Relativism debate is a recurrent one, which has been treated extensively in international literature on human rights since the 1960s. In her foreword to the report "Gender Equality: Heritage and Creativity", UNESCO Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural right, Farida Shaheed, reiterates some of the arguments commonly used against those who would argue that struggling for women's human or cultural rights and gender equality is disrespectful of cultures, traditions or religions giving lower status to women than to men, and are threatening the diversity of cultural expressions on the pretext of universalism.

The reason why discourses claiming that women should not benefit from the same rights as men has little relevance, is that they are based on the idea that this is how things work, have always worked and must keep on working in given societies; and that the communities who perpetuate allegedly discriminatory traditions are doing nothing but safeguarding and transmitting an immutable and invaluable heritage. The point is that these discourses present cultures as being "monolithic, static, ahistorical"(UNESCO report, p.5), thus essentializing them.

Yet, as reminded by Shaheed, "culture is never static and is constantly evolving. Cultural practices evolve or are discarded as community perceptions shift and alternatives are pursued". History and historical changes have proved that nothing is "essential". Things are what they are at one point - and change - because of a game of power, because of the state of power relations at a given time. So that the question to be answered when trying to understand the functioning of a society is "who holds the power?". And in the case of culture which can be described as what defines a community's collective identity and ensure social cohesion, one may ask: "who in the community holds the power to define its collective identity?"

How does the state of power relations between men and women (and more groups) in a given society shape the prevailing definition of gender and genders' roles? Culture and gender are social constructions, the result of fluctuating power relations. This is why essentializing discourses cannot be accepted as valid arguments to claim that a particular culture is intrinsically discriminatory to women.

Invoking culture (cultural specificities) to justify gender-based discriminations prevent people from holding accountable the institutions, authorities and actors

who maintain such rules. It is necessary to adopt a reflective critical and analytical view to understand and explain the power relations that underpin discriminatory practices embedded in many societies, institutions, structures at all levels, starting with family. But since there is no way to irrefutably demonstrate that only one or more groups should hold power over the others, or that one or more groups should have no or little right to express themselves, why not give all a chance to contribute to the definition of their community's collective identity which is not written in stone? The maintaining of community cohesion should not be detrimental to one group in the community and to women in particular.

That being said, Shaheed also stresses that the question when adopting a human rights perspective is not to determine "whether and how culture and tradition prevail over women's human rights but how to ensure that women own both their culture, including religion and tradition, and their human rights" (UNESCO report, p. 5). It is not so much about trying to impose to different cultures a new hierarchy of their priorities - women's human rights over tradition instead of the contrary - as about ensuring that women have equal say as men in the definition of what makes tradition. Did they agree with it, subscribe to it, take part in the discussions leading to the validation of the practice and were they listened to as seriously as their male counterparts? It is about women's empowerment.

Concretely, for Shaheed women should enjoy "the right to equally determine and interpret cultural heritage; decide which cultural traditions, values or practices are to be kept intact; which are to be retained but modified, and which are to be discarded altogether. The right to participation includes the right not to participate in any ritual, custom or practice which contravenes the human dignity of girls and women, regardless of cultural justifications. Women and girls must enjoy the freedom to join, leave and re-join as well as create new communities of shared cultural values around any markers of identity they want to privilege, without fear of punitive actions, including any form of violence."

What about when women themselves subscribe to discriminatory practices that apparently harm them? Regarding the cases when women encourage traditional discriminatory practices against themselves, Janet Blake declares that one should investigate the social function of the practice and analyse the gender dynamics at play. It might be that the practice serves a social, economical or other purpose for a particular group so one should wonder through which kind of other alternative these needs could be fulfilled. "While it is vital to tackle social norms and taboos that result in discrimination and recognise that victims may often collude in their victimization for many reasons, communities also need to become aware of what these are in order to address them appropriately and in terms acceptable to the people involved"(UNESCO report, p. 53)

The challenge for gender equality and human rights defenders in general, is to ensure that these rights are strongly embraced, legitimized, and internalized by the individuals of all human societies despite cultural diversity. Otherwise, there is no chance that they will be implemented in practice. To this end, any principle of human rights needs to get a cultural translation matching each community, to be, as Farida Shaheed puts it, “vernacularized”, through, for example, “ initiatives that ground human rights concepts within the traditions of diverse cultures” (UNESCO Report, p.6). Human rights principles must contribute to perpetuate the existence of diverse cultures with their specificities but they cannot be used to shield gender-based discriminatory practices from criticism.

The “Culture’s-transformative-power” perspective

“Heritage is gendered, in that it is too often ‘masculine’, and tells a predominantly male-centred story promoting a masculine...vision of past and present.”

Laurajane Smith in “Heritage, Gender and Identity”, 2008³

Because culture is where society is both mirrored and shaped, with or without gender inequalities, it’s the perfect playground to question gender-related norms, to experiment, suggest and impose, to potentially large audiences, new visions of what things, reality could ideally - or should not - look like. How?

