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The need for improved diversity in the creative and cultural industries to pursue the aspirations of a future, designed for all

Rozina Spinnoy

Introduction

The term 'creative industries' started to be used almost 20 years ago. By then, the term 'cultural industries' already existed with the signification of music, dance, theatre, visual arts, film, and the heritage sector. The primary attempts to gauge the value of the creative industries were in 1997 when a newly voted Labor government in the United Kingdom chose to try to describe and evaluate their direct influence on the British Economy. Today, the concept of creative industries and their significance is acknowledged by nearly all governments globally.

In Europe, the cultural and Creative Sectors contribute €509 billion every year. The amount represents 5.3% of the European Union's Gross Domestic Product. This makes the Creative and Cultural Sectors the largest employment sector with over 12million full-time positions in Europe (Culture Action Europe, 2019). In 2018, creative industries contributed approximately £111.7 billion of value to the United

Kingdom economy. It is believed that while oil was the principal fuel of the Economy in the 20th century, creative industries are the fuel of the Economy in the 21st century. If that is the case, we need to reimagine how administrations are structured, cities are organized, education is issued, and citizens relate within communities. While creative industries are essential to the Economy's advancement, the industry still faces challenges such as racial, gender, and ethnic discrimination that need to be resolved. This research outlines the challenges faced by minorities in creative and cultural industries.

The nature of Creative jobs during crises such as the Coronavirus

During the covid-19 pandemic, many jobs were seen as less viable due to the pandemic's impacts and imposed rules such as social distancing. While the pandemic hit the entire Economy, creatives in the United Kingdom were the highly impacted group. Very few creatives, such as those working in National Theater streams and TV shows, survived during mandatory lockdowns. Primarily, crises lead to the cancellation of critical events and art festivals that denies many creatives opportunities to work.

Moreover, the pandemic forced many creatives to focus on the online audience causing them to give their content freely. By doing so, they were setting a pattern that their content is less valuable thus devaluing the creative industries as a whole. While various stakeholders such as the UK government, pledge to reinforce the creative industries, the process could be faster. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, creative industries were among the fastest-developing industries. As seen above, its contribution to the Economy in 2018 was approximately £111.7 billion. However, the coronavirus epidemic has

revealed the intrinsic precarity of the creative workforce market. Creatives are usually insecure and poorly compensated, and their job requires considerable investment to start and survive.

According to the UNESCO study on the impacts suffered by the creative industry amidst the pandemic, the crisis caused Gross Value Added in leisure and cultural domains to decline by $750b in 2020. Moreover, ten million jobs were lost that year. The report suggests that the creative sector has been suffering crucial effects from the onset of the pandemic, accompanied by a reduction in the support for leisure projects. While the report shows that creative industries are instrumental in social cohesion, well-being, and educational tools, it also indicates that the industry's potential to contribute to economic advancement has been undermined.

Women in the creative industries

The creative industry is one activity that can improve the economic structure of society and boost social inclusion. Statistics show that only a tiny percentage of females with a creative sector education find themselves in creative jobs upon completing their scholarships (Setyaningsih et al., 2012). While more women than men study creative arts, lesser women enter the creative workforce after graduating (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2013). The most recent statistics show that 40.6 percent of male creative graduates were hired in creative industries within six months after graduating, compared to 30.3 percent of their female counterparts. Hence, despite creative arts degree programs being so enticing to female students, a more significant percentage of male creative arts students ultimately go on to work in the industry, according to the research of HESA's Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) statistics.

Nevertheless, the percentage of females entering creative jobs is currently at its peak over the last five years, and the gender gap is slowly closing. However, it is still evidently present. Most creative directors are majority male, and a study by the Young Creative Council discovered that 88% of female creatives do not have role models. In comparison, 70% of female creatives have never worked with a female creative executive or director (Larsen, 2020). Therefore, implementing policies and practices in gender equality and taking a systemically inclusive and intersectional diversity lens approach across the creative and cultural industries would be necessary to break these statistics.

Sarah Baker and David Hesmondhalgh are celebrated experts in the cultural and creative industries. In an article named "*Sex, gender and work segregation in the cultural industries*," the authors give deductions from research concerning gender- based workplace discrimination in the creative industries, particularly industries of music, television, and publication in London (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015). Their outcomes are consistent with international outlines exposed by the UNESCO statement. Their conclusions on gender-based work discrimination in creative industries are valid and relevant for most countries worldwide.

Hesmondhalgh and Sarah commence their paper by claiming that all societies across the globe tend to relate some specific jobs to women. Some courses commonly associated with women are hairdressing, nursing, beauty work, and primary teaching (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015). On the other hand, jobs like driving, car sales, carpentry, plumbing, and other related sectors are associated with men. The case is very similar in the creative industry, according to Hesmondhalgh and Sarah.

