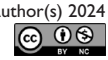
Crosscurrents

MEDIA CULTURE &SOCIETY

Media, Culture & Society
1–12



DOI: 10.1177/01634437241254331
journals.sagepub.com/home/mcs


Is television reformable? The 'reformist tendency' in inequality research in the cultural and creative industries

Jack Newsinger and **Helen Kennedy**
University of Nottingham, UK

Rowan Aust
Co-Director of ReelTime Media, UK

Abstract

This article engages with research on UK Television (UKTV) and the wider cultural and creative industries by interrogating the role of academic research in industrial and social change. We argue that a 'reformist tendency' implicitly structures much creative industries research. This reformist tendency takes a critical approach to the problem of inequality, identifying it and making it visible, and at times developing strategies which attempt to enhance and promote greater equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Academic research seeking to reform the media and creative industries increasingly works in collaboration with – often relatively powerful – social actors within these industries. However, the creative industries in general and UKTV in particular, have shown a remarkable resistance to reform and remain characterised by persistent inequalities in terms of class, race, gender and disability. This article explores this problem aiming to provoke debate into the role of academic-industry collaboration in the failure of creative industries EDI. It argues that academics should adopt a more reflexive and selective approach to collaboration.

Keywords

creative industries, EDI, gender, impact, industry, UKTV

Corresponding author:
Jack Newsinger, University of Nottingham, University Park, Trent Building, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, UK.
Email: jack.newsinger@nottingham.ac.uk

Introduction

This article engages with research on UK Television (UKTV) and the wider cultural and creative industries by interrogating the role of academic research in industrial and social change. We argue that a 'reformist tendency' implicitly structures much creative industries research. This reformist tendency takes a critical approach to the problem of inequality, identifying it and making it visible, and at times developing strategies which attempt to enhance and promote greater equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Academic research seeking to reform the media and creative industries increasingly works in collaboration with – often relatively powerful – social actors within these industries, and these types of collaborations are at the forefront of University research strategies and Government funding agendas. However, the creative industries in general and UKTV in particular, have shown a remarkable resistance to reform and remain characterised by persistent inequalities in terms of class, race, gender and disability. It is, therefore, high time the reformist tendency itself was subject to more scrutiny and debate within the field. This article is our contribution to this debate.

The context for our discussion is longstanding, persistent structural inequalities that are reproduced by and through industry structures, and material and ideological practices (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). Research activity that collaborates with the media and creative industries, and the now large policy and funding apparatus that surrounds it, therefore, collaborates with an institutional formation through which privilege and inequality are maintained and reproduced. Challenging this inequality, while an explicit aim of much research activity, has *not* resulted in lasting and meaningful change at a structural level. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided ample evidence that equity principles and practices are quickly overridden in moments of crisis (Wreyford et al., 2023). At worst, we might consider that many of the assumed signifiers of progress were in fact largely cosmetic.

We do not argue against industry collaboration in research; indeed, many of the examples we use below are drawn from our own research. Between us we have over 30 years of research activity in collaboration with various companies, groups and initiatives across the UKTV sector, and the wider cultural and creative industries. Rather, we make a twofold argument: firstly, that the field should do more to analyse its relationship with industry and accept that performative, personal, conceptual and/or political commitments to enhanced workforce diversity have not translated into a secure and enduring transformation of industry practice; and second, that academic research should be more selective and reflexive about which social actors it collaborates with in order to reform unequal creative and cultural work, and promote enhanced equality. This article is, therefore, our reflective investigation into the role of academic researchers in the UK's media and cultural industries that takes as its main example our own research into gender and UKTV. First, we expand and explain the concept of the reformist tendency in academic-industry collaboration. The second section outlines the failure of EDI policy in the cultural and creative industries and how research interventions have attempted unsuccessfully to contribute to enhanced equality, focussing on gender by way of example. The final section explains this failure through the asymmetric reward structures inscribed in the Impact Agenda in UK higher education policy which structures research collaboration

towards largely cosmetic and discursive change by relatively powerful social actors. Finally, we reflect upon how those committed to contributing to social change through research work might seek to overcome these issues and argue that academics seeking to have a reforming impact on the cultural and creative industries should be far more reflective and selective about who they collaborate with.

