Official Procedure and Lived Reality: Feminist Class Analysis of the Gendering Logic and Paradox of Music Organisations in Ireland

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This research, and the things that it has achieved over the last four years, were only made possible for the following: the daily common room conversations and corridor conversations of my close friends - the women of the office that kept the show on the road and were always on hand with sharp labour critique; my comrades in the Postgraduate Workers Organisation and our sustained work to challenge the exploitative conditions of doctoral researchers; the men and women workers who participated in the research, and those who sat down with me to share their stories in detail; the women workers who trusted me with their very personal experiences; and my supervisors, Jim and Aileen, who gave me endless encouragement to pursue a confident, critical feminist inquiry, to follow my instincts, and to say what I felt needed to be said, and I thank them, in equal measure, for never giving me a deadline.

I also want to acknowledge an aspect of this research that had an impact upon me personally. During the course of conducting the research, my view on gender changed substantially, in light of the evidence that workers presented. The realities of what it means to be a male or female worker in an organisation that I had taken for granted, or had not questioned until then, were brought to light and my perspective is forever changed by this process. This was only possible because I had the privilege of spending four years closely thinking and reading about power, gender, and labour, and investigating the realities of workers first hand. This study is critical in its inquiry of how music organisations engage with workers, and the role that management structures play in shaping different realities for male and female workers. At the same time, I am aware that those who are in charge of what 'equality' policies to enact and how to enact them, have not had the opportunity to sit down with the literature and critically evaluate their views over several years, and to carry out their own research. That senior management can turn to HR managers and hand over all responsibility to them for this complex matter, and do so readily, is unsurprising given the weight of this responsibility, and the demands of the organisation which offer senior management little time to pause and reflect. My feminism has changed in acknowledging these things, and it is clearer to me now, more than ever, that one of the biggest challenges facing feminist inquiries of labour is the very nature of feminist inquiry, in a market driven society where solutions for 'equality' are presented by organisations and management, and space for workers and feminists to critically reflect upon and challenge these solutions is difficult to create.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
A&R	Artist and Repertoire
CHRM	Critical Human Resource Management
CIS	Critical Interpretive Synthesis
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
D&I	'Diversity and Inclusion'
E&R	Expectations and Requirements
EDI	'Equality, Diversity, Inclusion'
GOA	Gendered Organisational Analysis
HRM	Human Resource Management
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate

List of Publications arising from this Study

Kiely, Y. (2026) 'It's the best person for the job': gendering logic and the hiring practices of music organisations in Ireland, *Irish Communications Review, 20(1)*.

Kiely, Y. (forthcoming) 'On the cover of a music magazine or on the payroll of a music company: class, gender, race, and the practices of music organisations in Ireland', O'Hanlon, A-M, Dilane, A. and Lydon, M. (eds) in *Gender Matters and the Irish Music Industry*. Ireland: UCD Press.

Abstract: Official Procedure and Lived Reality: Feminist Class Analysis of the Gendering Logic and Paradox of Music Organisations in Ireland

By Yvonne Kiely

This feminist study investigates critically analyses the human resource management (HRM) paradigms of Ireland's music organisations, and the impact of these paradigms upon the lived realities of male and female workers. With no prior feminist studies of Ireland's music organisations, this study opens a new line of inquiry for feminist organisational research in Ireland's music industries

Prior to this study, music organisations in Ireland had never been researched from a feminist perspective and were an undefined population with no centralised information about how many there are and how many people are employed by them. This study quantifies the population of music organisations in Ireland and their workforce. By mapping music organisations' overall gender and race divisions of labour, their racial homogeneity is brought to light in parallel with gender as the most salient marker of difference.

Music organisations in Ireland make public commitments towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' and express their compliance with legal obligations towards the non-discriminatory treatment of workers. On a global level, music organisations with these same public commitments operate alongside news stories that continually report contradictory practices that sustain harmful cultures for workers, and particularly for female workers. Through a mixed methods approach using interview and survey, this study investigates how music organisations manage labour relationships with HRM paradigms. With the combined theoretical framework of Raewyn Connell (2021, 2011) and Joan Acker (2006), the gender effects of HRM in managing the relationship between the organisation and male and female workers is brought to light. Management's reliance on a neoliberal, market-oriented HRM solution for gender divisions of labour and harmful cultures maintains patriarchal gender relations rather than remedying them. Lived realities of workers contradict the organisation's commitments to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. A new feminist theorisation of paradox is produced from analysis of this contradiction which challenges the dominance and legitimacy of the HRM paradigms of music organisations.

1. Introduction

This feminist study is concerned with workers of music organisations in Ireland, and how their lived realities as male and female workers are shaped by gendering logics of the organisation. Music organisations in Ireland have never been researched from a feminist position, and in general, they are an under-researched population, despite being the most concentrated sites of jobs and income in Ireland's music industries. The population of interest are workers in labour relationships governed by formal employment contracts, in paid employment, operating in core music industry sectors (live, recording, publishing) and peripheral sectors (such as education, music magazines). Music organisations are defined according to these labour relationships, in these sectors, and are also defined by their hierarchical structure, where the relationships between workers are arranged according to a chain of command operation, whether they are large or small organisations, predominantly with management structures at the middle and upper end.

Music organisations tend to operate in the private sector, and engage in commercial activities centred around the positive exploitation of the economic value of music, music technology, artists, and audiences. Household names on an international level include Live Nation Entertainment, Sony Music, Universal Music, Warner Music, and Spotify, all of which have operations in Ireland. In Ireland, audiences and artists would be familiar with Aiken Promotions, MCD, IMRO, Ticketmaster, The National Concert Hall, and *Hot Press*. Music organisations are unique in some of the activities that they carry out, specifically activities that involve music performance, the management of artists, music education, the processes involved in recording music and producing musical products like records. Additionally, the legal landscape of music industries is governed by intellectual property law, where two forms of copyright are at play, covering the composition itself (publishing rights) and recordings of the song (master rights). This legal context shapes work activities inside the organisation. In other ways, music organisations are similar to arts and media organisations, and organisations in general, that operate with the same kinds of labour relationships and structures. There is still bureaucracy, organisational processes like employment contracts and hiring policies, and expectations to comply with employment law. The temporal and spatial arrangement of the work itself generally aligns with other organisations, where workers are located in an office, though certain jobs in music organisations carry expectations and requirements that require workers to attend gigs, work on the road, and travel. Music organisations in Ireland tend to operate with management paradigms for managing the relationship between workers and the organisation, such as human resource management (HRM) paradigms. While music organisations have unique qualities, their management logic is illustrative of logics that are

applied across industries regardless of type. This represents a form of standardisation of labour process that management science and HRM support, and as this study demonstrates, these management logics have gender effects.

The contributions of this study for feminist organisational research are primarily related to how critical feminist inquiries of organisations can develop and advance new understandings of the organisational construction of gender, and the role that management paradigms (such as HRM) play in constructing and maintaining patriarchal cultures, and supporting individualist, neoliberal logics that have implications for all workers. The study of logic is one usually carried out by organisation theorists and management researchers, which operate with paradigms that are implicitly geared towards producing helpful analyses for the organisation as a market actor. Evidence of the loyalties of these disciplines to the organisation are evident in entrepreneurship research, HRM, and organisational behaviour, which sometimes critique the organisation as gendered, but stop short of critiquing neoliberal capitalism and management paradigms themselves. By carrying out a study of logic, with a critical feminist framework independent of these paradigms, this study produces new knowledge that can support feminist organisational research as a discipline capable of critiquing the organisational construction of power.

This study develops the theories of Connell (2021, 2011) and Acker (2006) to the study of management paradigms and management science in music organisations, and extends their theorisation of contradiction to a new feminist theorisation of paradox that challenges dominant conceptualisations of the concept in management and organisation theory. The paradox of music organisations in Ireland describes how men and women are both 'equal' and 'unequal' under management-led approaches towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. This paradox is identified through analysis of contradiction and offers empirical evidence of the need to critically examine the legitimacy of the HRM paradigms of music organisations and their moral authority for guiding how these organisations engage with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. Prior to this study, nothing was known about the internal realities of music organisations, their policies or practices, and the day-to-day lives of men and women employed by them. Additionally, music organisations in Ireland were an unquantified population, with no data about how many there are in the country, or how many people are employed by them. This study provides insight into the internal world of Ireland's music organisations, and quantifies the population. Finally, the study offers a new understanding of the relationship between music organisations and their societal context, namely the relationship between the organisation and the home, through which evidence of the differing realities of parenthood for men and women is identified. The role of external forces, such as

economic conditions, HRM paradigms, and legal obligations and social expectations towards the treatment of workers is accounted for through a framework that constructs the gendering, managerial logics of music organisations in conversation with neoliberal market-oriented logics and the legitimacy of management-led approaches to governing the relationship between workers and organisations.

Music organisations in Ireland have developed in a national context of neoliberal policy-making and capitalist development, and against a history of Church and State cooperation in a newly independent, post-colonial Ireland from the 1920s. Arrangements of labour amongst men and women in Irish society have been managed through the interplay of social, political, and economic institutions, where early on, the family was singled out as an institution for women's labour, outside the labour market. Today, almost equal numbers of men and women contribute to Ireland's labour market, with greater numbers of racial minorities represented also. Music organisations operating in Ireland are increasingly positioning themselves as good examples of 'equality'[1] and 'equal opportunity'[2] practices. As the only source of information about these practices, Ireland's music organisations thus far have communicated an image about themselves of progress, and one that appears to consider patriarchy a thing of the past. Today's job advertisements with gender-neutral, affectless language that remind audiences of the organisation's commitments to 'equal opportunity' and non-discrimination are a far cry from the highly gendered job advertisements of the 1970s. Such advertisements (figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) were explicit in requiring, for example, young women only for certain positions. As capitalist institutions with a market imperative, operating in a context deeply marked by patriarchal relations, the word of music organisations that all is now 'equal' should not be taken at face value by feminist researchers. Rather, the actual lived realities of male and female workers are, arguably, a more reliable source of knowledge about what music organisations mean by 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. Whether or not patriarchy has been consigned to history, or plays a role in the labour of workers, is a question that these lived realities can help answer.

[1] Condition of parity regardless of an individual's gender' (Browne, 2024).
[2] The idea that people ought to be able to compete on equal terms, or on a "level playing field," for advantaged offices and positions' (Mason, 2013).



EMI

SECRETARY

REQUIRED FOR THE

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF EMI RECORDS

The successful applicant will have had experience in a similar capacity. She will have a friendly manner, good appearance, a sense of responsibility and enjoy the informal atmosphere of a record company environment. Education — Leaving Certificate. Age 25-35.

Apply to:

Mr. Guy Robinson, Managing Director,

EMI (IRELAND) LTD.

130 Slaney Road, Dublin Industrial Estate, Finglas, Dublin 11.

Figure 1: job advertisement, EMI Records (October 1, 1976, Irish Independent)



MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK

A major international record company requires immediate applications for the following positions:

(1) SALES EXECUTIVE

Bright, alert, experienced; clean licence, etc.; age 23-30 years.

(2) GIRL FRIDAY

Experienced Shorthand Typist, tact, personality, ability to communicate, interest in music and a desire to be involved in the promotion of the company's interests.

(3) RECEPTION/ACCOUNTS/TYPISTS

Basic office experience required.

All the above carry excellent salaries and promotion prospects. Please reply with recent photo for interview identification to

BOX NO. 40120

Figure 2: job advertisement, unnamed organisation (June 5, 1975, Irish Independent)



Figure 3: job advertisement, EMI Records (August 2, 1973, Irish Independent)



Figure 4: job advertisement, EMI Records (September 13, 1974, Irish Independent)



INTERNATIONAL RECORD COMPANY

has two vacancies:

(a) SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Based in Dublin, the position offers an exciting, challenging career to the right person.
The successful applicant will be over 25, with some sales experience, an ability to use his own initiative, and capable of working under pressure as part of a go-ahead creative team.

(b) ASSISTANT WAREHOUSE MANAGER

The ideal candidate will be 25-40 and have considerable experience of warehouse systems and stock control. He must also be able to motivate staff, liaise with suppliers at managerial level, and develop customer relations to the benefit of the company. An ability to accurately memorise catalogue numbers and titles would be a decided asset.

Apply in writing, stating full personal details and work-history to **Box 45452.**

Figure 5: job advertisement, unnamed organisation (November 25, 1977, Irish Independent)

Most of what is known about what goes on inside music organisations comes from the organisations themselves, through public reports and statements drafted and signed off by senior management, as well as through news reports communicated on behalf of workers that detail issues with working conditions. Messages provided by the largest music organisations (that have operations in Ireland) detail how they are 'addressing the global issue of racial injustice' (Sony Group Corporation, 2024, pp.12), that they 'operate with the highest standards of business ethics and compliance with all laws' (Warner Music Group, 2025, pp.20), and they 'ensure the safety, security and health of our employees at work' (Universal Music Group, 2016, pp.11). News stories about workers of these organisations, however, contradict these messages. An investigation of Sony Music Australia drawn from testimonies of over 100 current and former employees revealed that Sony's global head office was aware of the systematic abuse of employees within its Australian organisation at the hand of its CEO Denis Handlin and took forty years to act on these allegations (Tobin, Russell and Carter, 2021). Allegations detailed how men and women of the executive team were singled out to be bullied and humiliated in meetings, and staff were fired for getting pregnant or for not smiling at Handlin. In another case, following multiple accusations of sexual harassment from female employees, Warner Music New Zealand dismissed its senior vice president of artists and repertoire (A&R), Scott Maclachlan (Mau, 2021). Warner argued that these allegations were new to them, and in their defence, pointed to the existence of an employee code of conduct. Despite these claims, allegations have dogged the company for years, including multiple internal reports of sexual misconduct within Warner Records, Warner Music Group and Warner Music Sweden (Millman, 2022; Willman, 2017; Malt, 2022; Arcand, 2017). When

allegations of rape and sexual misconduct by former co-workers against Def Jam Recordings co-founder, Russell Simmons, emerged in news reports in 2017, its parent company Universal Music Group was silent. These allegations date over a near thirty year period from the 1980s, during which time Universal remained in partnership with Simmons on new projects, from 1999, up until a 2017 *New York Times* report (see Coscarelli and Ryzil, 2017) prompted Simmons to step down from his position in Def Jam. Given the anecdotal acknowledgement of his behaviour within industry circles outlined by a *Pitchfork* timeline (Yoo, 2017), it is highly unlikely that Universal employees who worked with Simmons were oblivious to his conduct.

Assurances of good organisational practice are also expressed by music organisations that operate exclusively in Ireland, and, to date, the only public account of internal conflict for workers inside music organisations is related to MCD (a concert promoter based in Ireland owned by Live Nation Entertainment), which was reported to be dealing with complaints of 'abrasive management behaviour' (Beesley, 2021). But countless stories continue to emerge from music organisations elsewhere. These include Lily Allen's allegations against a Warner executive (Heawood and Brooks, 2018); the reported sexism and racism of Beatport and its CEO Robb McDaniels (Ross, 2022); reports of sexual harassment, assault, and active silencing of female music journalists at *Vice* and *The Fader* (Alford, 2019); Kesha's case of employment discrimination and sexual assault against Sony producer Dr Luke and Sony Music (Lockett, Gordon and Zhan, 2023); the complicity of Sony Music in facilitating the activities of convicted sex offender and trafficker R Kelly (Surviving R Kelly, 2019, 2020, 2023); the case of discrimination, harassment, and corruption against the National Academy of Recording Arts and Science (the organisation that hosts the Grammy awards) by its former CEO Deborah Dugan (Dugan v. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, 2020); and workers from Live Nation, DistroKid, and Bandcamp unionising in response to harmful and punitive working conditions (Maiberg, 2023; Wenzel, 2024; Cooke, 2024). Despite these high-profile cases, there is a dearth of feminist academic research about what goes on inside music organisations (outlined in chapter 2.5). These global examples are particularly relevant and important when looking at countries like Ireland, where knowledge about workers of music organisations is extremely limited, because they highlight how harmful working conditions can remain hidden from view for long periods of time. Feminist researchers of music industries in Ireland are largely concerned with artists (outlined in chapter 2.4), and have yet to focus explicitly on music organisations and the labour relationships that operate within them. This doctoral study establishes a new line of inquiry for feminist research of music industries in Ireland, by focussing its attention on music organisations and their workers.

The objective of the study is to investigate the day-to-day practices and processes of

music organisations in Ireland, and the organisational construction of power in the realities of male and female workers. In so doing, the study develops a critical feminist framework for theorising the class relations of Ireland's music organisations, and how gender relations are constructed through them. The study seeks to produce new knowledge about the processes and policies of music organisations, the actual practices of the organisation and their impact upon the men and women employed by them, and the relationship between music organisations and the home. Articulating why this kind of feminist inquiry is important is a key objective of the study, and this objective is supported through the presentation of the lived realities of workers, which prior to this study were unaccounted for.

The primary research question guiding this study is: How are the labour relationships of music organisations in Ireland managed through their organisational logics? Following this question, several sub-questions arise:

- What is the population of music organisations in Ireland and their workers?
- What form does this logic take in organisational processes and practices?
- How does this logic impact upon male and female workers employed by the organisation?

(i) Logic

Organisational logic has been theorised by feminist organisational research as the unacknowledged or taken for granted assumptions and meanings about gender and race that are embedded in organisational processes and practices (Acker, 2006). These gendering and racialising logics are operators of organisational processes and practices that are not readily identifiable in the statements and policies of organisations. They are embodied in organisational processes and inform what actually happens in practice, in the lived realities of workers. For example, employment contracts are standardised tools for managing the relationship between workers and the organisation, and are considered neutral processes by HRM because they apply the same rules to everyone. However, these terms can have unacknowledged gender effects, for example when the requirements of the job cannot be fulfilled by women in the same way as men, due to the different gender effects of parenthood. Additionally, when the worth of jobs is evaluated, this calculation can be informed unconsciously by gender patterns of occupations, where jobs that men more often do are valued more highly than jobs that are more often done by women. This study accounts for how these logics operate, and their impact upon the lived realities of workers. This is achieved by looking not only at what the organisation says is happening, but also at what is actually happening. A comparison of the latter with the former brings to light the logic at the heart of

how the organisation operates, through an analysis of contradiction. This kind of analysis, whereby evidence of contradiction is used to theorise organisational logic and its effect upon male and female workers, draws from Connell (2021, 2011) and her discussion of neoliberal capitalism as an inherently contradictory system. Efforts are made by organisations to remedy and smooth over issues that arise from the market-oriented needs of the organisation, yet these solutions are management-led with market loyalties, and still maintain existing tensions between male and female workers. While Connell has not produced empirical studies that seek to analyse contradictions in realities and practices in organisations, her analyses to date continually emphasise the need to focus on how logics operate and their impacts upon workers. This doctoral study develops a novel theoretical framework (with a combination of Acker's and Connell's theories) in the context of Ireland's music organisations for analysing contradiction, to understand how logics operate and their impact upon workers. This represents an early step in the development of critical feminist theories of organisational logics, that are independent of traditional organisation theory and management paradigms.

Feminist critiques of organisational logic point out how a neoliberal logic of managerialism has become embedded in contemporary organisations. Connell (2011) outlines how in neoliberal economies, the gender-neutral workplace is an 'implicit goal' (pp.37) of management models that favour an individualist outlook, resulting in gender problems being seen as problems relating to the individual, and not to the organisation. This kind of logic is favourable for the organisation, as it positions the organisation as a neutral actor in the lived realities of workers, and as an entity with no responsibility for workers beyond that which supports the economic interests of the organisation. Acker (2006) identifies this 'non-responsibility'[3] as a function of the gendering and racialising processes of capitalist organisations, where pertinent issues, such hiring practices that reinforce division of labour, or ineffective disciplinary policies, are by default constructed as issues distinct from the organisation itself. This logic also lays the groundwork for organisations to position themselves as providers of solutions for issues facing workers, thus allowing these solutions to maintain existing power relations, rather than transforming them. This doctoral study identifies the neoliberal logic of HRM paradigms as the central logic that guides music organisations' response to obligations and expectations towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'.

[3] The legitimacy of economic arguments for the separation of organisations from the needs of society and aspects of workers' lives that will not support profit motives.

(ii) Official realities and lived realities

Central to this investigation of logic is the relationship between the lived realities of workers and the official reality of the organisation. Lived realities encompass what is actually happening, in practice in the lives of those working for the organisation. The official reality is that which the organisation says is happening, in policies, documents, and statements. Music organisations are the dominant voice, constructing an image of themselves as compliant supporters of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' and communicating this image to audiences and stakeholders. This representation of reality is the one sanctioned and approved by management, that carries the seal of approval of management expertise and externally validated 'best practice'. Thus, it takes the form of an official reality, constructed in alignment with a management science external to the organisation, often located in academic disciplines, that offers it legitimacy and authority. As previously discussed, the lived realities of male and female workers of music organisations sometimes come to light in news reports, but are otherwise hidden from view, and they highlight practices that contradict the more visible official reality of the organisation. These realities are identified by gathering evidence from workers themselves, for example, through interview or observation. When analysed through a feminist theoretical framework, evidence of contradiction between these realities can bring to light how gender and race are constructed in the relationship between workers and the organisation. The analysis of official realities and lived realities forms the majority of the analysis presented in this thesis and forms the basis of a new feminist theorisation of 'paradox', which is the core theoretical contribution of the study.

(iii) Paradox

Paradox is a familiar concept in organisational theory and coming from a paradigm which endeavours to understand the social world in useful ways for the organisation, paradox is theorised as an unavoidable feature of organisations that, if managed correctly can provide payoffs for the organisation (Franken, Plimmer and Mailen, 2019). In this sense, paradoxes are not meant to be resolved, but managed, through a process of 'managing contradiction' (Hargrave and de Ven, 2016, pp.1) carried out by members of management. Evidence of paradoxes include market-driven directives that seek to motivate workers to work longer hours, while aggravating tensions between workers and management. Paradox is less developed in feminist sociology and feminist studies of organisations outside of management paradigms and organisation theory, though studies do account for contradiction and the ways that organisations can produce contradictory realities that undermine each other (such as Cohen and Meulen Rodgers, 2021; Connell, 2005, 2011).

This thesis accounts for the construction of paradox through the HRM paradigms of music organisations, where these paradigms create and maintain contradictory realities. When official realities and lived realities are contradictory, and these contradictions are mutually exclusive, a paradox is created. The paradox identified by this study is one where men and women are both 'equal' and 'unequal', and this paradox is identified in multiple organisations across Ireland's music industries. When HRM paradigms are present in music organisations, with commitments towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', these organisations are paradoxical. On the one hand, HRM paradigms endorse 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' through 'EDI' ('Equality, Diversity, Inclusion') alignment and HRM policies and this informs the official reality of the organisation. Meanwhile, patriarchal hierarchies, sexism, and harmful working conditions remain in place and construct differing lived realities for male and female workers. The crux of the matter is that the same organisational processes that the organisation says will remedy these problems are the same processes that preserve them. Management-led solutions continue to uphold a patriarchal market-oriented logic at the heart of how the organisation operates. This demonstrates the need for critical feminist critique of management logics and structures, independent of management paradigms. It is here where this study directs its focus.

(iv) Non-responsibility

Acker (2006) theorises the non-responsibility of organisations as a feature of capitalist organisations, which routinely construct their responsibility towards the lives of workers along economic lines, meaning they take no responsibility for the needs of workers that cannot further the economic interests of the organisation. Evidence of the non-responsibility of music organisations is demonstrated by the need for feminist initiatives to make a business case argument when trying to persuade organisations to change their policies and practices (discussed in chapter 3.1). Evidence of non-responsibility is also identified by this doctoral study, and it functions as part of HRM logic, allowing organisations to consider the market-needs of the organisation when making decisions about the ethical treatment of workers. The legitimacy of this non-responsibility further motivates the paradox sustained by HRM paradigms. This study argues that evidence of this non-responsibility, uncovered through an analysis of official and lived realities, can offer a meaningful challenge to the legitimacy of the HRM paradigms of music organisations.

(v) Class

Workers' access to vital resources in society, such as jobs and income, and the differential access to these resources that characterises capitalist societies, are class relations. This

understanding of class draws from Acker (2006) and her theorisation of gendering and racialising class relations. Class relations are shaped by the practices of institutions and their interactions with each other, such as interactions between work organisations, the home, and the state. Hiring practices, grievance and disciplinary practices, employment contracts, rates of pay, and the allocation of employment benefits all contribute to how workers are positioned in relation to each other, and how they are able to meet their needs for sustenance and survival. This study examines the day-to-day organisational practices that shape class relations. By including a focus on the relationship between the organisation and the home, workers' lives outside the organisation and the impact of this societal context upon the construction of class relations inside the organisation are better accounted for. When organisational processes construct hierarchies of privilege in access to resources, such as jobs, gendering and racialising class relations are produced. In this sense, gender and race are constructed through class relations.

(vi) Gender

Gender is defined by this study as social relations, centred around social processes and human practices that bring reproductive distinctions into practice, producing the cultural categories of men and women (Connell, 2021). The cultural categories of men and women are operationalised through organisational processes, such as hiring practice and grievance and disciplinary practices, and this results in the construction of patriarchal gender hierarchies and differential access to important resources between men and women, such as access to jobs and justice. The gendering of workers' realities is embedded in organisational processes themselves, and these realities can be reproduced by management structures and logics even when they purport to be remedying gender problems in the organisation. The job advertisements from the 1970s presented earlier offer some historical insight into the key role that gender plays in the organisational processes, even if the language since this time has changed.

Gender relations were identified through an analysis of the relationship between the organisation and its male and female workforce, where a comparison of realities brought to light how this relationship differs for male and female workers. When the same organisational processes mean differing things in the realities of male and female workers, and have different effects, this is evidence of the organisational construction of gender. This study develops the theorisation of gender relations by identifying the role of HRM paradigms and management-led approaches to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' in their construction.

(vii) Race

Race is defined as social relations that are socially and politically constructed around definitions of skin colour, other physical characteristics, and historical processes (Connell, 2021; Acker, 2006). Acker (2006) describes how in the onset of industrial capitalism, it was white, western men who were in an advantaged position due to legacies of slavery, property ownership, and family inheritance, and as such, race relations are an embedded feature of capitalist logic that require investigation. In the same way that organisational processes can construct gendering realities for workers, they can also construct racialising realities for workers, for example, through hiring practices, or anti-racism policies that do not address the structural causes of racism in the organisation. Evidence of race relations can be found through an analysis of worker realities, where organisational processes produce differing realities for white workers, who are the majority group in Ireland, and racial minorities.

In setting out to investigate the race relations of Ireland's music organisations, this study identifies racial homogeneity as a core feature of music organisations, and gender as the most salient structure in the lived realities of workers. The near absence of race relations from Ireland's music organisations is an important empirical finding, as it offers new, previously unaccounted for information about the realities of workers and the labour arrangements of music organisations that these organisations' policies are aimed at. A core part of the Irish context is the country's largely white workforce, which is also reflected in its music industries (discussed in chapter 3.5), where arts and entertainment industries overall are far more popular among white workers. The racial homogeneity of Ireland's labour force and music industries invariably plays a role in shaping divisions of labour in music organisations, as this is the pool from which new workers are hired into the organisation. At the same time, media organisations in Ireland are powerful actors who play a role in shaping cultural consumption and deciding what makes it onto the popular agenda (McCullagh, 2008) and this relationship between the organisation and society is not one-directional where race patterns in the labour force determine what goes on inside music organisations. While this study set out to investigate the gendering and racialising logic of music organisations, their gendering logic is the aspect that the analysis focuses on. One male racial minority was interviewed by this study, and this worker felt that race had not negatively impacted upon his time in the organisation. As all other interview participants were of the racial majority, no evidence of racialising logics was found.

The ease by which organisations can engage with the realities that feminism is concerned with (Fraser, 2020), on terms that work for the organisation, demonstrates both the hegemony of neoliberal logic in workplaces, and the suitability of a critical feminist critique of class for interrogating this logic. This kind of analysis recognises organisations as active

agents in the construction of power, that are embedded in societal contexts that inform the realities of workers. In the Irish context, the realities of music organisations that workers must navigate are informed by a history of Church-State cooperation in the management of women's labour and role in society (detailed in chapter 3.5), which legitimised patriarchal gender hierarchies as a natural feature of the economy. By defining women's role within the home, the interplay of Ireland's social, economic and political institutions effectively rendered women's concerns in the workplace as inconsequential to organisational policy and practice. Responding to the lived realities of male and female workers in music organisations today means responding to historical constructions of patriarchy across capitalist institutions in their contexts, and this approach is further detailed in chapter 2.1.

By building a picture of the experiences of men and women employed by these organisations, one that encompasses not only work inside the organisation but work in the home, this framework brings feminist theories of labour and capitalism into contemporary contexts of neoliberal markets and highly formalised management structures of music organisations. This approach develops a feminist conceptualisation of class as a feature of the operation of music organisations and allows for theory and analysis to reach beyond music organisations into their societal contexts so that the impact of this relationship can be understood. By critically analysing music organisations' policies, processes, and practices, empirical evidence of the effects of dominant organisational logics and paradigms upon male and female workers and the realities they must navigate are brought to light. This allows for feminist critique to identify and locate specific functions of the organisational construction of power. This is important because questions of accountability and avenues for change are better answered when feminist inquiry is specific in its analysis. Data is limited to workers who volunteer to participate in the study, which means that some aspects of these realities will be unaccounted for. Selection methods for organisations to include also means that evidence is predominately limited to those organisations targeted for inclusion, though some organisations were included because participants volunteered through the survey. However, given the small size of Ireland's music industries, these limitations do not impede the study in meeting its objective to investigate the logic of music organisations in Ireland and its impact upon workers.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework of the study and the feminist literature that guides the approach of the study. Chapter three presents a review of dominant management paradigms in organisations, feminist organisational research, music industries, music organisations, and the Irish context. Chapter four details the methodological approach of the study and its research design. Chapter five presents the study's findings and chapter six

presents a discussion of paradox, the main theoretical contribution of the study. Each of the three sections of chapter six provides evidence largely gathered from the same organisations, from the same workers, and the main contributions of the study draw simultaneously from these key sections, synthesising them into an overall critique of management paradigms and logic. Finally, chapter seven provides concluding remarks with reflections on evidence and its implications for feminist organisational research. The following chapter introduces the critical feminist approach of the study, and its engagement with class analysis.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Feminist theories of work and capitalism: Socialist feminism, Marxist feminism, Anarchist feminism

Feminists concerned with class and work under current socio-economic systems can be categorised according to three related traditions; socialist feminism, Marxist feminism, and anarchist feminism (though some feminist authors might protest the idea of categorisation, for the purposes of this review, they will be categorised). The main arguments of each tradition and their interpretation among feminist academics forms the basis of this section of the literature review. Following this brief overview, where this thesis stands in relation to these traditions will be discussed.