Through Heritage

Heritage is defined in the UNESCO report as *“a legacy from past generations, cherished in the present for its recognised aesthetic, spiritual and social values within society. It comprises historic monuments, cultural properties and artefacts, landscapes, natural environments, as well as intangible, or living, heritage. These same values compel individuals, groups and communities to draw significance and enjoyment from their heritage in the present, and to transmit it to future generations.”* (UNESCO report, p. 33)

The fact that the “aesthetic, spiritual and social values” of the ancestor’s legacy need to be “recognised” in order to be called heritage, shows that it is the result of a choice. This choice mirrors the values that a society decides to transmit and the way it wants to define itself. “Who defines what heritage is and its significance? Who decides the collective identity? Who speaks? Who is heard? Who benefits and who is disadvantaged? Who can access and enjoy heritage? Who decides limitations to heritage? Who has the power to make decisions over individual and community resources? Who decides which heritage expressions deserve protection?” These are some of the questions raised in the UNESCO report. Once again, as for any other element belonging to culture, and as discussed before, power relations –

³ Smith, L. 2008. “Heritage, Gender and Identity”. B. Graham and P. Howard (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing. Quoted in the UNESCO report p.54

undoubtedly also power relations between genders - are involved in these decisions. Powerless individuals and groups within a society won't participate to the same extent as others in the selection of the things which deserve to be considered heritage and it seems that women are in a weak position.

One has to look no further than cinema's version of art history in order to get a good illustration of Laurajane Smith's statement about the predominantly masculine character of heritage. At the end of the book "Film and the Visual Arts"⁴, Steven Jacobs provides us with a list of "feature films having an artist as the main character". He indicates that "only 'real' (but of course fictionalized) professional artists and famous amateur and 'outsider' artists are included" (Jacobs, 180-182). It is interesting to note that out of a total of 102 listed feature films on 71 artists until 2011 (year of the book publishing), only 7 biopics were dedicated to women artists. Fictions about art and artists - "art fictions", as H. Perry Chapman⁵ called them - are illustrations of what remains from the scholarly works coming from the universities or official institutions of knowledge production, when they are exploited in popular forms of artistic expression concerned with artistic subjects.

The results of Jacobs' survey on biopics of artists are thus quite representative of male-artist's long supremacy in the field of historical research and of the obscurity, by contrast, surrounding the life courses of women artists whose works and name often remain hidden from (art) history and heritage by extension.

As confirmed by the UNESCO report, women's contribution to the creation of heritage is undervalued and they are often deprived from the possibility to participate in its identification. In heritage interpretation, their role is often restricted to "bearing and birthing the men who succeeded to it" (p.34). The exclusion of women's contributions to the creation of heritage is partly due to the fact that in all societies, women's activities have been traditionally identified with, and relegated to, the private or domestic sphere, while the public sphere, seen as more relevant, important and prestigious, has historically been men's monopoly. In the same vein, the dismissal of certain forms of women's contributions to heritage is often explained by their belonging to what is considered as merely falling under female role (traditional food production and preparation, textile weaving and making pottery are some of the examples mentioned in the UNESCO report), rather than practices to be valued and safeguarded as heritage.

Moreover, gender considerations have been proved to sometimes limit researchers' access to information and heritage locations. The UNESCO report mentions cases

⁴ Jacobs, Steven. *Framing Pictures: Film and The Visual Arts*, Edinburgh University Press, 2011

⁵ Chapman, H. Perry. "Art Fiction", in *Art History*, Vol. 32(4), September 2009, pp. 785-805

when because of gender restrictions and protocols, male researchers were not allowed to interview and record female knowledge holders on women's affairs, and likewise for female interviewers on men's affairs. These observations led to the conclusion that "gender roles that render people invisible in their societies may also make them invisible to the external gaze" (p. 42). Yet, negative, rare or inexistent portrayal of women through a nation's heritage cannot but lead to a reinforcement of the contemporary inequalities suffered by them (unequal perception of their value, contribution to and usefulness for society). Women's underrepresentation and exclusion from heritage interpretation "counters pluralism in historical narratives and undermines women's contribution to, and recognition within heritage" (UNESCO report, p.39).

However, due to the fluctuations of power relations throughout history, heritage, as culture, is not static but submitted to changes in "circumstances, needs, knowledge and values" (p. 33). The conditions governing heritage identification, interpretation, access, safeguarding and transmission have sometimes evolved toward greater inclusiveness.

For example, heritage practices which initially had gender restrictions are perceived or practiced today without restrictions. The report mentions cases when sex-specific transmission of heritage evolves and gets to include both women and men.

