



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

Gender and Labour in the Music Industry

An exploration into why the music industry has a gender problem and what can be done to change it

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This master's thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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ABSTRACT

While numbers are missing, it has become clear over the past decade that the music industry is a place of far-reaching gender imbalance in the form of gender segregation. This paper aims to look at why this is the case, basing its line of argumentation on a close understanding of the mechanisms and structures that lead to the disparity of gender representation in the music industry. It aims at contradicting myths about working in the music industry that, instead of being "cool, creative and egalitarian" (Gill, 2002), proves to be an insecure, exclusive and heavily biased place of work based on informality and exploitation, both in the Marxian sense and in the form of self-exploitation. The paper concludes with finding deep structural issues in the music industry at the root of its gender issues and the need for both societal and individual action and change to affect a shift in the gender imbalance in the industry. Based on in-depth interviews with informants from the music industry, the paper then moves on to discussing possible methods of affecting change, considering both policy-imposed solutions like gender quotas as well as strengthened labour politics and unionisation, and measures instituted from within the industry such as the active and public raising of awareness combined with a conscious use of language, the furthering of role models and the formalisation of the recruitment process.

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1. Introduction

Norway is one of the most gender-equal countries worldwide, as is constantly proven by statistics. The latest ranking of The Economist, *The Glass-Ceiling Index*, which "aims to reveal where women have the best chances of equal treatment at work," sees Norway in second place behind Iceland; other rankings consistently place Norway among the top 5 gender-equal countries, usually competing against the other Nordic countries Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland (The Economist, 2016, March 3rd). Nevertheless, or maybe because of that, gender balance remains somewhat of a "hot topic" in Norway.

This is no different in the music industry. Every year before the festival season, the disparity of gender representation on festival line-ups wells up in the media, usually in the form of angry comments on the lack of female artists on the bills, especially among the headliners. Upon examining the industry more closely, it becomes evident that also beyond the headlines-making waves of public outrage, the music industry is characterised by a pronounced gender imbalance, manifesting itself in the forms of gender segregation.

Also in academia, this topic has received heightened attention in the past years. The specificity of cultural industries and their distinctive characteristics of work have been under close scrutiny over the last two decades, originating in the study of digitalisation of labour and the rise of the new media worker in the innovation hubs of Silicon Valley and elsewhere. Research on the music industry specifically, however, has remained surprisingly sparse until now.

It is hard to come by detailed statistics presenting the extent of the issues the music industry has with gender representation. That those issues exist, however, is uncontested. Therefore, this thesis will neglect the discussion of if the music industry is gender-imbalanced and will instead focus on the question why this is so as well as what can be done to affect change.

The first part of this paper takes a close look at the mechanisms that form the music industry. The concept of labour exploitation in its Marxian origins, its limits and newer takes on it, especially in the concept of self-exploitation, will be discussed. Based on this and an examination of the defining characteristics of the music industry, both in its externally perceived and actual versions, the forms gender imbalance takes in the music industry will be analysed.

Drawing on the findings of semi-structured in-depth interviews with informants from the music industry, the discussion then focuses on possible measures to change the gender imbalance of the music industry.

2. Theory

There is little research available on working conditions in the music industry. However, research on creative industries and the field of (new) media has seen a rise in interest the past two decades. A new focus on labour dynamics as well as social and gendered structures within social studies and other related fields has opened working conditions in creative industries such as the music industry for close scrutiny of academia and media alike. Especially the shift in spatial working arrangements from the physical to the digital and its accompanying effects on company culture, beginning in the 1990s and culminating in the famously informal and creativity-focused corporate environments of tech start-ups in Silicon Valley and elsewhere in the early 2000s has been covered closely. This leaped over to research on creative industries, which in turn informed much of the research on cultural industries. Many of the mechanisms explored there can also be transferred to the music industry, as researchers such as Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2011), Leonard (2014), Whiteley (2012) and Frenette (2013) show.

The Music Blueprint, based on UK-statistics, defines "[...] the music workforce as anyone involved in performing, creating, producing, recording, promoting and selling music [...]" (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2011, p. 13). It also gives a comprehensive list of professional roles in the music sector:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| A&R: artists & repertoire | Event programmer | Music librarian/archivist |
| Accompanist | Events manager | Music publisher |
| Agent | Instrumental teacher | Music therapist |
| Arts administrator | Licensing and royalties officer | Programmer |
| Audio engineer | Lighting technician | Press officer |
| Audio equipment manufacturer | Live event technical support | Promoter |
| Booking agent | Lyricist (talent scouting) | Producer |
| Collection society executive | Manager | Remixer |
| Community musician | Mixer | Retailer |
| Composer/arranger | Musical director | Sales staff – distribution and retail |
| Concert promoter | Musical instrument maker | Songwriter (both local authority and private) |
| Conductor | Musical instrument distributor | Sound engineer |
| Distributor | Musician/artist (both lead and session)/performer | Sound technician |
| DJ | | Studio manager |
| Education officer/workshop leader | | |

EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL ROLES IN THE MUSIC SECTOR (CREATIVE & CULTURAL SKILLS, 2011, P. 14)

The music industry entails everyone from the musician, the technicians involved in live production and recording to the people trying to monetise both music and musician. With such varied occupations come widely different demands for working conditions which, in turn, are undergoing constant change as digitalisation progresses. The music industry can roughly be divided into people directly involved in the production of music, e.g. musicians, composers, producers and technicians, and those indirectly involved, such as A&R, bookers, PR-staff and salespersons. Also this categorisation is problematic, as roles often blur and overlap in the music industry as well as differ internally depending on musical genre.

Indeed, the music industry seems to be hard to categorise. Richard Florida (2002) separates creative workers into different roles: the Super-Creative Core, creative professionals and an accompanying service class (Florida, 2002, p. 68-71). According to Florida, the Super-Creative Core "fully engage[s] in the creative process", while the creative professional "engage[s] in creative problem solving" (2002, p. 69). The service class consists of workers working "low-end, typically low-wage and low-autonomy occupations in the so-called 'service sector' of the economy" (2002, p. 71). He sees this class as separate from the former two, as it does not engage in creative work at all — in fact, labor is "de-skilled" and "de-creativized" (2002, p. 71), there to execute those tasks that would keep the creative class from being creative. However, Florida sees a fluidity between these groups. Some people work in the service sector only for a while until they can move up into the creative class, as well as creative professionals strive to become part of the Super-Creative Core.

The music industry also defies these categories. Workers directly and indirectly involved in the production of music alike can be part of both the Super-Creative Core, the creative professionals or the service class, often at the same time. A musician might for example write their own music and record it with a backing band, being in the Super-Creative Core, while also being hired in as session-musician to support another artist's recording or live performance, thus being a creative professional. The same musician might also not be able to live off their creative output full-time and is thus in need to support themselves with another job on the side that gives them both a stable enough income and flexibility to continue to aspire to become a full-time musician. Equally can the work of a

music supervisor consist of both mind-numbing routine tasks and super-creative decision processes, making a handfull of supervisors rock stars within their field, as for example Alexandra Patsavas, music supervisor for the TV-series Grey's Anatomy, which became notorious for its fitting music and played a significant role in breaking new artists in its heyday.

The music industry's unwillingness to fit into categories and its often contradictory features form an important backdrop for understanding both why it seems so desirable to work in the industry and how those features play a part in the industry's still difficult relationship with gender balance. In this chapter, I will therefore focus on the music industry's characteristics as well as Karl Marx's critique on the capitalist system of labour. One does not get around him when discussing imbalance, and his concept of labour and exploitation, put into a contemporary context, can help understand labour mechanisms in the music industry. However, Marx' theories also have their limits, especially when taking the concept of self-exploitation into consideration. On this basis I will then move on to gender issues in the music industry, namely gender segregation and the effects high levels of informality and flexibility have for the industry in general and women specifically.

2.1 Working Conditions in the Music Industry – Myth and Reality

Although comparable with other forms of cultural work, the music industry is organised in specific ways which create distinctive working conditions. From the outside, being part of the industry has its allure – the closeness to fame and its promise of the mythological 'sex, drugs and rock'n'roll,' flexibility and fun are appealing to those who strive to evade the nine to five office job. From the outside, working in the music industry looks "cool, creative and egalitarian" (Gill, 2002).

Richard Florida gives those types of workers a name in his book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). He characterises them as free, bohemian and adhering to a set of values specific to the creative class: individuality, meritocracy as well as diversity and openness. Creative workers value their individuality because "[t]hey do not want to conform to organizational or institutional directives and resist traditional group-oriented norms" (Florida, 2002, p. 77). This translates

into flat hierarchies, casual dress-codes, flexible hours and more open spatial working arrangements. They also value meritocracy: "[t]he Creative Class favors hard work, challenge and stimulation. Its members have a propensity for goal-setting and achievement. They want to get ahead because they are good at what they do" (Florida, 2002, p. 78). Here, not only money gives them gratification and recognition. Lastly, creative workers also value diversity and openness, which means that they "[...] strongly favor organizations and environments in which they feel that anyone can fit in and can get ahead" (Florida, 2002, p. 79).

Florida's values of the Creative Class are all positively charged, as is the popular discourse on working in cultural industries in general and in the music industry specifically. However, those qualities are at the same time also the same features which make that kind of work problematic, making the music industry an exclusive and discriminating place of work. They also contribute to pronounced gender imbalance and segregation. In other words, the music industry is not as "cool, creative and egalitarian" as it would like to be.

2.1.1 Individuality vs. Insecurity

The music industry is an increasingly insecure place of work. Work relationships are often based on temporary contracts, part-time or hired-in freelance work. According to the UK *Music Blueprint*, 36% of music industry workers in 2011 were self-employed and 33% in part-time working situations, compared to 13% and 26% respectively in the UK economy as a whole (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2011, p. 16). Work is often project-based and/or seasonal, such as the promotion of an artist's LP-release, the production of a festival or the management of a tour. Gill pronounces this "[t]he end of the career and the rise of project based work" (2002, n.p.). Combined with part-time employment, it is common to parallelly work on several projects, usually on a deadline, which creates not one continuous stream of work-influx, but alternating periods of high levels of stress and idleness.