2.1.1 Socialist feminism

Socialist feminism has no universal definition, and is characterised by multiple, sometimes complementary, sometimes disparate approaches to accounting for women's oppression in society. It is a second-wave feminist politics that seeks to interrogate the relationship between class, gender, capitalism, and patriarchy (Hoggart, 2000); it is an offshoot of the New Left that acknowledges sexism on a par with other aspects of oppression and favours reforming capitalist systems from within than dismantling them (Gordon, 2013); and it is a movement intended to eliminate gender and class by overthrowing male-dominance and capitalism (Jagger, 1995) - a definition more akin to anarchist feminism. There is also a distinction made between Marxist feminism and socialist feminism, along with literature that positions socialist feminism as a combination of Marxism and radical feminism (Sen, 2022).

Marxist feminism is often included within or alongside discussions of socialist feminism, where they are positioned in an influential relationship with each other (such as Tong and Botts, 2024; Brenner 2014; Hennessy, 2014; Eisenstein, 1979). That the distinction between the two is so slight, and that differences 'seem more a matter of emphasis than of

substance' (Tong and Botts, 2024, pp.119) means that these schools of thought are often discussed together. A widely adopted premise of Marxist feminism is that a workers' movement built in opposition to the subordination of women's reproductive capacities to the motives of profit and accumulation is the necessary action required to remedy women's oppression under capitalist systems. The socialisation of domestic work is a path to achieving this, an argument that was enacted through the Wages-for-Housework campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s which took shape across countries in Europe, Asia, and the Americas (though it did not fully achieve its aims). Smith (2021) argues that Marxist feminists and socialist feminists ultimately take 'the same theoretical starting point' (pp.24) despite slight differences in approaching key issues. In the following discussion, both are presented in tandem.

Confronting capitalism, in some fashion, is acknowledged as a tenet of socialist and Marxist feminism (Brenner, 2014; Smith, 2021). But depending on who you read, there are different views on where to position capitalism and class within the argument, and neither is there a consensus on the position of gender. Tong and Botts (2024) characterise forms of socialist feminism according to three categories, which were developed in part by Marxist feminists in response to perceived shortcomings of Marxist feminism: two-system explanations; interactive-system explanations; and intersectional-system explanations. The first approach rests upon an interpretation of a dichotomous relationship between capitalism (class) and patriarchy (sex), where emphasis is placed on one or the other depending on the argument being made. Aspects of women's lives such as motherhood and sexuality are presented differently according to emphasis. For example, Jagger (1995) argues that patriarchal systems can exist regardless of capitalism, and 'male dominance structures every area of life' (pp.322) therefore policy and practice should attend to women's reproductive freedoms rather than focussing on a single workers' movement. Arguments for the pervasiveness of male domination in society also bear resemblance to arguments from radical feminism, which is acknowledged as a close relative of socialist feminism (Eisenstein, 1999) and Marxist feminism (Vukoičić, 2013).

The second approach positions capitalism and patriarchy as 'co-equal partners' (Tong and Botts, 2024, pp.137), bringing sexual divisions of labour to the fore as a way of combining class analysis with feminist analysis. By identifying women's sex and their relationship to production as sources of their oppression, the different ways that sex is made to matter in the lives of women workers are theorised (such as Hartmann, 1976). Applications of this approach have looked at women's domestic and caring work in relation to paid work, and the interrelated nature of reproductive labour with capital. Marxist feminism adopts this perspective in its critique of the separation of the public and private spheres under capitalism (such as Vogel, 1983). The relationship between unpaid domestic and paid productive spheres

is identified as the source of women's oppression, rather than the sexual division of labour in itself.

The third approach aligns with a definition provided by Brenner (2014) that encompasses 'all feminists (whether they would identify with the label or not) who see class as central but would not reduce relations of power and privilege organized around particular identities (e.g., gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, nationality) to class oppression' (pp.38). This approach does not position class or sex at the centre of its critique. It instead seeks to give multiple dimensions of social relations, such as race and sexuality, the opportunity to contribute to understandings of women's oppression. Some feminists concerned with intersectionality, race, and critiques of capitalism have argued for the need to bring histories of slavery into feminist conversations about work and capitalism. Davis (1981), a Marxist feminist, traces the development of the anti-slavery movement of the mid-nineteenth century parallel to the women's rights movement, where black women were more prominent participants in the former. She argues that the oppression of women operates across black people's enslavement in the South and the labour relationships of capitalism, and that this connection was not acknowledged by the women's rights movement.

Criticisms of socialist feminism and Marxist feminism draw attention to their roots in grand theories and their tendency to over-theorise (Tong and Botts, 2024; Johnson, 1990; Maynard, 1995), where lesser attention is paid to empirical evidence of actual practices that create oppression, and how they may vary across cultural contexts. For example, Saffioti (1978) applies Marxist feminist critique to women in Brazilian society, highlighting how the productive centres of capitalism shape labour patterns in countries peripheral to them. In an interview with Littler (2014), Nancy Fraser points out that the 'labor-centred idea of socialism' (pp.30) can inadvertently sideline other pressing issues connected to political economy that feminists should be concerned about, like reforming political structures, and environmentalism. This tendency can be attributed to the relative dominance of Marxist thought within the feminist socialist tradition compared to other schools of thought rooted in gender theory. This is evident in how socialist and Marxist feminist theories of gender and capitalism often circle back to Marxist paradigms as the solution to women's status in society (such as Eisenstein, 1999; Sen, 2022). This is not to say that ideas about class critique that draw from Marxism cannot contribute to new theory - it is when these ideas are adopted wholesale, rather than critically applied with the intent of developing new theory, that problems arise.

2.1.2 Anarchist feminism

Anarchist feminism shares its relatives' concerns with capitalism, women's oppression, economic exploitation, and organising a movement. Similarly, it has a range of definitions, some of which place it in differing relationships with socialist feminism. It represents the intersection of non-anarchist feminisms and anarchism (Kinna, 2018); it is a philosophy that encompasses a 'family' of perspectives such as 'mutualists, collectivists, communists, federalists, individualists, socialists, syndicalists, feminists' (Kowal, 2019, pp.4); and a political practice that aims to abolish institutions that reinforce power relations (Véron and White, 2023).

Capitalism, and institutions built upon centralised decision-making, and institutions that reinforce oppression in the terms of people's day-to-day lives (such as State managed social welfare systems) are objects of critique by anarchists. As an institution that is heavily indebted to capitalist logic, the abolition of state structures is often cited as an aim of anarchism, which would precede the introduction of local, self-governing organisations with horizontal structures (Véron and White, 2023). Anarchist feminists take up critiques of the State from the vantage point of patriarchy and gender hierarchy. Kowal (2019) observes how the gendering of the family institution and its relationship with public life in late nineteenth century Europe and North America resulted in the woman's legally mandated position in the home, as a subservient wife with little control over her sexual and bodily autonomy. In western societies the institution of marriage is regulated by the state, often with religious and moral oversight, and its capacity to extend conservative interests into personal relationships motivates some anarchist feminists' outright opposition to marriage. For instance, the introduction of a marriage bar in Irish law in 1923 forced women working in the public sector to give up their jobs when they were married, so that they would fulfil their predefined roles as mothers in the home. Anarchist feminists argue that in the absence of a marriage contract, women have more freedom to retain reproductive and sexual autonomy. Others adopt a more pragmatic approach to evaluating the flaws and opportunities of marriage (Shantz, 2004), which can provide migrant men and women with access to state benefits and offer useful legal certainties.

A distinguishing feature of anarchist feminism from anarchism is that it pays more attention than the latter to private life and the domestic realities of women (Jeppesen, 2019). In this sense it bears similarities to socialist feminism. But it diverges on how best to deal with capitalism. Socialist feminism endorses mobilising class consciousness as a way of disrupting control over working conditions, which will change the relationship between the public and private sphere and thereby transform women's oppression. The state can be utilised in this

process and capitalism does not necessarily need to be abolished. Anarchist feminism (and anarchism) opposes all organisation of paid and unpaid labour under capitalism and endorses action that will enable a horizontal form of self-governance to replace the state without imperatives to sell labour, where centralised hierarchy is replaced by collective decision making in local clusters (Levy, 2019; Jeppesen, 2019). The power relations of capitalism necessitate hierarchical control over material resources and people and are a legitimating force for patriarchal power. Women's liberation from patriarchy therefore requires liberation from capitalism. The ease by which capitalism absorbs feminist gains and repackages them to feminists - a critique by Fraser (2020) about the close relationship between neoliberalism and feminism - could be viewed from the anarchist feminist perspective as evidence of the need to completely reform logics of social organisation.

Anarchist feminism is not a strongly established academic tradition, compared to socialist feminism or Marxist feminism. Criticisms of anarchism are much more discussed than those of its feminist comrade, and the scanter pool of literature about anarchist feminism and its conceptual frameworks makes the task of understanding its core arguments difficult. A developed strand within this literature is the 'how' aspect of anarchist feminism, which integrates anarchist activism with feminist activism (Jeppesen, 2019; Maiguashca, 2014; Murney, 2023), for example, through direct action, feminist squatting communities, organising around issues of bodily autonomy, anarchist day care systems, and self-defence workshops. A criticism of anarchism is that it offers an unrealistic or naive ideal (Morland, 1997) without offering practical steps to ensure that the freedom of persons in a world without hierarchy will actually be protected. Anarchism acknowledges the need for a system of collectively agreed rules - but there is little engagement from anarchist feminists with the question of rules and conduct. Loizidou (2019) provides a feminist interpretation of 'an anarchist way of life' (pp.189) that preceded law and could offer a vision for the future. The analysis of how previous notable anarchists lived their lives does not answer pertinent questions about how women would be protected in this future world where rules of acceptable behaviour are governed by an anarchist ethos without coercive measures. Institutionalised hierarchy is considered by anarchist feminists to be a building block of patriarchy. But whether or not the new non-hierarchical utopia will put an end to all forms of patriarchy is unclear. What to do about patriarchy after capitalism is an important question that has yet to be sufficiently answered.

2.1.3 Where the framework of this thesis sits among these traditions

The theories of Connell and Acker which guide this study embody elements of Marxist feminism and socialist feminism. Neither explicitly adopt Marxist feminist theory, but the influence is clear. They borrow emphasis from the second and third approaches of socialist feminism, though they do not fit neatly within either. Both have acknowledged their loyalty to socialism in their literature and writings.

Acker (2006, 2007) proposes that capitalism is itself gendering and racialising, and Connell (2021) is in agreement with her approach to gendering economies, markets, and corporations. Understanding the gender and race effects of market processes and political economies, and how the relationship between the family and capitalist organisations feeds into relations between men and women, is how both authors bring class analysis and feminist analysis into one conceptual framework. This follows the tradition of a socialist feminism that positions capitalism and patriarchy on the same level, as the same process. Both also argue for broadening the scope of analysis beyond sex and class, to consider race and ethnicity as important components of capitalist logic. Colonialism and imperialism, past and present, inform local gender arrangements, which in globalised and transnational economies are part of a fragmented yet interconnected global gender order (Connell, 2016). Looking more often at the origins of capitalism, Acker (2006) identifies the separation of the market from the home as the basis for the 'gender coded distinction between production and reproduction' (pp.86), which forms the basis of a gendering capitalism. When this distinction emerged, white men were already in an advantaged position due to practices of slavery, private property ownership, and colonialism.

Acker's critique of capitalism's gendered substructures aligns with Marxist feminist critique of the relationship between the home and the market. She calls for analysis to pay attention to the 'non-responsibility' of capitalist organisations towards aspects of workers' lives that cannot potentially be utilised for the benefit of the organisation (especially workers' lives in the home). Concerns for the profit-oriented motives of organisations and their implications for women's domestic realities are strongly evidenced by Marxist feminism, such as the Wages for Housework Campaign from the 1970s and 1980s which called for the profits of corporations to be redirected towards mothers in the home. Connell's attention to pre-capitalist histories of colonialism, imperialism, and gender as a direction of world history, also aligns with the historical materialism of Marxist feminism. Yet, neither scholar builds their frameworks with any explicit anchoring to Marxist feminism. Marxist feminism is highly committed to the relationship between production and reproduction - the multitude of institutions (such as politics, healthcare, religion, the state), their logics, and the complex

relationships they have with each other, and to the home and the organisation, do not receive this level of attention. Connell and Acker are very interested in these institutions and their relationships. It perhaps does not matter in the long run as to how they classify themselves - the theoretical ideas and how they are evidenced by research are what matters. For the purposes of categorisation, thus far, the framework sits within the socialist feminism tradition, with an acknowledgment of the influence that Marxist feminism has had on some of its key arguments. But there are concerns about socialist feminism that push this thesis to challenge this categorisation.

The actions that Connell and Acker propose to deal with patriarchy and class relations expand the scope of critique to the realities of male workers, so that the construction of gender through class can be interrogated from multiple angles, as a whole. Socialist feminism often focuses on the realities of female workers and female carers, despite its calls for a worker's movement for women's emancipation. The critique of this thesis is centred on music organisations and their relationship to the home. This involves in-depth organisational fieldwork in specific industries, to understand the organisational construction of gendering and racialising class relations through the actual practices of its members. But these kinds of studies are uncommon within socialist feminist research, even though the logic that governs the relationship between the home and the market is of serious concern. Neither Connell nor Acker endeavour to weave explicit theoretical grounding in particular socialist feminist traditions within their major works, which may be an intentional strategy on their part, because categorisation can elicit preconceived notions about what the problem is and the solutions it requires.

As this chapter demonstrates, categorisation is a highly imperfect practice that in this instance seeks to put structure to schools of thought that are closely related and only sometimes offer clear departures from each other. It would be more useful to categorise this study as a feminist class analysis of organisations. In this sense, the thesis keeps an open mind as to what conclusions should be made based on the evidence, while drawing from its core theoretical constructs.

2.2 Consolidated framework

In line with a feminist class analysis that is concerned with labour relationships between male and female workers, in capitalist music organisations that operate as sites of structured and differential access to important resources, this investigation of logic looks to the kinds of processes that govern these labour relationships, and the effects of these processes upon workers. By gathering evidence of organisational processes, how they function, and what the

material impact of these processes are (the stated impact or otherwise), the logic that guides the organisation's management of their relationship with workers is brought to light. Central to this investigation is the distinction between what the organisation says is happening (the stated effects of organisational processes that appear as an official reality) and what actually happens (the lived realities of workers).

In organisations where there are commitments to change, for example bringing more women into senior management, or changing the way workers interact with each other to create a culture where workers feel comfortable making disclosures, organisational processes are the vehicle through which music organisations drive these commitments, and this is done through management structures. If the motivations for these commitments and the logic that guides them are centred around the needs of workers and women, and do not allow other considerations to interfere with these commitments, then official realities and lived realities would be in alignment. Contradictions between these realities would point to a discontinuity between what the organisation says, and what it means. This is where the gendering logic of management-led approaches to addressing gender relations can be identified.

Feminist critiques of labour express a concern about the market imperatives of organisations because of their implications for workers, where the market needs of the organisation are easily supported over the needs of workers. Because there are legal obligations and social expectations regarding the treatment of workers and regarding 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', music organisations have a moral dilemma to navigate, concerning the market imperative of the organisation, and the need for compliance with these obligations and social expectations. The business case for change allows music organisations to do both, at least on paper. This balancing act between the needs of the organisation and the needs of workers, in reality, amounts to something much different than what the organisation says it does. These needs are contradictory, and evidence of this contradiction can be found through an analysis of official and lived realities, which offer insight into the logic that governs the relationship between workers and the organisation.

Because music organisations have bestowed HRM with the moral authority to manage this dilemma and its contradictions, HRM is of central importance to feminist critiques of labour. In music organisations that rely on HRM paradigms to govern their relationship with workers, the persistence of these contradictions amounts to a paradox that is intrinsically linked to the logic of HRM itself. The same organisational processes that are intended to transform realities actually maintain them along their current trajectories, where workers are stressed, and women face barriers to access jobs and justice. By gathering evidence of paradox and the contradictions it is made of, this study develops a critical feminist framework for the

study of organisational logics, that offers an alternative mode of engagement with logic and paradox, different to those offered by HRM and organisation theory. This matters because the modes of engagement offered by HRM and organisation theory critique logic, paradox, and the realities of workers with the view of improving management paradigms (discussed in chapter), rather than engaging with the possibility that management paradigms may themselves be an inadequate means of supporting workers and women.

The primary research question of the study is answered through this investigation of organisational processes, realities, and HRM paradigms. By first quantifying the population, the study gains a clear picture of the overall labour relationships and divisions of labour across sectors, from which samples of music organisations can be drawn from. Examining the processes and practices of music organisations is the means through which the form of this logic is understood. This evidence is analysed with respect to the official realities of the organisation and the lived realities of male and female workers, where management paradigms shape access to resources and contradictions emerge that are telling of the operation of the organisation's gendering logic.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Management paradigms of gender, race and organisations

3.1.1 Management theory and HRM

Management theory is a field of research concerned with management principles, structures and practices. It encompasses the field of human resource management (HRM) and has roots in organisation theory. Different management paradigms have emerged since the eighteenth century with the aim of providing educational findings and applications for work organisations (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017). The development of management theory in its earliest form is discussed with reference to ideas of liberal economists (such as Adam Smith, Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte). The history of management theory can be contextualised against the development of organisation theory, which Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) argue came about in order to respond to the forms of organisation that emerged after industrialisation. The authors provide a detailed historical account of the onset of large organisations in the late nineteenth century and the ideas of the people who became known as legitimate intellectual voices in the development of organisation theory and management theory over the following decades. This is an all-male cast of more than thirty theorists who are credited with shaping knowledge about organisations and management structures into the twentieth century. The maleness of the intellectual work of organisations and management is inadvertently demonstrated by Oyibo and Gabriel (2020) who assert that 'these great men developed their theories by building on each other's work' (pp.224).

HRM as we know it today came about through the evolution of management theory, and a growing attention to the idea of people management, meaning the optimal use of people as resources for the organisation. This aspect of HRM draws heavily from organisational behaviour. Organisational behaviour is concerned with interactions between workers, their relationships with each other, and how they think and act in the workplace. It is 'ultimately concerned with using this information to promote certain desirable employee attitudes and behaviours, as well as the effectiveness of the organisation more broadly' (Hammond, 2016, pp.3). In the twenty-first century, management that adopts a market-focussed approach in overseeing and guiding operations is favoured (Spender, 2015), where persuasion rather than coercion is advocated as the best method of supporting organisational performance through the work of employees. This is best evidenced in the growth of HRM in capitalist organisations since the 1980s as the dominant paradigm for the organisation's engagement with gender and race. Itani (2017) identifies the late nineteenth century as the starting point of HRM, and traces a change in the mid twentieth century, acknowledging the role that academia and business schools played during the 1960s in legitimising HRM (particularly in the USA), which was elevated further by the rise of neoliberalism and individualistic corporate logics through

the 1970s and 1980s. The 1980s and 1990s is credited as being the point at which HRM moved from being rationality driven to culture driven (Itani, 2017), and the time period where profit motives and individual leadership became much more pronounced (Watkins and Dalton, 2020). The development of HRM in Ireland is traced to the late 1930s and the founding of the Institute of Labour Management (now the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) (Harney, Heffernan and Monks, 2014). Following the employment legislation of the 1960s and 1970s, HRM was increasingly adopted across public and private sectors, and this growth was motivated by Ireland's economic strategies for foreign direct investment (McCarthy, 2016).

HRM as expert and educator

Changing models of viewing the world, referred to as paradigms, are acknowledged as motivating and representing 'substantial shifts in the knowledge and practice of management' (Clarke and Clegg, 2000, pp.49) that are heavily influenced by changing business environments and technologies. Desires for newness in organisational strategy, and the most cutting-edge best practice, are also part of the evolution of management paradigms, embodied in the transformation of management expertise as a commercial product (Clarke and Clegg, 2000). In Ireland, these products look like management training and accreditation courses delivered by business lobbying groups, such as IBEC (Irish Business and Employers Confederation), and education providers, such as business schools in third level institutions that deliver MBA programmes and HRM courses for undergraduate or postgraduate students. The sourcing of management expertise by organisations as a service is acknowledged as a feature of how organisations deal with 'complex situations' (Furusten, 2013, pp.5), and organisations may also wish to hire those they perceive as management experts as employees in their senior ranks.

While it is common for third-level institutions to explicitly try to make students more employable in the labour market regardless of the course they study, the paradigms of HRM make management and HRM degrees distinct in their endeavour to produce students that are trained to be in alignment with a market-oriented logic of the organisation. Similar to marketing jobs that tend to require marketing degrees, HR jobs tend to require HR degrees. During the analysis stage of the thesis, job advertisements from music organisations in Ireland were gathered, and one of these advertisements is from the National Concert Hall looking for a HR manager. It details that candidates must have a third-level HR qualification. Looking outside of Ireland, USA based Big Machine Label Group (Music Business Worldwide, 2025) details that their new Human Resource Business Partner must have a third level degree in HR or a related field, and that extra HR certification is preferred. The production of HRM

paradigms by academia is linked with the production of HRM expertise, which is sought by music organisations now that HR has developed into a standalone job that has a seat at senior-level decision making. Through their public communications, music organisations themselves impact upon the production of HRM paradigms in a relational process. This evolution of HRM across Ireland's music organisations is accounted for in chapter 5.4.

Critical HRM and critical management studies

The logic of contemporary HRM positions people as of vital importance to the organisation, but as cogs in a larger machine designed for productivity and performance. The development of an ethos of instrumentality in HRM is evident in its historical development, as is an ideological conflict between HRM and labour unions. Across the UK, USA, and Europe, the 1980s to 1990s saw a weakened bargaining position of labour which until then had occupied a strong position (Harvey, 2020). Harvey argues that 'the early phases of neoliberalism were about curbing the power of the unions' (pp.15). This assertion is also made by Jackson (2016), who identifies anti-union sentiment in the claims made by prominent neoliberal proponents that unions ultimately increase unemployment and job insecurity. In their critique of challenges facing unions under current neoliberal logics, Albo (2009) names the theoretical claims made by neoliberal supporters as 'unmitigated failures as policy frameworks, and a social disaster for whole societies and workers' (pp.121). Criticisms of neoliberalism and its impact upon workers are prevalent in sociological analyses of labour and political economy. Management studies and HRM scholars also communicate self-critical arguments, which acknowledge neoliberalism, capitalism, and profit motives of organisations. But they circle back to the idea that HRM and management can be modified, and bettered by these criticisms.

This approach of self-criticism is formalised in the fields of critical management studies (CMS) and its sub-field critical HRM (CHRM). Academics in the field of CHRM distinguish themselves from mainstream HRM, pointing out that they observe the control functions of management structures, the possibilities for conflict within the tradition, and the hegemony of positivist HRM teachings (Longman and Mackintosh, 2024; Itani, 2017; Delbridge and Keenoy, 2010). CHRM proponents Watkins and Dalton (2020) describe HRM as 'the economic love child of Margeret Thatcher and Ronald Regan' (pp.63), describing the failings of HRM through its phases of existence, within an argument for how HRM could provide solutions to major issues facing organisations today, such as their impact on climate change. Reasons for CHRM's existence, and the re-evaluation of HRM, are also connected to evidence that HRM does not follow through on its promises for improved organisational performance (Delbridge and Keenoy, 2010). CHRM adopts principles of CMS, whereby

managerialism is subject to scrutiny with the view of motivating 'progressive forms of management' (Spicer, Alvesson and Karreman, 2009, pp.537) and creating a 'more enlightened management practice' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, pp.3) that elevates the moral reasons for 'diversity'. With its roots in groups of ideas commonly referred to as the Frankfurt School, Critical Theory was adopted by management researchers in the late 1970s/early 1980s with the view of posing a challenge to the dominance of normative and universalist approaches in the production of knowledge by organisations (Burrell, 1999). The argument of CMS is that the emancipatory focus of Critical Theory, and its critiques of ideology and the production of knowledge, are well suited to supporting a new agenda for management studies, and some have applied its principles to 'diversity' paradigms.

In their analysis of women managers in China, the role of individualisation and market rationale for engaging with 'gender equality' programmes are identified by Tatli, Ozturk and Woo (2016) as having a negative impact upon women's access to management roles and in the development of 'equality' programmes by the organisation. Tatli (2010) provides evidence of how the ability to make a business case for 'diversity' is considered 'an essential expertise for diversity practitioners' and 'the only standard requirement for the job role' (pp.245). She argues that this discourse can serve to undermine 'diversity' practices in the organisation, and that critical 'diversity' research is required in order to critique and improve approaches. This argument appears to pose a radical challenge to management practices, but her argument returns to how HRM can be improved by critical discourses - a circular argument that maintains the legitimacy of HRM.

In this critical turn in HRM, elements of ideology critique that are taken from Critical Theory are used to investigate management structures, for the betterment of management structures. The position of HRM is expanded to allow for it to become the expert voice in critiquing organisation's engagement with gender and race, as well as the expert voice in how best to engage with gender and race. The adoption of principles of Critical Theory by management research has produced paradigms that respond to criticisms of traditional HRM teachings and shape the process of critical engagement with HRM in a way that supports its role as expert and educator. To adopt a critical view on CHRM and CMS, it would appear that management theory has adapted its boundaries of critique in a way that protects its ideological legitimacy and dominance. The field continues to be constructed by HRM and management academics, published in management journals, and disseminated by business schools to prospective employees. Contrary to the spirit of Critical Theory, the status quo of management ideology in work organisations remains intact.

3.1.2 'Equality', 'equal opportunity' and 'diversity'

The development of HRM as a 'strategic partner' (Purushothaman and Ilamathian, 2015, pp.78) of a globalised organisation was realised from the 1980s through to the 2000s, at the same time that 'diversity' and management approaches to the demographics of the workforce became embedded within HRM strategy. This produced a 'paradigmatic shift' in HRM in the 1980s and 1990s where benefits to the organisation for engaging with an increasingly heterogeneous workforce became the dominant rationale (Davies and Thomas, 2010) as increased global competition shifted HRM paradigms towards a more market-oriented outlook (Biron, Boon, Farndale and Bamberger, 2025). The fusion of HRM with corporate functions was enabled by the development of a convincing business case for 'equality' (or more so, 'diversity'), which elevated HRM as a feature of business development and growth, during a time when organisations, and multinationals in particular, were actively constructing their operations according to a neoliberal logic of international competitiveness.

'Equal opportunity' and HRM

In HRM, the premise of 'equal opportunity' is that employers should not discriminate along any of the protected characteristics set out in 'equality' legislation (Lewa, Muna and Muna, 2022) and these authors also position 'equal opportunity' as a feature of organisations that are concerned with 'diversity'. For hiring, it is related to the idea of fair and ethical practices for managing people based on principles of non-discrimination (Gutiérrez-Broncano, Rubio-Andrés, Jiménez-Estévez, Opute and Camilo Giraldo-Giraldo, 2024) and these authors always position 'equal opportunity' and 'diversity' in the same argument. 'Equal opportunities' can be achieved by reconfiguring hiring procedures to remove bias, by looking more at what the job requires and developing criteria based on these requirements (Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson, 2014). In this sense, 'equal opportunity' is infused with ideas about meritocracy and objectively matching skills to jobs. At the same time, there is attention paid to social groups that are viewed as disadvantaged by hiring procedures, which has led to some support for targets and quotas in organisations based on numbers of people from these social groups. As mentioned, some HRM authors position 'equal opportunity' and 'diversity' in the same argument, as related approaches, engaging with both concepts as co-habiting features of organisational strategy (such as Guerci, Hauff, Panichella and Radaelli, 2022; Knies, Borst, Leisink and Farndale, 2022; Donnelly and Hughes, 2023; Minghua, 2022). 'Diversity management'[4] seeks to encompass all perspectives under a single viewpoint that improves

[4] 'Diversity management', or 'managing diversity' describe management practices that combine 'actual and perceived differences among workers' in a single approach to developing a 'diverse' workforce, in order 'to achieve maximum productivity' (Martocchio, 2018, pp.95).

opportunities for everyone, without distinguishing between social groups, and there is a greater focus on culture and the advantages of maximising employee participation for the benefit of the organisation. By contrast, there is a moral argument of 'equal opportunity' related to how people *should* be able to access jobs that does not directly feed into a business case for change (Torrington et al., 2014). The logic of 'diversity' is far more compatible with the strategic loyalties of HRM.

Since the 1990s 'diversity' has been increasingly adopted by employers as an alternative term to 'equal opportunity' (Cowling and Mailer, 1998), and 'the diversity model has dominated HRM' (Davies and Thomas, 2000, pp.1129) through a paradigm of 'managing diversity' (a common title for HRM textbooks) for the benefit of the organisation's goals and strategies. 'Equal opportunity' occupies a back seat role in HRM paradigms, and is discussed as part of a wider conversation about 'equality', 'diversity', and 'inclusion'. This logic leans towards a gender-neutral, race-neutral reality of meritocracy, and accountability that is difficult to tie to any one person or particular organisational process. The evolution of 'diversity' within HRM has resulted in the proliferation of 'EDI' paradigms in Europe.