The reformist tendency in academic-industry collaboration

The impulse for academics to collaborate with industry, broadly defined, has varied roots that would include the instrumentalisation of higher education research and particularly the arts, humanities and social sciences from the 2000s; more recently the codifying of this in the 'impact agenda' in funding policy and practice (which we discuss in more detail below); and less prosaically, a desire among some academic researchers to work on questions that emerge from real-world problems and contribute to social justice.

Within the sub-field of cultural and creative industries, academics work with industry and policy actors around activities such as: building knowledge and collecting data on workforce demographics; representing the experience of inequality in research findings; making findings publicly available through reports; seeking to inform and enact policy change; offering critical and historical perspectives; indirectly funding and maintaining groups and individuals through consultation and other such mechanisms; and other less formalised and visible supportive activities. In some instances, academics have seconded or worked directly with government agencies and policy bodies that seek to promote and develop the creative industries. Underlying nearly all of these forms of collaboration is a 'reformist tendency': the normative political conviction, either explicit or implicit, that equality, diversity and inclusion in the cultural and creative industries can and should be improved through the practice of research activities. However, the assumptions and methodologies underpinning this reformist tendency are themselves rarely subject to interrogation and critique. This is a problem: even a cursory knowledge of the history of EDI research in the UK in the last twenty years demonstrates that the problem of gender inequality – which we focus on here by way of example – has proved intractable, despite the huge efforts within research collaboration to address it.

We use the term 'reformist tendency' to reference debates within the history of political reformism associated most clearly with the Left and Western social democracy. In this tradition, political reformism presents an alternative to the capitalist status quo which promises enhanced equality, social justice and worker power, while also neutralising the impulse towards more transformative, revolutionary change associated with Marxist and other more radical political traditions, a tension embodied most clearly in the British Labour Party and its European and Western analogues (Coates, 1990; Miliband, 1972). In using the term 'reformist tendency' we are, therefore, referencing and appropriating a longstanding debate on the political Left about the capacity for change under capitalist social relations, and the most effective ways in which activism might seek to enact change: either through the reform of existing structures and social relationships, or through the revolutionary transformation of these structures and relationships. This debate receded as a topic in Management and Organisation Studies towards the end of

the 20th century as Marxism itself receded (Rowlinson and Hazard, 2000), and barely featured at all in academic discussions of cultural and creative labour as they developed in the UK and Australia (important exceptions include Gill and Pratt's (2008) discussion, and ultimate dismissal, of the importance of the Italian Autonomous Marxist tradition in our understanding of creative labour; and Hesmondhalgh's (2016) discussion of the concept of exploitation in media labour, in which he rejects Marxist understandings of the term). Radical, critical and activist research focussing on cultural and creative industries has tended to be informed by approaches emerging from other traditions such as feminist research (e.g. Conor et al., 2015; McRobbie, 2015), critical race studies (Saha, 2017) and/or post-structuralism (Banks, 2007).

The politics of reformism has not, therefore, been a subject of concern within the field of cultural industries studies. Indeed, political reformism has been largely an implicit normative assumption within it. We argue, however, that the notion of a 'reformist tendency' provides a particularly useful conceptual lens through which to evaluate and reflect upon different kinds of research-industry collaboration within the cultural and creative industries which, arguably, have Third Way post-socialist orthodoxy written into their DNA (see Hewison, 2014; Newsinger, 2012, 2015). Indeed, in the era in which the #MeToo Movement, Black Lives Matter, the Climate Justice movement and others challenge the limits of mainstream and official routes towards social change, it is a good time to reflect upon the implicit politics of reformism within research agendas. We focus on gender inequality, partly because that is the most heavily researched 'diversity characteristic' in the cultural and creative industries (discussed in more detail below), and partly because our research has been in this are, which enables us to draw upon and unpack examples from our work to illustrate the argument.