The project-based nature of work in the music industry also makes it necessary for the worker to always be on the lookout for the next project. This eternal job-

hunt makes them "portfolio worker[s]" (Gill, 2002, n.p.), the display of their work becoming their selling point, creating a perpetual state of insecurity:

Leadbeter and Oakley's glib statement that people are 'only as good as their last project' conceals the anxiety and insecurity that this can produce — anxieties about finding (enough) work, getting it wrong, only been given one chance, not knowing where or when the next contract will come from, etc — all of which have to be managed by the individual alone. (Gill, 2002, n.p.)

Also, individuality in terms of flexible working hours seems to be a myth — working hours are in fact dictated by the project's demands and usually unevenly distributed (cf. Gill, 2002, n.p.). Growing independence from a fixed work space is also ambivalent. While digitalisation indeed opens up for more flexible office arrangements, making it unnecessary to physically be in the same place as your colleagues, it also opens up the circle of possible candidates for a job to a worldwide base. In times where teams are organised in apps and necessary communication is conducted via video-calls, messenger-chats or shared documents in the cloud, it becomes unimportant whether the person you work together with sits one metre or one continent away from you, especially when only hired in on project-basis.

Florida's individuality seems to be in fact a deceptive front for "an individualisation of risk" (Gill, 2002, n.p.). Insecurity prevails when music industry workers increasingly have to take care of their own social security, insurances and employment. Angela McRobbie remarks that

[i]ndividualization is not about individuals *per se*, as about new, more fluid, less permanent social relations seemingly marked by choice or options. However, this convergence has to be understood as one of contestation and antagonism. Individualization thus marks a space of social conflict, it is where debates about the direction of change are played out and where new contradictions arise. [...] The individual becomes his or her own enterprise, sometimes presiding over to separate companies at the one time. (McRobbie, 2002, p. 518-519)

McRobbie also explains how individuality and flexibility nevertheless remain mantras of cultural work. In the absence of workplace regulations, politics and democracy, she elaborates, the worker internalises those insecurities into self-blame, ensuring they doesn't open up to social critique (cf. McRobbie, 2002, p. 521-522).

2.1.2 Meritocracy vs. Exclusivity

The music industry is dominated by informal recruitment and hiring procedures (cf. Gill, 2002, n.p.; McRobbie, 2002, p. 523). Vacancies often do not get officially advertised and are instead spread by word of mouth, personal recommendations or directly filled with a person already known to the person in charge of the hiring process. Informal networks, consequently, have become of immense importance in the music industry, making network-building a necessary part of the job. In the times of the "portfolio-worker", always on the hunt for the next project, this necessity gains new dimensions. Socialising becomes an integral part of the work week. In Fletcher & Lobato's study of music writers in Australia, one of their research participants said that "working as a writer 'can be like having two jobs — one that pays, and you do from nine to five, and one that doesn't pay, that you do from five to midnight'" (Fletcher & Lobato, 2013, p. 161), referring to the perceived necessity to go to concerts and other events to meet people from the industry and generally keep up with the scene.

People neither comfortable nor able to join the networking-game are therefore at a disadvantage. But informal recruitment structures do not stop to exclude there — when hiring from your network, chances are that you hire somebody who matches you. As Bielby notes, "[m]ore often than not, the 'best' hire matches the gender, race, and age of those already doing the job" (Bielby, 2014, p. 143).

When one does not get a job because one is the best-suited candidate for it, but because of other external factors, meritocracy, already in itself a problematic concept, is not upheld. Neither is it at entry level in the music industry: internships, often unpaid, have become the new entry-level jobs (cf. Shade & Jacobsen, 2015, p. 190). Not everybody can afford working for free over extended periods, which excludes potentially equally qualified aspiring workers from making their first steps in the music industry. Possessing an allure for outsiders, the music industry is in a state of constant oversupply of workers (cf. Frenette, 2013, p. 370), often highly skilled and educated, waiting for a chance. Offering unpaid internships is therefore unproblematic for companies, not needing to worry not to attract highly qualified applicants. But it is also classist and based on the paradox that in order to gain an entry-level job, you need to

have prior working experience. This phenomenon is of course not limited to the music industry, but adds to the already precarious conditions there.

Florida also states that the creative class derives their recognition and gratification not only from money. The majority of jobs in the music industry are low-income, sometimes so low that the wages have to be supplemented with income from another job, typically outside of the cultural realm. It is also common to work for free or low fees for the sake of building one's portfolio or getting a foot in the door. In a digitalised world, where you are not only competing with other professionals in your city, area or country, but effectively in the whole world, "[t]he boundaries between paid and unpaid work become permeable" (Huws, 2014, p. 148). Logically, incomes in the music industry are low: in 2011 in the UK, 78% of the work force earned less than £20,000 a year (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2011, p. 13).

This means that the claim that meritocracy is an integral value for creative workers, is at best self-deception and at worst a lie. The music industry operates in fact in an exclusive environment, excluding both at entry-level and in further recruitment processes, as well as basing itself on a low-wage system.

2.1.3 Openness and Diversity vs. Gender- and Race-Bias

As shown, access to the music industry is by no means based on meritocracy and is much rather resembling an excluding and closed environment. Underlying these processes are industry-engrained structures of gender- and race-bias. *The Music Blueprint* shows the degree of underrepresentation of both non-whites and women in the UK-music industry: 93% of workers are white and 61% male (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2011, p. 13). And while a rate of 39% of women in the industry might not seem too bad compared to other industries, a closer look at both horizontal and vertical gender segregation (see below) paints a different picture of gender representation in the music industry.

The realities in the music industry delineated here stands in quite a contrast to Florida's values of the creative class. But his view seems to correlate with popular discourse, making the music industry a sought-after and popular industry to want to work in. Conor, Gill & Taylor see this grounded in a

glorification of creativity and creative labour through media and policy alike, giving it "a status almost beyond critique" (Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015, p. 2). David Hesmondhalgh recognises this too, stating that "[t]here is a whole representational apparatus in modern societies which emphasises the potential for pleasure, sociality, recognition and self-realisation in media and cultural work" (Hesmondhalgh, 2016, p. 36).

Creative work in the cultural sector, then, becomes more than just a job. In her study, Gill found that her research subjects found their projects to be "central to their sense of self" (2002, n.p.). Brook uses Bourdieu's approach of cultural fields to explain why people become creative workers: they "invest in the field as a 'vocation'; that is, an occupational identity that is not reducible to formal employment" (2013, p. 311). Cultural labour becomes integral for their sense of self-fulfillment.

This trait of cultural labour is essential when looking at how exploitation and self-exploitation in the music industry operates.

2.2 (Self-)Exploitation, Marx and Cultural Labour

When talking about cultural labour and exploitation, Marx' critique of the capitalist system cannot be evaded. In the past decade, many of the cultural sociologists discussing working conditions have returned to Marx' ideas to critically assess their validity on today's discourse on labour exploitation, including Hesmondhalgh & Baker (2008), Cohen (2012), Jarrett (2016) and Hesmondhalgh (2016).

According to Marx, labour exploitation becomes possible when the worker lacks the production means the capitalist has. These skewed power relations between worker and capitalist lead to the worker having to sell their labour. The capitalist makes a profit when the worker produces more value than the production itself costs and is therefore interested in keeping labour costs at a level where the worker is able to maintain their labour power, but low enough to maximise production profits. The profit margin is created by what Marx calls surplus labour, i.e. the additional labour a worker puts into the production of a good without receiving its equivalent value in remuneration. The more marked this difference and the less the worker is able to afford the good produced by

their own hands, the more alienated does the worker become. As the worker becomes poorer and the capitalist richer, the capitalist system perpetuates itself and deprives the worker of their autonomy and sense of self.

How does Marx' theory translate to modern-day cultural work? Cohen remarks that "[c]ultural work is more often described as the antithesis of alienation: as social and collaborative work that grants workers relative autonomy in the labour process and facilitates self-expression and opportunities to engage in total human activity" (Cohen, 2012, p. 142). She then goes on to argue though that Marx' description of labour exploitation also can be applied to cultural work:

The labour-capital relations in cultural work can be obscured for a variety of reasons, including the fact that choosing to pursue cultural work despite the risks can be empowering, that an ideology of enterprise increasingly underscores cultural work, and that cultural work is based on personal relationships that can mask economic relations [...]. Relations of exploitation can be so obscured that it often seems as if cultural work is not really work at all, giving rise to a 'labour of love' discourse that preempts discussions of power relations [...]. (Cohen, 2012, p. 145)

She also acknowledges the tension between the seeking of autonomy and the reaction of capitalism to it: capitalism reacts by granting relative autonomy for the creation of cultural goods, while tightening control on IP-rights and on workers not directly involved in the creation process.

Hesmondhalgh problematises the concept of labour exploitation in the cultural context. He doesn't see the promise of self-actualised, meaningful work in the cultural field as "a conspiracy by the powerful to deceive middle class educated children" (Hesmondhalgh, 2016, p. 36). According to him, there are in fact "real ways in which cultural production and consumption at their best can promote human flourishing" (Hesmondhalgh, 2016, p. 36). These ways are disseminated by the media and education, adding to the attractiveness of cultural labour and leading to a skewed distribution of people wanting to work in the cultural industries and available work, which in turn contributes to underpaid work and precarious conditions in the industry. It is this "tangled set of contradictions" Hesmondhalgh sees as "to the unjust advantage of the powerful and privileged" (Hesmondhalgh, 2016, p. 36), leading him to the conclusion that Marxian labour exploitation is in fact a reasonable concept to apply.

2.2.1 Immaterial, Affective and Emotional Labour

When writing *Capital* in the late 1800s, Marx didn't have the cultural worker as his main inspiration for his critique on capitalism. While the sheet-music publishing industry thrived in those days, proper industrialisation of the music scene didn't take place until the era of Tin Pan Alley around the turn of the century and the rise of recording devices. What kind of labour, then, is the creation of cultural content and its dissemination?