'Equality' in HRM

'Equality' is conceptualised by HRM as embedded with 'diversity' and 'inclusion' in a single approach to engaging with gender and race, predominately articulated as 'EDI', or 'DEI'. 'Equality' is positioned as an objective of measures to eliminate biases that impact upon discriminatory working conditions in the organisation, and 'EDI' is primarily concerned with stereotypes that employees have about certain social groups (DeNisi, 2024). Under this paradigm, discriminatory practices and the changes that are necessary to respond to them are centred on individuals, in the relationships between employees. By changing the behaviours of employees under the guidance of 'EDI', such as biases of those involved in hiring, barriers to jobs that women and racial minorities face will be eliminated. 'EDI' draws from the ethos of instrumentality inherent within HRM, by reinforcing the direction of the benefits of improved cultures towards the performance and legitimacy of the organisation.

Women in management is a prominent topic in 'EDI' literature and discussions of 'the leadership gap' (Wanger, 2024, pp.2476). HRM studies about gender and leadership in organisations have popularised the concept of 'the glass ceiling', a concept with multiple definitions that refers to vertical discrimination most often experienced by women (Babic and Hansez, 2021) and a subtle yet strong barrier that prevents women and minorities from entering management positions (Cleveland, Stockdale, Murphy and Gutek, 2000). Organisational level stereotypes about leadership and motherhood prevent male managers

from hiring mothers, and result in mothers internalising negative beliefs that then hold them back (Taparia and Lenka, 2022). Perceptions among women of being treated differently increases perceptions of the 'contradictory demands' (Babic and Hansez, 2021, pp.5) of the 'work-to-family conflict' (pp.1), which leads to mothers in management feeling more strained, less motivated, and less satisfied in their job. In line with a logic that supports the needs of the organisation, 'the glass ceiling' should be addressed because it can negatively impact the business (Taparia and Lenka, 2022) and 'diversity' makes good economic sense (Fox-Roberston and Wójcik, 2024).

HRM overwhelmingly focuses on hiring practices and access to jobs. Sexual harassment, bullying, and access to justice are investigated to a far lesser degree. Boddy and Boulter (2025) investigate perceptions of employees of HR's response to reports of bullying from a CHRM perspective. Participants detailed how they feel that HR refuses to help them, is complicit in bullying, sides with management on the issue, and appears to favour hiring 'corporate psychopaths' (pp.550). The authors conclude that HR's collusion with senior management prevents it from fulfilling its function, and that despite this, if HR can demonstrate a clear business case for strong anti-bullying policies, a solution may be found. As a last resort, they argue that unions or external interventions may be required. The organisation's tolerance for harmful behaviours impacts the willingness of HR managers to engage with sexual harassment training and organisations with a high tolerance reduces the effectiveness of training (Goldberg, Rawski and Perry, 2019). The authors conclude with a recommendation that organisations should foster HR's motivation to learn prior to training. Drawing from public sector organisations in Ireland, Hodgins, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara (2020) analyse evidence of failures of organisations to address bullying as a consequence of individualistic understandings of bullying and responsibility. Policies are easily ignored and management's response can silence victims, and this evaluation leads the authors to recommend enhanced anti-bullying policies.

Criticisms of 'EDI' from HRM academics highlight issues around the implementation of 'EDI' policies, and the comprehension that employees have of 'EDI' principles and procedures. Milian and Wijesingha (2022) interview educators from a social sciences faculty in a Canadian university, to measure perceptions and practices related to the well-developed 'EDI' policy of the organisation. Participants expressed scepticism about the authenticity of 'EDI' commitments, hostility towards the 'over-regulation' of 'EDI' policies (pp.457) that were perceived to be encroaching on their liberties as educators, and others admitted that they didn't have much knowledge of these policies even if they believed in the ethos of 'EDI'. True to HRM tradition, the authors provide recommendations for managers based on their analysis of the findings, which suggest that universities invest more resources into education around

'EDI' policies, and follow through on their public commitments to 'EDI' to remedy sceptical perceptions.

Researchers in Ireland have also levelled criticisms at 'EDI'. Ruggi and Duvvury (2024) collect evidence from academics at the University of Galway, who point out that the university seems to align itself with 'EDI' in order to 'look equal instead of being equal' (pp.11), and the authors recommend that more effort is required to integrate 'EDI' into organisational practice, and to ensure that those carrying out 'EDI' work are supported. Amendments to policy are recommended by Sweeney (2024) in her analysis of 'EDI' practices and policies of An Garda Síochána (Ireland's policing authority). This organisation shares the same issue with the University of Galway, whereby commitments to 'EDI' are not backed up in practice. Sweeney makes recommendations for improved 'EDI' practice, which includes affirmative action in hiring and 'EDI' training. In an edited collection about 'EDI' in Ireland's higher education institutions (McIlrath, Connolly, Leeson and Maher, 2025), discriminatory realities faced by women, racial minorities, disabled workers, and carers are presented by contributors, which includes obstacles to accessing jobs, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. The purpose of the book is made clear - to endorse the aspects of 'EDI' that appear to be working, and to offer insight into how the aspects that are not working can be improved. In other words, figuring out how 'to embed EDI as a prevailing pillar of activity with HE in Ireland' (pp.416). In alignment with the logic of CHRM, criticisms of 'EDI' tend to circle back around to how this evidence can be used to produce more effective 'EDI' paradigms, even when the authors themselves are not HRM academics. These arguments endorse 'EDI' paradigms, without considering their failures as evidence of the need to question the value of such policies to begin with.

'Diversity management' in HRM

'Equality' can mean different things depending on the position taken. One conceptualisation that rings true with the logic of HRM and 'EDI' is the idea of equal treatment, that the rules of the organisation, such as rules for hiring, should be applied equally to everyone. In his philosophical critique of 'equality of opportunity, Cavanagh (2002) identifies this argument as procedural 'equality'. 'Diversity management' is a tool for achieving 'equality' (Nachmias, Mitsakis, Aravopoulou, Rees and Kouki, 2021) that is applied by encouraging personal commitment towards 'diversity', which then creates a more 'inclusive' culture. The procedural aspect of this kind of 'equality' is realised through the application of neutral organisational procedures - a reality only brought to fruition through alignment with 'EDI' and good 'diversity management'.

Some Irish studies engage with 'diversity' management from a non-HRM perspective, without endorsing the concept. In an ethnographic study, Bryan (2010) looks at ethnic and racial minority groups in Irish secondary schools and the explicit adoption of 'diversity management' by the Office of the Minister for Integration in its strategy for combating racism in Ireland. Bryan teases out the business case that the Irish government's argument for multiculturalism is constructed around and highlights how management's engagement with race can produce contradictory effects. Another study by Rogers, O'Boyle, Preston and Fehr (2014) analyses data from a European project Media for Diversity and Migrant Integration, which looks at 'diversity management' practices in media organisations. By comparing the hiring practices of RTÉ (public service broadcaster) and TV3 (commercial broadcaster), the authors identify different approaches to discrimination in hiring practices, where the former adopts 'equality' policies and training for managers, and the latter favours a meritocratic, skills-based hiring process, that juxtaposes hiring 'the best person' with affirmative action. The contrast between these studies, and HRM studies that engage with 'diversity management' is demonstrative of an implicit motivation of academic HRM to frame its research as both valid academic knowledge, and valid management expertise - seemingly contradictory aims, that in practice, appear to support each other in the relationship between organisations and academic HRM.

In an HRM focussed survey of the management practices of 241 organisations operating in Ireland from manufacturing, finance, retail, agriculture, energy, transportation, communication, and construction industries (Armstrong, Flood, Guthrie, Liu, MacCurtain and Mkamwa, 2010), an argument is presented that links the implementation of 'diversity and equality management systems' (pp.978) with improved organisational performance. HR practices that effectively draw out the benefits of 'diversity and equality management' can provide a competitive advantage to organisations, and the authors make this argument by quantifying the effect of adding 'diversity' measures into the statistical analysis, arguing that changes to the results demonstrate improved employee productivity and innovation. An argument along the same lines is made by Hunter (2023) in a qualitative study of compliance practices in five organisations across the public and private sector in Ireland. Hunter critiques the relationship between 'diversity' practices and compliance in the organisation as a positive one whereby compliance improves with the integration of 'diversity' measurements. They also argue that those organisations who have not integrated 'diversity' into their compliance programmes should do so, and the study ends with a list of recommendations for organisations.

Studies in other jurisdictions (such as Inegbedion, Sunday, Asaleye, Lawal and Adebanji, 2020; Gazzaroli, Diallo and Gozzoli, 2024; Patrick and Kumar, 2012) also develop a business case for 'diversity management' by arguing for its impact upon innovation, wellbeing, commitment, and job satisfaction. A systematic review of 'diversity management' literature by Yadav and Lenka (2020) found that between 1991 and 2018, most papers in leading peer-reviewed management journals are written by researchers from the USA (eighty studies), with two from Ireland and seven from the UK. Overwhelmingly, the 123 studies link the concept of 'diversity management' with individual and organisational level consequences related to the functioning and performance of the organisation. The authors describe the review as 'a one-stop-shop for the comprehensive solutions of diversity management literature' for scholars (pp.921) and its findings are presented as a model that can be used by practitioners in organisations. The continued orientation of HRM-led empirical and theoretical analyses of organisations towards an argument that can be useful to management reflects the close, mutually reinforcing relationship between management in organisations, and management paradigms in academia.

3.1.3 Paradox in HRM paradigms

In organisation theory, paradox describes contradictory features of organisations that produce irrational or absurd situations (Putnam, Fairhurst and Banghart, 2016). For example, someone can be both awake and asleep, and an organisation can have an 'equality' policy that actually reinforces differential treatment of employees. The interplay between these contradictions means that they end up reinforcing each other, bringing about the 'possibility of impossibility' (Hearn, 1998, pp.2).

One conceptualisation of paradox in HRM relates to the divergent interests of the organisation as a market actor motivated by profit, and the organisation as an employer of workers with ethical responsibilities towards them. In a CHRM argument, Delbridge and Keenoy (2010) link this 'central paradox in the conception of HRM' (pp.807) to the success of neoliberal policy and deregulation of markets, and the singular focus of HRM academia on theorising management in large corporations. They posit that CHRM can provide answers to this paradox by broadening the HRM agenda to include the organisation's societal context, and the possibilities for conflict in employment relationships, so that the ethical aspect of people management can be supported. Paradox has also been linked to social justice in workplaces with 'DEI' commitments (Bosch, 2024). The author argues that an awareness of the inherent paradoxes of 'DEI' can enhance the organisation's commitments towards justice and 'may result in less rhetoric and more thoughtful approaches' (pp.2) (findings from this

study question the possibility of this, given the central loyalties of HRM to the needs of the organisation). Meritocracy is implicated in another paradox related to gender biases among managers (Castilla and Benard, 2010). The contradiction uncovered through their experiment of 445 participants is that managers in an organisation that is explicitly presented as meritocratic enact biases related to financial rewards towards male employees over equally qualified female employees. 'Diversity management' utilises meritocratic logic in its encouragement of cultures where everyone has the freedom to rise to the top, yet evidence of paradox has not prompted HRM academics, or CHRM academics, to question the legitimacy of 'diversity' or meritocracy.

Paradox appears to be an accepted feature of 'EDI' and HRM paradigms. This aligns with broader arguments about paradox in organisations, that frame paradox as something to be managed, not resolved, and if managed correctly, paradox can provide payoffs for the organisation, such as employee adaptability (Franken, Plimmer and Mailen, 2019) and improved risk management (Soane, 2025). At the heart of the paradox in HRM and 'EDI' is the tension between the market-oriented needs of the organisation, and the human needs of workers. This means that the origins of paradox are inherently linked to the reasons why organisations make 'EDI' commitments in the first place. The pursuit of organisational legitimacy is acknowledged by HRM as a core motivation behind the organisation's adoption of HR policies (Biron et al., 2025). The role of external pressures in the shaping of HR processes is a preoccupation of organisational institutional theory, which looks at how society influences organisations and how legitimacy is constructed (Dibben and Wood, 2024). Notable external pressures are legal obligations, such as employment law, and social expectations. The argument is that organisations will seek to construct their policies to match societal-level values to gain implicit approval for their operations from those outside the organisation (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). There can be a mixture of moral and pragmatic motivations behind legitimacy practices (Kuruppu, Milne and Tilt, 2019), and threats to legitimacy include evidence of non-compliance or misconduct. The role of perception in HRM paradigms, and the value HRM places on understanding and changing perceptions is connected to legitimacy. The adoption of 'EDI' and 'diversity management' is considered a step towards strengthening legitimacy, and research is often conducted about perceptions in relation to these topics, such as perceptions of organisational morality (Abdelmotaleb and Saha, 2020) and perceptions that can enhance employee trust (Lamertz and Bhave, 2017). Legitimacy can be achieved through public facing 'diversity statements' (Singh and Point, 2009, pp.24) which demonstrate compliance with acceptable standards for engaging with gender or race, and voluntary reporting to stakeholders and audiences (Kuruppu, Milne and Tilt, 2019). A common form of reporting by music organisations is enacted through annual

gender pay gap reports, which in Ireland and the UK is motivated by legal requirements to report these figures. Evidence of the role of societal pressures to conform, or appear to conform, to mores and standards for the treatment of workers and engagement with gender and race indicates that the underlying logic for making 'EDI' and 'diversity' commitments is built around the needs of the organisation. The continued survival of the organisation as a competitive and accepted actor is the outcome of successful legitimacy practices, and ideas about what the right things to do (emphasised by CHRM) are still tied up with this economic motivation.

3.2 Approach of this study: Feminist class analysis of organisations

3.2.1 Feminism and organisational analysis

In the 1970s and through to the 1990s and 2000s, feminist criticisms of organisation theory emerged in literature which drew attention to the gender-neutral deficits of dominant theories for studying organisations (such as Wolff, 1977; Acker and Van Houten, 1974; Mills and Tancred, 1992; Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009). The central argument is posed by Mills and Tancred (1992) in their edited collection on page one: traditional organisation theory is gender-blind, and the entirety of organisational analysis needs to be remodelled from the ground up. Early authors named the field 'gendered organisational analysis' (GOA), which can be categorised as an 'organisations-as-gendered' approach. The central argument of GOA is that gender is not something that sometimes happens in organisations. Rather, power is constructed and reconstituted by the decision-making and behaviours of people through legitimate organisational processes (such as management structures or hiring practices), and as such, the organisation cannot occupy a spectator role in the functioning of social relations in the workplace. In this sense, gender is *of* the organisation.

Acker and Van Houten (1974) are credited as the instigators of GOA with their critical debunking of the Hawthorn Studies (which gave rise to the psychological concept Hawthorn effect). By re-evaluating the primary data gathered by the original researchers in 1924-1932, Acker and Van Houten drew attention to the fact that the original researchers did not take into account the sex of participants in the study, and the omission of this variable led to important dynamics between male supervisors and male and female supervisees being subsumed into a gender-neutral argument of productivity. Acker and Van Houten's work led to later organisation theory texts including caveats in their acknowledgements of the Hawthorn Studies, questioning their empirical basis (Thompson and McHugh, 2009) and neglect of environmental and gender factors (Mullins, 2007). Acker's theory of gendered organisations and organisational logic (1990) is also credited as motivating the evolution of GOA (see Mills

and Tancred, 1992). This theory identifies implicit gendering assumptions and meanings embedded in organisational processes, such as employment contracts, hiring procedures, and policy. As the name suggests, GOA began with a focus on gender, and much of the literature about organisations as active agents in the construction of power prior to the 2000s and 2010s is about gender relations, with some exceptions where ethnicity and sexuality are theorised. Early texts provide feminist assessments of organisational culture, sex and sexuality, state bureaucracy, gender roles, women managers, meritocracy, ethnicity, GOA methodologies, and acknowledgements of the shortcomings of non-gendered organisational research.

Attention to the societal context of gendered organisations is a fundamental feature of GOA. The assumed gender neutrality of a job is challenged when expectations associated with sex roles in wider society for men and women are seen to draw distinctions between appropriate workplace behaviours for men and women in particular jobs. When women occupy traditionally male dominated jobs or ranks, problems of exclusion, inappropriate sexual behaviours, double standards, sex role conventions, and gender bias are navigated by the development of 'strategies of gender management' at work (Sheppard, 1992, pp.155). The conferring of merit and the evaluation of employees is also cited to not just be an evaluation of job-based performance (merit as a neutral concept) but an evaluation of men and women in jobs that are designed on 'a gender base' (Burton, 1992, pp.191). This means that being a man or woman in a certain job is a critical indicator of how well that job is being carried out, and perceptions are informed as such. These kinds of evaluations are evident in the differing realities faced by male and female musicians in Ireland, who are subjected to different critiques of expertise and legitimacy which are grounded in patriarchal ideologies. The exclusion of women from performance spaces (O'Shea, 2008), the assumption that women musicians are groupies attached to men (O'Hanlon, 2023), and the music magazine presentation of male musicians with instruments and female musicians without instruments (Kiely, 2020), adds up to a gendering ideal of expertise and know-how that has negative consequences for women in this occupation.

Ethnicity, race, and class in GOA and feminist studies of organisations

Ethnicity and race are broached in an early study by Calás (1992) through an exploration of Western organisational research about Hispanic women and embedded colonising processes of these studies, which have been authored with a western epistemology. Calás points out how little attention organisational research pays to ethnicity and race and populations that are not the racial or ethnic majority, and she specifically critiques the growing popularity of 'diversity' in USA management paradigms which she argues will likely homogenise Hispanic women

'within dominant organizational discourses' (pp.202) similar to the 'women in management' discourse. Upon reflection, it appears that Calás' predictions for the homogenising logic of 'diversity management' have been borne out in its one size fits all approach. She talks about the 'discursive limits' (pp.204) of management theory in the context of the USA and Europe, which is similar to the critique this doctoral thesis poses to HRM in its framing of the organisation's terms of engagement with gender and race. Who gets to make knowledge about whom is her central concern.

The production of knowledge by GOA scholarship has largely been directed by a western interest in power and organisations, and academic books on the topic have been taken on by publishers in the USA and UK (such as Mills and Tancred, 1992; Clegg and Dunkerley, 1977; Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009) with contributions from some authors coming from conference papers presented in these regions, or reprints from journals with a European focus (such as *Organization Studies*). This implicit western standpoint goes some way to explaining the field's focus on gender. There is also a tendency of research about women to minimise differences within groups of women (Bell and Nkomo, 1992), serving to render the realities of class relations, as well as racial and ethnic relations, invisible. Depending on multiple factors (such as cultural context, type of work and organisation) the perceived significance and meaning of different aspects of social relations may vary, as observed by Wright (2011). Feminist music industry research in Ireland has been undertaken against its own cultural context of colonial history and patriarchal church-state relations, where nationalism and Irish ethnic identity in traditional Irish music, and gender in the same genre are the most evidenced aspects of music industries. Similar to Ireland, gender is the most evidenced topic in the UK, with race and ethnicity discussed together with respect to popular music and music scenes, classical musicians, and music education (Hyder, 2004; Minors, Burnard, Wiffen, Shihabi and van der Walk, 2017; Scharff, 2018; Bull, 2025). An analysis of Grime music in Britain by Charles (2019) brings race and working-class identities together as critique of power structures and belonging among black communities in London, and appropriation in wider music industries. Grime music is critiqued as a safe space for black working-class artists who view Grime music by white artists as appropriation, based on the view that 'whiteness…lacks culture' (pp.315). Slominski (2020) identifies an othering of black artists from Irish traditional music, and ideas about heritage and family that make traditional artists with Irish roots seem more legitimate. The difference between these analyses lies in the racial and ethnic standpoint of those that are establishing rules of participation; one is a black community that occupies a lower status in a white colonial country, and the other is a white community that occupies a dominant status in a post-colonial country. What is salient for research in any particular country, will always be informed by that country's cultural context.

Contemporary researchers have brought ethnicity, race, and class into the gendering organisations conversation, and the term GOA is no longer used. One of the most popular and highest-ranking journals in the field, *Gender, Work & Organization*, retains a focus on gender while publishing papers that also delve into race and ethnicity (these are the most common after gender). While the field has developed as a 'researching-organisations-as-gendering-and-racialising' approach with a broadened scope, the theorisation of class and capitalism is underdeveloped.

Class is theorised as access to higher education credentials in Chilean organisations (Cornejo-Abarca, Ugarte and Martin-Caballero, 2025) that are less accessible to working class and minority groups in the USA (Quinn and Ferree, 2019), as a consequence of precarious employment in Britain (Spellman and McBride, 2025), and differential access to status and financial resources in the USA (Sargent, Yavorsky and Sandoval, 2021). This evidence speaks to the societal context of organisations and the capitalist, neoliberal logic that organises labour in these regions. Yet, none of these studies make this connection. Moves by feminist organisation researchers to recognise class relations as part of organisational realities and to bring class into analyses of gender and race is a notable evolution in the field. But the early call to 'situate the organization and its structural and ideological features in the macro-social context which it inhabits' (Wolff, 1977, pp.7) is not realised when political economy and its gendering and racialising effects upon access to resources are omitted from analyses. This may be influenced by the adoption of GOA principles by management and organisation studies (Nkomo and Rodriguez, 2017), which by design would not make such a critique. Identifying the logic of neoliberal capitalism and tracing its ideological functions in the empirical data of workers' realities across the organisation and the home, and other institutions in workers' lives, can help advance feminist analyses of organisations. This thesis draws from the researching-organisations-as-gendering-and-racialising approach but positions itself as a feminist class analysis of organisations. There is an explicit intent articulated by the framework of this thesis to bring the scope of sociological and feminist critiques of work, class, power, and political economy to bear upon the practices of feminist organisational research.

3.2.2 Realities and logic

Understanding the everyday lived realities of workers in organisations is how this thesis investigates the logic by which gendering and racialising class relations are constructed by the organisation. Looking at everyday realities is an approach that is well developed within strands of organisational research, through differing paradigms, which results in differing conclusions. HRM paradigms identify the harms that impact upon men and women in the

organisation which can be named as organisational failures, in so much as these failures can be attributed to management practices and logics that require improvement by HRM. Even when practices of HR managers are implicated in these findings (such as Hodgins, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara, 2020), the issues are presented as related to individualistic understandings of responsibility, rather than anything to do with the logic of HRM itself. HRM remains part of the solution. The relationship between the realities that workers must navigate and the gendering and racialising logic of the organisation is where this thesis directs its analytical focus. This focus extends to the logic of HRM and management structures, and challenges the implicit authority communicated by HRM that defines its own agreeable parameters for how realities are problematised.

Organisational logics of managerialism and neoliberalism

Waring (2013) argues that the individualism endorsed by HRM paradigms is itself a problem affecting the realities of workers, in a study of academic staff at universities in England. HRM's conceptualisation of the interests of the organisation as synonymous with interest of its workers bestows management with the 'right to manage' (pp.401) with management tools and management discourse. This has led to smaller departments being subsumed into larger units run by a line manager with smaller budgets, higher administrative workloads, and the increased use of HRM tools designed to measure workers against the needs of the organisation, such as appraisals and performance reviews. Participants in the study pointed out that the prevalence of sexual harassment and issues over 'equal opportunties' were harmful aspects of their realities that remained unchanged under the authority of HRM structures. Drawing from evidence provided by participants who expressed concern over the impact of these management practices on academic freedom and autonomy, Waring identifies HRM as an 'insidious' (pp.409), 'neoliberal response to a problem' (pp.410) - a logic of managerialism that was endorsed, and apparently internalised by senior management.

The synergy between HRM and the interests of the organisation is evident in a legal critique of reporting procedures by Meyersfeld (2020), where a conflict of interest between HR managers and workers who make complaints of sexual harassment renders the necessary, legal impartiality of judgement by HR as an impossible ideal. She points out that because HR is meant to represent both victim and perpetrator, 'it becomes functionally impossible to do right by both parties' (pp.327). When a female employee of an Australian organisation made complaints of sexual harassment against her male line manager to HR and other members of senior management (Duffy, O'Shea and Tang, 2023), she was silenced and ignored, and with the complicity of HR and management, the perpetrator was enabled to escalate his behaviour

to sexual assault on company property. The role of managerial hierarchy and gender in reinforcing patterns of sexual harassment in western universities (McCarry and Jones, 2022; O'Connor, Hodgins, Woods, Wallwaey, Palmen, Brink and Schmidt, 2021) is directly attributed to management structures and neoliberalism by O'Connor et al. (2021) in a review of literature about gender-based violence in higher education institutions. The complicity of employees who enable perpetrators of sexual harassment in Canadian organisations by ignoring the issue or making excuses for them (Cunningham, Drumwright and Foster, 2019) is theorised through interviews with employees who have experienced sexual harassment. The authors note that the majority of perpetrators identified in the study were male in senior management and the majority of victims were female at a lower level than perpetrators.

A reliance on managerial procedures as the solution to 'equality' also results in hiring practices maintaining the status quo. Directives to de-gender organisational processes are analysed by Burton's (1992) account of the endorsement of 'neutral administrative logic' (pp.186) by Equal Employment Opportunity programmes in Australian workplaces and their focus on the distribution of jobs - and the redistribution of women - according to proposed non-discriminatory rules of competition based on merit. They found that the focus on the distribution of jobs and the *who* aspect of jobs led to a neglect of critical analysis of how the organisation itself contributes to gender-structured job opportunities and progression. A finding by one of the EEO working groups analysed by Burton centred on 'an apparent paradox of EEO practice' (pp.195), which led to the increased exclusion of applicants who fit the predetermined criteria from the selection process (her analysis implies that women are losing out).

The ambiguity of meritocracy is further demarcated with the ambiguity of what makes a good leader, where meritocracy is combined with more abstract traits and 'less-observable aptitudes, personal characteristics, and more-observable knowledge, skills, and behaviors' of leaders (Johari, Shamsudin, Zainun, Yean and Yahya, 2022, pp.1027). Leadership is acknowledged by HRM as a 'mysterious concept' (Higgs and Dulewicz, 2024, pp.82) despite forty-nine HRM theories of leadership accounted for in recent years (Zhu, Song, Zhu and Johnson, 2019). Senior-level jobs require high levels of commitment to the organisation, and according to 'the glass ceiling' literature, mothers face obstacles to reaching these jobs. These critiques never identify the role of the needs of the organisation in the construction of these obstacles. In interviews with eight women working in artist management, A&R, and tour management, Leonard (2015) identifies the demands of the job as a reason why women feel under pressure not to take maternity leave. Female employees who do take maternity leave are reported to earn less than men, with reduced access to management jobs after returning from leave (Cabeza, Johnson and Tyner, 2011). A further difference in earnings between

women without children and mothers - the 'motherhood pay gap' (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2015, pp.4) - for workers in Ireland means a 'wage penalty' (pp.14) of six percent for mothers with two children (based on 2005 data). By viewing access to jobs through concepts like meritocracy and leadership, management paradigms can serve to obscure the significance of the relationship between the organisation and the home in the construction of gendering realities for workers.

Organisational logics constructing gendering and racialising class relations

Patriarchal power is theorised by Connell (2021) as a dimension of gender relations that is articulated as men asserting power over women through authority, control, and violence. Power is not always about men exerting direct control over women, because patriarchal power can be exerted indirectly through organisational processes, such as hiring practices that are biased in favour of men, and bureaucratic procedures that make it difficult for women to report harassment. In organisations where workers are entirely the racial majority, which in Ireland would mean 'white' workers, the racialising of patriarchal power is only evident when racial minorities enter the organisation. Connell (2014, 2015a, 2015b) positions the political economies of countries that are global power centres (such as USA, UK, and some European countries) as forces that have resulted in the commodification and subjugation of women's bodies, in a system that reinforces the racial hegemony of western and global north countries as the metropole of knowledge and expertise.

The historical evolution of corporate power centres is also the historical evolution of HRM and managerial logics. Racial minorities working within these managerial logics are only defined as part of a generalised 'diversity' approach that is more often about gender (such as 'gender balance'). The hegemony of such logics contributes to maintaining a subjugated position of racial minority workers without making room for the legitimacy of this subjugation to be reformed or questioned. The reality that racial discrimination (and gender discrimination) is a feature of patriarchal organisational cultures and practices is harder to discern when all realities are subsumed under a single banner of 'diversity'. Power relations and economic relations (such as divisions of labour across jobs and hierarchies) are intrinsic to what Connell (2021) refers to as the gender order, which represents the current trajectories and positions for men and women in society. In the context of Ireland, western Europe, the UK and USA, the gender order is a history of patriarchal hierarchy informed by histories of colonialism, imperialism, and the centring of discourses of western economies and management expertise. Clelland and Dunaway (2021) describe the dominance of western ways of knowing and talking about ethnic and racial oppression (pointing to the USA in particular)

as a universalisation of intellectual paradigms, which has been magnified by neoliberalism's impact upon curricula and education policies. The empirical presentation of 'diversity management' by HRM as a method for recognising and leveraging distinctions among employees based on gender, race and other characteristics under one conceptual banner (Seliverstova, 2021), has parallels with Yuan's (2012) critique of the legitimising power of meritocracy over differences between people inherent within HRM paradigms. When disparate groups of people are enabled by the organisation to have the opportunities to advance, whether or not they do is their responsibility. As HRM originated in the USA, applying its concepts elsewhere poses difficulties to research (Yuan, 2012). Yet, researchers (and organisations) apply them in an Irish context without integrating the racial homogeneity of the workforce, and the trends within sectors such as music to rarely employ racial minorities, which points to a western-centred hegemony of management models without grounding in cultural context.