The failure of EDI policy and the role of research

Enhanced gender equality has been at the forefront of the stated aims of UK screen industries policy since at least 2000. DCMS made it one of the aims of the UK Film Council and it is around this time that the main industry regulatory bodies began to collect workforce diversity data through the Creative Skillset workforce censuses and the BFI's Statistical Yearbooks (Eikhof et al., 2018). Responding to increasing political pressure, the TV industry created its own diversity monitoring organisation in 2018, Project Diamond, run by the Creative Diversity Network, which produces an annual report, amongst other activities. More recently, workforce diversity data has been collected by Ofcom, the independent regulatory agency for TV, radio, video and on demand sectors in the UK, which began collecting data on the demographic make-up of the television workforce in 2018, and publishing these in annual 'Diversity Reports'. The entertainment branch of Prospect trade union, Bectu, and organisation Directors UK have both contributed significantly to quantitative and qualitative surveys of diversity and conditions in UKTV. In 2018 NESTA established the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), co-run with a consortium of UK universities (Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Work Advance, London School of Economics, Manchester, Newcastle, Sussex, and Ulster) until 2023 since when it is now co-hosted and delivered through a partnership between the University of Newcastle and Royal Society of the

Arts. The PEC is intended to provide high quality research evidence for the industry and policymakers, including diversity and inclusion and the screen industries.

Within this knowledge production landscape, gender and gender inequality in the UKTV workforce is the most extensively researched area of all cultural, creative and media sectors and of all diversity characteristics, including race. We know more about the picture of gender inequality in UKTV, how it has changed over time, its nuances and the mechanisms through which it is reproduced, than we know about any other form of inequality in any other creative sector. For example, a 2018 evidence review commissioned by the British Film Institute on diversity research into the UK screen industries between 2012 and 2016 (which one of us co-authored) found that gender and issues related to gender were by far the biggest form of diversity research, and within the screen sectors UKTV was the most researched sector (CAMEo, 2018). The report summarised this evidence base in the following terms: 'Evidence from the film and TV sector comprehensively documents an industry culture in which gendered perceptions, gender bias, gender discrimination and gendered bullying are still widespread' (CAMEo, 2018: 32).

It is frustrating to acknowledge that the picture painted in more recent evidence is one that is essentially static, or even worsening. For example, 2023's Diamond data report found that women continue to be underrepresented in key creative roles in UKTV, including directing, producing, writing and composing. The study found that women accounted for just 32% of writers and 25.3% of directors in the UK television industry. It notes that 'Despite a gender divide in these roles being evidenced for at least a decade, the proportion of female directors and writers is continuing to decrease from an already diminished position' (Diamond, 2023: 4). Perhaps nothing, however, demonstrated the hollow fragility of the creative industries' commitment to gender equality as clearly as the sector response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and associated government lockdowns, in which women and other marginalised groups disproportionately suffered. A UNESCO report authored by Bridget Conor in 2021 put it thus:

> Moments of crisis increase the vulnerability of already marginalised groups, including women, and can reinforce the view that women are less central or 'more disposable' to the creative workforce than men. This is especially vital as COVID-19 continues to unfold and its long-term effects on the arts and cultural production are not yet known. (Conor, 2021: 4)

As described in *Locked Down and Locked Out*, a report we co-authored with Natalie Wreyford, women working in TV were penalised by additional childcare during the pandemic lockdowns. These penalties included entrenched gendered expectations around childcare creating significant pressure upon women attempting to juggle home-schooling and work, losing work due to caring responsibilities, lack of understanding and care from employers, and huge financial and emotional pressures (Wreyford et al., 2021). However, as noted there:

> It is vitally important [. . .] that these impacts are understood as a result of pre-existing, long term, **chronic weaknesses** in television labour markets, television work cultures, and wider societal attitudes and organisation around childcare and women's labour. COVID-19 did not create this situation. Rather, it revealed and compounded it up to the point where for many

> mothers it has become so unbearable that they consider exiting the industry and, in some cases, even taking their own lives. (Wreyford et al., 2021: 11 emphasis added)

These insights and conclusions are based upon what was the largest survey of mothers working in UKTV ever conducted, painting a very bleak picture of the prospects for real, sustainable, longer-term gender equality. Indeed, one can almost feel the frustration in the lack of progress across this literature, despite the accumulation of a weight of evidence of the processes, mechanisms and outcomes of gender inequality that is unmatched in other sectors. Take one further example from Maura Edmond published in 2023:

> Alongside the academic literature, there are dozens of new reports – by government agencies, cultural organisations, unions, professional associations and activists – which document inequalities at the level of exactly whose work is being made, financed, performed, awarded, reviewed and taught, who is being hired and promoted, who is appointed to influential leadership positions, who is paid what and so on. Again and again, the research describes recurring patterns of inequality, including the underrepresentation of women in key areas of the creative and cultural industries, underrepresentation at senior levels especially in artistic leadership, workplace segregation and feminisation of lower-paid and less-technical positions, and ongoing concerns around wage gaps, 'boys clubs', caring-related responsibilities, sexual harassment and precarious employment conditions, much of which is amplified by the intersections of race, class, ability and sexuality. (Edmond, 2023: 430)

The weight of evidence provided through the research cited above offers a direct challenge to any belief that this is an industry that is capable of being reformed through academic collaborations, knowledge exchange or research. Simply put, if these academic collaborations changed anything, we would be able to see its results in enhanced gender equality in UKTV and beyond. Instead, despite the massive emphasis placed upon data gathering, interpretation and dissemination, what we see is the continued significance of gender-based inequality as an axis of difference in the experiences of women and men. The reasons for this failure are undoubtedly complex and multifaceted. Newsinger and Eikhof (2020) argue that it can be explained through an examination not of policies and practices aimed at increasing diversity, but of what they term 'implicit diversity policy'. That is, those policies and courses of action that are not explicitly addressed to workforce diversity, but which nevertheless affect it. Understanding the lack of workforce diversity in this way has the effect of shifting the perspective from one in which the problem is located in the lack of capacity of 'diverse' workers themselves (to compete, to network, for example), to one which explores the ways whiteness, maleness and middle-class norms are produced and reproduced through policies, practices and values (see also Cobb, 2020). Until the ways in which inequality and privilege is reproduced are challenged directly, and power is ceded to underrepresented groups themselves, things are unlikely to change.

It is also now clear (if it was not already), that revealing, describing, critiquing the problem through research does nothing to solve it. The picture of inequality and the main issues surrounding it are well documented and understood in the research literature, and have been for many years (Bhavnani's work in 2007, e.g. still rings largely true today). Indeed, the production of diversity data may in some circumstances even be retroactive

in, firstly, allowing institutions and organisations to perform data collection as a proxy for policy and practice interventions; and secondly through the manipulation and control of data dissemination in order to present institutions and organisations in a more positive way, a process that Shelley Cobb, in another context, describes as a kind of 'institutional defence' (Cobb, 2020: 126). The point is well articulated by Deb Verhoeven, talking of the film industry:

> It is safe to assume that sporadic equal-opportunity measures or affirmative-action policies that identify the statistical representation of women as the cause rather than the symptom of a problem do not create the conditions for improved diversity throughout the film industry. It is not the numbers we need to be focused on. It's the values [. . .] The problem is that too many men benefit from the current system. (Verhoeven quoted in Berry et al., 2022: 4)

While gender inequality may now have a raised profile for organisations and policymakers, may no longer be 'unspeakable' in Gill's (2014) phrase, this discursive shift has not translated into industry transformation. This mismatch between the language used to discuss diversity and social change has been demonstrated by Edmond in her study of 'gender equality talk' in Australian media and cultural industries, with clear relevance in the UK context. She argues:

> we can observe within policy discourses a circuit of possibility–legitimation–endurability. In this circuit, feminist concerns are first legitimised and optimistically put 'on the agenda', but the acceptable options for action and mobilisation are narrowly defined and ultimately fail to advance substantive change, allowing for inequalities to be framed as 'entrenched' and 'inevitable'. (Edmond, 2023: 2)

While research evidence may have challenged the language around gender equality it has not made much observable difference to structures or practices. In other words, organisations and policymakers have used research to 'talk the talk', but not 'walk the walk'.

The above summary demonstrates the ineffectuality of gender inequality research in UKTV and the wider creative industries in bringing about meaningful, long-term change. For us, as academics engaged in this activity, this is exhaustively frustrating to acknowledge, as we are sure it is for our colleagues also committed to social change through research activity.

There are at least two immediate challenges that emerge from this rather bleak review of the current situation: is the television industry reformable at all? And why do we as a community continue within this reformist tendency? If not enhanced EDI, who and what is our research is actually supporting? We will begin by considering this latter challenge below.