For example *compagnonnage* in France, a "network for on-the-job transmission of knowledge and identities and a training system for young people" which was previously for men only, now includes women. In addition, cases when heritage is practised exclusively by one sex do not imply that the other sex is excluded or discriminated. Actually, men and women often have complementary roles in heritage practice, interpretation, transmission and protection and initiatives are launched in order to raise awareness about the value of women's contribution to heritage. For instance, in order to enhance/foreground/highlight the craftsmanship of women lacemakers of Lefkara, Cyprus, and the importance of the intergenerational transmission of this heritage, apprenticeship workshops were organised for young female and male artists, educators, archaeologists and designers in 2013. Also, by referring to a traditional theatre practice in South Korea, *Namsadang Kari*, through which exclusively male actors perform a social satire that mirrors issues such as "the oppression of women in a male-dominated society" (p. 36), the report shows how heritage can become a platform for awareness-raising on social problems.

"Heritage's close connection to identity makes it a potent instrument of voice and representation for individuals, groups and nations". Consequently, opening heritage access, creation, identification, interpretation and transmission to both women and

men would have two effects. On one side, it would efficiently contribute to challenge gender norms and stereotypes by raising awareness about them and help audiences to question them. On the other side, it would strengthen the value of heritage practices within communities, given that with more people involved and feeling concerned, heritage becomes more representative of society's diversity and gains greater support.

Through creative expression

We have focused mainly on heritage so far, but the same conclusions could be drawn for creative expression. Indeed, creativity “draws together [not only] tradition, [but also] imagination and innovation” (UNESCO report, p.75). It offers individuals the opportunity to question existing norms, to reinterpret values and identity narratives, to propose alternative discourses and practices around many issues, including gender equality and in many different aspects of life (the cultural as well as the socio-economic and political ones).

Culture has a real transformative power over society, through the potential of both creative expression and heritage to impact and change minds, perceptions and opinions, to initiate, impulse social transformation by opening spaces for social dialogue. Heritage and creative expression have the potential to empower women not only from a social, civic and political point of view, but also from an economic one, provided that their freedom of expression is ensured and respected on one hand and promoted through employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the cultural industries and activities on the other hand.

The project with the Cypriot lacemakers not only highlighted these women's contribution to heritage but also “boosted their teaching and income-generating activities”. Indeed, the development of a tourist economy around heritage sites for example and the commerce of cultural goods constitute a financial windfall whose benefits could be shared by a greater number of women, for the benefit of their communities' overall development (social inclusion, progressive eradication of poverty and economic growth through enlarged ownership of development processes). This aspect of the positive effects associated with gender equality in culture will be discussed in the following point. But it appears clearly now that women's enjoyment of their cultural rights (access, participation and contribution to culture) goes hand in hand or even paves the way for the realisation of their other human rights.

The sustainable development perspective

“In its capacity to address both the economic and social aspects of poverty, culture can enhance the integration of the social, economic and environmental aspects of development, which is a precondition for sustainability” (UNESCO report, p.76).

Because culture is a driver of sustainable development and sustainable development cannot be achieved without gender equality

Over the past 60 years, gender equality and access and participation to culture have come from being seen respectively as a prerequisite for the realization of human rights and one of the fundamental human rights, to being internationally recognised as tools to achieve global sustainable development. The evolution of the international literature produced on these subjects since the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, mostly under the United Nations’ impulse, mirrors this shift of focus.

In 2000, gender equality was one of the eight **Millennium Development Goals** identified by the United Nations (MDG 3, “Promote gender equality and empower women”), with the aim of alleviating extreme poverty by 2015. The importance of this goal for global sustainable development was reaffirmed when last year, on September 25th 2015, world leaders made gender equality the fifth of the seventeen priorities selected for the **new 2030 agenda for sustainable development**. The underlying idea is that ensuring sustainable development implies *“recognizing and building on the capacities of each person and the available resources within his or her environment”*. Everybody, women as well as men, needs to be involved and mobilised. Societies cannot afford to leave aside one single group in the often gigantic effort required to lastingly fulfil their social, economic and environmental needs. That’s why guaranteeing the same rights to women and men is essential so they can all be given equal opportunity to contribute. Gender equality from this point of view, is *“not only a legitimate right, but also a social and political necessity”* (UNESCO Report, 16).

Culture was in turn to gain increasing recognition as a “driver and enabler” of sustainable development, with the 2013 *“Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies”*, adopted in China during a conference organised by UNESCO. The document stresses what a “source of meaning and energy, a wellspring of creativity and innovation” culture can be (enabler) and how it contributes “to inclusive, social, cultural and economic development, harmony, environmental sustainability, peace and security” (driver) (UNESCO, p. 14), especially when development policies take cultural contexts into account.

Regarding economic development, UNESCO’s report reveals that in 2011 “world trade of creative goods and services totalled a record US\$ 624 billion, with an average annual growth rate of the sector of 9 per cent since 2002”. These figures demonstrate that the cultural industries and the creative economy are an important sector for economic growth since it generates income and employment.