Acker (2006, 2007, 2000) identifies gendering and racialising class relations as a subtext of capitalism, where structured and differential access to the resources and rewards that are concentrated in the hands of organisations is constructed by organisational processes themselves. She calls upon organisational research to identify the ideologies that support these processes, and the concrete decisions made by people which produce gendering and racialising access to these resources (such as decisions related to policy design, hiring, and discipline). Acker doesn't critique HRM or management paradigms, but there are clear parallels between her application of the concept of the non-responsibility of organisations, and the market-oriented logic of HRM. CHRM goes as far as saying that the organisation should value workers beyond their economic value. The concept of non-responsibility as it is applied here, argues that the organisation should be held accountable for the lives of workers in the home, a realm which under capitalist logic is outside the market and whose needs are positioned as lesser than the needs of the organisation. Evidence of the gender effects of parenthood for workers in Ireland highlight the differing realities navigated by mothers and fathers in media organisations (O'Brien, 2014, 2016), differences in earnings between men and women related to parenthood and time away from the labour market (Turner, Cross and Murphy, 2020), and the impact of the age of the youngest child impacting up women's participation in employment (Russell, McGinnity and O'Connell, 2017). When gender arrangements of labour in the home impact upon gender arrangements in the organisation, and vice versa, claims of non-responsibility inherent in the logic of organisations and management paradigms are therefore unreflective of the realities facing workers, and serve to legitimise gendering class relations.

Criticisms can be made of Acker's approach to studying capitalism and organisations. Her work focuses on capitalism and its origins, and subsequent effects on capital and

ownership of property, leaving little room for neoliberalism, and her analysis of the family does not delve into changes in nuclear family structures that have led to the rise of dual-earning households. The strengths of her theory lie in her theorisation of the substructures of capitalism, the logic of capitalist organisations, and the conceptual framework of gendering and racialising class relations (2006), which brings gender, race, and class into a single process. Connell's work engages heavily with neoliberalism, the production of knowledge, and the gender-neutrality of neoliberal policy in organisations. Her critiques of the family are based on up to date patterns of working parents, and her theory of gender relations (2021) is integrated with political economy and international corporate ownership structures. Difficulties posed by Connell's work lie in her emphasis on gender relations when talking organisational power, which would be challenging to apply to a context where race relations are particularly salient. Each framework on its own would be insufficient for a feminist class analysis of music organisations in Ireland. As a combined framework, the strengths of one support the weaknesses of the other. A strong point of convergence for both Acker and Connell is on the topic of the contradictions of capitalism (see Acker, 2006, 2004, 2007; Connell, 2021, 2016, 2013).

3.2.3 Contradictions of capitalism

Despite contradiction being a consistent feature of arguments made by Acker and Connell, it is seldom applied by those who adopt their theories. For Acker, her concepts of inequality regimes and gendered organisations are popular among organisation researchers in both HRM and feminist sociology (see a review by Nkomo and Rodriquez, 2019). Her concept of gendering and racialising class relations, which ties the organisation to the home, is barely developed by other researchers, and the same can be said of her framework for organisational non-responsibility, which is intrinsically connected to a similarly under-utilised concept of contradiction. This has resulted in the ideological boundary between paid market labour in the organisation, and unpaid domestic labour in the home, being unaddressed by researchers. Connell hasn't received the same level of popularity among organisational researchers as Acker, but her work on masculinities is applied by sociologists (such as Behan, 2025; Pascoe and Bridges, 2015) and her gender theory has been applied in organisational research (such as Al-Shara'h, 2021; Baguant, 2020). Though the inherent contradictions of capitalism that are at the heart of gender orders are hardly touched by academic studies that engage with her work. Failure to engage with these most central concepts of capitalist critique may be a reflection of a reluctance to engage with capitalist critique, in general, among organisational

researchers (particularly for HRM scholars and non-HRM sociologists who endorse management paradigms).

But evidence of contradiction is provided by literature about organisations, including in HRM. Contradiction in organisation theory is defined as 'systemic, structural or societal oppositions, antagonisms, conflicts or interests' (Hearn, 1998, pp.2), and 'opposites that are mutually exclusive' (Putnam, Fairhurst and Banghart, 2016, pp.6). In an HRM critique, van Dijk, Kooij, Karanika-Murray, De Vos and Meyer (2020) posit that workplaces that employ meritocratic procedures for allocating jobs and rewards exacerbate differences in performance among employees and reinforce social inequalities. The argument is that people who are rewarded based on merit are also more likely to be rewarded based on non-meritocratic reasons than others. The concept of family friendly policies in Finland is critiqued by Heikkinen, Peltoperä and Kokko (2024), who find that the organisation's professed commitment to making the workplace an easier, more flexible place for parents to work, does not materialise that way in practice. Depending on their hierarchical position, the ability for workers to benefit from these policies varies, and the motivation of the policy to provide productivity benefits to the organisation actually results in participants feeling the need to prioritise their work over their responsibilities as parents. In another HRM argument, Fernando and Prasad (2018) identify how the practices of HR managers, who are tasked with supporting workers who report harassment and discrimination, directly silence women who come forward with such complaints. As the ones conferred with the moral authority to shape the organisation's response, these HR managers easily avoided acting in female workers' interests. Hodgins, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara (2020) argue from a CHRM perspective that it is inherently in the best interests of organisations to ensure that bullying accusations do not surface, and that practices that support this logic take place while anti-bullying policies are, on the surface, endorsed by the organisation. These authors do not theorise contradiction or make any connections to neoliberal capitalism - their paradigms direct them to circle back to evaluate how management can do better.

Through a socialist feminist lens, contradiction is connected to capitalism and neoliberalism, in a line of inquiry which draws from Marxist feminism and concerns with the relations of paid and unpaid labour across the labour market and the home. The reshaping of the family under neoliberal capitalism established an imperative and a path for women to join the labour market in altered labour relations (Connell, 2011). Despite this change, participation is not 'equal'. The contradictory relationship between the market and the family is contextualised against the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on men and women workers by Cohen and Meulen Rodgers (2021). On the one hand, governments announced a shutdown of the economy, while continuing to depend on the continued labour of frontline healthcare

workers (predominately women), and the education of children by parents (predominantly mothers), many of whom continued to work from home. Kohlrausch and Weber (2020) argue that the impact of digitalisation on organisations means that women will be less impacted by automation than men, because women are more often in caring occupations, and men are more often in technical occupations. But the dominance of men in technical roles, that may become a 'gateway to prestigious positions in the digital age' (pp.20) will ultimately yield greater benefit to male workers. They identify the possibility that digital capitalism will alter gender relations, while reinstating old patterns of subordination that are at the heart of the contradictory divide between productive and reproductive labour.

The persistence of an oppositional yet mutually dependent relationship between the organisation and the home constructed on a gender base characterises capitalism's contradictory logic. In this relationship, 'family life has been transformed to meet the needs of paid work, but paid work has not been transformed to meet family needs' (Acker, 2006, pp.93). The gendered substructures of capitalism (Acker, 2006) articulate the inability of the economic logic of capitalism to effectively manage its contradictions. Despite evidence of complex gender effects of neoliberal policy, neoliberalism 'has nothing to say, explicitly, about gender' (Connell, 2005), rather, it encourages a presumed gender-neutrality of workplaces (Connell, 2011). This further reinforces their non-responsibility and legitimises class relations by their omission from its logic. Management paradigms offer organisations a way to remedy, or stabilise, the effects of capitalist contradictions that occasionally reveal themselves as crises, such as the #MeToo movement in Sweden's music industries (Werner, 2022). The harms of organisational power are exposed in these crises, for a period of time, until contradictions are smoothed over by promises of reform by music organisations enacted through new policies about harassment, and public statements about commitments to 'diversity' and 'equality'. The opposition between lived realities of workers, and official realities constructed by music organisations (discussed in chapter four) is how this doctoral thesis develops contradiction as a feature of their organisational logic, offering a new theorisation of paradox that accounts for the relationship between the organisation and the home, and the role of HRM paradigms in legitimising the organisation's non-responsibility, and the maintenance of class relations.

3.3 Political economy of music industries

Leary (2018) traces the first usage of the word 'market', as an abstract term referring to a competitive free market distinct from a physical marketplace, to the 1970s and the beginning of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism refers to a set of ideas centred on the economy that combines ideas of individual liberty and economic growth (Ravenhill, 2020) into a moral philosophy

that today dominates how the Irish State (Fraser, Murphy and Kelly, 2013) and governments across Europe and Western countries respond to social and economic realities. In this sense, neoliberalism is also a set of institutions around the globe, brought into close relationships through an ideology of individualism and capital. It is also referred to as neoliberal capitalism, or a contemporary form of capitalism (Harvey, 2020) characterised by policy that supports free trade in an open market and the loose regulation of corporations and finance. Neoliberalism is credited as enabling the accumulation of wealth in a relatively small group of employers, corporations, and elite actors, resulting in a growing gap in wealth between these groups and wider society - referred to as the growth of finance capitalism (Peet, 2011). In the context of music industries in Ireland, which host a range of multinational music organisations as well as nationally distributed music organisations that look beyond Ireland for profit, neoliberal capitalism is an important feature of the world that these music organisations operate in.

The development of cultural industries in major economies across the USA, Europe, and Asia according to a neoliberal doctrine is detailed by Hesmondhalgh (2019), who argues that a rise in support for a neoliberal regime coupled with the weakening of labour movements from the late 1970s had a 'particularly profound impact on the cultural industries' (pp.115). During the 1980s and 1990s, media and entertainment organisations put in place strategies for internationalisation and restructuring, to respond to perceived economic benefits of global integration, and the opportunities for profit that these sectors appeared to offer as businesses looked increasingly towards service industries for growth (Hesmondhalgh, 2019). As organisations have adopted neoliberal strategies, the idea of labour 'flexibility' has become synonymous with organisational performance and a business case for reducing labour costs for the benefit of the organisation (Leary, 2018). In a study of workers across magazine, television, music, and journalism industries (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010), a common reality of job insecurity and low pay was expressed by participants that speaks to a 'precariousness of creative careers' (pp.145). The role of the capitalist organisation in this process is briefly accounted for in an overview of the evolution of management structures and an emphasis on individualism.

The political economy of Ireland's music industries has been investigated by Rogers and Cawley (2016) with respect to the adaptation of major record labels to digitalisation in the 2000s. These music organisations were able to maintain their dominant market position through global strategies, repositioning themselves as music companies with all-encompassing copyright deals with artists that go beyond the music itself. Reflecting on an Irish music market that is 'lauded as consistently punching above its weight as a player in the global music market' (pp.199) despite domestic music revenues declining, the authors argue

that these practices have served to further undermine domestic revenues and position Ireland's music industries as outward facing economies. The strategic positioning of major record labels around intellectual property has had an impact upon domestic screen composers in Ireland, who are now facing a reality where they no longer have the power to negotiate publishing rights and to retain ownership of the music they write (Rogers, 2024). This evidence tells us that Ireland's music industries are intrinsically global in their logic. Ireland's music industries are small in size and heavily influenced by a small number of multinational music organisations (Live Nation, Sony Music, Universal Music, Warner Music) whose international offices inform strategy locally in Ireland. Therefore, the logics that guide these organisations' practices are of major significance to understandings of Ireland's music industries.

Hesmondhalgh (2019) provides a detailed account of the development of cultural industries, accounting for neoliberalism, digitalisation, cultural policy, and ownership. Within this, gender is a small sub-section of a chapter, presented in a critique of divisions of labour and existing research on the topic. The critique that is missing here is the gender effects of individualisation, meritocracy and neoliberalism in creative and cultural work. Milestone (2015) investigates these effects in her study of new media workers in Manchester. Under current neoliberal logic, individual workers are responsible for their own successes and failures, even when jobs are allocated privately in closed networks and biases against women, and particularly women with caring responsibilities are baked into the job. The pervasive logic of individualisation then perpetuates gender relations in 'essentialised social constructions of ideal creative workers' (pp. 507). Looking to music industries specifically, Kiely (2020) uses a longitudinal study of gender representation on the covers of *Hot Press* and *Rolling Stone* to point out the gender effects of neoliberalism in images of pop stars. The emergence of two patterns, one for female artists and one for male artists, is critiqued as the 'calculated crafting of an image of gender in cultural production' (pp.124) in globalised media industries that increasingly tend towards a homogeneity of media content.

Still, significant ground has yet to be covered for feminist studies of Ireland's music industries and their political economies with gender and race. Saha (2017) fleshes out the racialisation of cultural industries and the production of race at macro and micro levels in cultural work, while pointing out how under researched the topic is. He argues that commodification within neoliberalism produces reductive labour processes and ideologies that have particular race effects. For example, the intertwined realities of black workers of record labels who are subject to the organisation's economic strategy, which sometimes results in departments that they are most represented in being axed, represents 'a form of spatial management that can in turn be read as a form of racial governance' (Saha, 2017, pp.120). The

argument that the coherency of neoliberal thought is dependent upon racial ideologies is put forward by Cornelissen (2025), who analyses an implicit Eurocentric racial logic in the development of neoliberal philosophy, that is inseparable from its patriarchal, individualistic logic.

This doctoral thesis investigates the gendering and racialising class relations of Ireland's music organisations. By paying close attention to the practices and realities of music organisations, the things that are said, and the things that are unsaid, the effects of neoliberal doctrine in the lives of workers is revealed from a feminist standpoint. Thus, making a novel contribution to feminist studies of music industries.

3.4 Systematic review of gender, race, class, and music organisations

Knowing that the potential pool of literature about gender, race, class and music organisations is small, and that there has been no previous attempt to evaluate the extent and nature of this literature, it was deemed feasible and prudent to conduct a systematic review of the field. Reviews of literature that are conducted systematically, with a research question and a comprehensive search strategy, can benefit from enhanced 'quality, replicability, reliability, and validity' (Xiao and Watson, 2019, pp.109) and can offer useful insight for empirical studies of the same topic when conducted beforehand. These kinds of reviews are often conducted as a standalone activity in technology, science and clinical research fields, but are more recently recognised as valuable methods of review in sociology (Chapman, 2021). They tend to be carried out by groups of researchers rather than single researchers due to their time-consuming nature - the systematic review for this thesis, from searching to analysing and writing, entailed five months of full-time work.

A study of perceptions among people involved in directing PhD programmes in biomedicine and health sciences across over one hundred European institutions (Puljak and Sapunar, 2017) identified the top three reasons for a reluctance to recognise systematic reviews as the basis for a PhD thesis. Almost fifty-eight percent feel that because these reviews are conducted by groups of researchers, they do not represent an independent contribution from the doctoral researcher. Fifty-three percent believe that these reviews do not produce enough new knowledge for a dissertation. Just over thirty percent worry that for topics with no primary research, this method runs the risk of producing 'empty reviews'.

As the systematic review of this thesis was conducted solely by the doctoral researcher, the first concern is assuaged. Regarding the concern about new knowledge, systematic reviews can be carried out as a means of generating theoretical frameworks, rather than simply producing summaries of methods and findings of other studies. Here, the theories of Acker and Connell were applied to a group of empirical and theoretical studies, with the aim of

synthesising data from those investigations into a new argument, to test these theories and to gain insight from the combined knowledge of the studies. This method can produce a framework that brings aspects of the chosen theories to the fore and allows the researcher to gain valuable experience applying these theories before gathering primary data. At the same time, limitations (such as authors not providing important demographic information of participants) do impact upon what can be gleaned from this method. This systematic review is conducted in parallel with a traditional narrative review of literature (in previous and subsequent chapters) and papers already known to the researcher that did not appear in the search were included, which ensures that accounts of existing knowledge are not limited to the boundaries of this specific search strategy. Finally, by targeting multiple large and popular databases in addition to smaller discipline specific databases, the potential for 'empty reviews' with little or no studies to critique is minimised, along with the selection biases that can arise from traditional narrative reviews.

3.4.1 Systematic review: method and findings

In order to assess the extent to which the concepts of gender, race, and class are accounted for by academic research of music organisations, a method for the systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles across five databases (EconLit, SCOPUS, Business Source Complete, Communication Source, Academic Search Complete) was carried out in early 2023, and again at the end of 2024 to update the list. The method drew from an approach called Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) developed by Dixon-Woods et al. (2006), which combines the processes of conventional systematic review with methods for interpretive synthesis. This method was chosen because it was developed as a reflexive process for the study of methodologically diverse literature, which emphasises critique of the literature's taken-for-granted assumptions, while at the same time fulfilling the goal of traditional qualitative review to generate theory. As research into an under researched topic that draws from theory which calls for critical study of social structure, this approach was deemed more appropriate than that of traditional systematic review, which usually focuses on summarising the methods and findings of existing literature. The table below outlines the review process.

REVIEW PROCESS	RESULTS
1. Formulate a review question, which is subject to change as the review progresses	How does current literature account for gender, race, class, and the practices of music organisations?
2. Develop a search strategy & construct the field of inquiry	(i) Fifty-one search terms were chosen (see appendices). (ii) Inclusion and exclusion criteria were chosen to produce a sampling frame: Date range for round one search: 1920 – 2023.

	Date range for round two search: 2023 - end 2024. Document type: peer reviewed journal articles. Language: English Round one search identified 830 potentially relevant papers, narrowed down to fourteen papers for inclusion. Round two identified nine additional papers for inclusion.
3. Apply a sampling procedure to select papers	Theoretical sampling was used to identify which papers to include for analysis by identifying papers that offer critical engagement with the concepts of gender and/or race and/or class in conjunction with music organisations. The theories of Connell (2021) and Acker (2006) informed this process, where their frameworks identified papers for inclusion: organisational processes, divisions of labour, organisational hierarchies, differences in power and wages, beliefs, images and ideologies, violence, domestic and caring work, efforts to address gender/race/class, emotion. Papers which mentioned these concepts, for example referencing their potential relevance in the literature review but did not critically engage with them were excluded. **Twenty-three papers** were identified for analysis. This final count also includes relevant papers that were already known to the researcher but did not appear in the databases. A list of these papers can be found in chapter 6.
4. Data extraction	This step was partially accomplished during the theoretical sampling stage. The extracted data was thematically organised in a document.
5. Conduct analysis to generate theoretical framework	A new theoretical framework was developed by applying the theories of Joan Acker (2006) and Raewyn Connel (2021) to the extracted data.

This synthesis of research about music organisations is based on an analysis of twenty-three papers. Gender is critiqued by nineteen studies, race by five studies, and one study engages with both concepts. Class remains on the fringes of critique, with no study providing critical engagement with the concept, though it is mentioned by a small few. The earliest study was published in 1990, the latest in 2024 (figure one). Seventeen studies (seventy-four percent) were published after 2010. This points to a growing interest in the social relations of music organisations, situated with an early tradition of feminist scholarship concerned with popular music industry structures and institutions that dates from the 1980s, in critiques of MTV and music video representations of women (see Delano Brown and Campbell, 1986; Peterson-Lewis and Chennault, 1986; Vincent, Davis and Boruszkowski, 1987; Vincent, 1989).

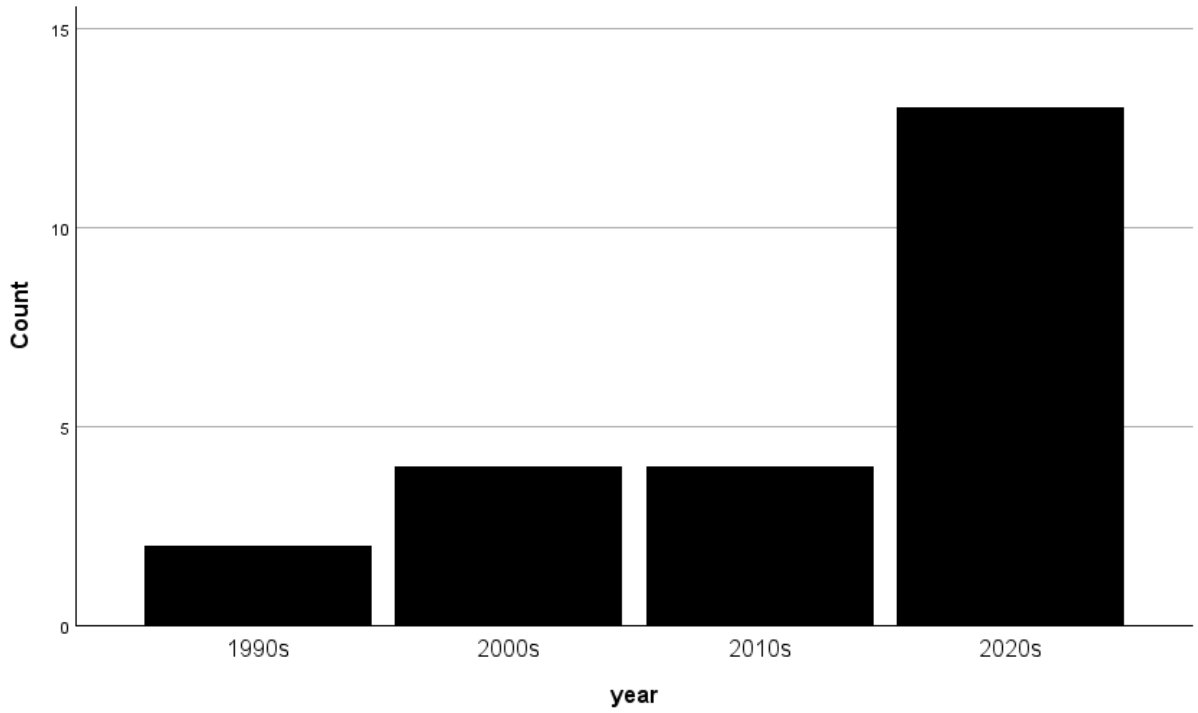


Figure 7: publication year of each study

Outlined in figure eight, the most popular territories for feminist studies of music organisations are the USA and UK, with eight each, accounting for seventy percent of studies. The remainder are mostly from territories across Europe, with two from Canada, one from Australia, and one from Africa. One study offers analysis based on an undefined mix of forty-six countries. None of the studies offer critique of music organisations in Ireland. The volume of research about music organisations in western and global north territories corresponds with the historical dominance of a small number of multinational music companies from the USA and UK in music markets (Negus, 2019), which could be a motivator for researchers in these regions to pay greater attention to the power relations of music organisations. The overall dominance of music organisations from native English-speaking regions in conjunction with the dominance of English language journals in academia also could play a role in this pattern.

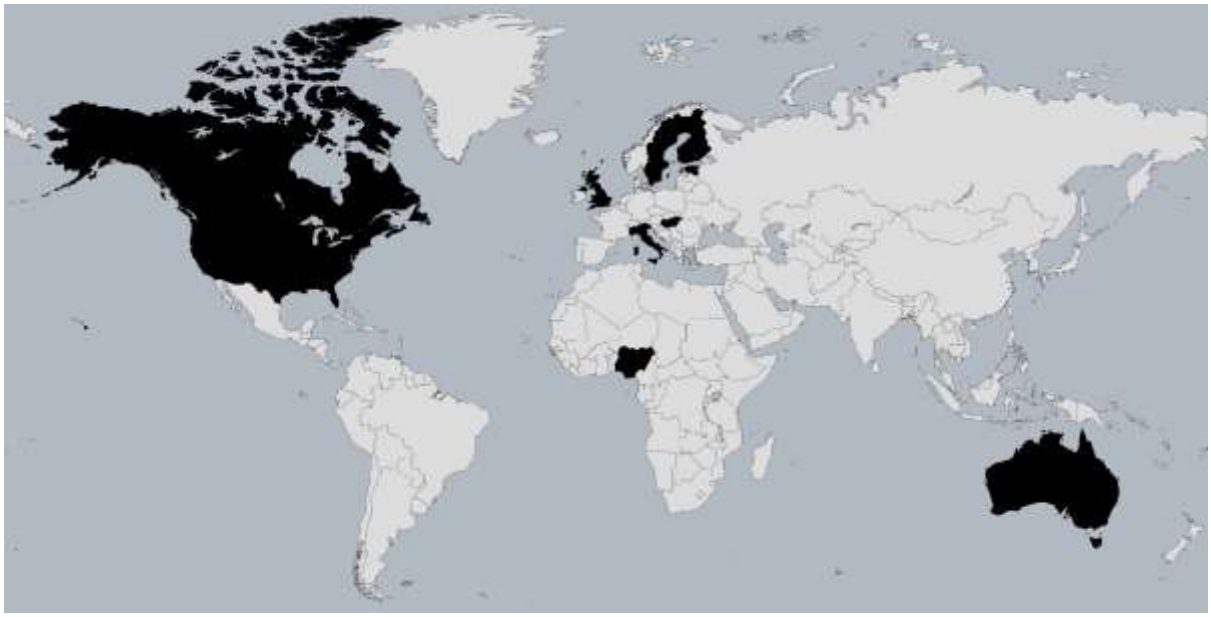


Figure 8: Map of countries represented by the systematic review (some countries are represented in multiple studies): USA=8, UK=8, Canada=2, Sweden=1, Australia=1, Italy=1, Finland=1, Estonia=1, Hungary=1, Nigeria=1. One paper provides survey data for an unspecified list of 46 countries and is not represented here.

Underlying assumptions of the twenty-three papers

Some studies use the term 'majors' casually in discussion when referring to certain music companies that are based in western markets, with no clarification as to its meaning and in some cases the term is used without acknowledging the territory of the companies being discussed (see Stuart and Laat, 2024; Paraciani, 2023; Vincent, Coles and Vincent, 2022; Bennett, 2018; Laurie, 2014; Bronstein, 2008; Lont, 1990). This ignores the fact that this concept originated in the west as a means of classifying large record companies (currently referring to Sony Music, Warner Music, and Universal Music) dominant in those markets, and is not universally adopted by music industries in all countries. For example, in Korea, the Western version of 'majors' does not accurately map onto the differing structures and operations of their industry equivalents that manage and produce K-pop artists (Park, 2013; Hyunjoon, 2009), locally referred to as 'entertainment companies', such as SM Entertainment and HYBE. In India, music companies that are 'majors' in Europe and the USA are not dominant in these markets, due to the absence of a music publishing sector (Lal, Hesmondhalgh and Umney, 2023). This is because Bollywood film companies are the main music rights holders (considered their 'majors'), and audiences predominately consume music through film.

A more common underlying assumption identified across multiple papers is their use of the concepts gender and/or race, while providing no definition of them. Brooks, Pras,

Elafros and Lockett (2021) provide an explanation of their approach to defining gender and race (the only study to engage with both concepts), and Farquhar-Wulff (2023) explains that they use 'gender identity' and 'cis-gender' to measure gender, but they provide no definition of these concepts, and the term 'gender expansive people' is used by Dougher (2024) without clarification. In the absence of definitions, gender and race are implicitly presented as concepts with universal meanings and widely adopted interpretations. It can be argued that gender and race do have widely adopted interpretations, evidenced by commonalities in the wording of legislation adopted by governments and design of initiatives adopted by companies and organisations around the world, such as the construction of gender put forward by 'EDI'. However, the presumption that there is a consensus around the meaning of these concepts is disputed by the various approaches of feminist theory, and disagreements in public debate. By omitting explanations of what they mean by these concepts, the ability for readers to assess the approach of the study and to situate it within feminist tradition is impeded.

Theoretical framework of the twenty-three papers

None of the studies explicitly endeavour to investigate the gendering or racialising of music organisations themselves, and the organisational construction of gender or race is not theorised by any study. Still, in these twenty-three studies there is useful evidence to inform feminist investigations of music organisations, with some limitations that are discussed. Each study is elaborated on in the dimension of the framework that it best exemplifies, with the connections between dimensions interwoven with their critique.

(i) Hierarchy and management structures

Hierarchy and management structures speak to power differentials across departments and levels in the organisation. The construction of power relations through hierarchy and management structures means that the practices of management and the logics they employ are inherently legitimate in day-to-day realities, and are difficult for workers who are outside of management structures to challenge.

Commentary from Stuart and Laat (2024) about the absence of HRM structures in music organisations is positioned within critiques of racism and microaggressions in precarious labour relationships, in a way that suggests that HRM structures can provide recourse for workers seeking accountability, though no evidence of this is provided. HRM structures are not critiqued by studies in this review, but the power of management to shape the fortunes and realities of workers is evident. Management policy decides which musicians

are appointed to the more prestigious role of Principal Chair in professional orchestras across the USA, UK and Europe, where eighty-three percent of Principal Chairs are male musicians (Sergeant and Himonides, 2019). The framing by management that this role is a reward for long service is disputed by findings from the study, which indicates that other unacknowledged factors are relevant in the minds of management. Management can also endorse ideas of meritocracy by constructing affirmative action for gender in opposition to these ideas (Bennett, 2018) as if they are mutually exclusive, thus creating ideological distance between the organisation and its gender effects.

Management structures and hierarchy are interlinked with other components in this framework, as they provide a base for practice, and the practices of management repeatedly arise in the critique of studies, for example in hiring practices, or in responses to sexual harassment, discussed in later sections. While managers of music organisations and their practices appear across studies in the review, critiques of management structures and paradigms themselves are absent from all twenty-three studies. For example, when live venue management push back on calls for training on how to respond to sexual harassment Hill and Megson, 2020), an analysis of management structures would interrogate how this exercise of power is deemed legitimate. Efforts are made by this review to bring these structures to the fore as they appear in each component of the framework.

(ii) Organisational processes

Hiring and promotion practices, employment contracts, wages, the expectations and requirements of the job, how relationships between workers are managed by policy, and the general structure and organisation of 'the work' are the organisational processes which contribute to the day-to-day reality of the organisation's gender and race relations.

Expectations to have long working weeks, work evenings or attend gigs are in conflict with other aspects of women workers' lives (see Richards & Milestone, 2000), such as childcare. Several women participants from this study commented on the fact that most people in jobs that entail this kind of work are men. The expectations and requirements of the job are not embodied in a uniform way in the work that men and women do.