Asymmetric reward structures

A key point to highlight here is that there is an *asymmetric reward structure* inherent in industry-academic collaboration. This helps to explain the continued use of models of collaboration that have clearly failed to enact meaningful reform. That is, the rewards and benefits that accrue from industry-academic collaboration are different for industry partners and academics.

We recognise that an important motivation that sustains a considerable number of endeavours in this area will be the intrinsic rewards within partnerships, that very precise alignment of principles and passions; the opportunity for academics to engage in critical change-oriented collaborative activity that aligns with their values, the opportunity to potentially 'make a difference' through the application of their research in context. However, there are also less symmetrical extrinsic rewards in play. These might include things such as increased research funding, teaching relief and enhanced research time, 'high quality' publications, conference papers, keynote talks and similar, the accumulation of institutional capital, impact case studies and contribution to REF (of which more below), promotion and career progression, more desirable work environments and professional networks, and a bigger salary. In short, personal advancement. (We have ourselves, it should be noted, benefitted from many of these rewards through industry-academic collaboration at different times and in different ways.)

All these rewards and benefits depend upon the increased currency of industry-academic collaboration within the university sector, of course. But it is highly significant that it is often the collaboration itself that accrues the currency, not the success of the collaboration in enhancing EDI aims within the industry. Put another way, an academic can advance their career working on diversity research in collaboration with industry without ever significantly advancing diversity.

The broader context to this situation is the 'impact agenda', which will be familiar to anyone working in UK higher education in the last twenty years. Most critical discussion of the rise of 'impact' in UK universities and its standardised measurement through the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Impact Case Study sees it as part of a more general managerialism and economization of public policy from the 2000s (Power, 2018). The 'Warry Report', published in 2006, recommended that universities should measure the impact of their research beyond the academy. Impact became part of the REF criteria in 2009 and in 2014 a new requirement was added to REF that 20% of funding would be awarded based upon demonstrable social, cultural and economic benefit to society of research, raised to 25% for REF 2020. The UK is not alone in including these metrics, countries from across Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania, including Australia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Italy, Canada, Spain, Hong Kong, Finland and Norway, have all incorporated an evaluation of research impact into their national higher education research assessment frameworks, reflecting a growing global emphasis on a consideration of the wider societal benefits of research.

In the UK, critical attention has focussed on the epistemology inherent in the qualitative Impact Case Study unit of measurement as a constrained format reliant on evidence creation, often in the form of solicited testimony. There is also the additional work involved in the production of Impact Case Studies, which often falls to academics and professional support staff, and has resulted in the construction of an additional bureaucratic infrastructure to encourage, identify and evidence 'impactful' research. All important considerations, of course. For our concerns in this article, the 'impact agenda' and the epistemologies and measurement technologies that support it are important in how they shape the reward structures within which research that seeks to reform UKTV takes place. Critical approaches to the 'impact agenda' in the UK have tended to focus on its effects on academic freedom and 'risk taking', as Power (2018) has it: that it

instrumentalises research towards measurable social effects and away from more subtle, long-term or amorphous results. For example, Bandola-Gill and Smith (2022) draw upon the sociology of quantification and discourse analysis to argue that 'calculative devices quickly became tools of governing; as such, we must expect REF impact case studies to follow this trajectory within the universities. And indeed, evaluation methods implicitly involve defining what 'good research' is and, consequently, steer scientific practices' (p. 1859). The performative dimensions of REF and the Impact Case Study – the way that they enact particular ideas and approaches towards impact – can work against the kinds of impacts that we, as socially committed researchers, might want. For example, powerful companies and organisations citing research evidence, or using it to profess a commitment to change, can fulfil the demands of REF without changing the structural barriers inherent in the industry or leading to enhanced EDI.

'Impact' and impact discourse performatively constructs the social reality of academic partnership and collaboration. The specific ways in which this plays out in the sub-discipline of the cultural and creative industries, and across different research projects and activities, are of course contextually dependent and unpredictable. But equally it would be narrow-minded to imagine that these institutional pressures and determinants do not play a structuring role in this part of academic labour, our own included. This helps to explain why the reformist tendency continues to prevail despite its failure to bring about sustained and meaningful long-term change.