Academic focus on this question has risen curiously late. In their work *Empire*, the autonomists Hardt & Negri offer a now seminal definition of immaterial labour as "labor that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication" (Hardt & Negri, 2000, as quoted in Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008, p. 98). Hesmondhalgh & Baker also draw on the concept of emotional labour as coined by Hochschild, which they define as "requiring the worker 'to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others'" (Hochschild, 1983, as quoted in Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008, p. 108). While Hesmondhalgh & Baker apply this to the TV-industry, it can be easily applied to the music industry as well — an industry build up around the emotional responses of the consumers of music and the monetisation of it.

Jarrett prefers the term affective labour, which Hardt & Negri consider as a category of immaterial labour (cf. Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008, p. 98). Jarrett problematises this categorisation because it "denies the materiality of this work, particularly when it is associated with domestic or care work" (Jarrett, 2016, p. 116). She defines affect as

[...] an autonomous energy, a state of potential that cannot be captured or confined within a body, perception or cognition without undergoing a fundamental transformation. It is inherently inalienable and so, to return to the language of Marx, can only be consumed (experienced) as use-value. (Jarrett, 2016, p. 121)

She goes on to argue that because of its inalienability and autonomy, the appropriate form of exchange of affect is gifting, an economy that ostensibly lies outside of market mechanisms (cf. Jarrett, 2016, p. 122). However, she sees gift economies as in fact part of capitalist economies of value exchange because it is "conservative in its social effects, the commons can only take on established social dynamics" (Jarrett, 2016, p. 170).

2.2.2 Free Labour

Jarrett's concept of affective labour is important for understanding her argument on free labour. Drawing on Marxist feminism, she argues that domestic work of the housewife is affective labour that indirectly contributes to capitalist value creation by relieving the stereotypical male breadwinner of household and child-rearing responsibilities, thus giving him more labour power (cf. Jarrett, 2016, p. 133). This places domestic work within the capitalist system. Domestic work is therefore exploited work, because, as Cohen remarks, "[a]s Marx explained, unpaid labour that contributes to the generation of surplus value for capitalists is exploited labour" (Cohen, 2012, p. 149).

Understanding this complicates Marx' placement of affective, pleasurable activity entirely in the realm of non-market activity. By showing that also voluntary work in the household contributes to value creation, Jarrett "[...] challenges the assumption that our labour that is not directly commodified is automatically outside of market logics and therefore inherently self-actualising" (Jarrett, 2016, p. 171). Thus, she argues that exploitation also lies in the pleasurable.

In recounting the early years of the internet and the importance of free labour in the form of user-content creation, Terranova argues that free labour does not have to be exploited labour (cf. Terranova, 2000, p. 48). She explains that "[...] the labor of building a community was not compensated by great financial rewards (it was therefore 'free,' unpaid), but it was also willingly conceded in exchange for the pleasures of communication and exchange (it was therefore 'free,' pleasurable, not imposed)" (Terranova, 2000, p. 48). However, applying Jarrett's line of argumentation, this kind of labour based on a hobby (i.e. being a webmaster in a forum etc.) also is exploited labour, as it, all its pleasurableness notwithstanding, spares internet companies of paying someone to create the content they create, thus adding to the creation of surplus value for said companies.

Labour exploitation through free labour in the cultural industries generally and the music industry specifically also takes on more apparent forms than domestic work. Free project work, as a favour and/or for building a portfolio, are a common sight in the music industry, as well as unpaid internships that are often

regarded as a way into paid labour in the music industry — as Shade & Jacobsen remark, "the entry-level job *is* the unpaid internship" (2015, p. 190, emphasis theirs). But also volunteering, such as at festivals, where volunteers often work long shifts for a meal and a festival pass for the days they don't work, is a substantial and exploitative part of the music industry.

2.2.3 Self-Exploitation

Another interesting facet of affect, pleasurable, exploitation and labour is the notion of self-exploitation which is closely linked — paradoxically — to self-actualisation. Not only its image of being "cool, creative and egalitarian" attracts people to the music industry, they also choose to pursue a career in it because they are genuinely passionate about music. When you love what you do, it is easy to forget what time it is and stay late at the office, work weekends or pull all-nighters to meet a deadline, and it also overweighs poor remuneration. Ross speaks of a willingness of the cultural worker to "discount the price of their labor for love of their craft" (Ross, 2000, p. 6). In fact, when Gill studied new media workers in 2002, she found that many had to supplement their new media work with other types of work in another sector, despite often working on several new media projects simultaneously. Nevertheless, she discovered that "[...] in spite of the enormous amount of other work being done, both men and women regarded this as supplementary — just something they do to earn money — and they defined their work identities in relation to their new media projects" (Gill, 2002, n.p.). In other words, their creative projects "were central to their sense of self" (Gill, 2002, n.p.). Also Florida sees the creative worker as seeking recognition for their work not only in money (cf. Florida, 2002, p. 78). Indeed, finding such gratification in their work seems to be the tip of the pyramid in Maslow's hierarchy of needs that places self-actualisation at the pinnacle.

But as Jarrett has shown, exploitation and pleasure do not exclude each other, and knowingly accepting precarious labour situations in the music industry doesn't make it less exploitative. Furthermore, as Cohen concludes, the blurring of lines between self-actualisation and exploitation contributes to the obscuration of the structures of exploitation so that "[...] it often seems as if cultural work is not really work at all, giving rise to a 'labour of love' discourse

that preempts discussions of power relations [...]" (Cohen, 2012, p. 145). Also Conor, Gill & Taylor consider this dynamic as highly problematic:

It is significant to note the potency and pervasiveness of this personalized figuration of the 'creative' [i.e., "the typical 'creative' as driven by passion to Do What You Love (DWYL), prepared to work for long hours for little or even no pay, and requiring minimal support"] and how profoundly it has displaced important questions about working conditions and practices within the CCI, let alone issues of equality, diversity and social justice. (Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015, p. 2)

In other words, self-exploitation and exploitation in the music industry are a self-perpetuating system, showing how Marx' capitalist critique of the late 1800s still is powerfully timely today, as also the music industry, albeit fuelled by the dynamics of self-actualisation and pleasurable-ness rather than Marx' proletarian labourer's need for self-preservation, has exploitation at its very foundation.

2.3 Gender (Im-)Balance in the Music Industry

The issue of labour exploitation in the music industry becomes further complicated by adding a gender-dimension to it. Labour exploitation in the music industry is in fact also gendered.

2.3.1 Gender Segregation

The Music Blueprint states that in 2011, 61% of people working in the UK's music industry were male, leaving women represented with 39% (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2011, p. 13). While classically male- or female-dominated sectors display greatly more skewed gender distributions, these numbers are misleading because they cannot show gender imbalances within the music industry and its occupations. This becomes clear when looking at horizontal and vertical segregation in the music industry.

The European Industrial Relations Dictionary defines horizontal segregation as "the concentration of men and women in different kinds of jobs" (Horizontal Segregation, 2013). In the music industry, men typically work in technical or prestigious creative jobs, such as A&R, artist manager or producer, while women are often to be found in marketing, PR, production or retail. In a study, Hesmondhalgh & Baker researched labour segregation by gender in the TV-

industry. When guiding Baker through their workplace, a participant from a production company remarked that "'this is the creative side' and told us that the other half of the office area, which was entirely female, was for 'production' [...]" (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, n.d., p. 7). Labour segregation by gender works on both mental and structural levels, as this quote shows.

Also vertical segregation plays into this, which "denotes the situation whereby opportunities for career progression for a particular gender within a company or sector are limited" (Vertical Segregation, 2015). This effect is popularly illustrated with expressions such as the glass ceiling through which women can see men moving up, but cannot break through it themselves, or the sticky floor that hinders women from rising in the ranks. Also in the cultural industries, Conor, Gill & Taylor claim that "[...] women are required to be exceptionally good in order to receive the notice and reward which would be granted to a man for more ordinary achievements" (2015, p. 14). The Icelandic artist Björk expressed her frustration about this phenomenon in an interview with Pitchfork following the release of her album *Vulnicura* in 2015, saying that "[e]verything that a guy says once, you have to say five times. [...] So I have to do everything with five times the amount of energy, and then it will come through" (Hopper, 2015). Here, she refers to producing most of her music herself, only hiring in another (male) producer in the end-phase of the album project. Yet, the man almost exclusively is quoted as the sole producer, with her contribution not being recognised.

Occupations are strongly gendered in the cultural industries and driven by stereotypes — as Hesmondhalgh & Baker remark, "[g]ender stereotypes matter hugely in the division of labour by sex" (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, n.d., p. 17). In her paper "To Communicate is Human; to Chat is Female", Mayer shows how stereotypically gendered work is based on allegedly natural skills such as the cliché of women possessing good communication and "peoples skills":

[...] much of feminized labor is characterized as a service, a dedication, and a natural extension of one's body and emotional capacities. In other words, what feminizes labor is the adaptation of unwaged forms of work associated with femal sex and gender characteristics into a labor market, where these forms are less valued and subordinate to other kinds of work. (Mayer, 2014, p. 51)

This shows that the segregation of labour by gender also contributes to differences in pay, commonly called the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap is not an issue characteristic to the cultural or music industry alone. In virtually all countries, women get paid less than men, with an average of 15,5% less pay in OECD-countries. The best-ranking country is Hungary with a 3,8% difference, Norway ranking 4th with 6,3% and Japan ranking last with a 26,6% wage gap. (The Economist, 2016, March 3rd). Numbers for the music industry are hard to come by, but a UK-survey of cultural industries suggests that women working in the music industry earn on average £1 less than men, with men earning £7.92 and women £6.92 (Creative & Cultural Skills, 2010, p. 101), meaning that women in the UK-music industry earn 12,6% less than their male colleagues.