The gendering assumptions of organisational logics are also made material in the lives of workers through hiring practices. In a study of gender representation in music programming at the Royal Opera (Vincent, Coles and Vincent, 2022) this phenomenon is described as 'an institutional context built upon a foundation of systemic gender discrimination' (pp.). The legitimacy of the gendering of hiring decisions within direction and

design teams is underscored by the preference of the Royal Opera for the revival of popular canonical works, of which men direct ninety-two percent in their programme. The self-perpetuating cycle of works directed by men being revived, leading to men hiring men more often than women is indicative of the exchange between the gendering logic of the organisation and the practices of management. Similar to orchestral conductors, choral conductors tend to be men (Farquhar-Wulff, 2023). Among the women conductors interviewed, gender was cited as a reason why they do not access jobs in choral organisations due to male peers not taking them seriously, and holding biases against mothers.

Strategic business management has racialising consequences for workers, detailed by Negus (1999) in his critique of how 'major companies and their labels have come to deal with black music in separate divisions' (pp.493) as a means of assessing economic performances of genres separately. The outcome of such practices is that black music divisions, which are usually staffed by black workers, are axed easily in times of economic crisis or uncertainty. This reveals how the organisation structures the day-to-day work by a market-oriented logic that can deploy race as a variable for organisational processes, without explicitly recognising it as such.

Gender can be adopted by music organisations as part of their strategy in official communications or documents, observed by de Boise (2019) in the form of commitments towards 'gender equality' by music organisations in the UK and Sweden. How these organisations approach gender is characterised as a focus on projects in Sweden with noticeable state oversight, and a focus on individuals in the UK with reliance on the market - neither of which offer perfect solutions. Concluding that it is 'difficult to evaluate' (pp.496) if any of these 'equality' projects have had an impact upon remedying gender relations offers an insight into a reality that is seldom acknowledged by music organisations that champion the issue: that there is no organisational approach that offers a clear pathway towards transformed gender relations. The rhetoric of music organisations, as analysed later in the thesis, would have us believe otherwise.

(iii) Gender and race divisions of labour

The large-scale operationalisation of race in hiring practices is further evidenced by (Edmonson, 2008) in their analysis of how multinational music companies in the USA construct their hip-hop divisions with black personnel from other established labels. These studies highlight tensions between employment opportunities for black music professionals on the one hand, and the reluctance of music companies to fully commit to the investment and preservation of these divisions which are outside of the mainstream (predominately white)

pop market. Race divisions of labour of music organisations are only critiqued by Edmonson (2008), Negus (1999), and Brooks et al. (2021).

An 'institutional continuity' (Laurie, 2014, pp.100) of gender divisions of studio labour during the 1950s and 1960s across white-founded labels (Decca, RCA-Victor, Stax) and black-founded label Motown, begs for greater intersectional investigation into the gendering and racialising of music organisations. The author discusses how female artists were devalued in relation to male producers, but does not offer any critique of what it means that these female artists were also black, in some cases working for a black-founded label. That being said, the connection made between the gendering of labels regardless of who founded them offers a critique of an industry-wide gendering logic, that speaks to the position of women on a larger scale. The subordination of female workers of music industries in Italy to a male dominated culture operating across music sectors (Paraciani, 2023) also results in similar patterns of occupational sex segregation in organisations, where women tend to occupy jobs that are more amenable to caring responsibilities at home (such as office based jobs, press officers, promoters). But as these women argue, they are demanding jobs that can still entail evening work and attending gigs.

Studies that position divisions of labour at the centre of their critique can approach this topic from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Paraciani (2023) looks at structural causes of the gendering of occupations, as do Brooks et al. (2021), who identify harmful workplace cultures and a 'heteropatriarchal structure' (pp.249) of recording studios that acts to exclude women and racial minorities from studio work. The approach by Adesoji (2023) identifies gender stereotypes about women and the demands of motherhood as reasons why women are not at senior levels of Nigerian music organisations, and frames the issue within an argument for competitiveness based on 'diversity' and leadership literature from management studies. The difference between these approaches results in the authors discussing different locations of power in women's access to jobs. In the final critique, the organisation has the power to be the solution to the problem, if they align it with their strategic objectives. In the first two studies, the culture and processes of organisations are framed as an enabling force for women's subordination. These studies demonstrate that it is important to interrogate the rationale behind the presentation of numbers, not just the numbers themselves.

(iv) Worker relations

Some studies provide knowledge of the antagonisms and cooperations of 'worker relations' (supervisory relationships and worker interactions). The role of hierarchy in normalising and enabling sexual violence carried out by men against women is accounted for in study of

Australian music industries. Women reported harassment from more senior-level male staff of venues, recording studios, and radio stations, and their lower-level position meant that these women weren't able to move forward in their careers or projects, in addition to them perceiving 'the risk of assault as a more immediate threat' (Fairlamb and Fileborn, 2020, pp.26). Divisions of labour across hierarchies means that women are more often reporting to men in more powerful management roles, and managerial authority can offer those who would seek to harm women more opportunity to do so. The harm that distinguishes women's realities from men's in music organisations, with the added harms of racial discrimination, is further evidenced in an account of harassment, discrimination and microaggressions experienced by women working in recording studios (Brooks et al., 2021) across forty-six countries. Women and racial minorities reported not being credited for their work, receiving inappropriate sexual remarks, being ignored, and their work being treated as inferior. Men in also reported some of the same issues as women, such as not being credited for their work. The shared aspects of worker relations is where the concept of class can be developed, and in turn, how these shared aspects differ for groups of workers allows for class to inform gender and race. The fact that there are issues that cross gender and racial lines is seldom identified.

Organisational processes also shape workers relations, and sometimes music organisations actively adopt gender in their processes (such as 'equality' policies), which in turn are meant to change worker relations in a certain way. The actual effect of these processes can be different to the intended effect. When music education organisations in European countries attempted to address gender through workshops and policies (see Werner and Kussi, 2023), there were some adverse consequences, including a perception that discipline on the issue doesn't amount to anything, and a fear among workers of 'saying the 'wrong' thing' (pp.8) resulting in less conversation amongst workers about gender issues. These contradictions are useful in identifying how gender is constructed in the relationship between music organisations and workers, because they identify discontinuities and conflicts in competing gendering logics, thus bringing those logics to light.

(v) Directional maintenance of social relations

Directional maintenance integrates the multitude of individual, group, and institutional strategies which contribute to a direction of the social relations and historical trajectories for men and women; articulated predominately as a patriarchal gender and racial hierarchy. Several studies provide evidence for these strategies, often relating back to management structures. This was observed in the form of resistance from a male venue manager to the persuasion of a female staff member to take part in a training session designed to help venues

implement safer spaces policies and practices in response to reports of sexual harassment (Hill and Megson, 2020) and the dismissal of sexual harassment complaints by venue staff (Hill, Hesmondhalgh and Megson, 2020). Hill and Megson (2020) are critical of the male manager's resistance, critiquing his position as the 'banal politics' of white men (pp.12). A solution for how venues respond to sexual harassment that they suggest is for more women to be in management roles in venues. It is unclear whether the authors mean women who are feminists with a deep interest in addressing this issue, or women in general.

Management personnel and executives of music organisations are dominant organisational actors who occupy positions of power and influence, and they articulate logics through their decision-making and practices. As such they have greater directional control over the gendering and racialising of the organisation than employees at lower levels - but control is always in a state of negotiation. An illustrative example is the Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) boycott of Warner Communications from 1976-1979 (see Bronstein, 2008). WAVAW criticised Warner's use of promotional material depicting violence against women used in album campaigns of its artists, such as the Rolling Stones. Warner Communications argued that contractually they had no power over these content choices, and they successfully defended this position for several years. The logic of Warner Communications was one which normalised the use of these kinds of images as a legitimate work practice, as a taken for granted reality of selling records that supports the interests of the organisation. The ability for management to maintain this position was strengthened by their rank and position in the organisation.

In their analysis of a popular recording industry award ceremony in Canada, the Juno Awards, Young (2006) critiques the kind of racial hegemony that those involved in administering the ceremony can construct in their own promotional practices. In response to protests from a black music association in Canada that took aim at the lack of recognition of ethno-racial minorities by the ceremony, those involved in the Juno Awards introduced new awards for these artists and created an advisory committee. This study highlights the complex nature of directional maintenance, which is not always as clear as the power of one actor over another. The author critiques this concession as one that serves to reinforce the organisation's hegemonic position by securing the consent of subordinate groups, and to allow this act to 'feed back into and enhance promotional strategy' (pp.201). Resistance did push the organisation towards change, but they appeared in the end to maintain their dominant position by enhancing their legitimacy.

The advocacy of Keychange, an organisation that encourages gender quotas in music festival programming, uses a system of gender measurement that Nissen (2023) suggests is

resulting in 'gender disparities' being 'systematically underestimated' (pp.147). By counting any group with a woman in it as 'one woman' in calculations of line ups, the marginal status of women within mostly male artist groups is lost. The market reality of music organisations that adopt Keychange pledges is acknowledged by Raine (2021) as a factor that works against their motivations to 'take socially conscious risks' (pp.200). External conditions inform the gendering and racialising of music organisations - whether they are considerations of money, or of social criticism and protest.

(vi) Directional change of social relations

Acker's suggestion that capitalist organisations are inherently gendered in the image of a male worker would suggest that directional change is both improbable and pointless. In fact, Acker argues substantial change would involve doing away with organisations as we know it (though her recommendations circle back to socialist reform in current systems). This review finds evidence of strategies enacted by workers of music organisations that offer an altered course of gender relations that differ from historical patterns: named here as directional change. It is therefore suggested that music organisations are gendered in such a way that advantages male workers, but that this gendering is not fixed or unchangeable.

Co-operation between workers offers some insight into how resistance can disrupt gendering processes. In the previously mentioned study of safer space policies (Hill and Megson, 2020), the persuasion of the female staff member was eventually successful, and the venue manager did commit to safer space training, along with multiple organisations who implemented new strategies in the workplace. This demonstrates that management structures can be altered - though whether or not the adoption of these policies has resulted in a decrease in sexual harassment of women at these venues as a consequence of actual enforcement measures is not evidenced by the authors.

Returning to the campaign of WAVAW (Bronstein, 2008), in 1979, Warner executives decided to amend corporate policy regarding the use of violent images on album covers and promotional material in response to a two-and-a-half-year campaign from members of WAVAW. This change only happened after the chairperson of one of Warner's labels confirmed that they voluntarily ceded control to recording artists to use album artwork and promotional materials that depicted violence against women. The executives' shift from resistance and denial, to acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility is demonstrative of a shift in the flow of the organisation's logic and its gendering – albeit a minor change – made real by the introduction of corporate policy that would impact upon the expectations and requirements of the jobs in the A&R and sales and promotion departments. However, this

study does not investigate how this played out in the work of the employees responsible for the implementation of this policy. While the aim of WAVAW was realised, it took several years of protest and campaigning to achieve one relatively small change in the organisation's practices. It could reasonably be argued that the task of changing gender relations inside the organisation for workers - a world that is out of public view - is of a far different magnitude.

Young (2006) argues that even when concessions are made, these concessions are simply a reflection of the organisation's ability to absorb challenges, to produce an altered hegemonic position. When management structures remain in place, the problems that are enabled by differential power relations between men and women are likely to be reproduced, regardless of amendments to policy. The resistance shown by the Rock Camp for girls in Portland (Dougher, 2024) to sexist music industry structures was demonstrated in its founding mission to create a space that is different from these structures. Part of this was achieved with low entry fees and free spots awarded to girls from low-income families. The rhetoric suggests that this organisation was able to find a feminist strategy that enabled it to pursue its mission. In the same vein of previously discussed studies, this study highlights that resistance is not so straightforward in a society so indebted to market demands. In 2022 the Rock Camp closed down, after twenty years and significant financial struggles.

A hopeful critique of the feminist-lesbian, counter-cultural, US-based label Redwood Records by Lont (1990) identifies the feminist politics of the all-women organisation as an important backstop against the corporate forces that were seeking to buy out the label. 'Constant tensions and pressures' (pp.10) from inside and outside the organisation meant that the organisation was sometimes driven by politics and sometimes by profit. The author theorises this approach as a subcultural resistance in the form of persistence, where the organisation continues in spite of these conflicts. A few years after this paper was published, Redwood Records closed for financial reasons. No organisation discussed by these studies offers an unconflicted example of successful directional change. All involve processes of negotiation that never result in consensus, and demonstrate a changeability of social relations that appears to centre around management structures and feminist politics. This is not a clear cut, simple dichotomy. Rather, workers are enmeshed within processes that steer social relations according to logics that are most diffuse at that point in time. The external forces that contribute to this dynamic are discussed in the final section of the review.

(vii) Industry orientations

During the review, it became clear that the logics of music organisations are sensitive to the external conditions of music industries on an international level. Industry orientations is a

concept coined by this study to describe the external conditions of music organisations that impact upon their gender and race relations. These conditions were observed in fourteen studies (Lont, 1990; Negus, 1999; Young, 2006; Edmonson, 2008; Bronstein, 2008; Laurie, 2014; Bennett, 2018; de Boise, 2019; Hill and Megson, 2020; Raine, 2021; Vincent, Coles and Vincent, 2022; Nissen, 2023; Dougher, 2024).

Industry orientations encompass:

- Market conditions (nine papers)
- Social expectations (six papers)
- Cultural policy (one paper)

Analyses of these studies demonstrate relationships between these fluctuating industry orientations and the logics of music organisations, which constitute the realities that workers must navigate.

Market conditions

Market conditions impact upon the way that gender and race are implicated in the organisation of work and organisational structure (Negus, 1999; Edmonson, 2008) and the way that men and women are valued inside the organisation against perceptions of the market value of the work they do (Laurie, 2014). Black female artists were not managed with the same attention and devotion of resources that their male counterparts were, due to their shorter career successes. The treatment of black music genres as a distinct market strategy in itself meant that race divisions of labour were impacted by concerns for risk and competition, resulting in easily eliminated departments mostly staffed by black workers.

Concerns for risk are also observed to be related to the gendering of high-profile jobs in opera productions (Vincent, Coles and Vincent, 2022), where the relationship between 'organisational programming and investment choices' (pp.206) influences who occupies the stage director job. Less risky programming choices that appeal to wide audiences (older works by men) are juxtaposed against programming choices of newer works by women. Where the organisation sits on this balance informs who then takes on the stage director role. The inclination of music festivals to commit to 'equality' and book more women artists is also shaped by perceptions of economic risk and insecurity. Raine (2021) observes the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and how this context combined with the need to sell tickets can potentially undermine altruistic commitments towards gender.

The impact of the market on music organisations' engagement with 'gender equality' practices is directly commented on by de Boise (2019), who argues that music organisations

in the UK have greater freedom to run their activities in the absence of obligations towards cultural policy and State rules for funding. At the same time, their reliance on the market means that ticket sales and audience numbers directly impact upon how much musicians and staff can be paid, which can result in those involved in these 'equality' projects (usually women) being paid less than if there had been external oversight. Other studies also talk about the importance of financial resources to the organisation and how this can have an impact on the gendering of realities for workers. The inaccessibility of paid maternity leave policies for women workers in smaller UK organisations that are not operating with multinational ownership structures is briefly mentioned by Bennett (2018). Two organisations operating with a feminist ethos both shut down for financial reasons (Lont, 1990; Dougher, 2024). The feminism that guided decision making for those involved was often in conflict with the need for economic success, which both authors comment on.

Social expectations

Expectations of audiences outside of music organisations can take the form of protest and activism targeted at that organisation (Young, 2006; Bronstein, 2008), more industry-friendly programmes such as Keychange (Raine, 2021; Nissen, 2023), and community pressure and persuasion (Hill and Megson, 2020; Lont, 1990).

This aspect of industry orientation is interwoven with market conditions, in the same way that the other dimensions of the framework are interwoven with each other. The guiding thread here is a market logic embodied in a business case for action, observed in how social expectations were communicated. By using public protest to draw negative attention towards the organisation, activists hoped that their actions would make Warner 'tire of the negative publicity' (Bronstein, 2008, pp.427) and force the Juno Awards to recognise ethno-racial minority music (Young, 2006). These actions were informed by societal mores and standards, and enacted in ways that would draw the attention of media and key financial stakeholders. The politics of activists sought to use the logic of the organisation against it, and in both cases, their activities did result in change in these very specific issues.

Similarly, the market-oriented logic of music organisations is used by feminist programmes, like Keychange, to convince those with power in these organisations to change their practices. Expectations related to ideas of fairness in access to jobs are represented by the concept of 'gender balance' that Keychange encourages organisations to pledge to. The voluntary adoption of this pledge within organisational processes by some 613 music organisations worldwide (as of 2022 from the Keychange website) is indicative of how compatible the logic of this programme is with the logic of music organisations. By framing

the programme as a 'desirable marketing tool' (Raine, 2021, pp.197), engagement with social expectations about gender becomes appealing, due to the fact that a commitment to change is all that is required. Even if 'public demands for change' (Nissen, 2023, pp.145) continue to be levied at organisations, this commitment can be used in their public communications to assuage concerns.

Members of the community that music organisations are embedded in can act upon the logic of the organisation, through pressure and persuasion. The feminist membership of Redwood Records had a large impact on the practices of the organisation (Lont, 1990), resulting in important strategic decisions being guided by their approval. In this case, the organisation was explicitly attempting to prioritise feminist politics over market loyalties as much as possible, and there was no need for a business case for their engagement with these expectations. A business case was put forward by customers of a venue to its management (Hill and Megson, 2020) to convince them to adopt safer space policies and training. The threat that they would no longer attend the venue if something didn't change successfully convinced the manager to adopt these changes. The interrelationship of a market logic with feminist politics is demonstrated by the prevalence of a business case within its arguments for change.

Cultural policy

The cultural policy approaches of the UK and Sweden (de Boise, 2019) offer different perspectives on state involvement in the practices of music organisations. The requirement to engage with 'gender equality' in order to access state support has meant that music organisations in Sweden have had to change their practices, such as programming for events, with the threat of sanctions acting as a motivating force. The more hands-off cultural policy of the UK allows for greater reliance on the market with no sanctions for deviating from policy. The obvious difference between the two is the real threat of sanctions that organisations in Sweden face. This is a type of business case for engaging with external expectations, with state-led policy acting as the enforcer.

3.4.2 Concluding remarks

The treatment of each dimension of the framework as distinct from each other is purely for analytical purposes. In practice, they are enmeshed with each other in the realities of workers. External conditions can shape practices inside the organisation resulting in altered gendering and racialising logics. Logics embodied in organisational processes and structures inform gender and race divisions of labour and worker relations. Actions inside the organisation can also manipulate its logic, either through a reinforced maintenance of social relations, or a change in its direction. Music organisations can also act upon industry orientations,

communicating their gendering and racialising logic outward, thus impacting upon the same conditions that shape their practices. This is notable in the usefulness of Keychange pledges as a marketing tool for music organisations. That music organisations demonstrate resistance to change only until it becomes unfeasible to continue this way, demonstrates the conflict between the market-oriented needs of the organisation and the needs of the workers. The framework illustrates the role of management, relationships between workers and external forces in exposing this conflict to critique, which is further evidenced in the reluctance of music organisations to respond to feminist concerns. Results are indicative of relational processes between music organisations and external conditions that can challenge dominant practices towards gender or race, or reinforce them. In these studies, the business case for change is often deployed by feminist arguments. This means that challenges to dominant practices construct the logic of their argument according to a logic on music organisation's terms. For women inside the organisation, their realities would appear little changed by those feminist arguments, but this can only be investigated with primary research into the practices and realities of music organisations. This doctoral study addresses gaps in existing literature, where feminist qualitative inquiry of internal organisational practices and their implications for workers is lacking, class relations are not developed in conceptual frameworks, and evidence of workers' realities of Ireland's music organisations is completely absent. By conducting in-depth organisational fieldwork with a critical feminist lens, this study captures details that other studies miss, particularly when they adopt a counting-bodies-approach to understanding gender and race.

3.5 Work, capitalism, and the Irish context

3.5.1 The work organisation in Ireland's media industries

The approach to defining work organisations adopted by this study draws from sociologies of work and organisations, and feminist theory. The work organisation refers to male and female workers who are coordinated around a common market-oriented objective, in gendering and racialising labour relationships formalised through economic, legal, and hierarchical relations of power. The kind of labour relationships that this study is concerned with are those governed by employment contracts, which enshrine these relations of power in a legal document.

The development of work organisations as we know them under neoliberal capitalist regimes can be traced to the effects of industrial capitalism in the early nineteenth century, which transformed the social organisation of work according to a logic that defined the market in relation to the home (Edgell and Granter, 2020). Grint (1991) identifies the industrial revolution as a juncture that motivated the emergence of cultural definitions of work as

something that only takes place outside the home, in the labour market, for pay. This ascribes value to work, only if it can be measured in economic terms for the benefit of capital. Therefore, capitalist value is the only legitimate value work can have, and the domestic and caring work mostly undertaken by women is valueless. By the end of the century, paid work in the former, and unpaid work in the latter, demarcated men's and women's positions in the socio-economic order. Acker (2006) theorises this demarcation as 'an underlying principle in the conceptual and actual physical and temporal organization of work' (pp.92). The institutionalisation of this logic across the gendered distinctions between the market and the home has meant that the development of the work organisation has gone hand in hand with the progression of men across its occupational and managerial ranks.

For nineteenth century Ireland, economic production was defined through its peripheral relationship with its more powerful British coloniser (Breathnach, 1988), where agricultural farming, as opposed to industrial manufacturing, became workers' main economic activity (which was exported to Britain, along with the low waged labour of Irish workers). It wasn't until the mid-twentieth century when capitalist development took off in earnest in Ireland, bolstered by new government policy for attracting foreign direct investment into the country (Andreosso-O'Callaghan, Lenihan and McDonough, 2016). A focus on multinational investment from abroad and loosely regulated participation in international markets became the overarching principle of Ireland's financial development through the 1990s and 2000s, establishing Ireland's neoliberal political economy (Kitchin, O'Callaghan, Boyle, Gleeson and Keaveney, 2012).

Contextually significant to this discussion of media industries in Ireland is the development of Irish newspapers, radio, and television broadcasting after the country's independence from Britain in the 1920s. Horgan (2001) traces a close relationship between State politics and media practices, where competing interests in Irish nationalism, Catholicism, and entrepreneurial interests shaped media landscapes over decades of the twentieth century. This is telling of the interplay of gendering logics between the State and media organisations, both of which were led by male workers. Interests were not centred around how to support women's economic and political participation in an independent Ireland - Irish nationalism, party politics, and religious posturing dominated the agenda. Irish traditional music and Irish cultural organisations were similarly constructed around Irish nationalist identities with masculine codes and meanings (O'Shea, 2008; Slominski, 2019), with similar constructions in the Manchester Northern Soul scene documented by Milestone (2016). Later, civil war in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s had a stark impact on music industries north of the border. As one interview participant outlined, 'there was a period of time that there was no concerts…nobody wanted to come' (male, head of organisation). While

this study is only concerned with music organisations in counties south of the border with Northern Ireland, this insight is evidence of how the logic and practices of the work organisation in Ireland's music industries is in a relationship with the logics and practices of other institutions across Irish society. Notably for Ireland, its political history and nationalist identity building has played a part in shaping the development of the country's media industries. As feminist scholars have pointed out, this history and identity building has gender and race effects (Slominski, 2020; O'Shea, 2008; Monaghan, 2021).

Research into women's status in media organisations in Ireland (radio, newspapers, television), provides evidence of how gender is implicated in the operation of these organisations. Expectations to work long hours and weekends negatively impact mother's participation in television production work due to conflicting demands of parenthood and the job (O'Brien, 2014) which men can more easily manage due to their wives spending more time at home (O'Brien, 2016). Practices that discriminate against women (O'Brien, 2014; O'Brien, 2015; O'Brien, 2016) such as not taking their skill level seriously, not taking them seriously in senior-level roles, undervaluing 'soft skills' most often carried out by women, overlooking them for promotion, or paying them less than men, further inscribe their lower status in the organisation's culture. Occupations remain segregated by sex in television production (O'Brien, 2015). Technical jobs involving equipment and director jobs tend to be male dominated, with female workers in administrative jobs, and rarely at senior level in any job. Since 1995, the international Global Media Monitoring Project has been measuring how women are represented in news media itself and its production, by taking a snapshot of a news day across multiple countries. The latest data for Ireland (Wheatley, Ross, Carter and Boyle, 2025) shows that there are more women working as journalists and presenters today than in previous decades. Across print, digital media, radio, and television, forty-one percent are women, an increase of nine percent on 2015 data. Despite overall divisions of labour changing, the topics that men and women cover demonstrate gender patterns; just over half of news stories about celebrities are covered by women, crime and violence have more men covering these stories, as well as legal news stories.

One of the organisations in the study by O'Brien (2016), Ireland's national broadcaster RTÉ, operates with public commitments towards 'equality' or 'equal opportunity' expressed through 'Diversity and Inclusion' ('D&I') policies (see RTÉ, 2018). Arnold (2024) looks at the actions taken by RTÉ in response to social expectations and political pressures to engage with gender and 'equality' in the 1970s and 1980s. Efforts by RTÉ to investigate its own divisions of labour in the 1980s with a Working Party are described by the author as 'highly bureaucratic and beset by challenges including the commitment of RTÉ staff' (pp.9). In the 1980s, an external body called the Women in Broadcasting Study Group was established by the

government to do the same investigation as RTÉ's Working Party. Both came to similar conclusions; men were dominant in all aspects of news production and communication, women did not have the same degree of access to jobs as men, and their caring responsibilities were impacting upon their participation. Despite recommendations from both research groups aimed at making jobs more accessible to women and addressing occupational segregation in the workplace, evidence from O'Brien (2016) demonstrates that women in the years after these reports were published still faced discriminatory practices and obstacles to accessing senior-level jobs in RTÉ.

Prior to this thesis there has been no academic study of gender or race divisions of labour in music organisations in Ireland, or their internal policies and procedures, which means that no review can be undertaken of existing literature in this area. The commonality of gender patterns in occupations and across hierarchies, the impact of parenthood, and the enduring prevalence of discriminatory practices and attitudes, evidenced by these studies of media organisations in Ireland tells us that the issues facing women in television, radio, and newspapers are shared. The extent to which these issues are shared by women workers of music organisations is investigated by this study, as well as the degree to which they differ by the nature of the work that defines these particular jobs. In a departure from many of these studies, the realities of men are also objects of inquiry of this study alongside those of women. This research pays close attention to how the work organisation operates in music industries, where engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' is a common feature of organisational policy, embedded in strategy, and expressed through 'EDI'.

3.5.2 The family, religion, and the State in Ireland

Evidence of the role of caring responsibilities in the realities of workers in Ireland's media organisations highlights the need to consider the home and the family in studies of organisations. The construction of Ireland's family institution is indebted to its relationship with the State and Catholicism. The Irish State itself developed as a sectarian institution, predominately through the twentieth century, with less overt (but still present) sympathies to Catholicism in the twenty-first century. The newly independent Irish State leaned into conservative Catholic ideology when defining women's role as citizens (Beaumont, 1997), making a legislative distinction between men and women by relegating women to home, to fulfil their roles as wives. Contrary to the emancipatory promises of the 1922 Free State Constitution, where 'equality' was considered a value worthy of protecting, the early years of the Irish government 'revealed a willingness to incorporate Catholic principles in social legislation during their terms in office' (Beaumont, 1997, pp.565). These Catholic principles

were also to a great extent accepted, or not protested, by members of Irish society, including women.

From the initiation of the State, legislation to allow divorce was opposed by the government (it would not be legalised until 1995). A public service marriage bar was introduced in 1924 (and remained until 1973) to prohibit married women from joining the civil service, and to force newly married women in the civil service to leave their job. In 1932 this was extended to include primary school teachers. In 1934, the sale and import of birth control was criminalised. Women's participation in the labour market was further restricted in 1936 with legislation that limited the number of women workers allowed in any given industry, so that more employment opportunities could be made available to men. Concerted efforts were made by the State, with direct influence from the Church, to reinforce the gender-coded distinction between the home and the market.

Article 41 of the Constitution recognises the family as a fundamentally important institution of Irish society, and in section 41.2.1, 'the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved' (Bunreacht na hÉireann, Article 41.2.1, 1937). Article 41 recognises the home and the family as worthy of protection in themselves outside of an economic logic, and states that mothers should not be compelled for economic reasons to work outside of the home - assertions which socialist feminism would welcome, if they were backed up by financial compensation to mothers in recognition of this role. For several decades, Article 41 existed in parallel with legislation that made the labour market the jurisdiction of men, with women begrudgingly allowed, in certain numbers, if they were not married. This meant that women's capacity for economic power was severely curtailed throughout the twentieth century, while their work in the home was, in writing, recognised as important.

The influence of the Catholic church on the family continued to be directed towards women in the establishment and operation of 'mother and baby homes' across counties in Ireland since 1922, with the last mother and baby home closure in 1996. These were forced detention institutions run by Catholic orders of nuns and bishops, with policy support and financing from the State. Magdalene laundries that existed before the famine were also taken over by these religious orders and operated alongside mother and baby homes, which 'forcibly housed unwed women who became pregnant' (Clark, 2020, pp.124). In addition to an absence of support from the State which was also concerned with what to do about the 'problem' of the 'unmarried mother" (Garrett, 2017, pp.361), these women were often shunned by their families due to fears over their status in the community and the social consequences that would arise from appearing to accept their daughters or sisters who were now a 'social

problem' (Gallen, 2022, pp.104). Inquiries and research into the operation and conditions of mother and baby homes draw attention to the normalised and systemic physical and psychological abuse that was inflicted upon women by those involved in running these institutions, and the culpability of the State in this abuse (Gallen, 2022; Donahue, 2023). In addition to these harms, women were invisible unpaid workers at these institutions under conditions resembling those of inmates or overburdened workers on farms (Price, et al., 2025).