For industry partners, rewards are different and varied. Most obviously, commissioning or collaborating in research can be used to demonstrate and/or perform a commitment to increased diversity, as mentioned above. There are also undoubtedly completely sincere and committed attempts to address workforce diversity issues and institutional inequalities that may fail for a variety of reasons, including misunderstanding the problem or 'organisational blockage'. We have experienced first-hand the organisation that takes policy and practice recommendations to increase diversity, and proceeds to (even perhaps wilfully) misunderstand and dilute them until they are ineffectual. And that is without considering instances of institutional and individual racism, sexism and elitism that might be present but hidden within positions of authority. These experiences are, we imagine, common in research collaborations across the academic community. These are, however, un-systematic observations we have made based upon our own experiences. What is striking is the lack of existing studies of these processes within the field of media and creative industries, or studies of the relationship between academic researcher and impact contexts.

This asymmetric reward structure inherent in industry-academic collaboration creates a potent recipe for both this failure to achieve lasting structural reform, and no processes of reflection through which to examine this failure. That said, while it might structure and limit the reformist potential of such research, it does not completely define it. Much good work continues despite these constraints. The opening up of space for more critical reflection upon these structuring constraints seems to us to be a first step towards progress.

Conclusion: Is UKTV reformable at all?

The second provocation that emerges from a consideration of the persistence of inequality *despite* decades of research and intervention is whether UKTV is reformable at all?

Or whether any attempt at reform by recourse to research collaboration with industry partners is an effective vehicle for the promotion of enhanced gender equality in UKTV? The question also arises as to whether or not this is a peculiarity of the UK context and the UKTV industry in particular or whether similar patterns can be identified elsewhere in other national contexts. Within the UK context at least, it seems to us to be beyond doubt that, based on the evidence we have outlined, that this is a valid and urgent question that should be at the forefront of EDI research and the impact agenda more broadly. Furthermore, evaluating collaboration and establishing more reflexive models is an important next step in responding to these provocations. Again, it is important to emphasise that what we are arguing for here is not an attack on the incredibly rich, critical, values-driven work that goes on within this significant section of the academic space, nor are we advocating for a return to an 'ivory tower' model of disinterested academic inquiry. Rather, we are seeking a more reflective and transparent approach to the issue of industry-academic collaboration as an important step towards greater understanding, and potentially addressing, the persistence of inequality within the sector.

Too often, industry-academic collaboration has been approached as if the presentation of research findings to powerful social actors is an effective challenge to entrenched, structural inequality, as if those benefitting most from unequal hierarchical structures will dismantle their own intersectional gender, race and class privilege if only they knew it existed. This strategy (perhaps wilfully) underestimates the capacity for actors within the industry to resist reformation. As Hadley et al. (2022) conclude about the similar trajectory of attempts to reform the UK arts sector, 'you cannot hope to transcend or dismantle dominant epistemological & conceptual paradigms purely on the level of ideas alone. You have to disrupt the material systems which continue to enforce & legitimate them' (p. 249). It follows that academics seeking to have a reforming impact on the cultural and creative industries should be far more reflective and selective about who they collaborate with. Does a specific collaboration have the potential to disrupt existing material systems? Or might it be used as a form of 'institutional defence' (Cobb, 2020)? Could collaborations and partnerships based on shared values provide a step towards implementing a more transparent framework through which to identify intransigencies but also recognise and potentially amplify small or incremental changes where they do occur?

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Jack Newsinger https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6908-755X

References

Bandola-Gill J and Smith KE (2022) Governing by narratives: REF impact case studies and restrictive storytelling in performance measurement. *Studies in Higher Education* 47(9): 1857–1871.