The issue of unequal pay in the music industry becomes more pronounced when paired with what Hesmondhalgh & Baker call the "winner take all" mentality (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, n.d., p. 8). They find that "[c]reatives are highly hierarchized", with "the successful few" being "disproportionately rewarded" (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, n.d., p. 8). Alan B. Krueger's "Economics of Real Superstars" seems to be transferrable to non-musicians as well: the really prestigious positions in the music industry such as the famous manager, the genius A&R or the superstar-producer are disproportionally much better paid than other, less prestigious jobs, which are paid disproportionally poorly. What ensues, then, is not only a gender pay gap, but also a prestige pay gap.

Considered that women in the music industry still are drastically under-represented in those prestigious positions — the superstars behind the superstars are typically male — and the general gender wage gap, it becomes clear that women in the music industry have a difficult financial standing.

But not only women are affected by gender segregation in the music industry. It is in fact to the detriment of all genders, as it also hinders men from freely choosing their career of choice, as a participant in Leonard's study of interns in the music industry shows:

At the end of the scheme she was offered a number of jobs, including a personal assistant role, but she declined these as she wished to work specifically in A&R. When one of the male candidates enquired if he might instead be put forward for the personal assistant job he was told: 'Oh no. We would never put a guy forward for that' [...]. (Leonard, 2014, 131)

When people are hindered from using their talents to their fullest, the whole industry suffers. Hesmondhalgh & Baker conclude that "[...] work segregation by sex limits collective flourishing, because it leads to a situation where it is harder for people to match their talents to occupations, thus inhibiting the way in which people's talents might serve the common good" (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, n.d., p. 4).

2.3.2 Motherhood

The gender imbalance in the music industry is also affected by the difficulty to combine work and parenthood, also for men, but especially for women. Working with music often includes odd hours, weekend work and frequent travelling.

With the rise of digitalisation also in the work environment, jobs have become a lot more spatially independent. Working from home is now not a technical issue anymore, and was in the late 1990s and early 2000s hailed as an emancipatory tool for women to combine both work and child-rearing. The enthusiasm for "telecommuting" has since waned. Ursula Huws finds that many women consider the possibility of child-care parallelly to working as both the greatest advantage and disadvantage for working from home (cf. Huws, 2014, p. 150). Those who do it, usually do it out of necessity — they cannot afford either an office space or the daycare fee. As a consequence, women in the cultural industries tend to sacrifice family in favour of work (cf. Huws, 2014, p. 152).

Also Gill finds that combining creative new media work and children is difficult, also because working from home is detrimental to building networks, which, as discussed before, is an essential part of the music industry for securing new project work and keeping up with the scene. Working from home can therefore induce a feeling of isolation and disconnectedness.

While western countries increasingly ensure good conditions for maternity leave (excluding the United States), freelance work and self-employment also makes that problematic. Low pay adds to this, making it hard if not impossible to save up necessary buffers and afford childcare (cf. Leonard, 2014, p. 134).

2.3.3 Informality

Also the almost notorious informality of the music industry adds to gender imbalance.

Women suffer disadvantages because of the informal hiring process in the industry. Bielby remarks that the "lines of authority for hiring and pay decisions are often blurred" (Bielby, 2014, p. 139), making it difficult to understand hiring processes for an outsider. Moreover, Bielby observes that often "the 'best' hire matches the gender, race, and age of those already doing the job" (Bielby, 2014, p. 143), giving women a disadvantage in a male top-heavy industry. Gill also notes different ways of selling oneself between women and men: while women would assess their skills with "I only know...", men would praise the same set of skills with "I know a lot..." (cf. Gill, 2002, n.p.).

Also Conor, Gill & Taylor see "[...] evidence that women fare better in settings in which there is both greater formality to the hiring process and greater transparency" (Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015, p. 11), and one of Gills research participants puts it on the spot when saying, "Give me a formal hierarchy anyday over the fake democracy and pseudo-equality of this work!" (Gill, 2002, n.p.).

Equally does the male dominance in the informal networking culture in the music industry contribute to putting women at a disadvantage. One of Leonard's female participants in her study on gender in the music industry complained about a bro culture among her male peers, in which she always felt singled out as different as a woman in a male-dominated environment, and "she could not, and did not want to, engage with the performative culture of homosociality" (Leonard, 2014, p. 132). Another participant said she and other women in the scene would "compensate by being boyish" (Leonard, 2014, p. 132).

In conclusion, the music industry's creative and exciting apparel hides a work environment that is characterised by informality, insecurity, exclusiveness and discrimination. It is based on exploitation and, interestingly, self-exploitation that is closely linked to the urge for self-fulfilment of the workers entering the music industry. Those inherent structures also contribute to making the industry a

gender-inequal and in parts sexist place. The "'hip, cool and equal'-speak in and about the industry" (Gill, 2002, n.p.) does not only conceal this, it also makes it very hard for industry people to address and criticise those structures. There is a general unwillingness to talk about both gender and race in the scene as nobody wants to be seen as "the difficult one." And you cannot afford to be difficult either: the industry is highly informal, controlled by male gatekeepers who make hiring decisions and thus decide about who "makes it". In an industry as popular as the music industry there never is any deficit of eager and highly educated people willing to work hard for low to no pay. In other words, the music industry's problem with openness is ultimately reproduced by its own structures and self-imposed characteristics.

3. Methodology

Parallel to the music industry being little formalised and mostly experience-based, also music management as an academic field is quite unclaimed territory, with little research existing on the music industry specifically. Although researchers like Hesmondhalgh and Wikström have put systematising the music industry academically on the agenda in the past decade (cf. Patrik Wikström, *The Music Industry*, 2009 & David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*, 2013), and more and more papers being published about specific problems within the field, the process of forming basics of music management as an academic discipline still is very much ongoing. In the medium term, a higher degree of academic groundedness will benefit the industry greatly in moving away from the currently experience- and personality-based modus operandi.

Being a part of this progress is both intriguing and challenging on master's level. I hope this thesis can contribute to the current academic discourse on labour rights and gender in the music industry. It cannot solve all gender issues of the industry, but I nevertheless hope to shed some light on an important and long-overdue discussion and contribute to growing awareness in the field.

According to Denscombe, the choice of method needs to be both suitable, feasible and ethical (cf. Denscombe, 2007, p. 5). Suitable means that the method must be fitting to the research question — in fact, it is the research question that dictates the method. At the same time, the method needs to be realistically accomplishable within the limited framework of a master's thesis. Last but not least, the research method needs to comply with ethical concerns such as privacy.

For this thesis, I have used two methods: literature research and semi-structured interviewing. Before explaining these choices and their compliance to Denscombe's method criteria, I will take a closer look at why I employ qualitative methods for this thesis. I will then focus on the method of semi-structured interviewing, its process and evaluation before turning to the discussion of the data.

3.1 A Qualitative Approach

As Denscombe notes, the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods does not technically lie in the use of different methods, but rather in the different "treatment of data" the two approaches demand (Denscombe, 2007, p. 247). He sees quantitative research as associated with "numbers as the unit of analysis", the analysis of large-scale studies with specific focus based on a predetermined research design with a high degree of researcher detachment (cf. Denscombe, 2007, p. 248-250). Qualitative research is rather associated with "words or images as the unit of analysis" and the descriptive use of data collected in small-scale studies with rather holistic focus, based on an emergent research design and a certain degree of researcher involvement (cf. Denscombe, 2007, p. 248-250).

There is too little quantified and quantifiable data on the representation and position of women in the music industry. This fact shows the reluctance of industry members and legislation alike to really get to the bottom of the issue. Also Conor, Gill & Taylor deplore "[...] the shortage of relevant data which, we argue, both reflects and *contributes to* enduring inequalities" (Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015, p. 6, emphasis theirs). In other words, quantitative data on gender equality in the music industry that goes beyond a sheer evaluation of gender representation numbers in the field overall, is sorely called for and would contribute to strengthening the arguments of many researchers in the field.

Nevertheless, I chose to pursue a qualitative approach to my research. First and foremost it is my research question dictating the method — that the music industry has a gender problem is the premise of my thesis, the lack of aggregated data on it notwithstanding. On this basis, I am interested in the whys and hows of the problem, questions that are best answered in qualitative approaches such as the in-depth interview that I apply here.

But my choice of qualitative over quantitative methods also has a mundane reason: I do not possess enough knowledge to collect and analyse quantitative data in a manner that is worthy of both the data and a thesis on master-level. As a literature major on bachelor's level, I am familiar with the qualitative field alone, and gathering enough knowledge on quantitative research methods would have taken an amount of time well beyond the scope of the thesis. In

accordance with Denscombe, I therefore found that quantitative methods in general weren't feasible for research conducted by me.

3.2 Literature Research

Literature research must of course stand at the beginning of any research process. It helps finding and demarcating the research question and determine whether the research question is feasible to ask — maybe it has been answered before or can be answered fairly simply or is too complex for the scope of the task at hand? It is also important for placing the thesis in the academic field. Academic works do not form out of a vacuum. They are always anchored in previously executed research, whether in dissent or accord, with comprehensive knowlegde of its precedessors or patchy insight into the field at best. Without reference to other research, whether ex- or implicitly, it is nothing but empty claims.

The starting point for the literature research for this thesis was the common digital library database of all university libraries in Norway, Oria. I began with fairly open keyword searches that became more specific and detailed as my research progressed. I also used relevant journal archives and Google Scholar for my research. However, the most fruitful input came from the literature that other researchers referred to in their works. By pursuing those references across the available literature, the interconnectedness of the research in the field became more and more clear to me. Also specifically digging into the canon of selected researchers who emerged as prolific in the field (such as David Hesmondhalgh, Rosalind Gill and Ursula Huws) and reading some of their published work that at first might not have seemed relevant to my research question was at times very enlightening.

Literature research necessarily has to be an interative process of broadening and narrowing the search as your understanding and knowledge of the research subject at hand progresses and grows. For example, because of the already discussed lack of academic work on the music industry, I soon found that I had to broaden my scope to also include cultural industries in general and neighbouring industries such as new media and tech startups.