Thus both gender equality and culture are tools to achieve sustainable development. If culture is an enabler and driver of sustainable development it seems logical that efforts must be done to ensure access to culture for all. And if, as we demonstrated, sustainable development needs gender equality, sustainable development through culture cannot be achieved without gender equality. It has been proved that women help strengthening creative sectors (particularly in the developing countries) as much as the cultural and creative industries help strengthening their economic opportunities and active participation in public life. Once more, the two issues – gender equality and culture – are closely intertwined. This idea was validated in the **UN General Assembly resolution 68/223 on Culture and Sustainable Development** (20 December 2013), which highlighted the role of gender equality in achieving sustainable development through culture.

As a consequence, UNESCO stresses the importance of ensuring gender equality in access to income-generating activities and economic opportunities at and around cultural sites since it’s not always guaranteed. The case of the women divers “Haenyeo” of Jeju Island, Republic of Korea, is a good illustration of how women can be vulnerable in maintaining their livelihoods when faced with factors such as “the pressures of new technology or external competition due to their own weaker socio-economic position and more limited access to productive resources” (UNESCO, p. 44). This traditional practice, which has been passed down across generations from mother to daughter, is progressively losing its female-only character and female practitioners altogether. This is due to the recent rise of tourism on the island which has brought back into focus this particular form of diving, thereby increasing its income-generating potential. Attracted by the economic opportunity, new male divers with more sophisticated equipment imposed a very fierce competition on their female counterparts who lost control over the market. Beyond the economic

impact on these women's livelihood, their community might be about to lose "valuable knowledge of marine ecology on the basis of inherited teachings and direct experiences of the topography of the seabed, tidal time, wind, rocks and other marine resources". It's highly desirable to encourage women's participation in training activities in management when and where needed, so they can launch entrepreneurial initiatives and remain competitive.

This example also allows for some insight into how gender equality in culture can contribute to environmental sustainability. In its chapter dedicated to heritage, the UNESCO report highlights the importance of traditional knowledge of natural heritage environments in maintaining a balanced eco-system, food security, biodiversity and dealing with climate change impacts. Then, it reminds us that women traditionally play the role of keepers of biodiversity, especially in indigenous peoples' communities. Environmental and social impact assessments of projects which are likely to affect sacred sites, lands, waters traditionally occupied and used by indigenous and local communities are generally conducted with the cooperation of these communities and special attention should be given to the potential impact on women.

Lastly, the female divers of Jeju Island confirm the sustainable development specialists' idea that when considering a bottom-up approach to development fostering and opportunities through culture, it is necessary to take into account "*the resourcefulness, initiative and creativity that women exhibit in resolving their daily problems of survival*". In addition to resulting in "*important local forms of organisation, association and self help*", it turns out that "*this knowledge and coping strategies often form part of the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) practised and transmitted by women*" (p. 49).

For being a precondition to, and driver of, so many achievements in terms of overall development, gender equality logically had to be considered and incorporated transversally in all community policies including culture, and at every level of policy-making, from preparation to evaluation via implementation, not to mention regulatory measures and spending programmes. This strategy called "**gender mainstreaming**" was promoted at the 1995 **UN Fourth World Conference on Women** in Beijing and was endorsed as an official policy approach to gender equality by 189 countries, including the EU Member States, through the Beijing declaration.

In 1996, the European Commission considered that gender mainstreaming consisted of "not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures

specifically for the purpose of achieving equality”⁶. The EU later enshrined the strategy of gender mainstreaming in the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty and strengthened its legal basis in Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (*“In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women”,*2007). Twenty years after the Beijing Conference and Declaration, what can be said about gender equality in the particular field of culture?

⁶ Rosamund Shreeves, *Gender Mainstreaming in the EU : State of play*, European Parliament Research Service, 3 March 2016

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR: STATE OF THE PLAY

“Less female muses, and more female creators and directors. We will definitely benefit from the change, both individually and collectively.”

Fleur Pellerin, former French Minister of Culture and Communication⁷

Raw facts⁸

- “Gender gaps in cultural consumption”: Far more women than men consume cultural goods and more regularly.
- “Gender imbalance in higher education ” : Although there is a majority of women enrolled at university courses related to culture and the arts, the professional world does not mirror this pattern in terms of career progression.
- “ Unequal access to decision-making roles in cultural professions ”: Despite the strong feminine presence in cultural professions, men’s chances of career progression in that field are better than women’s (glass ceiling) and they also have more choices of career paths.
- Uneven distribution of women between the different types of cultural industries and activities and segregation into certain types of employment in cultural profession (glass walls). Women are overrepresented in the administration of public cultural institutions and the informal sector.

⁷ Quoted in the UNESCO report, p. 96

⁸ Main findings of the UNESCO survey, p. 24-25-81

- For women, the chances of “successful career trajectories to leadership positions” differ depending on the type of employment, of cultural industry and of institution. They have greater access to decision-making roles in public cultural institutions than in other areas of culture.
- Underrepresentation of female artists, theatre or movie directors, composers etc. in museum collections and in the programming of cultural institutions, and minor commercial value of works by women compared to works by male artists.
- The small number of women who reach top positions at decision-making level, as cultural gatekeepers or in professional networks does not necessarily make it easier for their peers to achieve the same level. The report underlines the lack of “a domino effect on the visibility and access potential of female entrepreneurs, operators and professionals to share, create and gain credibility with their peers” (UNESCO report, p. 81).