Primarily, they point out the irregular distribution of females in various creative and cultural sectors: 5% in interactive content and 6% in gaming sectors compared to 61% in the publication industry, 41% in television, 47% in radio, and 32% in the music industry. The authors also stress the overrepresentation of females in specific jobs in cultural industries. Occupations that involve the collaboration of production are distinctly 'female.' At the same time, creative jobs regarded as the most respected such as camera operators, directors, sound experts, editors, photography directors, and others, are primarily occupied by males (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015). Few craft and technical occupations, such as make-up artists and costume designers, are filled by females. They are underrated by society or even not acknowledged as including technical skills.

Therefore, in cultural industries, the line between creative and noncreative tasks and admired and non-admired tasks is frequently covered over the separation between singly male and female roles. Baker and Hesmondhagh highlight an example of the advertising sector; whereas of the year 2000, there were 60% female administrative employees, 54% female accountants, 44% media organizers, and only 18% female creatives globally (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015). Nevertheless, why are males associated with creativity? Baker and Hesmondhagh explain that there are specific myths about males that have existed for ages, describing them as "*male, sensitive, with juvenile egoism, apprehensive, dependent*." While most people claim that these features contradict at first glimpse with more conformist forms of masculinity, the distinction varies from manifestations of feminism concerning arts- females have customarily been perceived as deliberates best at articulating "taste" instead of "real" creativity.

Minorities / people of colour in the 0cultural and creative industries

Black Lives Matter is a reality index for workplace diversity and inclusion approaches. For instance, Adidas, a German sportswear brand, began hiring Latin and African employees in America following Black Lives Matter demonstrations due to George Floyd's massacre in Minnesota. However, most people, especially those out of the United States, need to perceive the significance of this movement. Therefore, to truly tackle the issues of inequality among people of colour in offices, people ought to perceive the Black Lives Matter campaign and diversity and inclusion exertions as jointly inclusive.

Debates around equality, anti-racism, and diversity in creative industries have existed for quite some time. However, there have been developments in elements of inclusion and representation. The terms diversity and inclusion (D&I) have frequently been used in the context of the creative industry. Organizations and businesses are working harder than ever to create projects and programs that will assist them in establishing an inclusive atmosphere. However, are they making enough progress, or are they simply talking? There is a universal feeling that something has changed, as evidenced by movements such as the Black Lives Matter campaign pressing people in creative and cultural industries to struggle with the degree of their habitually limited and exclusionary roles. The number of back employees in the UK's creative industries has increased dramatically in recent years. For instance, the number of employees from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) settings saw a 15% increase in 2015. The increase was more than twice that of the whole UK labor force. The Creative Industries Minister Matt Hancock reported that the upbeat jobs figures showed Britain's creative industries were doing better than ever." However, the large-scale unemployment and budget

incisions in the media and creative industries resulting from the epidemic have demonstrated how delicate the cultural ecosystem is. Efforts are needed to ensure diversity and inclusion in arts and culture by institutions, among other key players.

In research conducted by Bella Caledonia, she explores the need for inclusion and diversity in the creative industry. She gives recommendations that have been done with people of colour, especially in creative industries in Scotland. Caledonia interviewed various creatives, such as Aarti Joshi, Joe McCann, Ica Headlam, Nyla Ahmad, Claricia Parinussa, and Sekai Machache. She asked them about their struggles, experiences, and overall feelings about the creative industry (Caledonia, 2021). Consequently, several themes were established from which a valuable understanding of the current issues among people of colour in the creative industry can be obtained.

Minority cultural groups have a long past of under-representation in creative and cultural industries. How the creative industry perceives ethnic minority groups can often be founded on prominent prejudiced and inferential premises that have real- world repercussions. Studies reveal that minority communities' viewers trust that the representation of ethnic minority individuals affects how non-ethnic minority handle people of colour in real life. Organizations such as Media Diversified, whose operations ceased in 2019, have tried to bring diversity and inclusion to the United Kingdom's media scenery by supporting writers of minority groups (Caledonia, 2021). However, although there has been real progress, most challenges are with racism and falsification. The creative landscape across the world has to be changed if it is to be justly diversified and inclusive. In the United King-dom, for instance, cultural industries have been

conquered by a thin subgroup of the UK people. The covid-19 plague worsened the matter by reducing creative organizations and decreasing job opportunities in cultural and creative sectors.