For much of Ireland's history since 1922, the concept of motherhood has been inextricably tied to Catholic virtues, which have considered women's sexuality as a shame and a threat to the moral fibre of society, that requires careful management by the institutions of marriage, family, and the State. In twenty-first century Ireland, men and women work in a liberalised economy with changed legislature that allows for divorce, abortion, same-sex marriage, government run schemes that provide free contraception to women, and promises of financial redress to survivors of and children born in mother and baby homes. The most recent census of Ireland's population, conducted in 2022 by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), measured 1.2 million men in employment (meaning paid work outside the home) and 1.1 million women in employment (see CSO, 2023a). Census data also shows that almost twenty percent of families in Ireland are headed by a one-parent household, and of these eighty-five percent are one-parent mother families. The more widespread existence of single mothers is a defining feature of the family institution in contemporary Ireland. This does not mean however that single mothers, mothers in dual-parent households, or women in general are beneficiaries of a transformed gender order.

Two-parent households are still by far the most common family structure in Ireland. Ireland's policy approach to one-parent households continues to position this kind of family structure as of lower importance and status to that of a two-parent household (Millar, Coen, Bradley and Rau, 2012). One-parent households, which are mostly headed by women, are underpinned by welfare policy that encourages these parents to turn to the market for extra financial support, for example by taking up part-time flexible work. The dual responsibility of care and employment remains difficult to manage, and is shouldered most often by women who are parenting alone. Under neoliberal logics, in two-parent households it is often an economic necessity for both parents to work outside the home, and despite women's increased market participation alongside men, historical gender patterns of domestic and caring work in the home have not equalised (Watson, 2011; Connell, 2011). In the case of Ireland, women more often take on part-time work and flexible work options (Fine-Davis, 2016), and are the only workers who will need to take maternity leave. Gendering norms and cultural scripts of parenthood that influence how mothers and fathers engage with work in the home (Sanchez and Thomson, 1999), coupled with differing biological realities of parenthood for men and

women, and a socio-economic logic that compels economic participation irrespective of family status or choice for parenting models (Millar, Coen, Bradley and Rau, 2012), creates conditions for gender relations that are embodied differently in the lives of male and female parents, and male and female workers of organisations.

A referendum in 2024 proposed amending Article 41 to replace references to mothers with gender-neutral language referencing family members. The proposed new wording (endorsed by the government) was rejected and existing wording was retained. The suggestion from the Irish government to remove references to mothers in the home would provide an inaccurate reflection of the actual gender realities of family structure in Ireland; since it remains the case that mothers are more often doing care work in the home. The new wording would result in the biological realities that inform gender and care work in the home no longer being recognised by the Constitution - even if they are only recognised in writing. Ninety percent of people who stated their primary socio-economic status as 'looking after the home/family' in the 2022 census were female, and almost quarter of women working outside the home work part time (CSO, 2023a). Gender-neutrality is a feature of neoliberal organisational logic (Connell, 2011). Kitchin, O'Callaghan, Boyle, Gleeson and Keaveney (2012) posit that Ireland's less explicit loyalties towards neoliberalism in spite of its clear development in that direction, mean that neoliberal 'ideology thus remains largely hidden in the apparatus of Irish politics' (pp.1306). The infused gender and neoliberal ideology of the Irish State and its treatment of the family is perhaps most effectively evidenced in the Irish birth certificate. Figure 9 is a section of an Irish birth certificate issued in 1993.


ÉIRE IRELAND

Deimhniú breithe ar na h-éisiúint de bhun na hAchta um Chláirú Breitheanna agus Básanna 1863 go 1972

BIRTH CERTIFICATE issued in pursuance of Births and Deaths Registration Acts 1863 to 1972

[redacted] i gCeantar an Chláraitheora Maoirseachta do
..... in the Superintendent Registrar's District of [redacted]

Ainm (má tugadh) Name (if any) (3)	Gnéas Sex (4)	Ainm, Sloinne agus Ionad Chónaithe an Athar Name and Surname and Dwelling Place of Father (5)	Ainm agus Sloinne na Máthar agus a Sloinne roimh Phósadh di Name and Surname and Maiden Surname of Mother (6)	Céim nó Gairm Bheatha an Athar Rank or Profession of Father (7)	Síniú, Cáilíocht agus Ionad Chónaithe an Fháisnéiseora Signature, Qualification and Residence of Informant (8)
[redacted]	Female	[redacted]	[redacted] Inion Formerly	[redacted]	[redacted]

[redacted] seo thuas de thaifead uimh. i gClár-leabhar na mBreitheanna atá faoi mo chúram.

Figure 9: Section of an Irish birth certificate, issued in 1993.

The third column asks for information about the surname and home of the father, and the fifth asks for information about his job and job level. The only information that is requested of the mother is in column four; her surname prior to marriage, and her surname after marriage. This information very efficiently details the gendering logic of State and family. The father is positioned as the breadwinner and head of the household, as the only parent evidenced to have an occupation and home ownership. The mother is defined in relation to her husband, as a wife with a prior name. The implicit meaning is that the mother, with no occupation, will look after the child. Today, Irish birth certificates record the former surnames, home addresses, and occupations for both parents. The message here, in a neoliberal twenty-first century Ireland, is that both can have an occupation outside of the home, which is still the only legitimate location for economic participation.

Patriarchy is defined as male dominance in social, political, and economic institutions (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2010). The ideological construction of gender and class in Irish society has been produced through an interplay of logics and practices of the State, religion and the family, through which we can observe an evolution of patriarchal relations that are still present today, and investigated by this study in the realities of music organisations.

3.5.3 Ireland's labour force and labour market

The population demographics of Ireland's labour force acts as a base that informs gender and race divisions of labour in organisations. Ireland adopts definitions from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for how it measures the labour force and employment (CSO, 2025). The ILO defines 'decent work' as 'productive work' that generates an income and provides workers with access to employment protections (International Labour Organisation, 2015, pp.1). People in employment in the labour force are those aged between fifteen and eighty-nine years old, who work for pay or profit. People in the labour force who are unemployed are between fifteen and seventy-four years old, who are not working for pay or profit and are seeking this work. Everyone else is outside of the labour force and classified as an 'inactive population'. Overall, the labour force is defined as people who are between fifteen and eighty-nine years old who are in employment or unemployed. The labour force does not include full-time parents, or anyone not seeking work for pay or profit.

The CSO provides a breakdown by sex of the labour force, quantifying 1.57 million men and 1.38 million women as of Q2, 2025 (CSO, 2025), with a total figure of 2,818,100. CSO draws from 2022 data to provide a breakdown of race and ethnicity for persons in the labour force aged fifteen years and over. As of Q4 2022, the labour force figure was 2,686,500 (CSO, 2023b). Of this group, 2,165,676 persons in the labour force are white Irish/white Irish

traveller/other white background. This is 80.6 percent of the labour force. For persons of Black or Black Irish background, there are 36,176. This is 1.3 percent of the labour force. For persons of Asian/Irish or Asian background, there are 91,066. This is 3.3 percent of the labour force. The remaining figures relate to Roma (8,687), Arab (7,283), and other mixed backgrounds (29,442). Over 162 thousand people did not state their race or ethnic background for the 2022 census. This data is the best overall approximation of gender and race in Ireland's labour force (as defined by the CSO). The vast majority of this population is white and Irish, and almost evenly split between male and female workers. If we look at the race and ethnic data for the 'arts, entertainment and recreation' sector, there were 276 Black or Black Irish persons recorded in this sector as of 2022. Figures are also low for Asian/Irish or Asian persons, who numbered 570. The 'human health and social work' sector is the most popular among Black or Black Irish persons (8,588) and Asian/Irish or Asian persons (23,897). Respectively, this is twenty-four percent, and twenty-six percent, of each of these groups' total labour force figure. For all white persons, there are 35,457 in the 'arts, entertainment and recreation' sector, which is sixteen percent of that group's labour force population.

A major criticism of the CSO's measurements of the labour force is that it classifies anyone not doing work for pay as 'inactive'. This corresponds with the ideological distinction between the market and the home, where the former is valued as economically valuable. For Ireland, this means that for the 244,823 women who are outside the labour force and whose principal economic status is 'looking after home/family' (CSO, 2023a), their official classification is 'inactive'. The term 'principal economic status' used by the CSO is a misnomer - it implies some kind of economic value is being ascribed to this activity, which is not the case. Indeed, this study is not suggesting that its value should be defined economically. As the findings discussed in later chapters will illustrate, the distinction between the market and the family obscures the interconnected realities of their relationship. The work organisation is constructed by a logic that similarly obscures these realities, with differing implications for men and women workers. Extending existing economic logic to encompass the home may not resolve these gender effects, because the home remains defined by a logic disconnected from a conception of value distinct from the market. This argument is teased out in the final chapters of the thesis.

The logic that informs the ILO approach to work and the labour market is directly adopted by the CSO, which in turn provides data that the Irish government uses when producing policy. The ideological construction of Ireland's labour market is rooted in the assumptions and meanings produced by an international organisation formed in 1919, by an overwhelmingly male cohort of employer and worker representatives, that has always adopted a business case for engaging with gender (Hodges, 2014). In their overview of the ILO and its

approach to the family, Hodges (2014) points out that the ILO argues for women's participation in the labour market as a 'moral imperative' (pp.567), and addressing the relationship between work life and family life is part of this imperative, because it makes good business sense. The market oriented moral imperative that guides its perspective on this relationship is reflected in the perspectives of the CSO and the Irish State.

3.5.4 Ireland's music organisations

This chapter provides a review of literature about gender, race, class and music organisations in Ireland, alongside a brief overview how these structures are accounted for in Ireland's music industries as a whole. Studies of music industries encompass the social, economic, and political dimensions of music as a commercial entity. Studies of music itself and music making practices fall under musicology and the sociology of music, which are not covered by this review.

There are no feminist studies of music organisations in Ireland. Music organisations in Ireland have been studied without feminist theory with respect to their response to digitalisation via interviews with their employees (Rogers, 2013), Irish Music Rights Organisation's (IMRO) expansion between the years 1995 to 2000 (McCann, 2012), an attempt to quantify the number of music organisations in Ireland using Hot Press Yearbooks and IMRO directories (Burke, 1995), and a master's thesis by O'Donnell (2012) which chronicles the history of the Music Association of Ireland. The overall pool of literature about music organisations in Ireland is itself small, and it is then perhaps unsurprising that feminist analyses are lacking.

Class and Ireland's music organisations are investigated by a small number of studies; one master's thesis, two doctoral theses, and an academic book (see Reynolds, 2014; Ó Seaghdha, 2016; Deloughry, 2014).

The ways that music organisations can maintain power structures and exclusionary realities (Ó Seaghdha, 2016) impact upon musical participation among social classes (Deloughry, 2014), and challenge class relations (Reynolds, 2014) are demonstrated in these studies. By interviewing those involved with a Dublin-based hip-hop label Workin' Class Records, Reynolds identifies practices of the organisation that consciously try to challenge dominant ideas of what counts as hip-hop, in a scene that encouraged the commercial success of more American-sounding voices. The organisation did this by encouraging artists to embrace their north Dublin accent (which many of them tried to hide). The maintenance of gender and class relations can be extrapolated from Deloughry's (2014) qualitative doctoral

study of social class and classical music education, providing evidence of how gender and class are implicated in organisational practices and processes. A logic that 'emphasises gender differences' (pp.164) in instrument choice, for example in the gender of tutors, results in sex segregated tuition, with girls more often playing violin and flute, and boys more often playing guitar. Ó Seaghdha (2016) provides insight into the highly gendered Anglo-Irish membership of Trinity College music societies, where most only allowed men to be members, and class relations were divided by the Catholic middle class and the Protestant upper class. These studies give some indication of how music organisations can exert influence in the realities of people working in music industries, and given how few in number these studies are, they also highlight the extent of what is unknown about music organisations in Ireland.

A core concern raised upon analysis of these studies is the separation of gender from class in their frameworks, where class is treated as a system of stratification. This makes the task of interrogating the gender effects of labour practices much more challenging as the processes of Irish music industries that distinguish them as gendering hierarchies of privilege are more difficult to tease out. But even when such a framework is used, it can still help bring worker's realities to light.

The public facing practices of *Hot Press*, one of Ireland's longest running music magazines, has also been subject to feminist scrutiny. In an analysis of *Hot Press* covers between 1977-1985, Behan (2025) points out that Irish female artists do not feature on the cover of *Hot Press* in its first three years (1977-80), while a small number of male artists feature repeatedly. Four decades of images of male and female artists on the *Hot Press* cover space (1977-2017) are analysed by Kiely (2020, 2022) in a comparative analysis with *Rolling Stone* covers. Across both magazines, female artists appear on approximately twenty percent of covers, and two clear patterns emerge; passive, sexualised femininities for women, and active, non-sexualised masculinities for men, where the same patterns are prevalent across the cover history of both magazines, in almost identical fashion. These patterns are telling of how gender is utilised by those involved in the careers of pop stars (such as publicists and managers) as a legitimate business practice, with differing strategies for male and female artists (Lieb, 2018). In a separate analysis of *Hot Press*' forty-year commemorations, the nostalgic and selective storytelling of *Hot Press* in its positioning of the cover as a symbol of the magazine's commitment to a left-wing 'equality' agenda (Kiely, 2022) contrasts with the cover spaces' persistent reinforcement of 'stereotypical depictions of gender' (Kiely, 2020, pp.110). The endorsement of a set of sex-based rules of appearance, and the presence of the same rules in a popular magazine across the Atlantic, is demonstrative of how music organisations can construct hierarchical gender relations as a taken for granted reality, that is reconstructed in local and global logics.

Ireland's music industries

Within the pool of literature about music industries in Ireland, gender is the most evidenced concept and the one that feminist studies most often engage with. Gender, race, and to a lesser degree, class, are most often investigated by collecting evidence from musicians and performers, through interview or survey.

The role that gender plays in the lives of people working in music industries has been investigated by academics predominately from female standpoints of performers and musicians through survey and interview. When research about Ireland's industries and gender began to take shape in the 2000s/2010s, these studies did not start out with an approach to researching gender where men and women are equally considered, and early scholarship developed along these lines where the experiences of women are most often the sole focus of inquiry. Though these studies do investigate work practices and employment opportunities, they do not theorise class in conjunction with gender.

Irish traditional music is the genre most covered in the Irish context where gendered discourses of instrumentation, technology, music scenes, and physical spaces (pubs, domestic space) along with normalised sexism are identified as barriers to women's participation as Irish traditional musicians and session players (O'Shea, 2008; Monaghan, 2021; Slominski, 2019; Commins, 2021). Evidence from these studies paints a picture of the gender order of the Irish traditional music scene, from the early twentieth century to the 2010s, where men were historically more dominant in performance spaces in pubs, and women faced additional barriers to accessing these spaces. Slominski (2019) characterises the shift from pre-1930s sessions in the family home to post-1950s pub sessions as one that posed a new reality for women musicians to navigate, where expectations around their role in the home and childcare responsibilities potentially restricted their participation in public space.

The need to pay critical attention to the gender effects of parenthood in the lives of men and women workers is highlighted by Hanlon's (2023) survey of musicians in Ireland and O'Sullivan (2018) in interviews with musicians and DJs in Dublin between 2000 and 2017. The impact of parenthood and care work was felt by many women in O'Sullivan's study, who had 'no option but to leave the music industry once the needs of others became a priority in their lives' (pp.114). Similarly, in O'Hanlon's study a fifth of women with caring responsibilities stated that these responsibilities ended their career compared to three percent of men. This is in spite of both men and women acknowledging in almost equal measure that these responsibilities pose challenges to their career. The gender effects of parenthood are an under researched dimension of Ireland's music industries, that are contextualised in these studies

against a trend of reduced participation of women in music industries, and the sustained participation of men.

Irish traditional music is the practice most interrogated by studies of race in Ireland's music industries. Ideas about 'Irishness' in traditional music, informed by nationalism, influence perceptions of what constitutes legitimate practice for performers (Slominski, 2020, 2019; O'Flynn, 2009; Blake, 2017), which produces a 'normative white identity' of Irish traditional music practice and the othering of blackness (Slominski, 2020, pp.162). In their survey of musicians in Ireland, Hanlon (2023) gathered close to five hundred responses from white musicians, which made up ninety-two percent of total respondents.

Class is seldom investigated by studies of Ireland's music industries. Slominski (2020) In their critique of classed assumptions about fiddle players in Irish traditional music, Slominski (2020) outlines how traditional music was commonly associated with rural musicians of a lower class, and performing musicians were assumed to be classically trained, from the upper or middle class. Slominski ties in women's less visible presence in traditional music history with how the development of traditional Irish music was directed by the interests of Irish nationalism. The relationship between nationalist identity building, gender, and class speaks to how participation in music performance work can be informed by these processes.

3.6 Concluding remarks

Music organisations adopt practices that challenge, or legitimise class relations for men and women musicians, but little is known about how their gendering and racialising logics operate and the internal realities of these organisations that men and women workers must navigate. HRM literature constructs itself with moral responsibility and authority for how the organisation engages with gender and race. In studies of music organisations outside of Ireland, management structures and hierarchies have the power to change the course of the organisation's gender and race relations or maintain their current trajectory. These studies also demonstrate that it is through external pressures that these changed relations come about. Knowledge about HRM paradigms in music organisations in Ireland is lacking, as is the extent to which 'EDI' shapes the realities of male and female workers.

Evidence from studies of Ireland's music industries tells us that women musicians and performers face difficulties in accessing work and safe working conditions and being recognised as experts in their work. The realities of being a female musician are seldom acknowledged as impacted by the realities of being a mother. That fathers who are musicians

appear not to share the same conflict as mothers contributes to the near absence of this issue being problematised in wider conversations about participation in music performance. These issues are similar to those evidenced by studies of music organisations in the systematic review, and by wider feminist studies of labour, presented earlier. That workers of Ireland's music organisations may also be facing structural harms and barriers is a reality that this study seeks to interrogate, with a framework of feminist class analysis that is equipped with knowledge of how the logics of HRM and 'EDI' operate.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction: feminist standpoints

This chapter outlines the methods through which the day-to-day realities of music organisations and their workers were gathered and interrogated, and how the methodological approach of this study compares to other studies of organisations. In the literature review, organisational research conducted through HRM paradigms and organisational research conducted through feminist sociological theory were juxtaposed with each other, bringing to light fundamental differences in their approaches to understanding power and organisations. Sometimes, HRM positions itself as uniquely critical, in the form of CHRM. This study also seeks to apply a critical approach to organisational research, but from a feminist sociological perspective that interrogates ideological constructions of power from the standpoints of male and female workers. In this sense, the framework of this study draws from early calls to produce 'a sociology for women' (Smith, 1987) rather than a sociology of women, but expands this call to encompass all workers of music organisations, male and female, racial minorities and those of the majority, so that the gender and race effects of patriarchal capitalism can be accounted for in a fuller capacity.

Feminist class analysis draws from traditions that are concerned with capitalism and how labour relationships are constructed across society. The premise of this approach is the sexual division of labour across the market and the home that the advent of industrial capitalism legitimised as productive versus reproductive spheres of labour (outlined in chapter three), where men's position in this societal logic allows them to benefit from greater access to jobs, income and economic power. Sex is therefore positioned as the central comparator for understanding the realities of workers. This is the feminist standpoint methodology guiding the study. The overall focus on male and female workers is necessary because gender is a relational process that cannot be understood by focussing only on women, and men benefit from patriarchy. This process needs to be accounted for in order to theorise construction of power and privilege. While seeking to investigate power in the lives of workers, the premise that women face unique forms of oppression under patriarchal capitalism remains a core tenet of the approach of this study. The racialising aspects of worker realities need to be accounted for through the inclusion of racial minority workers because differences within groups of women and men can exist, and persist, regardless of organisational efforts for gender reform. Management-led approaches towards 'diversity' may also reinforce racialising logics, rather than remedying them. The shared realities of being a worker are also important for understanding the wider impacts of capitalism that management paradigms try to make sense of according to an individualist logic, such as motivating workers to engage in health-based

initiatives in the workplace and attend workshops for managing stress.

Stanley and Wise (2013) argue that the feminist standpoint position in research is useful because it favours a grounded, constructionist approach to investigating the realities of women, while being cognizant of how social sciences can serve to produce knowledge that reinforces oppressive ideologies for women. HRM is one such example, where the realities of men and women are interrogated with the view of figuring out how responding to them can be of benefit to the interests of the organisation, while the legitimacy of management paradigms are continually upheld. Feminist methodology is suited to the task of investigating the dominant ideologies that music organisations lean on in their engagement with men and women workers, because it embodies 'counter-narratives to dominant traditional models of research and science' (Dupuis, Harcourt, Gaybor and van den Berg, 2022, pp.4). HRM adopts principles of Critical Theory in order to imbue HRM with an emancipatory character. However, Critical Theory, as it is adopted by HRM, is disparaging of feminist sociology and sociological approaches in general, and HRM by its nature has a limited capacity for critical analysis of organisations. Alvesson and Willmott (1992) posit that feminist theory is 'restricted' and 'reductionist' (pp.9) in always viewing the lives of workers from a feminist perspective. They ground this critique in the viewpoint that not all aspects of organisational life have a gender component (a viewpoint that is incompatible with the framework of this study). But a feminist sociology can produce a critical theory of power and women's position in society, as argued by Wood (2014) and Caputi (2013), and it can investigate management logics and the ideologies they construct. This study represents a feminist sociological investigation of music organisations, that applies critical feminist theory to the realities of workers. A crucial aspect of this is carrying out ideology critique of management paradigms, which is enabled by feminism's preoccupation with investigating, naming, and challenging systems of oppression.

The primary research question guiding this study is: how are the labour relationships of music organisations in Ireland managed by their organisational logic? Several sub-questions arise from this inquiry:

(i) What is the population of music organisations in Ireland and their workforce?

(ii) What form does this logic take in organisational processes and practices?

(iii) How does this logic impact upon male and female workers employed by the organisation?

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Interviews for feminist organisational fieldwork

Interviews have long been utilised in organisational fieldwork as a generally reliable method of gaining access to the realities of organisations and their workers (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2012; Jones, 2014). This method creates a window into what happens inside organisations, through the standpoint of workers who have first-hand knowledge of these realities.

Critical feminist studies of organisations use interviews as a means of revealing the nature of organisational constructions of power in the realities of men and women workers. In a study of Australian corporations in the finance sector, Connell (2012) uses interviews with male managers to investigate the embodiment of masculinities in the organisation, using these interviews to theorise how a hyper-competitive version of masculinity becomes hegemonic. Through these interviews, Connell also understands the gender relations of the home, where all the men interviewed are married, with wives at home looking after their children. Connell (2021) argues that interviews with men offer unique insights that feminist research should be concerned with, because gender is a relational process, and men accrue benefits from patriarchy. Sheppard (1992) also uses interviews to investigate managers, this time interviewing women in Canadian organisations, to understand their own viewpoints on their position in the organisation. By choosing to focus on women in her interviews, Sheppard reveals the prevalence of sexual harassment by men in these organisations - a reality that is unlikely to have been uncovered by interviewing men alone. Acker (1989b), meanwhile, uses her insider position in a US-based task force on compensation systems and gender pay equity to conduct interviews with those involved. She uses interviews as a means of interrogating ideologies and the invisibility of gender in organisational logics which have gendering effects. The benefits of being an insider and member of the task force assisted Acker in gaining access to these realities. Drawbacks to being an insider when researching organisations are that shared understandings can result in participants glossing over topics, and power differentials between the researcher and participants risks coercing participation (Aburn, Gott and Hoare, 2021). For this doctoral study, the researcher is an outsider, with no previous employment history with music organisations.

The limitations of interviews include the fact that windows into the realities of organisations can be coloured by politics, bias, and challenges to reliability posed by multiple interpretations. Additionally, the processes of asking questions could unduly influence what is deemed important to the research and could restrict participants from sharing the things that they deem important (Jones, 2014). These limitations were mitigated against by gathering multiple responses from male and female workers of each organisation. This allowed for

consistencies and contradictions in workers' realities to be identified more easily. This study used semi-structured interviews, where a general outline of topics in an interview guide was embedded within a flexible interview structure that allowed participants to bring up topics themselves and partly steer the course of the interview. Parallel to the opportunities that this method can provide to critical feminist inquiry, interviews used in this way can also pose challenges. Critical feminist organisational analysis adopts a belief system that is by default suspicious of management structures, dominant messages, and solutions that are endorsed by the organisation. This could cloud the researchers judgement and cause them to miss the unexpected aspects of workers' relationships to the organisation that have a positive impact. Interviews can then reinforce confirmation bias, especially if the researcher unconsciously designs interview questions that exclude the possibility for unexpected evidence to be collected.

Questions asked during the semi-structured interviews were informed by the theories of Acker (2006) and Connell (2021, 2011), in that they asked basic questions about ordinary organisational processes and practices, knowing that these seemingly ordinary processes and practices can offer a great depth of evidence to analyse, whatever that evidence may be. A list of interview questions is provided in the Appendix. Questions were framed so as to avoid using concepts or terms that are themselves potentially loaded with meaning (such as 'diversity', 'equality', 'EDI', 'equal opportunity') or potentially leading language (for example, no participants were explicitly asked if they had ever experienced bullying or harassment, or if they had ever accessed a job that was not advertised). Interview questions were designed to ask specifically what was needed, in basic language that did not give prompts for key concepts used by management paradigms or topics that tend to come up in feminist research.

The benefits to using interviews for organisational fieldwork are that they are low-cost and allow direct interaction between the researcher and workers where a rapport can be built (this led to some participants in the study bringing the interview call to the attention of their peers), and interviews can also assist with creating a large sample size, if enough time is allocated for data collection. When applied through a critical sociological lens, interviews can be a viable means of challenging management rhetoric about 'best practice' for engaging with gender and race. This is realised in feminist critiques of the concept of meritocracy in recruitment practices (Wreyford, 2015; Milestone, 2015), the normalisation of racism and sexism in conjunction with increased pressure for 'diversity' (Milner and Gregory, 2022), and the ineffectiveness of grievance and disciplinary procedures in assisting women who experience sexual harassment (Fernando and Prasad, 2019; Milner and Gregory, 2022). By approaching organisations in this way, interviews can help feminist researchers disassemble

influential teachings and dominant modes of engagement with gender and race, to see what these paradigms are made of. Interviews can provide empirical evidence of the actual practices and processes of the organisation that construct power relations and require further investigation, and what the consequences of these processes and practices are for male and female workers.

Music organisations operating in Ireland are ideal sites of feminist organisational research, because they are an unquantified population that has never been researched from a feminist perspective, and there is ample evidence in the public domain that workers of music organisations, and their women workers in particular, face harmful realities. Ireland's music industries are also relatively small compared to other countries, and it is feasible to quantify its music organisations to a high level of accuracy. Interview participants were asked to quantify the number of employees in their organisation, and particularly from workers at senior level, specific numbers were provided which gave an up-to-date account of the workforce.

4.2.2 Surveys for feminist organisational fieldwork

Due to the small size of Ireland's music industries, it is possible to produce a well-grounded overview of the gendering and racialising class relations of the country's music organisations through surveying the population. Even if results are not representative, which cannot be guaranteed if surveys depend on people self-selecting and volunteering themselves for inclusion (Gideon, 2012), they are indicative of what is happening on the ground in the lives of workers across the country. Data collected directly from participants through interviews is complemented with data collected through quantitative surveys. This is referred to as complementarity; when mixed methods are used 'to gain complementary views about the same phenomenon or relationship' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2008, pp.287). Additionally, access to organisations may be hindered in some cases by gatekeepers or the hesitancy of workers to be interviewed. A survey provides an alternative avenue for the researcher to gain access to organisations, and for workers to share their realities in a way that feels safe for them. The survey also acted as a recruitment tool where respondents could volunteer to be interviewed.

Feminism questions the value of quantitative research for studying social relations. Criticisms of surveys as a method of feminist research point out that surveys pose a risk of conflating gender and sex by missing out on the gendering societal processes that organise people on the basis of sex, and focussing instead on individual level analysis, and that this

approach can also impact upon understandings of race as a socially produced concept (Harnois, 2013). Surveys are often used for organisational research in HRM studies of gender and race, predominately with the view of studying 'diversity', perceptions of 'diversity', and 'diversity' policies. Turi et al. (2022) survey employees of organisations in Pakistan to measure the impact of 'diversity' policies on employee performance, drawing theoretical implications for 'diversity' research from this data. Perceptions of what makes an effective 'EDI' policy are quantified by Berta, Mantrach and Cerquitelli (2025) through a survey of scientific researchers in STEM fields. Across HRM studies, surveys routinely present concepts from management paradigms (such as 'diversity', 'EDI') to respondents in questions. In doing so the studies pre-empt what it means to engage with workers' realities and the practices of the organisation, and this particular interpretation is legitimised as a research method. One of the concerns of feminists is that surveys present themselves as 'value-free, objective, and disinterested' (Harnois, 2013, pp.7) and can therefore legitimise the role that research plays in reinforcing inequities. The language used in questions, how options for answers are presented, and the order of questions, impact upon responses (Roopa and Rani, 2021). Conscious of how the design or questions can influence responses, this doctoral thesis positioned questions about sex, gender, race, and ethnicity, and education at the end, in an effort to avoid personalising the experience for respondents at the outset. Questions were also written using simple language, asking about ordinary organisational processes, without concepts from feminist theory or management paradigms, and definitions were provided of terms where appropriate (such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, multinational, transnational). A list of survey questions is provided in the Appendix.