Main patterns with their causes. Work segregation by sex in the cultural industries: the impact of stereotypes

In the article "*Sex, gender and work segregation in the cultural industries*"⁹, David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, present the conclusions of a survey about work segregation by sex in the cultural industries (mainly in the industries of music, magazine publishing and television) in England. Both scholars are well-known specialists of the cultural industries in other western Anglophone countries. Moreover, their results are in line with the global patterns revealed by the UNESCO report. One can thus reasonably consider that their analysis of the particular manifestations of work segregation by sex in the creative field has some validity, relevance at least for other developed countries.

Baker and Hesmondhalgh start their article with the following observation: all existing societies tend to associate some particular kind of occupations or jobs to women ("*nursing, primary teaching, hairdressing and 'beauty work', certain kind of manufacturing work involving 'manual dexterity'*") and some others to men ("*mining, driving, professional catering, plumbing and car sales*"). The same happens within the cultural industries.

First, they highlight the uneven distribution of women between the different types of cultural industries: low percentages of women in interactive content (5%) and game industries (6%) vs. relatively high percentages in book publishing (61%), TV (41%), magazine publishing (48%), radio (47%) and relatively low percentages in the music industry (32%). At a global scale, the UNESCO study similarly reports female domination in public cultural institutions, large industries such as book publishing, knowledge-intensive service industries, terrestrial television, broadcast radio, cinema exhibition, arts education, newspaper and book retailing. The

⁹" *Sex, gender and work segregation in the cultural industries* ", *The Sociological Review*, 63 :S1, pp. 23-36 (2015)

audiovisual, music production and new media and digital industries (special effects, post-production, web and games content) count a majority of men.

Then, the two scholars underline the concentration of women and men in specific types of occupations within the cultural industries. Public relations and marketing are now mostly female tasks although they were almost exclusively male until the early 1970s, both in the cultural industries and other sectors of the economy. Jobs consisting of the co-ordination and the facilitation of production are also markedly 'female' whereas creative jobs which are considered more prestigious (directors) and technical ones (*"camera operators, editing, sound technicians, directors of photography, engineering and 'road managers' or roadies in the music industry"*) are occupied in majority by men. The few craft and technical jobs occupied by women (costume designers, make-up artists for example) are undervalued and at worst *"not even recognised as involving craft or technical skills at all"*. Creative management roles that are increasingly feminised (especially in television: commissioning editor or commissioner) may appear as an exception, but these jobs are actually *"more managerial than they are creative"*, since they are mostly about *"organising and handling the creative outputs of others"*.

So in the cultural industries, the division between creative and non-creative roles – prestigious roles and non-prestigious ones - is often layered over the division between respectively male and female tasks. Hesmondhalgh and Baker point to the example of the advertising industry in which, by the year 2000, women represented *"60% of finance and administrative workers, 54% of account handlers and 44% of media planners and buyers, but only 18% of creatives"* (lower percentage than in the 1990s). There is no need to say that these creative women hardly achieve the position of creative director; blame it on the glass ceiling.

The article invites us to avoid oversimplistic views of *"the relations between 'above the line' creative and 'below the line' technical and craft occupations"*. Indeed, creative workers receive very unequal reward even if the successful few mask the crowd of those who suffer uncertain work conditions, especially in some occupations such as acting where women are well represented. Technical jobs sometimes enjoy higher levels of union protection and can be more prestigious than facilitation and marketing roles mainly occupied by women. So women seem to be always disadvantaged anyway.

Hesmondhalgh and Baker give several reasons why feminists - and society at large - should be concerned with work segregation by sex in general:

- Inequality: *"jobs and occupations carried out by women rather than men tend to be paid less"*. The two scholars invite us to consider the differences in pay rates

between countries where a given occupation (dentists for instance) is dominated by men and countries where the same occupation is equally female and male or dominated by women. Dentists (mostly men) in the US earn far more money than their counterparts (equally or predominantly women) in parts of Europe.

“Work segregation by sex limits the autonomy, freedom and recognition accorded to individual women and men, which exacerbates inequality”. When a woman or man has the required skills to follow a career that is considered more appropriate to the other gender, he or she might feel reluctant to choose that career – provided she or he imagines it, which is not guaranteed - and finally renounce.

- Work segregation by sex limits not only individual flourishing (as mentioned previously) but also the collective one by *“inhibiting the way in which people’s talent might serve the common good”*. This was one of the arguments used to explain why gender equality is a precondition for sustainable development.
- Work segregation by sex is based on and reinforces social stereotypes which in turn reinforce gendered occupational segregation: it’s a vicious cycle. The fact that work segregation by sex conveys social stereotypes is highly problematic in the cultural and creative industries since these are where social representation is constructed, where society and culture/collective identity (with or without its inequalities but potentially with them) is not only mirrored but shaped.