Generally speaking, I have come to find it important to both search broadly and specified, via various channels, to browse and assess found sources closely and critically, read literature that might not look relevant at first sight and follow cross-connections, be it also opening the book standing next to the one you looked for in the library or clicking through suggestions from Google's algorithms.

3.3 Semi-Structured Interviewing

Interviews are one of the most used methods in research with a qualitative scope (cf. Bryman, 2008, p. 436). In a rigidly structured form and/or as a survey, they can also be used in quantitative research "for the collection of straightforward factual information", but, as Denscombe remarks, "their potential as a data collection method is better exploited when they are applied to the exploration of more complex and subtle phenomena" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 174). Both the semi-structured and the entirely unstructured interview are especially suitable for the collection of data based on "opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences", "sensitive issues" and "privileged information" (Denscombe, 2007, p. 175).

As I am interested in the why and hows in my research, insight gained through personal experience, I chose to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews. In an interview guide I could formulate some issues that I wanted to address with my interview partners, but it also gave me the possibility to leave space for these stories to unfold and facilitate them with individual, spontaneous questions.

For the design, implementation and analysis of the interviews, I employed the "seven stages of an interview investigation" that Kvale (1996, p. 88) suggests:

1. Thematising — clarifying the "*why* and *what* of the investigation"
2. Designing the study
3. Interviewing
4. Transcribing the interviews
5. Analysing the interview material
6. Verifying — checking the findings for reliability and validity
7. Reporting those findings

Other qualitative data collection methods that were taken into consideration was the focus group, where a group of informants collectively discuss a topic under the guidance of researchers. Because of the geographical distance of my interview partners and the possible sensitivity of data, this method was dismissed. Also a case study would have been suitable, for example closely examining a music company such as a record label and its gender dynamics. However, as I live and work in Kristiansand, a city with little music industry infrastructure and no company exceeding two to three employees, it would have been necessary for me to conduct the case study in a different city, which was impossible for me because of my work.

In the following, I will discuss the strenghts and challenges of semi-structured interviewing I encountered during the course of the research for this thesis.

3.3.1 Strenghts

As mentioned above, semi-structured in-depth interviews open up to fully explore an informant's perspectives and opinions and lets them tell their stories in their own voice. It has the possible advantage of interview partners sharing openly and being candid about their experiences, something I was hoping for and dependent on. Research has shown that both men and women in the music industry often are reluctant to acknowledge a gender problem (cf. Gill, 2002, n.p.; Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015, p. 6). This also became obvious in my quest for interview partners (discussed further down) and gave my interviews a potential extra-sensitive angle. While I was aware of a certain reluctance to talk about gender in the music industry, the full extent of it did not occur to me before I started conducting my research. The interview proved to be the most suitable form to accomodate for this.

When conducted face to face, interviews also include non-verbal communication clues such as body language. In my case, those were very useful for detecting when an interview partner was "zoning out", misunderstanding my questions or starting to feel uncomfortable, giving me the possibility to change this in time before it could become an issue. In light of the sensitivity of my research object, this was particularly helpful.

Moreover, interviews can also have a tendency to become therapeutic as Denscombe notes (cf. 2007, p. 203), an effect I also saw in my interviews. Speaking of a topic that they have opinions about, but not always discuss openly, I got responses like "it's never crossed my mind until right now" (Andy) or "I am so glad to finally discuss something I know about" (Åslaug, after ended recording). The way the interviews contributed to my interview partners' thought processes is ultimately a way of raising awareness and opening up direly needed dialogue, both in academia and in the industry itself.

In this case, my prior acquaintance with the interview partners also established immediate rapport and trust. While I only know them professionally, not personally, this was enough to keep the inevitable awkwardness and shyness in the beginning of the interview to a minimum by being able to make small-talk, thus putting them more at ease and making them more ready to open up to me as an interviewer.

3.3.2 Challenges

Knowing my interview partners from before, however, also contributed to my interviewer's bias. I am no stranger to the cause of changing the gender imbalance in the Norwegian music industry and have been publicly vocal about my work in and support for several organisations contributing to it. The same goes for my interview partners. This led me to assuming certain aspects of their standpoints already before interviewing them, something I constantly had to check myself for, both during the interviews and when developing my interview guide prior to the sessions. I found it challenging to avoid closed and/or leading questions, but with the help of my supervisor I managed to discard my a priori notions of what my interview partners were going to say, opening up the questions to allow for the conversation to unfold into whichever direction, as it did in all interviews.

Using interviews as a data-collection method is also quite dependent on the skills of the interviewer. It was the first time for me to use this method, which made me insecure about a number of things before conducting the interviews. As already mentioned, I at first struggled with formulating my questions in a open way. I was equally insecure about how much I should contribute to the

conversation with my own opinions, i.e. how much of a dialogue the interview should become. I resolved this issue by holding myself back in the beginning of the interview and increasing my replies and comments as the interview progressed, provided it was appropriate. Andy even encouraged me to speak more, asking me specifically about my opinions and almost turning around the interviewer-interviewee situation in the end of our session, thus creating an interesting dialogue between us two. His interview was also the one where I strayed most from the interview guide. With my other interview partner, Åslaug, it was less natural to respond to her arguments, and here I was extremely conscious about not overtoning them.

Lastly, I conducted all my interviews via Skype and recorded the audio with a dictaphone. The technology led to initial awkwardness and inhibition both for me and my interview partners. However, the Skype-connection was unexpectedly trouble-free and did not hinder the interviews in any way. What's more, all interview partners are to some extent public figures used to speaking on record, so that any initial awkwardness quickly dissolved.

3.3.3 Ethical Concerns

In all research, the question of confidentiality and anonymity is of concern when dealing with data collected from research subjects. Especially when data is of personal nature or contains sensitive information for example about the subject's workplace, the correct handling of such data is of utmost importance.

As I only interviewed two persons, and because the music industry especially in Norway is so small that everyone knows each other (or at least of each other), this became a great concern of mine. Just by contextualising their background and position in the music industry, it would have been fairly easy for them to be recognised even when leaving their names out. I chose to discuss this openly with my interview partners before the beginning of each interview, giving them the option of remaining anonymous. In the end, both of them chose to forego anonymity. They were also good at indicating when they wished to speak off the record, which I of course respected. In Åslaug's case, we agreed on me sending her the passages of the transcript I intended to use for my discussion to get her approval beforehand.

3.3.4 The Interview Guide

Based on the findings of the previously conducted literature research, the interview guide for the interviews in this thesis consists of 14 questions, divided into five sections (see the full guide below). In order to ease into the interview situation, the introductory section features general questions about the interview partners' background in the music industry and how they got into it. In the second section, I was interested in their experience with labour exploitation in the music industry in general, especially working for free, adding the gender perspective in the following section. Here I was interested both in personal experience, the structural background of gender imbalance as they perceive it and possible solutions. Before rounding off with demographics, I then gave my interview partners space to discuss other issues that they felt necessary to address.

In order to keep the questions as open-ended as possible, I mainly asked about how or why they perceived something. I also was intent on not employing biased terminology during the interview, especially terms with negative connotations such as exploitation and discrimination. My aim was to influence my interview partners as little as possible with my own perspectives on the issue at hand, so that they would feel as little as possible affected by them

3.3.5 The Choice of Interview Partners

For the thesis, a total of two interviews were conducted. The following criteria were used for finding suitable interview partners:

1. The interview partner should have been in the music industry for at least a decade
2. They are known to be outspoken and likely to give honest opinion
3. They should be from different backgrounds within the music industry, e.g.
 - Freelancing, in organisational life or in permanent positions
 - From different countries
 - Both male and female

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Introductory Questions

- 1.1 How long have you been working in the music industry?
- 1.2 How did you get into the music industry?
- 1.3 What was it that initially attracted you to the music industry?

2. Labour Exploitation in the Music Industry

- 2.1 How would you characterise working in the music industry?
- 2.2 In your early years, what was your experience with working for free?
- 2.3 Why did you work for free?
- 2.4 What is your attitude towards working for free now?

3. Gender and Labour Exploitation

- 3.1 How do you generally think that gender plays a role in the music industry?
- 3.2 Did you ever encounter that your gender played a role in your work?
- 3.3 Are there specific structures that you see as gender-discriminating?
 - 3.3.1 How did the digitalisation of the music industry have an effect on those structures?
- 3.4 How can we affect change?

4. Free Part

- 4.1 Is there anything you feel we haven't discussed that you would like to take up?

5. Demographics

- 5.1 What is your current occupation and position?

INTERVIEW GUIDE EMPLOYED FOR THE INTERVIEWS INFORMING THIS THESIS

- 4. The respondents should have opinions about the topic of gender (im-)balance in the music industry

The interview partners were Andy Inglis and Åslaug Sem-Jacobsen.

Andy Inglis

Andy is a British artist manager and TM (tour manager) running his own company, 5000. He has a background in venue- and festival-management: he co-founded the London venue The Luminaire and booked for the Norwegian festival Quart, at its time the biggest and most influential music festival in the country. He also frequently consults, gives lectures and shares his expansive experience as a mentor.

Åslaug Sem-Jacobsen

Åslaug is a music and culture journalist and executive producer for different formats at Norwegian broadcaster NRK and TV2 such as *Lydverket* and *God kveld Norge*. At NRK, she was head of the largest music-journalistic editorial department in the Nordic countries, with almost 25 employees in her staff and the responsibility for TV, radio and internet. She is currently on leave from NRK and working as deputy mayor of Notodden.

In the end, the quest for interview partners in itself became a mini-study on gender-imbalance and its implications in the music industry. While aware of a general carefulness or wariness to talk about the subject, I underestimated the extensiveness of an obvious unspoken "don't ask don't tell" policy about it in the industry. Especially women were reluctant to talk about it, even when offered to remain anonymous. In total I asked one man to be interviewed (Andy Inglis), but six women, of whom three did not want to be interviewed. Two of them were willing to speak about the subject, but it was impossible to actually conduct the interview: both postponed the interview session several times over a period of over one month. In the end, I had to drop the interviews due to time constraints.