Surveys are a popular method in studies of 'diversity' in media, because they can reveal the realities that 'go beyond the content' (Loecherbach, Moeller, Trilling and van Atteveldt, 2020, pp.624), and this is demonstrated in surveys of social media audiences (Fisher, Culloty, Lee and Park, 2019) and local news production practices (Williams, Harte and Turner, 2015). Quantitative surveys can also look beyond the content in terms of labour inside media organisations, and can offer feminists a useful tool for building a picture of divisions of labour, occupational segregation, organisations' practices such as hiring and firing, and income levels. This numerical evidence can reveal longitudinal trends and sectoral patterns that speak to the societal construction of social relations, and can lend convincing empirical support to feminist research aimed at changing policy and political discourse (Harnois, 2013). The challenges that arise when surveying workers, some of whom may report dishonestly in an effort to portray themselves or the organisation in a more favourable light (Oberski, 2012), is mitigated against by the framing of questions around ordinary, day-to-day processes that can to a large degree be objectively measured, such as occupations and the organisation's ownership type. Other

questions around hiring practices could elicit more guarded answers, especially if their hiring experience deviates from policy. That survey responses are anonymous (unless respondents volunteer themselves to be interviewed) potentially mitigated against intentions to distort answers, as no organisation or person is identifiable from the responses.

4.2.3 Defining the target population and eligible participants

For studies of organisations, quantifying the target population (the number of organisations or the number of employees) can be straightforward where accurate and up to date information is readily available in centralised databases. In these situations, the target population is clearly defined and well-known, for example national databases about prisons. In other situations, quantifying the target population poses a significant challenge to the researcher. Jones (2015) argues that without any complete centralised database of organisations or their employees, it is necessary to employ the next best strategy that is available - using directories or listings, which can be considered 'good enough' as 'they may nevertheless be sufficiently authoritative to be taken as a reasonable proxy for the whole population, even if their coverage is not actually complete' (pp.80). Music organisations operating in Ireland represent an undefined population, with no centralised database (from the CSO or any government department with a remit for industry or employment) that could act as a definitive source of up to date, accurate information about these organisations. For this study, the company database Fame is used in conjunction with trade body membership lists and organisations already known to the researcher. The intent of utilising these sources is to quantify the number of music organisations in Ireland within core music industry sectors (live, recording, publishing) and peripheral sectors (such as education or music magazines), and the number of employees that work for them.

Fame is a product provided by analytics company Bureau Van Dijk that contains information about millions of companies (Fame, 2023). The database of company information, covering Ireland and the UK, is primarily intended for use by accountants, financial researchers, and analysts, and access to this database is provided through DCU. It is not a requirement for existing companies in Ireland to register their information with Fame and the process by which companies are researched for inclusion in the database is not clear, which means it cannot act as a definitive source of information. Nevertheless, in the absence of any centralised database, Fame is the next best option for listings of music organisations. Among the filters provided by the Fame search engine is 'industry classification', whereby users can search for companies within a specific NACE Rev 2. Category (the statistical classification of economic activities used by the European Union, used uniformly by member

states). By identifying the relevant NACE codes for music organisations[5], and searching through the results for each of the codes, a list of potentially eligible music organisations was made. Each of these organisations was then individually verified for inclusion or exclusion (for example, some organisations on the list were no longer in operation, and for some it was clear from their website that only one or two persons worked there). Trade body membership lists were similarly researched, with each organisation individually verified. In most cases, Fame provided employee numbers for each organisation and trends in these numbers over time. For the remainder it was possible to research employee numbers through the organisation's website, LinkedIn company information, and news articles that detail new hires for music organisations (this source was more useful for smaller organisations that would typically hire fewer than ten people). This process cannot produce completely accurate numbers that truly reflect the population at that point in time. But it can produce numbers that are a well-informed estimate based on a systematic method of research, that offers the best possible approximation of the population. The final list of music organisations acted as the pool from which eligible participants were drawn during data collection in 2024.

Eligible participants were defined as people aged eighteen or over who:

- Currently work, or used to work, for music organisations operating in Ireland,
- In paid employment with a formal employment contract,
- Whose role in the organisation is/was positioned within a hierarchy of jobs,
- With the potential for upward mobility *or* decision-making power over the mobility of others,
- Within an organisation in core music industry sectors (live, recording, publishing), *or* within an organisation in peripheral sectors that engages directly with commercial musical works, their creators, or the people and processes involved in leveraging the commercial success of these works and their creators.

The boundaries for a peripheral music organisation's inclusion in the study were defined according to the organisation's overall relationship to core industries and whether or not this relationship forms a substantial part of its operations. Music retail shops, bars and pubs where music activities take place, and music schools that operate on a traditional model of teacher-pupil relationships were excluded from the study. The focus on formal employment contracts identifies a certain group of workers in a certain kind of employment relationship with music organisations, where the terms of the relationship are set out in a written document that has

[5] 18: Printing and reproduction of recorded media; 59: Picture, video and television programmes, sound recording and music publishing activities; 90: Creative, arts and entertainment activities.

legal significance for both parties. This is an ideal type of labour relationship for investigating the functioning of organisational processes and logics in the realities of male and female workers, because these terms are explicitly set out.

Much of the information about who works for music organisations is available on LinkedIn, and during this preparation stage LinkedIn was the primary source of information about who specifically is working for music organisations in Ireland, and the work they do. Websites of music organisations sometimes offer a breakdown of each employee, their name, and their job title. Employee lists were drawn up for each music organisation, with names and job titles, and these lists also included former employees. By making these lists, the researcher was able to get a broad sense of gender and race divisions of labour across all music organisations, and they also acted as a reminder of who the researcher had invited to participate in the research and who they had yet to reach. This was important because the research needed to consciously include workers across multiple hierarchical levels, from a variety of occupations, to account for the impact of power differentials and patterns of segregation related to occupation type. Not all employees of music organisations are on LinkedIn, and it was only possible to view those who listed the organisation name on their profile. Still, these lists accounted for hundreds of potentially eligible participants.

4.3 Data collection

Using the organisation list as a reference, efforts were made to gather data from music organisations of varying ownership types and sizes, across multiple industries, to enable comparisons to be made in the analysis stage, between organisations that are similar and different to each other according to these variables. This was an effort to capture as broad a picture as possible of the realities of workers across Ireland's music organisations.

First, a purposeful nonprobability sampling procedure was applied to the organisation list. This kind of sampling technique is used when the researcher wants to know about a certain kind of population that is 'intrinsically interesting or important for the study' and 'to explore a perceived social problem or issue, or to develop theories that are grounded in the actual experiences' (Henry, 2009, pp.79) of members of that population. This meant that from the organisation list and its accompanying employee list, interview invites were sent to certain people from certain organisations over a period of time. Henry points out that findings from a sample selected this way cannot be generalised to the whole population. But for this research, as time went on, the selective sampling procedure for interviews became far more comprehensive and inclusive, due to difficulties in recruiting interview participants. The

purposeful nature of the procedure loosened from a focus on certain organisations on the list, to a much wider range of organisations, while keeping in mind the need to ensure one type of organisation was not overrepresented. Survey invites to participate in the research were sent to every person identified on the employee lists and were also shared across multiple social media channels including that of one of the most popular music websites in Ireland (Nialler9), and more widely among music industry workers via newsletters and direct emails from the researcher. The researcher also used paid LinkedIn advertisements to advertise the study to workers of every music organisation on the list that could also be found on LinkedIn. Almost 400 survey invites (close to half of the population) were sent directly to these workers from the researcher, in addition to the more widespread advertisement of the study across multiple online platforms.

Key variables for each organisation were listed so that the sampling procedure could ensure a mixture of organisations were targeted (see table 1). Based on the number of workers in each organisation, a desired number of participants was estimated, with the view that each hierarchical level in the organisation would be captured. In each case, the researcher also intended to include at least one former worker for every organisation in the study, because they could offer a unique perspective on their time in the organisation from their outsider position, that is not coloured by loyalty to the organisation or concerns about job security.

Organisation Name	NACE Code	Industry	Size	No. Participants
Www	90	Live	50 workers	8
Xxx	90	Live	6 workers	2
Yyy	18	Recording	23 workers	4
Zzz	59	Publishing	35 workers	6

Table 1: sampling procedure for music organisations.

The chosen survey software was Easy Feedback and the researcher paid a subscription to use the software. Easy Feedback was chosen because it offers visually appealing and smooth user experience, which works well on mobile devices as well as PCs and laptops. It was important that the survey had these qualities, so that respondents would be less likely to drop off from the survey once they started. Easy Feedback also satisfies the university's GDPR requirements, as data is stored and processed exclusively inside the EU. Survey invitations were sent to each worker that could be identified from organisations on the list. The researcher also shared a link to the survey with music industry workers known to them, who themselves were not eligible participants, but were embedded in professional networks with eligible participants. The survey link was shared on social media, directly with music industry workers whose email addresses were publicly available on their websites, and through the alumni newsletter of the researcher's alma mater which teaches music business and performance. The researcher also reached out to the music industry trade bodies in Ireland (PPI, IRMA, AIM) with a request that they share the survey invite with their members, many of whom would be eligible participants. This request was refused in each case (each body is overseen by the same people who are mostly from multinational record companies, and the nature of the project possibly elicited a defensive response from them). As a consequence of this gatekeeping, sending individual invites to each worker was the only viable means of ensuring that the survey gathered responses.

Interview invites were sent predominately through direct messages on LinkedIn, and a smaller number were sent through direct emails, and physical letters. This was in addition to interview participants being recruited through the survey. Interview invites were sent on a phased basis, in a deliberately careful process where a small number of people, from a small number of organisations, were contacted at any one time. Over time this resulted in sixteen music organisations being targeted for inclusion in the interview stage (close to thirty percent of the total number of organisations). This phased process was done to allow these potential participants time to respond, and to test the effectiveness of different approaches, knowing that some organisations would be more difficult than others to gain access due to organisational cultures about openness and disclosures of information. It was also important that the study had a greater number of interviews than numbers of organisations, meaning that from a sample of organisations, multiple workers are interviewed from each, rather than one worker from each organisation. When one participant was gained from an organisation, this motivated a more targeted approach to that organisation, to conduct interviews with a mixture of male and female workers across the organisational hierarchy, from a variety of occupations. No occupation was deemed more important to the study than another, and efforts were made to include office-based roles that deal with internal processes, such as accounting,

and more audience-facing roles, such as event management. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and online (using Zoom) and the audio of each interview was recorded and manually transcribed by the researcher.

4.4 Data analysis

Survey results were exported from Easy Feedback and analysed with SPSS, where an array of bar charts were produced based on variables in the survey. This allowed for clear comparisons to be made between male and female respondents across a range of variables, such as job level, income, family status, and occupation. Graphs from SPSS can be used as both an analytical tool for the researcher and as a tool for communicating findings to an audience (Mott, Stehlik-Barry, Sugrue and Babinec, 2017). Using bar charts to give summaries of data in this way is called descriptive statistics. In a survey of 460 researchers across disciplines and sectors (Jain and Sengar, 2024), the vast majority agreed that SPSS is useful for all kinds of research, as it can produce accurate analyses of data and communicate the results effectively and clearly. Descriptive statistics in quantitative research is useful for presenting an evidence-based argument about business and industry (Adams, Khan and Raeside, 2014), and for interpreting the social dimensions of relationships between variables (Abbott, 2017).

Initially, the researcher experimented with variables in graphs to identify patterns, anomalies, and trends within populations. For example, parents were separated into a sub-set and their answers for certain variables were compared to the answers that workers without children provided for those variables. This exploratory approach gave the researcher a deep familiarity with the data and brought into view variables that required further analysis, and it also confirmed that comparing variable combinations on the basis of sex within each graph was the most effective way of communicating the data. The other option was to split male and female responses into separate graphs and present them side by side. This would have allowed for a greater combination of data points to be used in each graph, but visually speaking, the relationship between male and female respondents was diminished in the process. It is far more useful for the study, and more compatible with the theoretical framework, to make this relationship as clear as possible. This mode of communication also supports the study's endeavour of making clear the impact of the logic of the organisation, and the forms it takes, upon the realities of male and female workers.

In addition to the quantitative analysis of survey results, a qualitative analysis of interview transcripts was conducted. The coding framework was produced from the theories of Acker (2006) and Connell (2021, 2011) and was also informed by the framework produced

by the systematic review of music organisations. Key themes were identified across the transcripts, and evidence of each theme was collected and categorised in a new document for each participant. The researcher did this manually without the use of coding software. The names of themes changed and some themes were split up as more information was gathered, to better reflect the nuances of participant realities and to develop the coding framework in conversation with the data. Drawing from the individual realities of workers, themes were analysed so as to build a broader picture of each organisation, and of the organisations as a group. Additional themes were produced that were more salient with some kinds of organisations than others. This allowed for commonalities to be captured within a heterogeneous picture of Ireland's music organisations.

The kind of thematic analysis applied in this study adopted both a deductive and an inductive approach, where a theoretical framework acted as a lens through which the researcher analysed data, and new themes emerged from this process which impacted upon the coding framework. The intent of adopting this approach was to allow for patterns to be identified and analysed in conjunction with the unique interpretations and perspectives that workers of music organisations have that they use to construct their engagement with the organisation. Social science researchers argue that thematic analysis is useful for studying the world from a constructivist perspective (Jankowiak, Soroko, Pietrzak and Wilk, 2024), and it is a desirable approach as long as it fits with the conceptual framework of the study (Braun and Clarke, 2020). As a critical feminist study interested in interrogating logics and embedded meanings that are implicit in workers' realities and organisational processes, thematic analysis aligns with the study's core intent of uncovering how realities are constructed and put together. The resulting framework produced from the interviews was compared with the results of the survey analysis, to see whether or not any aspects of the framework aligned with patterns or trends in the survey. In this comparison of quantitative and qualitative findings, there was much congruence and agreement between worker realities, which speaks to the suitability of the questions employed by each method.

Evidence of logic, and its gender effects, was identified through an analysis of the official realities of the organisation, and the lived realities of workers. Gendering logics are embedded in and communicated through organisational processes, and have effects that may not be acknowledged or articulated by the organisation. The data collection processes gathered information about these processes, and other aspects of worker's realities, and this picture provided the basis for distinguishing between the official reality of the organisation, and the lived realities of workers. By identifying contradictions between these realities, and looking closely at what actually happens, the meanings at the heart of how the organisation operates

are uncovered. Patterns of contradiction across organisations and their relationship to specific organisational processes, such as reporting procedures and hierarchies, were mapped out and formed the basis of this analysis of logic. Continually, these patterns and relationships were linked to management structures and HRM paradigms, which became the focal point of analysis.

This evidence was distinguished from social norms and culture, which relate to shared understandings amongst workers of conventions, how things are done, and what behaviour is appropriate (Breen, Tosto, Dignum and Hofstede, 2011). Culture and norms can be directed by the organisation through its processes, such as policies and training programmes, and they inform the practices of workers in the organisation. Logic is an embedded feature of the organisational processes themselves that are used to shape culture and norms, and this study paid close attention to organisational processes when collecting data from participants. The effects of logic can be at odds with shared understandings of how things are done, such as beliefs in reward and meritocracy, and with the stated intentions of the organisation when trying to enact change. Logic is connected to organisational culture and norms, but has a relationship to organisational processes distinct from these aspects of life in the organisation.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics in research can broadly be understood as 'the study of what researchers ought and ought not to do and how this should be decided' (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012, pp.16). Most commonly there is focus on procedures and rules, and though there may be different stances on ethical principles in research (Jones, 2015), oversight and regulation in academic research is usually governed by the university and a code of ethics that researchers must prove themselves capable of satisfying prior to conducting fieldwork. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the DCU Faculty Research Ethics Committee prior to commencing data collection. This process involved giving a detailed overview of who the eligible participants of the study were, how they would be contacted, how their data would be collected, stored, and disposed of, and any ethical issues that could arise during the course of research. The Committee asked for clarity about certain matters, such as the suitability of the survey software for GDPR requirements, and through this back and forth between the Committee and the researcher, the decision was made to approve the study. The researcher also sought additional guidance from the university's Data Protection Unit during this process.

This process produced two documents: a consent form, and information sheet, which both survey and interview participants were presented with prior to their participation. The

information sheet contained pertinent information about the purpose of the study, data protection and anonymity, researcher, supervisor and university contact details, and examples of how participant information would be presented in the study. The consent form confirmed with participants that they understood each of the terms set out in the information sheet.

Ethical issues were considered by the researcher in the early stages of the study. The biggest concern related to participant privacy and confidentiality and how best to protect it. Jones (2015) points out that getting access to organisations can be challenging when conducting interviews with workers, because this method seeks to gather information directly from insiders, as opposed to gathering information from publicly available sources. Participants are likely to be concerned about their identity being revealed by the research, especially if they are disclosing sensitive information about their experience in the organisation, about organisational processes or practices, or if they are voicing criticism of the organisation. These concerns could dissuade people from participating in the study to begin with, and could cause them to restrict their contributions if they do agree to be interviewed. Anonymity was promised to each participant, and the procedure through which this would be guaranteed was communicated. No person or organisational name are communicated in any publication or discussion of the research, interview transcripts are anonymised and stored on the DCU Google Drive account of the researcher, audio recordings will be deleted at the end of the study, and participants were assigned an alpha-numerical pseudonym (such as 13A) in the researcher's personal records. When using a direct quote from participants, they are identified only by their sex and seniority, and care is taken when making reference to the organisation's industries and occupations so that readers will not be able to decipher who the organisation is. Given how small Ireland's music industries are, extra precautions need to be taken with respect to what features of organisations and workers are shared, when they are shared, and how they are shared in conjunction with each other. This necessarily imposes limitations in how findings are presented. In addition to providing assurances to participants, promises of confidentiality can support the validity of data (Ong and Weiss, 2000) because participants are more likely to provide honest answers if they know that they will not be identified. On the other hand, participants could make inflammatory statements about colleagues more easily, if they know that they will not be held accountable. Because it is not possible to judge whether or not participants are being truthful in their answers, this kind of trade off is the best option available to the researcher. Ensuring that workers feel as comfortable as possible in being as honest as possible is the priority.

Another ethical concern related to adverse emotional consequences for participants who share experiences of physical or psychological harm, or discrimination in the workplace.

Maintaining professional boundaries as a researcher, while also being sensitive to the emotional state of participants who disclose personal issues, is a balancing act marked by 'inevitably fuzzy' boundaries (Carter, Banks, Armstrong, Kindon and Burkett, 2013, pp.99). In an experimental study of female participants disclosing traumatic experiences, Decker, Naugle, Carter-Visscher, Bell and Seifert (2011) found that very few reported any negative emotional impact from participation, and that this corresponds with a review of similar research contexts. If there is a chance of participants experiencing adverse emotional consequences as a result of participation, the researcher has a duty to mitigate against this, in as much as they can as a researcher. Prior to the interview, participants were provided with a list of phone helplines and websites for services that could assist them if they wished to discuss any of the issues they brought up during the interview (such as the Workplace Relations Commission).

4.6 Limitations

Some authors argue that generalisations cannot be made from non-probability sampling (Connaway and Powell, 2010). Others argue that the generalisations made through probability sampling, and any sampling procedure, are questionable (Williamson, 2018; Patton, 2015), because the contexts and conditions that underlie any evidence gathered are changeable, and cannot be understood as universal. Samples only provide the researcher with the ability to extrapolate 'the likely applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical conditions' (Patton, 2015, pp.713). The interview data offers an in-depth understanding of realities in their specific contexts, and the survey data complements this with a broad level understanding of realities across contexts. Combined, they provide a sufficiently wide-ranging, indicative overview of the realities of workers.

The study relies on the interpretations of workers to provide the researcher with an understanding of these realities. Observational methods would have provided the researcher with a direct view of how the organisation operates and the relations between workers. Observation is considered a useful method of studying actual behaviours in organisations, and can help researchers understand their role in constructing relations between workers of different hierarchical levels (Meinecke, Klonek and Kauffeld, 2016). As a previously unresearched population, untested by methods of feminist inquiry, the researcher judged that a reliance on observations carried too much risk of yielding a small sample. Not having any evidence of how amenable music organisations are to observation, coupled with the impression of music organisations as protective of their internal processes (based on news reports discussed in the introduction), led the researcher to choose interviews as the most

suitable method for gaining access.

4.7 Concluding remarks

This study investigates the logic of music organisations in Ireland by allowing the standpoints of male and female workers to act as windows into their realities. The theoretical framework guides this feminist inquiry, in a flexible and responsive conversation with the contributions of participants. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry through survey and interviews, the study develops a critical feminist framework for theorising the gendering and racialising class relations of Ireland's music organisations, that draws from in-depth context specific realities and broad level interpretations of realities. The logic of the organisation is the entry point for this theorising, and by asking questions about the ordinary processes of the organisation, and the practices that people employ in their work, the form of this logic and its embedded assumptions and meanings are brought to light. The functioning of this logic is outlined in the following chapters, which present a high-level overview of Ireland's music organisations, in addition to a close examination of key findings.

5. Findings

5.1 Introduction

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. Ireland's music organisations and their workforce are quantified, which answers the research question regarding measuring the population. This allowed the study to gain an overview of divisions of labour across the country's music industries, and to apply a sampling method during data collection that was designed to be proportional to the population in question. Evidence of organisational processes and practices was provided by both interview and survey participants, and key themes emerged which spoke to shared realities among workers, and gendering realities for male and female workers. These processes and practices are the form that logic takes, and this evidence, in conjunction with analyses of their impact upon male and female workers, answers the remaining research questions. Altogether, these findings and the discussion presented in chapter six develop a critical feminist framework for investigating the role of management paradigms in shaping the relationship between music organisations and workers, and the gender effects of the logic of these paradigms. This logic is analysed in detail in chapter six, where a discussion of paradox, the main theoretical contribution of the study, is presented.

5.2 The population of music organisations in Ireland

Based on the methods applied to quantify the number of music organisations in Ireland and the number of people employed by them, this study quantifies the number of music organisations in Ireland as fifty-six and the number of people employed by them as approximately 800, as of 2024. Observations made during this process also highlight how some music organisations in Ireland are exclusively the racial majority (white workers), and most organisations are almost entirely the racial majority. Where racial minorities are employed, they are almost always at junior levels, and seldom number more than one or two persons in the organisation.

Of these fifty-six, the majority are in the private sector, and a smaller proportion are public sector or not-for-personal-profit. Several organisations receive public funds through grants or partnerships. Fifty percent are in the live sector, and this sector holds sixty-one percent of the 800 jobs. By comparison, twenty-eight percent of organisations are in the recording sector, where there are eleven percent of jobs, and eleven percent of organisations are in the music publishing sector where there are eleven percent of jobs. Seven percent of organisations are in the education sector with fourteen percent of jobs, and four percent are in music magazine publishing with three percent of jobs. Eighty percent of total jobs are

located in ten organisations, and forty-five percent in four organisations. The largest organisations are in the live sector, followed by the education and publishing sectors. The smallest organisations are most concentrated in the recording sector, with half employing fewer than ten people. The live and education sectors are similar in their ratio of jobs to the number of organisations, where very few organisations hold the majority of jobs, and these organisations usually have at least fifty employees.

The survey gathered seventy responses from workers currently or formerly employed by music organisations in Ireland. With fifty-eight respondents currently employed by an organisation, the survey captures seven percent of people employed by music organisations in Ireland at the time that data was collected. Given the small population of workers, this response rate provides meaningful insight into realities, as the patterns that emerge are indicative of the formalised and established practices that take place in music organisations.

5.3 Survey: The gendering and racialising class relations of music organisations

Of the seventy survey respondents, thirty-seven are female, and thirty-three are male. Thirty-six of the female respondents are women, thirty-three of the male respondents are men, and one of the female respondents selected non-binary. The survey data is presented predominately as comparisons by sex. Additional graphs for the data presented in this section are listed in the Appendix.

All respondents are 'white'. Data on sex and race corresponds with data from interviews, and observations of divisions of labour from the data gathering process where employee lists for each eligible music organisation were made using information from LinkedIn and the organisation's website. Most respondents are Irish (figure 10), and one person opted out of this question by selecting 'no statement'. A small number of respondents chose multiple options for this question, usually choosing Irish with another ethnicity.

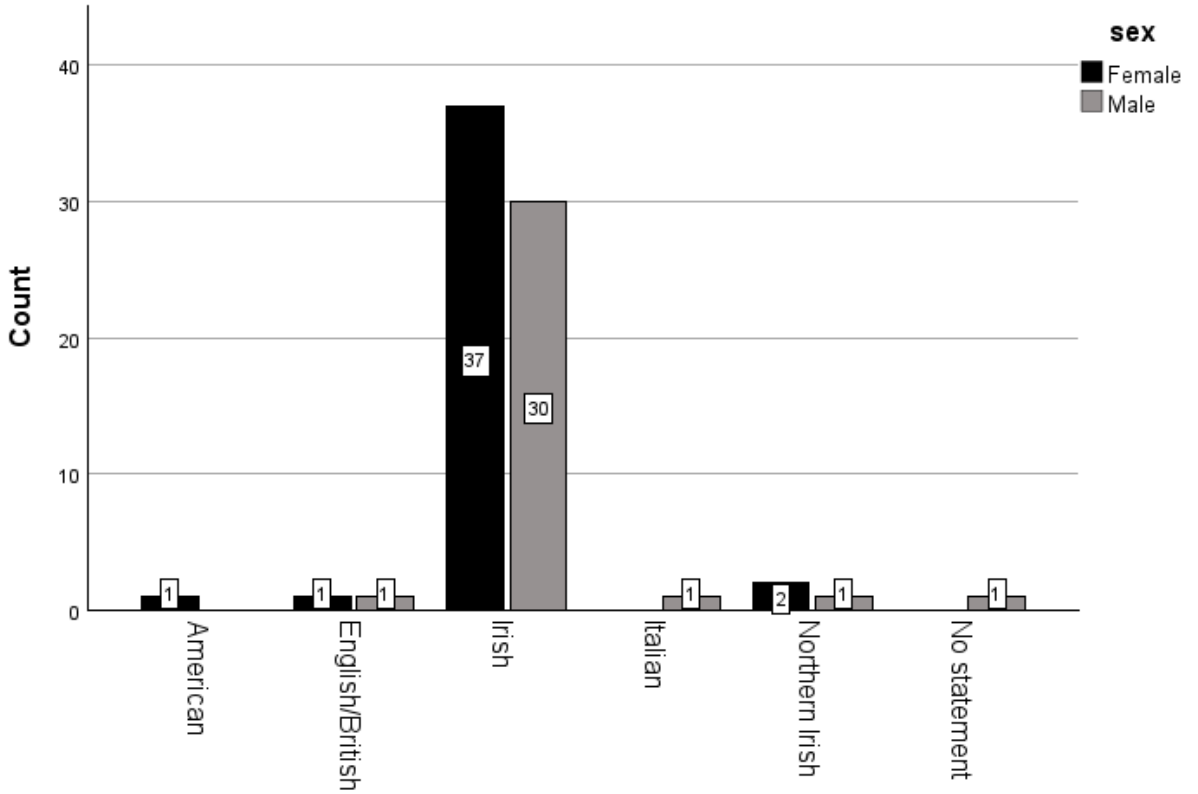


Figure 10: All respondents, their ethnicity (respondents could select multiple options)

Data is primarily derived from workers who are currently employed by a music organisation (twenty-seven female, thirty-one male). The remainder are former employees (ten female, two male). The discussion of data in this chapter combines responses from current and former workers, unless otherwise specified. Looking at both groups of respondents, sixty-seven percent (twenty-four female, twenty-three male) are in full-time permanent employment with a music organisation.

Findings from a survey of nearly 2,000 women working in music industries across the US (Prior, Barra and Kramer, 2019) found that forty-seven percent of respondents with a primary job in music industries also hold a secondary music-related job. Artists across cultural industries tend to hold multiple jobs (Hesmondhalgh, 2019) due to a number of factors including insecure working conditions and low pay. For sixty-three respondents (thirty-four female, twenty-nine male), their primary job (primary source of income) is with a music organisation, and the remaining seven (three female, four male) stated that their music organisation job is not their primary source of income. When asked if they hold any secondary jobs (secondary source of income) with music organisations, nineteen (ten female, nine male) said they do, and fifty-one (twenty-seven female, twenty-four male) said they do not. Thirteen respondents (seven female, six male) said yes to both questions about primary and secondary jobs. To account for workers who might hold other jobs outside of music industries,

respondents were also asked if they hold any non-music industry jobs in addition to their music organisation job. Fifty-eight do not (twenty-eight female, thirty male), and twelve do (nine female, three male). Data indicates that 'double jobbing' for employees of music organisations is uncommon but still happening in small numbers, and that those whose primary source of income is with a music organisation tend to keep this as their sole employment with music organisations. Ninety percent of respondents depend on their music organisation job as their primary source of income, and for analytical purposes the majority of the following analysis focuses on their data, though data from those whose music organisation job is their secondary source of income is still discussed where appropriate.

Responses by sector for thirty-four female and twenty-nine male respondents (figure 11) tally with patterns that were observed during the data collection stage: activities in the live and publishing sectors are more often carried out by women than men, and more men than women are carrying out activities in the recording sector and the education sector. Respondents were allowed to select multiple sectors, which means that these figures represent the spread of job-related activities by men and women across sectors, rather than unique jobs carried out by men and women in each sector. The secondary jobs of nineteen respondents (ten female, nine male) are spread predominately across the education, live, and recording sectors. Similar gender patterns are seen here, which is in part due to the thirteen respondents who are represented across both data sets working in largely the same sectors in both their primary and secondary jobs.