How do social stereotypes impact the division of labour by sex in the cultural industries? The article proposes a classification of the stereotypes commonly attached to women and their supposed abilities or inabilities.

“Positive stereotypes”	“Negative stereotypes”	“Neutral or ambivalent stereotypes”
<p>Caring nature, skilled in domestic work, greater manual dexterity, trustworthiness and attractiveness, greater communication and presentational skills</p> <p>Related occupations Nursing, teaching, social work, hairdressing, dressmaking, book-keeping, reception, shop assistant work</p>	<p>Less able to supervise others, less physical strength, less able in science and maths, less willing to travel or to face danger and use physical force</p> <p>Related occupations This explains the male domination in activities such as management, mining, construction work, engineering, transport, security work</p>	<p>Less inclined to complain, more willing to take on monotonous or repetitive work, more interested in working at home</p> <p>Related occupations Jobs that are low paid, unprotected and often repetitive</p>

Even though gender stereotypes are not the only factor determining men and women’s professional career paths (personal histories and preferences, workplace processes also play a role), the distribution of men and women among cultural, creative jobs mirrors social expectations on appropriate male and female behaviours and tasks.

On one side, thinking that women are supposedly more “*capable of caring, supportive and nurturing work than men*” and have “*greater communication skills*” could explain why they are overrepresented in PR but also in the documentary field of film-making which, according to professionals, requires being a good listener. “*PR work involves (...) looking after sensitive artists, maintaining personal relationships, providing support, and acting as facilitator and catalyst*”. On the other side, the idea that women are better organized and take greater care over procedure and so on can help explaining why they are very present in co-ordination and enabling jobs.

Whether women possess or not all these qualities is a “*moot point*” but that is the way people in the cultural industries have come to see them.

These stereotypes which give women access to some types of career in the creative industries are also used to exclude them from others, such as the “*prestigious*” creative roles. Organisational skills seem to be all the opposite of those expected from a creative person. According to one of Baker and Hesmondhalgh’s interviewees about film-making for the TV industry, “*your good director, the one that’s different, is actually the one who is going to want to put a wheel off the wagon and see what happens and take a risk... That is something you notice more with reckless males than you do with incredibly well organised and nice women*”.

What should we think of the fact that sometimes even women themselves (and many of them apparently) confirm the stereotypes? Does it mean that they themselves reproduce the patterns that restrict their career options?

Some researchers suggest that for women, the fact of being so socially competent is actually a way to compensate, a strategy to cope with the lower social status they feel they have. Friendliness, politeness, sensitiveness, a “*consensus-oriented social behaviour*” may all be “*tools that would enable them to survive and function in society*”, even though, according to Baker and Hesmondhalgh, one should avoid thinking that “*all social behaviour is completely aimed at achieving personal goals*”. However, they do believe that these attributes which make them so well suited for communication professions, are the same which prevent them from reaching top leadership positions in their function, which maintain them under the glass ceilings. By looking so friendly, consensus and dialogue-oriented, women may give the impression of lacking assertiveness and other kind of leadership skills. This is what scholars call the “*friendliness trap*”.

But what about men? Why is creativity associated with masculinity?

The article explains that particular myths about the artist persona have emerged throughout History, describing him as “*male, dependent, insecure, expressive, over-emotional, with infantile egotism*”. Although many would say that these characteristics contrast at first sight with more conventional versions of masculinity, they also diverge from representations of femininity with regards to the arts: women have been traditionally seen as muses capable at best of expressing “*taste*” rather than ‘true’ creativity.

A survey conducted by Vivendi and Laboratoire de l'Égalité, *"Women in music and cinema in Europe"*¹⁰ says nothing less. Women in the arts world tend to be muses or performers. In both cases they don't initiate the creative process but *"always exist thanks to a male creator"* who presents them as *"objects of male desire above anything else"*. Some artists deplore that the image of women is often both degraded and degrading. In such a context, actresses in particular suffer from the *"unfair tyranny of youth and beauty"* that leave aside many of them once they are no longer judged young and beautiful enough for most of the available roles. The interviewees (12 artists from different European countries) do not mention the association of creativity with childishness and laddishness, but some of them denounce the existence of a *"double-speak"* in the arts world. According to them, the skills that are advertised to succeed in arts and culture – *"sensitivity, selflessness and hard work"* – are absolutely not those actually necessary: apparently, *"aggressiveness, ruthless ambition, arrogance and self-promotion"* are more effective weapons that men manipulate better than women. While these character traits are *"socially taught to men"*, women *"tend to undervalue them"*.

The idea that creativity is masculine leads to the marginalisation of women from prestigious creative roles in the cultural industries and to their concentration in jobs involving qualities that are stereotypically attributed to them. But the fact that some women highly value the skills that stereotypes associate with them does not mean that they encourage these stereotypes or accept them, thus being accomplices of their own segregation. The problem is more in the hierarchisation of qualities and skills in such a way that the supposedly male qualities are always put on top and lead to more prestigious jobs. It would be preferable to show greater respect for all qualities in both women and men. For Hesmondhalgh and Baker, it does not mean however that one must see sexism and patriarchy in positive evaluations of creativity. Society should recognize and give value and price to different forms of creativity and types of leadership and management (we should stop with the dichotomies hard/men vs. Soft/women).