3.3.6 The Data Analysis

All the interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and subsequently subscribed by the author herself. As Kvale notes, there is no standardised way of transcribing (cf. Kvale, 1996, p. 170). I opted to condense the interviews already in the transcription process, keeping as close to the exact wording used by the interview partners, but editing out repetitions or non sequiturs, as well as omitting to transcribe passages that I considered irrelevant or unessential for the aim of the research.

The criteria used for the analysis of my data is based on Denscombe's four guiding principles (cf. Denscombe, 2007, p. 287). Firstly, "the analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn from the research should be firmly rooted in the data." Secondly, "the researcher's explanation of the data should emerge from a careful and meticulous reading of the data." Thirdly, "the researcher should avoid introducing unwarranted preconceptions into the data analysis." Being aware of my own bias and personal opinions and keeping them separate from the findings in this thesis was of great importance during the whole research and writing process. Fourthly, "the analysis of data should involve an iterative process" of constantly moving back and forth between "the development of theory, hypotheses, concepts or generalizations" (all quotes: Denscombe, 2007, p. 287-288). While prioritising and coding the data, I always had both the theory gained from my literature research and my hypotheses in mind, going back to modify both the scope of theory I intended to include and refine my hypotheses.

4. Findings

The aim of the interviews was twofold: to confirm the theoretical frameworks discussed above and to explore possible options to affect change. In this chapter, I will outline the former, leaving the discussion of measures to affect change in the music industry to chapter 5.

Since most of the literature that forms the basis for this thesis is focused on cultural industries in general, not the music industry specifically, the interviews were an important tool to corroborate the transfer of frameworks and findings to the music industry. Both Andy's and Åslaug's interviews confirm that such a transfer is legitimate, proving that music industry is indeed a place of pronounced gender imbalance grounded in structures of exploitation.

As a journalist and TV producer, it can be debated whether Åslaug is part of the music industry or not. Throughout her career, she has always worked with music and is very passionate about it, but technically, she should probably be classified as a part of the TV and broadcast industry. However, this borderline status of being both an insider and outsider to the music industry gives Åslaug unique insights into the field that more involved people are denied. What's more, her case proves that experiences in different creative industries are both comparable and interconnected.

4.1 Working Conditions in the Music Industry

Åslaug recounts being hired on project-basis in the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK for years before getting a permanent position: "I was not hired by NRK for many years, but I worked at the same place for a long time, so I wouldn't say that I was a freelancer who worked at different places all over, I was not working like that ever." While she didn't consider herself a freelancer, she recognises it as a common practice within the industry, saying that she "hired a lot of people who had to build a portfolio as a freelancer." For her, it was an internship that opened the doors to NRK:

I was very lucky because when I went to school, I had a practical experience-period at NRK, and when I was there, everyone was sick. So I got to do whatever I wanted and I had the chance to show off, so I got a job right after school. And then it sort of builds.

This shows the importance of building a network as well as the necessity to present and sell yourself with every project — each project becomes a pitch for the next one.

Also Andy exemplifies the importance of network when describing how he got into the music industry. In the beginning of the 1990s, he got one of his first jobs as an assistant to the founder of a little record label because he "could type": the employees at the record shop he frequented knew that, and when the label owner told them he was looking for an assistant, they pointed straight to him. This also proves how informal, and at times random, recruitment processes in the music industry are. Andy was simply in the right place at the right time.

Both Andy and Åslaug acknowledge that working for free is part of working realities in the music industry. Interestingly, Andy tells that he has perceived a shift to the worse in the past years:

I think actually more recently I've done it for free because... I think things are harder now. In the 90s, we didn't have the worst economic crisis in history, which is what we had in 2008, so things are harder now than they were back then. [...] I've got more experience of doing it now. I'll say to an artist, look, I'll help you out for a while and you pay me when you can make money, 'cause I can see the long term, so I do that more now.

However, he also recognises that his experience and standing in the business puts him in a different situation than beginners in the industry forced to work for free because they are trying to get a foot in the door. He says that "[...] that's maybe more my choice than it is someone saying, you can work for me but I will not pay you."

Åslaug and Andy also agree on the huge impact digitalisation has on every respect of the music industry. Andy also connects digitalisation of the work place and the growing spatial independence to his perceived worsening of the conditions for working in the music industry:

[...] your work force is global. [...] I've got to compete with managers all over the world and TMs all over the world, so my competition's global now. So it's way more difficult to get your voice heard above the rest as a young person.

4.2 Gender Imbalance in the Music Industry

Throughout her career, Åslaug has been very conscious about the ways gender plays a role in the music industry. In her experiences on the job, she has seen the gendering of jobs that contributes to gender segregation:

In the music industry, females usually are the "promo-babes" who work with following the artist around. They're very seldomly A&R, they're very seldomly executives. And in the music journalism field I think that the female journalist has a somewhat more equal part, at least in Norway, but there are of course a lot more male music journalists.

She also recounts that women's level of competence in the music business is sometimes doubted because of their gender:

[...] sometimes the artists didn't take the questions from the female journalists seriously enough. I also had stories where they were really surprised that the journalist knew that much, and I think that's because of their sex that they expressed that surprise.

She also comments on blurred lines that exist in typically female gendered jobs like PR-jobs:

They [i.e. women working in PR] have to cope with all sorts of strange things. If you're young and pretty, it's not an easy environment to work in. I've seen some stuff... They have problems having boundaries because they are supposed to please the artist and they're very low in the hierarchy in the record company, so I think that's a difficult position, at least when you're not eager to join into whatever.

In his days as a venue manager, Andy also saw many instances where his female staff was being sexually harrassed. As a man, he has also seen positive discrimination where the same person treats him differently than his female production staff:

I heard my staff telling me that this tour manager's, band member is being an asshole to me and I go meet them, they're really nice to me. And when that happens a lot, you're thinking well, this is happening for a reason. It can't be because I'm really nice and my staff is an asshole because my staff is not an asshole 'cause I made sure they weren't when I hired them. What else can it be? Are they skilled at their job? Yes they are. Are they asking the right questions? Yes they are because I've overheard them, it's a small club, I can see and hear them work. What's left? They're women.

This positive discrimination of men by men also manifests itself in what Åslaug calls the "all-male-club." Men in the music industry "know each other, they hang

out, they have their own lingo, all that kind of stuff." Those informal structures also translate to recruitment: Åslaug says that "[...] when I see who has been recruited over the years, it's people who know each other."

Åslaug also identifies the odd working hours of the music industry and the issue of combining them with child-rearing as a disadvantage for women in the industry. She regards the combination of late concerts and alcohol especially as easier to handle for men with children than women with children. Åslaug herself says she pushed maternity and didn't become a mother before the age of 38. But for those who start their family life earlier, this "very often stops her career." While she thinks it is easier in other businesses to make a comeback, Åslaug sees the "pressure on long evenings and those sort of things" as a serious issue for women with children in the music industry.

Andy acknowledges that maternity leave can be challenging especially for small businesses that only consist of two or three employees. However, he shows that these challenges can be worked around with the necessary awareness. He recently met a woman he considered hiring who had a six-month old baby. He says that "my first reaction was, that's a problem. And my second reaction which was maybe three seconds later was, no it isn't. And from then on I moved on that premise that it wasn't a problem." He recognises the equation of maternity equalling problems for the workforce as a result of his socialisation during his upbringing that is true for his entire generation, and makes a conscious effort to change the "wiring" of his brain to exclude a woman from a hiring process just because she has children. As he shows, the relative flexibility of working in the music industry allows for creative solutions to combine parenthood and work:

So I had to think about it for a minute, and I thought, how would that affect me? Well, it wouldn't, because she's demonstrated me very quickly that she is bored out of her fucking mind with a baby, she wants her career back. I've got no office, I don't want an office, she wants to work at home. That suits me perfectly. No travel expenses. It was a great situation, it worked great for me.

Åslaug added an interesting new dimension to the discussion when she brought up the highly problematic concept of groupies. Female music industry professionals who are working closely with artists are all too often objectified as groupies, "because females are groupies in their world." Åslaug recounts that

[w]hen musicians are interviewed by female journalists, they sometimes think journalists are groupies. It happens. [...] I have had a lot of employees who came back with some uncomfortable stories from their interviews, or from people around the artists. Sometimes they just assume that the journalist wants to have sex or whatever. Doesn't happen every time, I'm not saying that, but everybody has a story where they felt really uncomfortable.

Anita Wisløff, a Norwegian booking agent and co-owner of one of the country's biggest booking agencies, Atomic Soul, was confronted with the same objectifying presumption when she, in her student years, twice applied for the job as booker of Trondheims Studentersamfund, a concert venue run by students for students, and got refused both times in favour of men. When she asked why she didn't get the job, she received the answer that "honestly, we were afraid you would become a groupie"¹ (Wisløff, 2014).

Also Andy added an interesting new angle to the discussion when he argued for the current powerful generation of white men in their forties being far from perfect. He claims that the undervaluation of streaming-rates is something that "happened on our [i.e. his generation's] watch," and his stance on it is clear: "as an industry, as a generation, we fucked this up." Andy shows that the powerful leaders in the music industry aren't perfect, and argues for the necessity of them to pave the way for the following generations.

The last question of the section on gender imbalance in the music industry on how to affect change wasn't initially designed to be a focal point. However, during the interviews this question took considerable space, both when asked directly and implicitly throughout the other parts of the interviews. The literature research revealed only few suggestions to this question. During the course of my research, I therefore decided to shift the focus of the discussion in this thesis on possible approaches to change the gender imbalance in the music industry, based on the suggestions and practices of both interview partners. Those are therefore omitted from this chapter and will be discussed in detail in the following.

¹ Norwegian original: "Helt ærlig, vi var redd du skulle bli en groupie." Translation mine.

5. Discussion – What Can Be Done to Affect Change?

After examining why the music industry has a gender problem, the final section of this paper will focus on how we can address those structures to affect a positive change in the gender balance (or lack thereof) in the music industry. Drawing on the interviews with Åslaug and Andy as well as cases of best practice mainly from the Norwegian music scene which show the many ways in which music actors already attempt to change the music, I will discuss both big ideas dependent on legislation and societal change such as gender quotas and labour unions as well as smaller, more specific measures that center around the activism of individuals and smaller groups.

