

## Organising Identities and Inclusion in the Cultural and Creative Industries

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### Project Description:

The Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), which include the visual and performing arts, museums and galleries, media, and film, are recognised for their dynamic nature (Scott, 2022) and their role in shaping societal narratives (Ali & Byrne, 2022). Despite their profound economic and cultural impact, the CCIs remain a vastly understudied field.

This doctoral research project seeks to extend the conversation around inclusion within the CCIs, specifically focusing on genders and sexualities. Given the CCIs' reputation for openness and creativity, we might assume these industries are naturally inclusive. However, evidence suggests that challenges persist, particularly for individuals expressing non-conforming identities (Conor, 2021). While there has been some progress within the creative sectors, traditional venues and art forms can lag, such that gendered inequality remains characteristic of organisations relying on non-standard work (Vincent & Coles, 2023).

It is clear from the *Misogyny in Music* report (Women and Equalities Committee, 2024), that cis-women face limited opportunities, lack support, experience gender discrimination, sexual harassment and assault, and unequal pay conditions which are experienced even more intensely by those faced with intersectional barriers. A female-first approach to gender and sexualities is prevalent across the CCIs (e.g., Ehrich et al., 2022) and we see Butler's work of undoing binary conceptions (2004) as far from complete. For those expressing non-conforming genders and sexualities, the precarity and performativity of their identity becomes a site of continual struggle. Furthermore, they experience even greater oppression and discrimination than cis-women.

The project recognises the sector's potential to influence societal perceptions around genders and sexualities and foster systemic change. By exploring how identities are negotiated within the CCIs, the project aims to uncover the mechanisms through which inclusion is facilitated or hindered, offering insights into the broader dynamics of identity formation and representation.

This research examines the lived experiences of gender non-conforming individuals within the CCIs, attentive to the relationship between the freedom to express one's identity and the opportunities available for pursuing professional aspirations and artistic endeavours. By analysing how these industries cultivate an environment that supports or hinders the genuine expression and negotiation of identities, alongside the advancement of career objectives, we seek to uncover the intricate dynamics at play. This involves identifying the challenges and barriers encountered by individuals in these sectors, as well as the strategies they deploy to construct a viable professional identity.

**Aims:**

We anticipate that this project will contribute to theoretical debates around gender non-conforming identities, inclusion, and diversity in organisational studies. We set out some of the proposed aims of this project, although we are open to suggestion and adaptation around these from candidates.

- To examine the representation and visibility of non-conforming identities within the CCI
- To analyse the impact of organizational practices on, and structural barriers to, inclusion
- To explore the lived experiences of individuals with non-conforming identities
- To evaluate the role of CCI in shaping societal narratives around gender and sexualities

**Methods and approach:**

Applicants for this doctoral research project should exhibit a commitment to social justice and will be expected to engage actively with a community of scholars and professionals dedicated to tackling these pressing issues within the CCI.

This opportunity will appeal to those who enjoy qualitative methods and working with non-numerical data. We would be open to students undertaking ethnographic work (including interviews and observations) and multi-modal methodologies, including documentary analysis, and visual analysis. A critical approach is essential, focussing on challenging assumptions and rejecting the 'taken for granted'.

Empirical work will be underpinned by poststructuralist, intersectional feminist, and new materialist approaches to re-thinking the interrelationship of gender, sexualities, and the arts, and how these challenge dominant structures permeating the CCI and society. Any empirical setting relevant to the CCI will be considered, though the supervisory team have expertise and interest in music, opera and theatre, film, museums.

In your research proposal, please articulate the design of your study. This includes outlining the methods you will employ to collect data and the techniques planned for data analysis. Try to consider the conceptual framework that underpins your research, connecting key concepts, theories, and relationships, and reflect on the ethical considerations integral to your study.

Successful applicants will join a vibrant community of researchers who are committed to tackling the world's existential challenges through multidimensional transformative research. The project call is aligned with the Open University's commitment to conducting transformative research aimed at addressing structural inequalities and fostering societal change.

**About the Supervisors:**

Richard Longman: orientates his research around alternative ways of organising and asks questions about what we can learn from organising alternative things. His current work includes working with opera singers to explore individual experiences of inclusion and the impact of gender binaries.

Cinzia Priola: work focuses on studying the intersections between work, organisations and society in relation to inclusion and diversity. She is an expert gender researcher and her projects and publications have explored the experiences of women managers and entrepreneurs, of LGBTQ+ people in social firms, of disabled people in the workplace, across a range of organisations and national contexts. She has also written on qualitative and new materialist methodologies and on employee branding. More details can be found on her website: <https://www.open.ac.uk/people/vp3444>

Marco Distinto: research draws from post-structuralist theories to study workplace inclusion, migrant integration, and the sociomaterial aspects of management. Currently, he is researching the experiences and challenges of workers in the museum sector, focusing on the barriers to career advancement for people from minority ethnic groups. His interests also include ethnographic methods and post-qualitative approaches.

## References:

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- Women and Equalities Committee (2024) *Misogyny in music: Second Report of Session 2023–24* (HC129). Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5804/cmselect/cmwomeq/129/report.html> (Accessed 19 February 2024).