Diversity and Inclusion in Europe

The Hashtag #BrusselsSoWhite is an informal campaign reproving racial diversity issues in Brussels. The utilization of this hashtag on Twitter underlines the absence of racial diversity in the European Parliament. Racial minorities include above 10% of the European Union's population. Nevertheless, fewer than 5% of the policymakers voted into parliament positions are racial minorities (Heath, 2022). The absence of ethnic multiplicity among workers of the EU institutions in Brussels as described in the *#BrusselsSoWhite* movement, is even more striking since Brussels is a comparatively racially diverse region.

Rafia Zakaria pens against White Feminism, asserting that it does not give room for the racial minority feminists who have been disregarded, secluded, or expunged from the feminist drive. She talks about Brussels-based reporter Shada Islam concerning the persistence of white feminist ideology in Europe (Zakaria, 2021). Numerous determining elements must be considered regarding the lack of diversity in European Union affairs. For instance, there is a possible allegation that the European Union institutions' Human Resource sectors discriminate against ethnic minority applicants. Contributing elements such as 'educational elitism' in the perception of recruits being from the 'usual' educational institutions. Besides, there is an inclination that very few people from minority backgrounds are interested in such seats.

Undoubtedly, the EU promotes racial equality and discourages discrimination, which deserves celebrating. Thus, supporters of EU diversity need to exercise what they preach as far as striving to normalize ethnic diversity and prevent the categorization of individuals based on their biases. Therefore, instead of blaming one person or the EU for the absence of inclusivity, the prevalent lack of racial diversity needs to be addressed as a more complicated social and cultural challenge (Chander, 2019). While racial minority Europeans feel excluded from some spaces, mundane mindsets towards culture and nationalism are sustained.

Being in Europe is equated to being white; the European Union represents Europe, meaning that European citizens would occupy most positions. However, this is an awkwardly obsolete mentality that being European parallels being white (Psaledakis, 2019). Therefore, it is essential for people to expect multiculturalism in society, as being European in contemporary society is not associated with racial lineage.

The recommendations at varying levels include sectorial representative organizations within the creative and cultural industries to create awareness, educate, co-design and integrate frameworks for implementing inclusion, diversity and equity strategies directly within their institutions and existing cross-cutting policies. With the 'top-down meeting the bottom up' approach from the European and National level filtering down City and Municipality level cultural policies that impact local organizations and initiatives in the creative and cultural fields. There are several policy recommendations that could be implemented to ensure diversity in the cultural and creative industries, here are just a few suggestions:

1. **Establish diversity and inclusion goals and targets:** Governments and organizations can set specific goals and targets for diversity and inclusion in the cultural and creative industries, and track progress towards meeting those goals.

2. **Invest in training and development programs:** Governments and organizations can invest in training and development programs for underrepresented groups, such as people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities, to help them gain the skills and experience needed to succeed in the cultural and creative industries.

3. **Promote and support diverse representation:** Governments and organizations can promote and support diverse representation in the cultural and creative industries by supporting projects and initiatives that showcase diverse voices and perspectives.

4. **Provide funding and resources:** Governments and organizations can provide funding and resources to support the development and success of diverse artists and creators (example below from Royal College of Art).

5. **Implement diversity and inclusion policies:** Governments and organizations can implement diversity and inclusion policies to ensure that all employees and contractors are treated fairly and with respect, and to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

6. **Encourage collaboration and partnerships:** Governments and organizations can encourage collaboration and partnerships between diverse artists and creators, and between cultural and creative organizations, to promote diversity and foster creativity and innovation.

Detailing, for example as mentioned in point 4 above, the sharing of best practices and case studies, such as cultural and creative educational institutions supporting scholarships for underrepresented communities. (Royal College of Art, Virgil Abloh Scholarship, 2022).

Consequences from lack of diversity in the cultural and creative industries

Professionals mirror their background in their priorities – also in the creative industries, and as among them, design stands out as a means of creating new and better products, services or environments for other people, being able to identify with a diverse range of users is key. However, and despite empathy being a core component of design thinking and practice, an adopted, theoretical understanding of people with other backgrounds and other needs than oneself, can never compensate fully for an understanding coming out of belonging to a minority or an underrepresented community. Hence, a universally embraced aspiration in the creative sectors to accommodate people of different gender, ethnicities and ages, sexual orientations and identities, neurodiversity and degrees of physical and mental ableness, as well as people with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, will in part remain an academic issue, unless the same level of diversity materializes as a characteristic of the creative and cultural industries. If we want the future to offer products, services and environments for all; if we believe that the principles of universality and design for all ought to be ubiquitous in all we do, we also need to fight for a greater degree of diversity and inclusion in the professional environments who are the guardians of shaping our surroundings – and our future; designers, urban designers, architects and planners.

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