¹⁰ *"Women in music and cinema in Europe"*, a survey conducted by Vivendi and Laboratoire de l'Égalité, November 2013

Sexism and social stigma

Further addressing stereotypes and sexism, the UNESCO study reports cases in which social expectations of appropriate female behaviour or activities generate strong negative societal reactions towards women trying to step out of the box. In some African countries, women in the performing arts are even sometimes accused of immorality: *“they are seen as undesirable for marriage, unfit mothers, and attract criticism from within their own families”* (p. 82). They do not get more support from their male colleagues who abuse their authority and higher status. The testimonies collected in the report are compelling:

“The woman artist is badly regarded by society. She is considered debauched and frivolous. Even worse, the men in the sector who are supposed to offer support to women artists do nothing but abuse them by dangling fallacious promises, such as trips, programming and dissemination of their work.”

“As a woman, it is difficult to deal with the whims of some men who blackmail you before helping you or giving you honest responses”.

“We men, we don’t make things easy for women in our sector. They are always considered by us as cakes to be shared out” (p. 115).

Should they be tempted to start romantic relations with colleagues, due to the low presence of women in the performing arts and the intensity involved in the work, particularly while on tour, they would risk losing professional credibility (especially women in leadership positions). Furthermore they can be deprived of the opportunity to follow training overseas for fear of a possible pregnancy that would force them to quit their job.

Baker and Hesmondhalgh also raise the issue of sexual subordination of women roles in the British music industry which is, according to one respondent, *“still incredibly sexist”*: *“girls are press officers or stylists or groupies (...) Somebody at quite a big independent label decided she was going to become a manager and they just went ‘what do you want to become a manager for? Do you want to shag loads of bands?’ (...) There is that belief that a girl working in the music industry is just a glorified groupie.”*

The burden of domestic and caring responsibilities

Cultural or creative professions do not even have to be considered immoral when practised by women to make them be perceived as unsuitable for family life. Domestic and caring responsibilities, in which women still play a bigger role than their male counterparts, are hard to combine with the long and irregular work hours and absences dedicated to creation, production, networking, promotion and performance in a creative career (and in many others). Motherhood will tend to slower career progression and may lead women to opt for working part-time with obvious consequences on their income (general trend). We hardly need to say that low family support (often reported), also due to job mobility, does not help.

Regarding domestic and caring responsibilities, the traditional involvement of women in crafts is a perfect example of how social expectations restrict women to certain cultural activities. Crafts often means home-based industries and thus lower skill, investment and infrastructure threshold. They allow women to complete domestic and care commitments without disturbing the cultural and social balance of their home or community.

Women's difficult access to networks of influence and funding

Women's difficulties to penetrate masculine networks of influence (through which an artist can meet with potential funders and donors) and more generally to access funding and programming, reveal the existence of structural discrimination. Financial obstacles to cultural projects limit women's creative output and artistic ambitions (making low budget documentary movies instead of feature length fictions) and can also discourage more women from entering the creative fields.

Lastly, it's hard for women artists not to absorb and internalize the limits they face in the arts world. They first need to fight against themselves in order to fight against the obstacles that society imposes upon them.

The artists surveyed by Vivendi and Laboratoire de l'Égalité identified 3 mechanisms at work in the arts world that might explain gender inequalities. They seem to include all the causes that we have just analysed:

- *“a mechanism that makes women invisible”*: women are erased from teaching on art history and contemporary female artists are marginalized;
- *“one that distinguishes the career paths of men and those of women”*: work segregation by sex, women’s absence from decision-making circles and prestigious creative positions, male-dominated selection juries, women’s exclusion from influential, powerful and efficient male networks, and the difficulty to combine artistic activities with domestic and family obligations
- *“one that takes legitimacy away from women”*: men’s abilities are always taken for granted whereas women always have to prove theirs.
- It is worth mentioning that all these obstacles sometimes motivate women to launch their own cultural enterprise/business despite the difficulties, because they want to contribute to the development of their sector, create work opportunities that are not available for them otherwise (leadership positions) and create their own space in a scene dominated by men.

Both studies (Baker/Hesmondhalgh and Vivendi/Laboratoire pour l'Égalité) agree that the **solution to work segregation by sex and discrimination against women in the arts world and the cultural industries has to be found in education and employment policies**. They should be shaped in such a way that it will seem natural, normal that women or men can reasonably think of accessing and actually access all kind of jobs. No function should seem out of reach to both women and men.

Hesmondhalgh and Baker add that *“reasonable, constructive (‘caring’) approaches need to be more than just a niche that women feel they can occupy. Men should feel obliged to aspire to such behaviours too.”*

Good practices: what can be done?