5.1 Discussing Gender Quotas

Gender quotas have been a heavily debated measure ever since they first became popular as a political instrument of influence in the 1970s. Then and today, the Nordic countries are fronting the system, with Norway and Sweden possessing the most encompassing bodies of law on quotas both in the politics and publicly traded companies.

In the Nordics, gender quota systems had their inception in the 1970s and 80s, when political parties instated quotas that should ensure the representation of each gender in public office with at least 40% (cf. Teigen, 2011, p. 93). In 2003, Norway was the first country to adopt a corporate board law "stipulating that at least 40 per cent of the boards of public limited companies and of publicly owned enterprises must be comprised of each gender" (Teigen, 2011, p. 95). after an extended transitional period, the law became fully enforced in January 2008. The same year, the same stipulations were introduced for municipally owned companies (cf. Teigen, 2011, p. 95). As Teigen explains, the government's reason to opt for the introduction of gender quotas were "democracy and profitability": democracy because of "the idea that the principle of gender equality will further the participation, impact and influence of women" and profitability because "a better utilisation of potential female talent in the population will result in positive productivity effects [...]" (Teigen, 2011, p. 102). Since then, many countries around the world have instituted similar laws.

However, gender quotas have been far from uncontested. The high degree of state interference into private businesses has been considered as opposing the general trend of de-regulation of the 1980s and 90s. It has also been criticised that the law-imposed gender balance of the boards doesn't translate downward: in Norway, chairmen of boards are in 95% of all cases still male, as well as managerial positions still being overwhelmingly filled by men (cf. Teigen, 2011, p. 99).

In the music industry, a general uncomfortableness with the idea of quotas prevails. Most of the music companies are small and medium-sized and not publicly traded, exempting them from gender quota legislation. Especially when creativity comes into the mix and the qualifications making a candidate fitting for a job aren't just quantifiable, but also reliant on a certain x-factor, the possibility to having to "replace" that person because of their gender becomes touchy.

Andy is in favour of law-imposed quotas, regarding their enforcement as an act of poetic justice:

And maybe some legislation. I think quotas are good. And I don't care if men get offended that they don't get jobs because women do, I don't give a fuck any more. And I'm sorry for the men who are in the middle between the old sexist way and the new enlightened way which isn't here yet but one day will be here. And those men stuck in the middle, who are saying that's not fair, I'm not sexist, I'm a big supporter of feminism and I can prove it by these things, but I can't get the job because of feminism. And I'll be saying, you know what, tough shit. I don't know if I care now. Any huge change of social behaviour, there's always someone in the fucking middle who's got to suffer, and right now women have suffered for fucking human history. Maybe it's time for men collectively to take a hit and to get to equality. Otherwise, it would take so much fucking longer, so much longer. It might take centuries, it might take that long. It might never happen in your lifetime.

Andy has not been unaffected by gender quotas himself: after ended recording, he recounts that he recently did not get a tourmanagement-job because the band's manager wanted to have a female TM.

Such a kind of self-imposed, voluntary enforcement of quotas is a method Åslaug employed during her time at NRK: she decided that her shows were to have at least 40% female artists. As a state-owned broadcaster, NRK is under the obligation to include at least 35% Norwegian music in their music programmes (cf. NRK-plakaten (2008), attachment 1 to Stortingsmelding Meld.

St. 38 (2014-2015), p. 2), but Åslaug's decision to also include a gender quota in her programmes was entirely hers:

It was really important for me that we were going to have at least 40% female artists covered in total every year in all the shows I had done. So that was a job I had, also to have as much Norwegian music as possible. And we always succeeded. But it took some effort because there are less female artists than men. In NRK, that is important, but not too important. But for me that was really important. Also when it came to who I hired, I was always very eager to see if there were some female candidates. So I always had some extra interest in female journalists. Maybe that's wrong, but it's true.

She admits that this takes an extra effort, but is convinced that those measures have had an important effect on a more gender-balanced programme during her time:

It is the choices we made about gender that also helped a lot of those female artists I'm quite sure, because sometimes you wanted to use yet another band with boys, but because we needed more female artists, you just went the extra mile to find somebody who you really liked. So that's one way to go, just make some rules.

That such voluntary quotas also can backfire, shows the job advertisement Andy published a week after our interview. In it, he was specifically looking for "a woman under thirty" to become his assistant, "with the goal (within 12 months) of becoming my business partner with a share in the company²." Already in the original version of the advertisement, Andy notes that "you can probably report me under the Equality Act 2010, but I'll just remove mention of hiring a woman in the post, pretend I'm abiding with the terms of the Act, then go ahead and hire a woman anyway." A day later, that is what he had to do, following comments by both "women, men, and those who don't identify as either" who felt offended by the specifications of the ad. The following morning, he deleted the entire job advertisement, closing down the application without hiring someone, and posted an apology and explanation instead where he explains that

I was attempting to positively discriminate in an industry which continues to treat women – of all ages – badly, as society in general does. I hoped what I wrote would stimulate conversation and debate. It did that. However, I alienated many women over 30 who already find it hard enough to find work in the music industry. And the

² The full text of the job advertisement has since been taken offline. Excerpts here are reproduced with permission.

wording unwittingly discriminated against those who do not identify as either men or women. I believe my motives were good, and come from a place of wanting to effect positive change in my industry. The method; less good. Divisive, damaging. (Inglis, 2016)

Of course, voluntary, internal goals for gender representation have to abide to the law. Nevertheless, where law-imposed quotas don't apply or prove to not be an efficient enough measure, voluntary gender quotas can be a useful tool for any company in the music industry, from the two-person tour management to the international festival or major record label to make a difference in the company's gender representation.

5.2 Talk About It

In the music industry, "gender blindness" prevails — there is a strong tendency to ignore gender issues. Gill calls this the "post-feminist problem": the problem of "[...] men, but also most women — to understand their experiences as having anything to do with gender" (Gill, 2002, n.p.). But also those aware of it are often hesitant to talk about it. This phenomenon is not limited to the music industry: in their series "Gender Balance Today" (German original: "Gleichberechtigung heute") *Süddeutsche Zeitung* "asked more than 50 famous men if they call themselves feminists and if they would say so publicly: actors, politicians, musicians, authors, philosophers."³ The results show the clear hesitation of the men they asked:

The excuses were always similar. The phone rings, the press agent is calling. The famous host he is representing is of course a proponent of feminism. But unfortunately he cannot say that publicly, it would only be misunderstood. He has to consider the ratings. [...]

The interesting part: most of them didn't decline because they refuse the term. They decline because they do not want to call themselves feminists in public. Other men didn't have the time: the next shoot,

³ German original: "Die *Süddeutsche Zeitung* hat mehr als 50 bekannte Männer gefragt, ob sie sich als Feministen bezeichnen und das öffentlich auch so sagen würden: Schauspieler, Politiker, Musiker, Autoren, Philosophen." Translation mine.

the next album or book, appointments abroad. Ten minutes only, on the phone? Clearly too much.⁴ (Peters, 2016)

In the end, they received answers by five men.

In a climate where even men are afraid to call themselves feminists publicly, it is even harder to raise uncomfortable questions about gender in a work environment. Being critical becomes a competitive disadvantage — when you're afraid of becoming unemployable, you do not speak up. Critique therefore often comes from a place of privilege, something also Andy recognises:

It's partly because of my power as an older, experienced guy in my business — the guy is an important part of the phrase, and being white — that I feel like, I don't care any more how these things would damage my business. I don't know that there's anything that I wouldn't say any more that I think is wrong.

Paradoxically, only by talking about it more can it become more normal to talk about gender issues in the music industry. In order to raise awareness, we need to share experience, stories of defeat and victory and take the danger out of speaking up. This needs to happen in panels and debates, in the media and academia, but also in the lunch break with colleagues, in practise rooms and over beers during a concert. In other words, we need more men and women like Andy and Åslaug who talk about it.

5.3 The Power of Language

The need to talk about gender issues in the music industry in order to affect change is closely connected to the more watchful use of language. Clearly gendered terms like A&R-man (cf. Leonard, 2014, p. 130) or promo-babe limit both men and women in their perceived options in the music industry. Such language affects us subconsciously rather than consciously: it is doubtful that a woman decides not to work in A&R specifically because the predominant job

⁴ German original: "Die Ausreden waren stets ähnlich. Das Handy klingelt, der Presseagent ruft an. Der bekannte Moderator, den er vertritt, sei natürlich für Feminismus. Er könne das aber leider nicht offen sagen, das würde dann nur falsch verstanden werden. Er müsse ja auch an die Zuschauerquoten denken. [...]"

Das Interessante: Die meisten sagten nicht ab, weil sie den Begriff ablehnen. Sondern weil sie sich nicht öffentlich als Feminist bezeichnen wollten. Andere Männer hatten keine Zeit: Die nächsten Dreharbeiten, das neue Album oder Buch, Termine im Ausland. Nur zehn Minuten, am Telefon? Eindeutig zu viel." Translation mine.

title refers to men only. However, gendered job descriptions denote those positions as male or female domains and can therefore lead to a subconscious pre-elimination even before the conscious process of deciding what to become starts. This is not unique to the music industry either — for example, the term chairman of the board is used industry-independently, or the term nurse, in itself gender-neutral, is firmly rooted in the female domain.

It is easier said than done to eliminate such terms from the collective subconscious of society or even just an industry. Even Åslaug, who, as a journalist and a woman being actively interested in gender dynamics in the music industry, uses the term "promo-babe." She is very conscious of this though, saying that "'promo-babe' — just the word isn't good, you know —" and also made it clear in subsequent e-mail contact following the interview that she is uncomfortable having caught herself using the term. It is that kind of awareness that needs to be increased within the music industry and beyond.