Banks M (2007). *The Politics of Cultural Work*. London: Palgrave.
Berry M, Dooley K and McHugh M (2022) Fostering diversity on and off screen. *Alphaville: Journal of Film and Screen Media*24: 4.
Bhavnani R (2007) Barriers to diversity in film: A research review. BFI.org. Available at: https://www2.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/uk-film-council-barriers-to-diversity-in-film-2007-08-20.pdf (accessed 13 May 2024).
CAMEo (2018) *Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector: Evidence Review*. Leicester: CAMEo Research Institute.
Coates D (1990) Reformism. In: Bottomore T (ed.) *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, 2nd edn. London: Blackwell, pp.460–461.
Cobb S (2020) What about the Men? Gender inequality data and the rhetoric of inclusion in the US and UK film industries. *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 17(1): 112–135.
Conor B (2021) Gender & creativity: Progress on the precipice UNESCO. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375706.locale=en (accessed 13 May 2024).
Conor B, Gill R and Taylor S (2015) Gender and creative labour. *The Sociological Review* 63(1_suppl): 1–22.
Diamond (2023) Writers, directors and producer directors: A six-year overview of Diamond data 2016/17 to 2021/22'. *Creative Diversity Network*. Available at: https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Headlines-Writers-Directors-Producer-Directors-CDN-231123.pdf (accessed 13 May 2024).
Edmond M (2023) Enduring inequalities: Fifty years of gender equality talk in the media and cultural industries. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 26(3): 428–445.
Eikhof DR, Newsinger J, Luchinskaya D, et al. (2018) And . . . action? Gender, knowledge and inequalities in the UK screen industries. *Gender, Work and Organisation* 26(6): 340–358.
Eikhof DR and Warhurst C (2013) The promised land? Why social inequalities are systemic in the creative industries. *Employee Relations* 35(5): 495–508.
Gill R (2014) Unspeakable inequalities. *Social Politics* 21(4): 509–528.
Gill R and Pratt A (2008) In the social factory? Immaterial labour, precariousness and cultural work. *Theory, Culture & Society* 25(7–8): 1–30.
Hadley S, Heidelberg B and Belfiore E (2022) Reflexivity and the perpetuation of inequality in the cultural sector: Half awake in a fake empire? *Journal for Cultural Research* 26(3–4): 244–265.
Hesmondhalgh D (2016) Exploitation in media labor. In: Maxwell R (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Labor and Media*. London: Routledge, pp.48–57.
Hewison R (2014) *Cultural Capital: The Rise and Fall of Creative Britain*. London: Verso.
McRobbie A (2015) *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Cultural Industries*. London: Polity.
Miliband R (1972) *Parliamentary Socialism: A Study in the Politics of Labour*. Pontypool: Merlin Press.
Newsinger J (2012) The politics of regional audio-visual policy in England: Or, how we learnt to stop worrying and get "creative". *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 18(1): 111–125.
Newsinger J (2015) A cultural shock doctrine? Austerity, the neoliberal state and the creative industries discourse. *Media, Culture & Society* 37(2): 302–313.
Newsinger J and Eikhof DR (2020) Explicit and implicit diversity policy in the UK film and television industries. *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 17(1): 47–69.
Power M (2018) Creativity, risk and the research impact agenda in the United Kingdom. *European Review* 26(S1): S25–S34.
Rowlinson M and Hassard J (2000) Marxist political economy, revolutionary politics, and labor process theory. *International Studies of Management & Organization* 30(4): 85–111.
Saha A (2017) *Race and the Cultural Industries*. London: Polity.

Wreyford N, Newsinger J, Kennedy H, et al. (2021) *Locked Down and Locked Out: Mothers and UKTV Work During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Nottingham: Institute for Screen Industries Research. Available at: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/isir/documents/locked-down-locked-up-full-report-august-2021.pdf (accessed 13 May 2024).

Wreyford N, Newsinger J, Kennedy H, et al. (2023) Locked down and locked out: mothers and UKTV work during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Feminist Media Studies*. Epub ahead of print 14 October 2023. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2023.2266775.

Author biographies

Jack Newsinger is Associate Professor of Cultural Industries at the University of Nottingham. He is has published widely on work and equality in the creative industries with a focus on film and TV. He has worked on numerous funded projects and is currently Co-I on the AHRC-funded ReCARE TV project which seeks to transform care practices in UK reality television, working with the trade unions BECTU and Equity.

Helen Kennedy is Professor of Creative and Cultural Industries at the University of Nottingham. Her research interests are feminist games culture and the wider diversification of access to creative practice; the ludification of cultural experience, innovations in experience design and the cultural evaluation of immersive experiences.

Rowan Aust consults and devises methods on how to put theories of good work into practice in TV and film. She received her PhD in 2019 from Royal Holloway, London, and from 2019-23 taught TV and film at the University of Huddersfield. She has published widely on practices and ethics of care in TV and film. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and Visiting Fellow at the University of Bournemouth.