UNESCO commends national measures and policies whose approach consists of adequately addressing obstacles to gender inequalities in culture at all levels of the cultural value chain. This implies to study the production of culture *“as a result of a series of interlinked processes or stages that together form the culture cycle, value chain or supply chain, namely, creation, production, distribution and participation/enjoyment of culture and cultural expressions”*(UNESCO report, p. 83). Here are examples of what can be done at each level:

Creation

1. To use a formulation of former French Minister of Culture and Communication Fleur Pellerin, it is important to *“make the invisible visible”* by recognizing existing women talents and encouraging future women talents.
2. They should be brought into the limelight partly through revision of educational and training tools.
3. Address the stereotypes in the media
4. Implement measures aiming at improving the status and working conditions of female artists especially at the beginning of their career:
 - “facilitate women’s access to funding sources and schemes
 - provide scholarships and mentoring programmes to nurture women’s creative talents
 - set up spaces where women can create and develop new skills ”.

Production

1. Apply quotas and affirmative action programmes.
2. Elaborate institutional, financial and technical measures in order to create an enabling environment for female cultural producers (improving women’s access to existing funding schemes, ensuring gender balance when allocating funds, provision of targeted funding for female entrepreneurs, improving access to training and skills development, provisions of space and equipment
3. Diversify and subsidize child care options
4. Give higher visibility to female cultural producers.

Distribution, dissemination

The challenge here is to create opportunities for women to bring their cultural product to the public, through commercialisation, live performance, exhibition, screening, etc. Positive discrimination and promotion of women artists' international mobility and exchange contribute to increasing their visibility domestically and internationally.

Participation- Enjoyment

“Women and girls in developing countries and in poor neighbourhoods in developed countries often face complex barriers to participating in the cultural life of their societies” (UNESCO report, p. 86). Some cultural and political actors try to counterbalance this through reduced entry fees or even free admission to cultural institutions and educational and partnership initiatives. For example, programmes are launched to increase women's ICT literacy so they can have a better access to information and contents, develop contacts and express themselves.

An insufficient implementation of gender mainstreaming despite the high-level commitment to the policy

The UNESCO report highlights the diversity of situations and strategies that exist to tackle gender inequalities. A bit more than half of the survey respondents claimed that their cultural policy was taking into account or would soon take into account specifically gender equality.

When not explicitly mentioned in their cultural policy, gender equality can be referred to in other areas of the national policy (in the constitution for example) or exists as a policy area on its own right and is applied transversally. Commitment to gender mainstreaming can be due to subscription to international (United Nations) or regional (European Union) treaties, agreements, conventions, resolutions, etc. Concern for gender equality can be expressed very explicitly (objectives) in the cultural policy or more subtly and indirectly through monitoring and reporting obligations.

But twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, which established gender mainstreaming as the main approach to achieve concrete gender equality, the report also points out to difficulties preventing an effective implementation of the strategy, especially in the cultural field.

“Absence of regular and reliable research and data”: without any or not enough available gender statistics, sex-disaggregated data in all the cultural sector (large-scale studies), how can governments elaborate efficient, well targeted cultural policies? How can they address a problem whose scale, aspects and manifestations remain unknown? How to convince decision-makers that a problem has to be solved, that some measures need to be implemented?

“Absence of gender in impact assessments and monitoring mechanisms”: Whether or not things are put in place, programmes and measures enforced in order to tackle gender inequalities, no gender dimension is considered in impact assessments, monitoring tools, evaluation and analysis. How then to evaluate the efficiency of policies and programmes for gender equality, or their impact on gender when no particular efforts have yet been made in that sense?

Cultural policy is not always perceived as a priority in the implementation of gender mainstreaming: Mainstreaming gender into cultural policies is not always an easy task. It's dependent on political will and resources. And even when governments try to enforce the strategy, culture is often one of the last sectors they think about.

Need for "Targeted training and capacity-building": Some respondents express the need to raise awareness among a "broad cross-section of stakeholders" (cultural workers and decision-makers) and to "increase visibility for women's creativity".

UNESCO's final recommendations

- Implementation of international conventions and declarations in the field of culture in line with other human rights instruments and in respect of gender equality and diversity
- Systematic collection and dissemination by national statistical offices of sex-disaggregated data in all areas of the cultural sector
- Gender-responsive policies and strategies in culture aiming at empowering all members of society, taking into account both the diversity of groups and individuals and the intersection of gender with other social factors likely to generate inequalities (class, race, disabilities, religion, ethnicity, age, etc.)
- Reinforcement of national institutional capacities to promote equal access to women and men to decision-making processes, financial resources and education in cultural fields
- Training: leadership and mentoring activities for female creators and heritage professionals + gender balance at senior leadership levels in the cultural and creative sector
- Campaigns against gender stereotypes and discrimination
- Strategies promoting gender equality in culture inclusive of all members of society
- Support interdisciplinary research on the topic which involves groups and communities concerned and considers the complexity and diversity of gender relations and the underlying power structures.

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