Also in music journalism, language is a potent means. In Norway, bands consisting of women are quickly labelled "jenteband," girl band. This term is not to be confused with the English use of the term to describe the famous female pop- and R'n'B-bands of the 1990s — in Norwegian, it is applicable to bands of any genre and level of fame (although the English connotation still lingers). Predominantly male bands, however, do not per se become categorised as boy bands. They also receive a lot less focus on their appearance and clothing than their female colleagues. In 2014, the network Balansekunst (The Art of Balance) therefore composed "Spriket i språket," the ten commandments of music journalism in the 21st century where they recommend how a music journalist should handle gender. One of their suggestions is as simple as it is powerful:

Do you feel an urge to categorise artists as girl bands, balls rock [i.e. the opposite of a girl band, a band with balls] or female musician, try to exchange gender with skin colour, sexual orientation or religious affiliation. If it looks weird, it is weird.⁵ (Lindholm et al., 2014).

How engrained the use of gendered language can be also became clear in the interview with Andy Inglis. He says that "[...] I am constantly mentally, silently correcting myself [...]" for sexist or racist language that he sees as deeply

⁵ Norwegian original: "Kjenner du en trang til å kategorisere artister som jenteband, ballerock, eller kvinnelig musiker, forsøk å bytte ut kjønn med hudfarge, seksuell legning eller religiøs tilknytning. Ser det rart ut, er det rart." Translation mine.

intertwined with the socialisation he absorbed during his upbringing. As he remarks, "[l]anguage evolves, and societies evolve with them." Later on in the interview, he gives an example of how language can rewire thought processes: he recounts catching himself hesitating to hire a woman on the base of her having a small child. But then he checks himself and takes a moment to assess if this really presents a problem. And while he does not disavow a potentially negative effect maternity leave might have on a small company, he makes an important point on how this can be approached:

[...] it presents a problem. It presents a challenge. And how you want to address that is up to you. If it becomes a problem, maybe it becomes a semantic issue, a grammatically semantic issue. I see it as a challenge, you see it as a problem or whatever.

Categorising maternity as a problem per se closes the door for finding individual solutions for the challenge it might present. In an industry priding itself to be flexible and open, language should remain open and ungendered as well, allowing for more flexible thought processes and creative solutions.

Of course, an exaggerated focus on political correctness can be stifling, in journalism and everyday professional life alike. Nevertheless, a greater awareness for the power that language holds both for oneself individually and for society as a whole can contribute to a greater awareness of everyday sexism and will ultimately affect change.

5.4 Role Models

"[...] the best thing to do is to see artists like Beyonce and so on, because they show that everything is possible." This is what Åslaug answered when asked what we can do to affect change. The importance of role models to affect societal change is summed up by Andy as the need to educate children from early on and "normalisation" of women in positions that are currently gendered as male (and vice versa). While he has to make a conscious effort to shake the antiquated perceptions of gender roles from his upbringing, gender should become a non-issue for the generations of children to come.

Many music organisations have started working towards that goal, in Norway and abroad. For example the non-profit Girls Rock Camp Alliance (GRCA) organises camps where girls learn not only to be a vocalist, but also to play

drums, bass or guitar, thus debunking the gender divides often still prevalent in bands. Today, band camps all over the Americas and Europe are members of the GRCA, showing that there obviously is a need for such spaces especially for girls. Similar to that, it needs to become normal for those girls need to see that women can be influential A&Rs in major labels or famous festival bookers.

Also academia plays a role in this education process. Here, women are often poorly represented in the field of music: for example, the department of popular music at the University of Agder doesn't have a single female professor, and only one woman above research-fellow level (the department's vocal teacher). Preliminary results of the ongoing research project "Kjønn og skjønn i kunstfag" (English: Sex and discretion in arts departments) finds similar situations in the arts departments all over Norway (cf. Bore, 2015). The lack of female role models on every level in the music industry needs to be addressed in order to induce generations to come to think in other patterns than many of the current stakeholders of the music industry do. Only like that can change become enduring.

5.5 Formalising the Recruitment Process

As previous research and the interviews show, the formalisation of the recruitment process can also contribute to the reduction of gender imbalance in the music industry. All too often, vacant positions get filled by persons in the recruiter's immediate network, often not even publicly announcing the vacancy. As Åslaug says, the music industry is a boy's club which hires internally: "when I see who has been recruited over the years, it's people who know each other." Of course, the recruitment process needs to be appropriate in scope to the type of position. A short-time project position doesn't require a month-long vetting process of candidates with multiple interview rounds. However, the mere act of formally releasing a job advertisement makes the recruitment process more democratic and therefore easier to approach for women seeking a career in the music industry.

The music industry is an industry that is dependent on innovation, new ways of thinking and game changing ideas like no other. Recruiting from a pool of predominantly white men with the same opinions seems outright

counterproductive — if you only select from 50% of the population, you miss out on 50% of talent. Yet again, the opening of job positions to a greater group of candidates does not only help women and their standing in the music industry, it benefits the industry as a whole.

5.6 Workers Unite

Finally, the better protection of creative workers facing instability and precarity could benefit working conditions for workers in the music industry in general and create more secure environments for women in particular. To that end, the strengthening of labour unions and other organisations working for the improvement of wage or welfare conditions is an important tool. The Canadian researchers Enda Bronphy, Nicole Cohen and Greig de Peuter map such organisations on their web page "Cultural Workers Organize," on which they also share their research on a "labour movement that has had difficulty adapting to the growth of flexible employment and knowledge-intensive, communicative, and cultural work" (Bronphy, Cohen & de Peuter, n.d.). Musicians and technicians are often unionised, for example in the Musicians' Union in Great Britain, which represents over 30.000 musicians, the Norwegian Musikernes fellesforbund with over 7.000 members or the German Deutscher Tonkünstlerverband with roughly 8.100 members. However, those indirectly involved in the production of music lack appropriate representation fora, or are organised in groups so specialised that they become too small for having real political impact. The specificity of cultural work in its structures and its output, not to speak of its societal impact, has been recognised and hailed by policy-makers as the future of working (cf. Ross, 2000; Conor, Gill & Taylor, 2015). However, politicians seem just as blinded by the "cool, creative and egalitarian"-façade (cf. Gill, 2002) as the rest, resulting in creative industries lagging behind in policy-driven workers' protection and welfare. If we are to believe that the future of working lies in creative labour, such deficits need to be adressed and remedied.

The ways in which to affect change of the gender imbalance in the music industry discussed here is by no means exhaustive. Most of the options

explored here are advocating a certain level of openness around the choices made. Other actors in the music industry prefer to operate in the shadows, silently booking gender-balanced festival line-ups or hiring with an extra focus on forwarding women in executive positions. Those approaches are just as valid and necessary. Either way, in order for change to happen, everybody will have to take action in one way or other. Societal change and a stronger political focus is just as important as the engagement of everyone interested in the prospering of the music industry, because gender imbalance is not just the problem of the women who get the short end of the stick — it is the problem of the industry at large which chooses to ignore talent and innovation on the base of gender.

As an afterthought at the end of our interview, Andy tinkered with the idea of applying more drastic measures. He thinks that it's maybe time to start a revolution, likening the struggle for more gender equality to the fight of Rosa Parks and the Civil rights movement. He acknowledges that "she brought a whole world of pain on her head," but continues:

I would argue that if you want to affect change more quickly, it would take women to stand up and take abuse and to force this through, I think that's what it would take to happen more quickly, and it will happen more slowly if we wait for people like me to decide it's okay to do it.

The comparison of the music industry's gender issues with the struggle of black Americans out of racial segregation is of course an immense exaggeration. Women in the music industry are in the possession of their civil rights. But maybe Andy is right in the idea that the discussion will have to become a lot more uncomfortable before significant change will take place.

6. Conclusion

This paper attempted to establish a close understanding of the mechanisms and structures that lead to the disparity of gender representation in the music industry. As shown, the music industry is deeply rooted in structures of exploitation and self-exploitation that result in a strong hold for free labour and precarity. Combined with the industry's almost notorious informality, these factors form the ground for both vertical and horizontal gender segregation.

On that background, I then discussed possible measures to change those structures, considering both policy-imposed solutions like gender quotas as well as strengthened labour politics and unionisation, and measures instituted from within the industry such as the active and public raising of awareness combined with a conscious use of language, the furthering of role models and the formalisation of the recruitment process.

The list of measures is neither exhaustive nor definitive. By virtue of its currency — the making of the next big hit and superstar — and the specificity of its production, the music industry will always be ever-evolving and so will be the both the foundation for change and means to affecting it. But the choice of method notwithstanding, something has to change. In times where the new business models of the industry still haven't fully caught up with the digital disruption of the old ones, the music industry simply cannot afford to continue neglecting half of its talent pool. The responsibility to open for a greater gender balance in all areas of the industry is not only about equal opportunities, it is also about profitability. Gender imbalance in the music industry does not only affect women, it also affects men and the industry as a whole.

Of course, this thesis has its limitations. It has for example shamefully neglected the colour-blindness of the music industry. The prevailing ignorance of questions of ethnicity is likely to be rooted in similar structures to those of gender, and, as Hesmondhalgh & Saha already called for in 2013, demands closer attention and action. Also those identifying as neither male or female have not found any representation in this paper.

I also claimed earlier that critique often comes from a place of privilege. The same holds true for this thesis. Norway is one of the richest and most gender-equal countries in the world, and its music industry already has a good deal of

awareness and emerging initiatives to affect change. Organisations like AKKS, band camps like LOUD! and initiatives like Balansekunst, in which many of the country's music organisations are members, or KRETS show the extent of Norway's activism on the gender front in the music industry. Those organisations also increasingly contribute to information exchange cross-nationally. That Norway takes its leading role seriously is important and right. However, the ultimate goal should be to make all those initiatives lose their purpose. Norway still is decades away from achieving that.

Ultimately, the issue of gender equality is bigger than the music industry — it permeates society as a whole. We still have a long way to go in virtually every field of life. But we have to start somewhere, and if the music industry indeed is as hip and cool as it wants to be, it should be on the very forefront of this struggle.

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