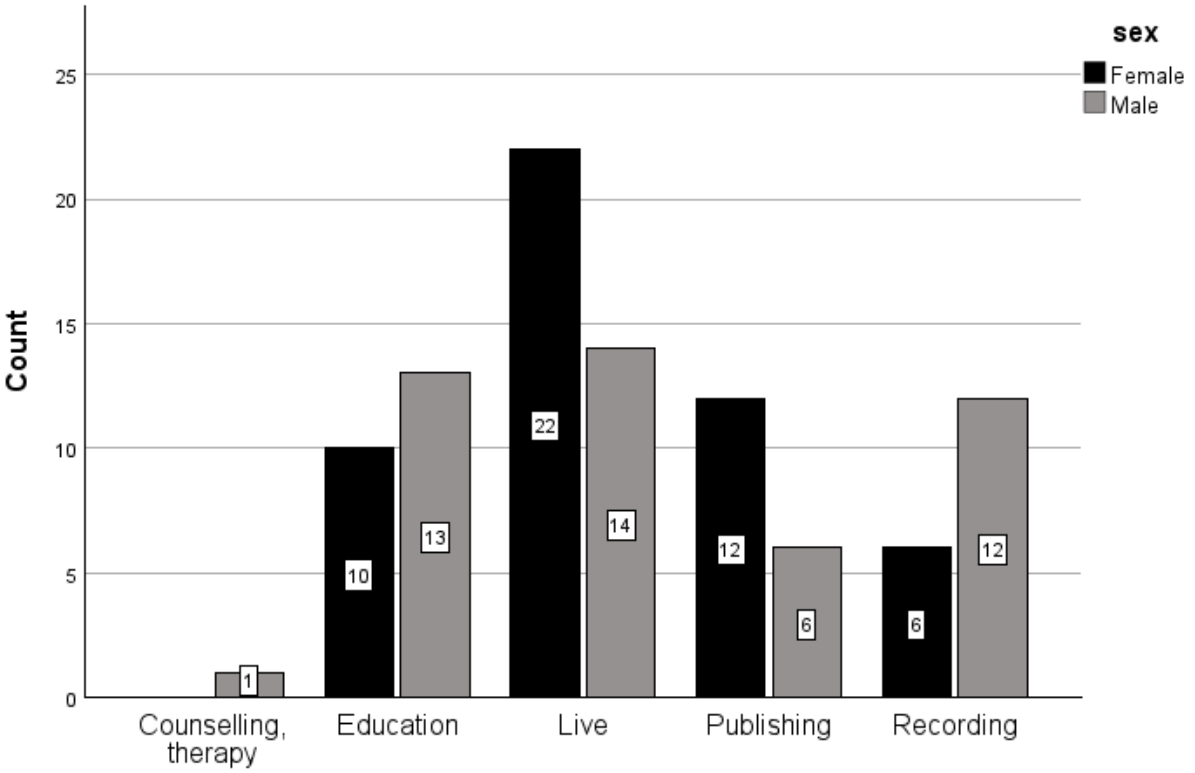


Figure 11: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, their sector(s)

The annual income of respondents with primary jobs in music organisations is predominately between €20,000 and €100,000 per year (figure 12). In the live and publishing sectors, more female than male respondents reported carrying out activities in these sectors, and there are more female than male respondents within this earnings range. In the recording and education sectors, there are more male than female respondents reporting carrying out activities, and within this earnings range, they similarly outnumber female respondents.

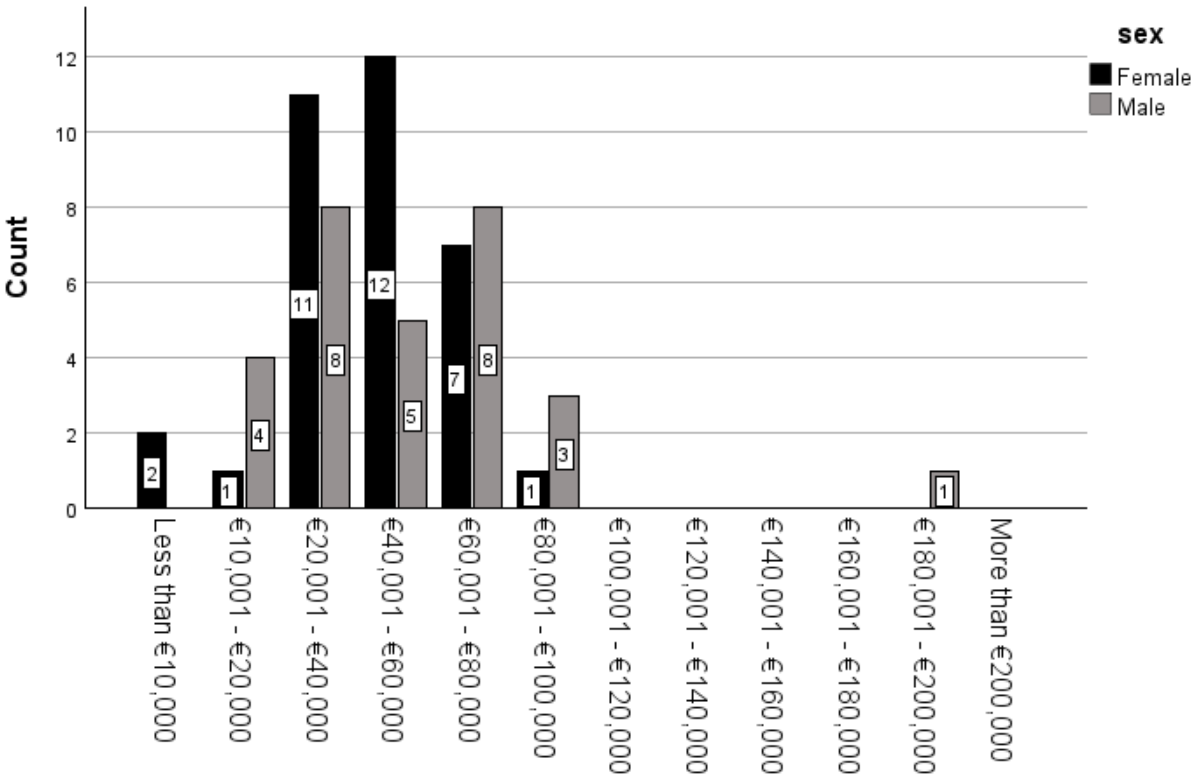


Figure 12: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, their annual income

Given that there is no publicly available centralised data about music organisations in Ireland maintained by the CSO or government departments, it's not possible to make comparisons with existing datasets. The overall ownership structure observed across these fifty-six music organisations is reflected in the survey data. Roughly equal numbers of respondents are working in the private sector (eighteen female, twenty male), and there are more female than male respondents in the public sector (seven female, four male) and not-for-personal-profit sector (nine female, five male).

Though it is impossible to determine if respondents are only from these fifty-six organisations. It is also impossible to determine if all respondents understood terms such as 'public sector' or 'transnational' with the same meaning that was intended by the survey. Definitions of terms were provided in each case. It was possible to make this evaluation of a small number of respondents who provided their organisation information at the end when they volunteered to be interviewed. There was some confusion about 'localised' versus 'national', and 'multinational' versus 'transnational' when asked about the distribution of their organisation, with a small proportion of these respondents incorrectly choosing one over the other. Workers generally do not have to think about their organisation in the way that this study does, and it may be the case that this survey was the first time many of them had ever

had to think about ownership structure, distribution, or organisation size. As is the case with any survey of this kind, the complete accuracy of responses cannot be guaranteed.

Much of what we know about gender divisions of labour in music organisations comes from industry reports, where data about occupations within sectors, and gender hierarchies are dissected, for example Smith, Pieper, Moore and Wheeler (2025) compare executive level jobs in music companies across sectors in the US. However, overall data about how many male and female employees there are across music sectors in any one country is rarely provided. One study (Jaguar Foundation, 2022) quantified the UK's live sector by using LinkedIn profiles of people associated with live music companies, and found that of these profiles, forty-three percent are female and fifty-one percent are male (six percent were unattributable). A study of sixteen European countries found that forty-three percent of workers at music venues and clubs are female, and fifty-seven percent are male (Dee, 2023). The live sector is repeatedly presented as one where women are most represented, as an almost even split. This study does not identify any reports that give an overall figure for the recording sector in any country, but reports (Smith et al., 2025; Smith et al., 2021) and academic studies (Laurie, 2014) argue that the recording sector is male dominated. Observations from the data gathering stage also suggest that organisations in Ireland's live and recording sectors follow the same pattern, which is also indicated by the survey.

Comparisons with existing data from other countries, and other sectors in Ireland, must be contextualised against the size of Ireland's music industries, the number of organisations it has, and crucially, the size of each of these organisations. The number of male or female respondents in any sector is affected when there are large organisations in some sectors and not others, thus offering more opportunities for employment in that sector for male or female workers. Among respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, thirty percent are in small organisations (ten to forty-nine employees, twelve female, nine male), twenty-seven percent are in medium organisations (fifty to 249 employees, eight female, eleven male), seventeen are in large organisations (250 or more employees, eight female, four male), and sixteen are in micro organisations (fewer than ten employees, six female, five male). Of the seven respondents whose music organisation job is not their primary income, two male are in micro organisations, one female and one male are in small organisations, one female and one male are in medium organisations, and one female is in a large organisation. Total figures for organisation size are provided in table two.

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Female	6	13	9	9
Male	7	10	12	4
Total	**13**	**23**	**21**	**13**

Table 2: All respondents, the size of their organisation

Looking at small and medium sized organisations where sixty-three percent of all respondents are from (figure 13), results indicate that the activities of music organisations are predominately across the live and education sectors. Though these numbers are not representative, they do correspond with the sector breakdown of the fifty-six organisations in Ireland.

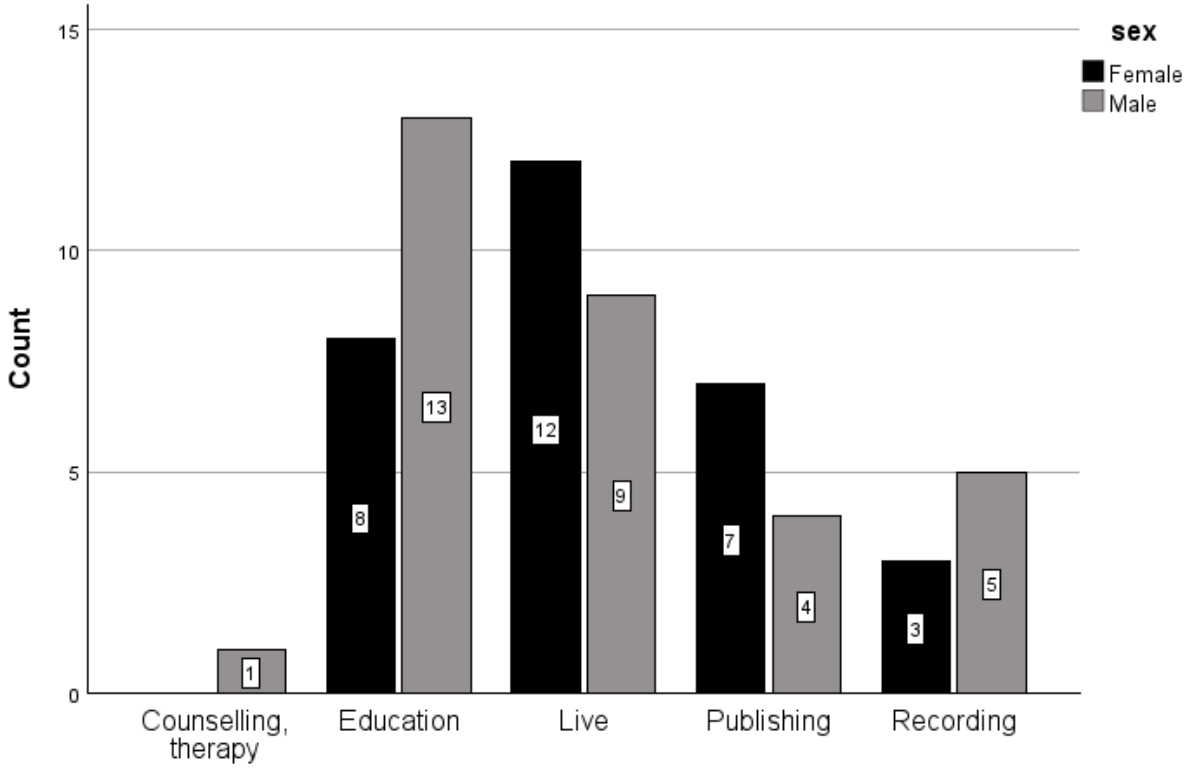


Figure 13: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, in a small or medium sized organisation, their sector(s)

Analyses of gender and jobs in media and cultural industries identify the segregation of occupations by sex, where women carry out traditionally feminised roles (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015; Banks and Milestone, 2011). Looking at the overall distribution across occupational roles (figure 14), results indicate that PR/marketing roles in music organisations are more often carried out by women than men (eighteen female, seven male). The role that men are most represented in is teaching/education (nine men and six women). Women's strong association with caring, nurturing and educational roles aligns with some of this data.

Why we see more men in education roles is most likely due to the focus of education organisations in some sectors being on music business education and industry expertise - the know-how that makes you a desirable employee, which is strongly masculinised. Data also suggests that men are more evenly spread across roles than women, with smaller relative differences between occupational roles. Women's representation across roles is marked by a pattern of larger relative difference, with their highest peak in PR/marketing tallying with the feminisation of this role in music industries (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015; Negus, 1992) and the occupation more generally (Yeomans, 2019).

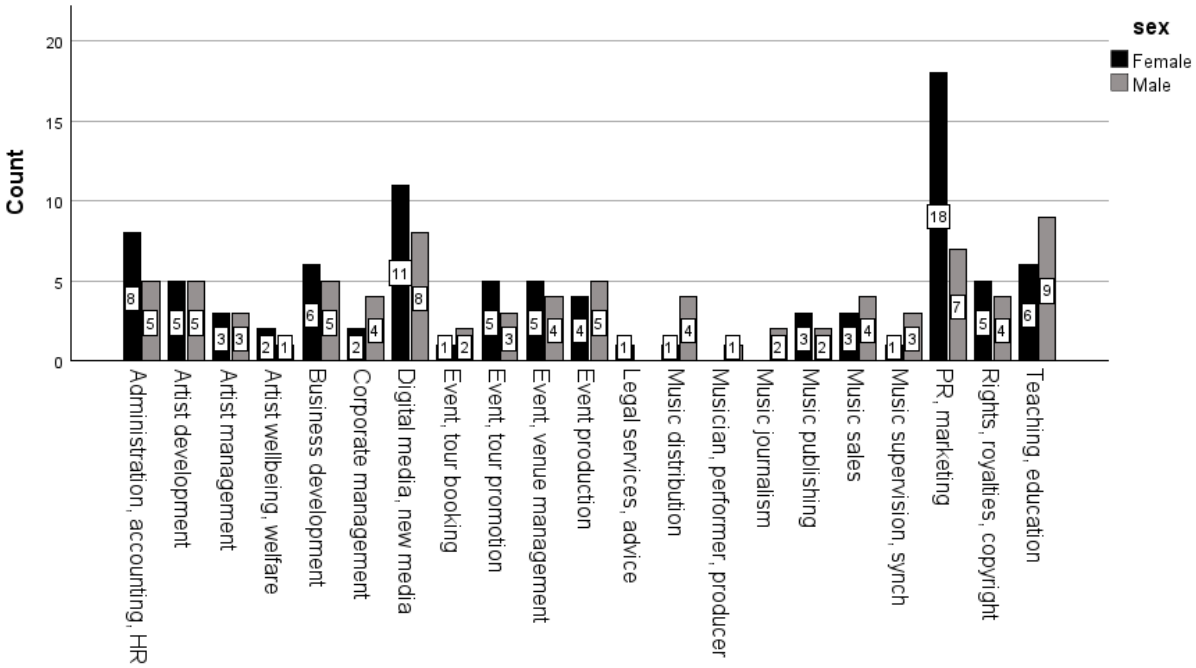


Figure 14: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, their job roles

Because jobs are highly concentrated in a small number of large organisations, if any of these organisations' hiring practices favour male workers over female workers, for example by hiring through personal networks of male workers already employed by the organisation, then this can have a large impact upon the gendering of that sector. The number of jobs an organisation offers across junior, middle, and senior levels is also a factor in the gendering of music sectors and organisations. Large organisations have greater numbers of junior-level and middle-level jobs than others. In line with the dominant structure observed across these fifty-six organisations, as you move up the organisational hierarchy, the number of jobs decreases. Looking at seniority (figure 15), male respondents are more evenly spread across job levels than female respondents, and are more often in senior jobs. Female respondents are most represented in middle-level jobs, and these numbers drop off at higher levels.

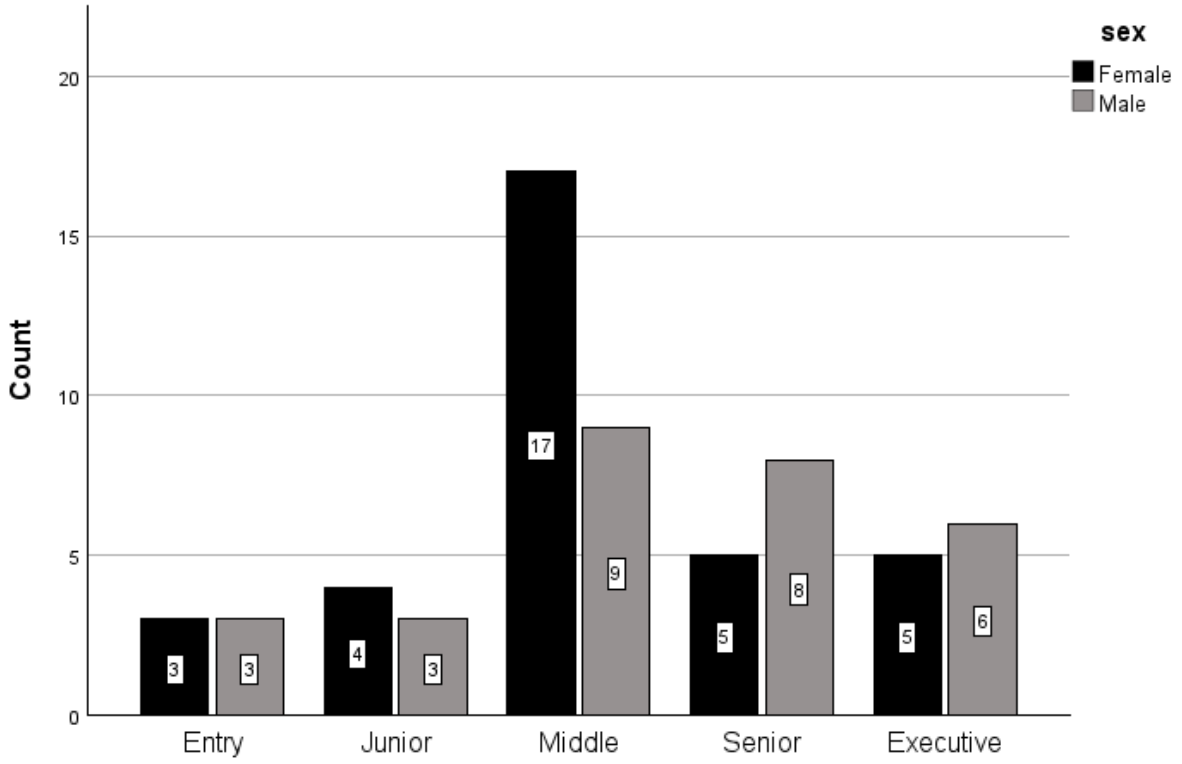


Figure 15: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, their job level

Female respondents outnumber males at junior (entry and junior combined) and middle level across the live (fourteen female, six male), publishing (ten female, three male), and recording sectors (five female, two male). At senior level (senior and executive combined), male respondents are represented in greater numbers than females in the recording sector (figure 16).

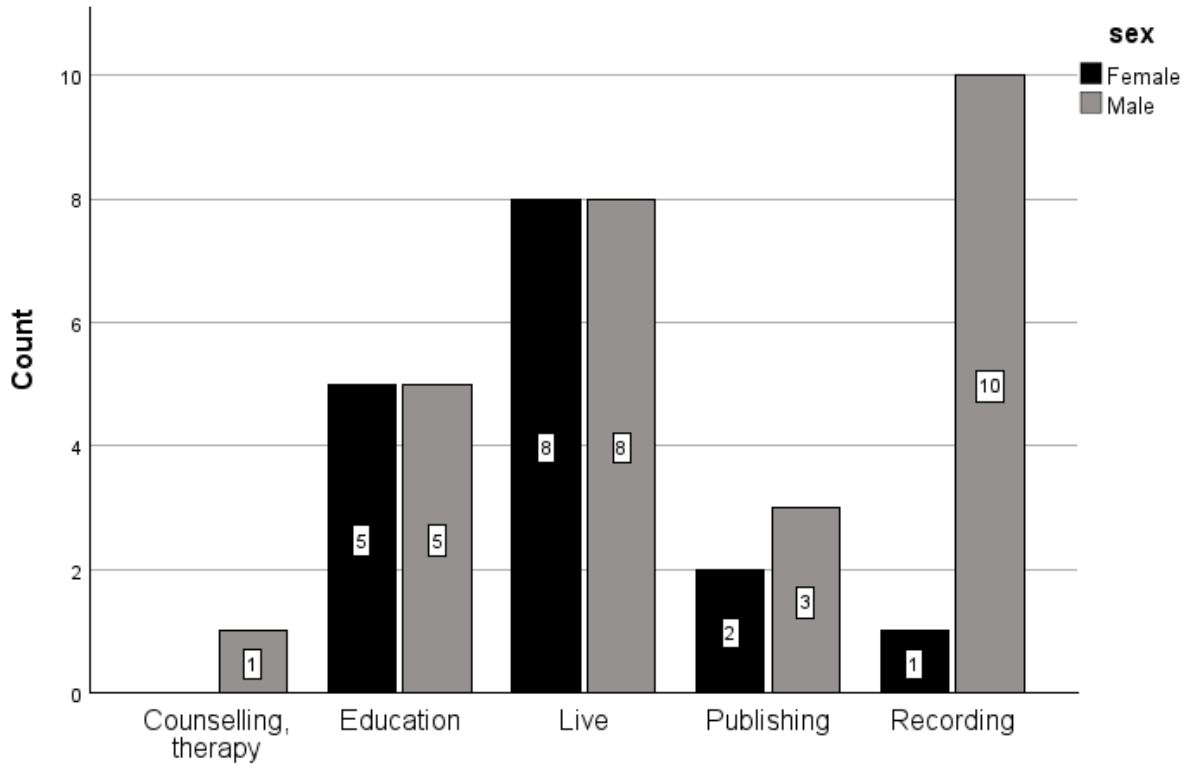


Figure 16: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, at senior level, their sector(s)

At senior level, male respondents are earning more than females in annual income: five females and nine males are earning between €60,000 and €100,000 and one male is earning more than €100,000. As most respondents selected multiple sectors when answering the survey, it is not possible to identify any one sector as the one with the highest income. The boundaries between sectors defined here are purely for analytical purposes - in practice, music sectors are interwoven, and the activities of workers for music organisations reflect this.

The gendering of organisational hierarchies by sector needs to be contextualised against their size and structure. In organisations that seldom grow in size, where people stay in their jobs for a long time, gender divisions of labour can be slow to change. Organisations that have historically been male dominated continue to be so. There may be more opportunity for these divisions to change when there are more jobs available for people to move into, when they are vacated. This is assuming that there is some kind of 'natural progress' happening regarding gender, and that there are no gendering practices happening within the organisation impacting upon access to jobs. But there are such practices happening in these organisations. Two important factors that inform how jobs are allocated are discussed in detail in chapter six - the private allocation of jobs, and parenthood. These topics are first explored here with findings from the survey.

5.3.1 The private allocation of jobs

Of the seventy survey respondents, thirty-three percent (eleven female, twelve male) have been offered a promotion that they did not ask for. This practice is evidenced across the live, publishing, recording, and education industries, and across job roles. It would appear that *some* male and female workers benefit from the private allocation of jobs, while others do not.

Of these respondents, men outnumber women in the recording and education industries, and women outnumber men in the live and publishing industries. This may in part be influenced by the live sector being the sector most selected by women and the most popular sector overall (twenty-two female respondents, fourteen male respondents) and the publishing sector being the second most popular sector selected by women (twelve female respondents, six male respondents) thus potentially increasing the likelihood of the reality of the private allocation of jobs for women in these sectors being captured by the survey. That being said, the live sector is also the sector most selected by men - a pattern of men being more evenly spread across sectors is observed in this data. There are almost twice as few men represented in the recording sector (twelve male respondents, six female respondents), yet their access to privately allocated jobs as promotions in this sector is at a higher rate than women's access in the live sector, despite women's larger presence there.

Among the nineteen respondents (primary job) who have been offered a promotion without asking for one, there are seven males and three females in senior-level jobs (senior and executive combined) who have benefited from this practice. At senior level, this practice is more commonly reported in the recording sector, for men. At middle level, there are four females and two males who have potentially benefited from this practice. Results indicate that the practice of privately allocating jobs is an important consideration for analyses of the gendering of jobs and hierarchies.

The practice of privately allocating jobs appears to be happening in organisations regardless of sector, and regardless of job level. The reasons behind the private allocation of jobs are presented and analysed in chapter five. One argument that could be put forward is that these people were offered these jobs because they were meeting the expectations and requirements (E&R) of their current job to a high level. In other words, management evaluated their performance positively and rewarded that person.

All respondents provided their own evaluation of how well they understand the E&R of their job. This question was asked in order to get a sense of how the E&R of jobs are constructed in the realities of workers. The majority of respondents carry out their job with some degree of clarity as to what is expected of them. Fifty-four percent (eighteen female,

sixteen male) are somewhat clear, though only thirty-eight percent (twelve female, twelve male) would go so far as to say they are very clear about this.

This data speaks to individual perceptions of E&R. It does not tell us about the gender effects of the E&R of jobs, or how these E&R are constructed by organisational processes. Chapter five discusses the E&R of senior-level jobs with close attention to sex and implicit constructions of the ideal worker (Acker, 2006). Some of the gender effects of organisational processes for the allocation of jobs can be explored here with respect to how respondents answered questions about parenthood and the relationship between the organisation and the home.

5.3.2 Parenthood

Among the seventy participants, eleven are fathers living with their children, compared to three mothers. Three respondents (two female, one male) are living with children who are both under and over eighteen. One mother works at senior level compared to eight fathers. The survey does not capture data from parents who are not living with their children. This is because the significance of sharing a home with children and the additional caring responsibilities that this brings is what the study seeks to interrogate.

The small number of mothers in the survey corresponds with findings from interviews, where parents are more often at senior level and most of these parents are fathers. Mothers who were interviewed spoke about the absence of other mothers at senior level in their organisation. Overall, data suggests that there are more fathers employed by music organisations than mothers. Among the fourteen parents living with children who answered the survey, four (two female, two male) have both primary and secondary jobs with music organisations.

Comparing the number of hours respondents who are not living with children work with respondents who are living with children, men's hours are little changed, and most continue to work at least forty hours a week (seven fathers). Of the few women with children in the survey, two are working fewer than forty hours a week. For those four parents who are 'double jobbing' with music organisations, both men are working longer hours in both their primary and secondary jobs compared to both women.

The gender arrangements of work in nuclear households tend to follow a pattern whereby fathers participate less than mothers in caring and domestic work at home. Even when mothers are also working outside the home, fathers' participation in childcare and housework does not increase to comparative levels and mothers' share remains higher

(Connell, 2011; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2010). Patterns of women spending more time on caring and domestic work and men spending less time may be influenced by a number of factors: the divergent gendering expectations of motherhood and fatherhood, whether or not respondents work from home, and if they have access to childcare. The E&R of the job, and the demands on workers in higher level jobs also play a role in workers prioritising the organisation over the home.

When comparing the hours of domestic work carried out by men who do not live with children, with fathers who do, the effect of parenthood appears minimal. When male respondents do not have children, none report caring/domestic work above twenty-five hours per week. When they do, eighteen percent (two fathers) report caring/domestic work above thirty-six hours. Yet, eighty-one percent still report hours of twenty or below. Men remain in the lower range of caring/domestic hours across both data sets, while women are in two different ranges depending on whether or not they have children. For the two male participants who reported thirty-six or more hours of caring/domestic work, these respondents have children under eighteen years old and do not live with a partner, meaning they likely have full responsibility for caring and domestic work. Though there are few mothers in the survey, these responses correspond with what mothers and fathers described when they were interviewed - that long standing gender patterns in the home persist in conjunction with narratives of women's economic participation and 'equality' in the workplace.

Fathers with female partners spend twenty hours or less on caring/domestic work. All parents who live with partners are in heterosexual relationships. The aspect that is missing from this data is whether or not the partners of parents in the survey are also working outside of the home, or if they are full-time parents. In the relationships observed here, fathers with female partners spend more time in their job than they do carrying out childcare or domestic work at home. The two fathers without female partners report carrying out more time on caring and domestic work than their job. The mother without a male partner reported the same reality. It is suggested from this data that fathers are enabled to prioritise their job when they have a female partner. There is no data to suggest that the reverse would be true for mothers with male partners due to low numbers, but the realities reported by interview participants demonstrate that mothers do not decrease their time spent on childcare in a comparable fashion to fathers when they live with a partner.

Of the ten female respondents in total at senior level in a primary job, one is a mother living with children. Of the fourteen male respondents at senior level in a primary job, seven are fathers living with children. Being able to commit more time to the organisation becomes more important when you are at senior level. Senior-level jobs in music organisations typically

entail long working hours and evening work, which was detailed by senior-level interviewees. Among the ten parents who live with male or female partners there is one mother who lives with a male partner, and nine fathers who live with a female partner. Of the seven fathers with a primary job, five are at senior level. The only mother at senior level does not live with a partner. This mother reported spending forty-one to fifty hours at their job, and thirty-one to forty-five hours on caring and domestic work. Amongst senior-level parents, five fathers carry out twenty or fewer hours of caring and domestic work every week, and these are the respondents with female partners.

It would make sense that when workers become parents, they have less time to spend on their job, due to childcare responsibilities. The conflict of demands between the organisation and the home can be mitigated against if parents have the resources to pay for childcare, have relatives who can help with childcare, or if they have a partner who is a full-time parent. This survey did not gather extra information about the specifics of respondents' childcare arrangements. Of the fathers at senior level, those with female partners spend at least twice as many hours at their job than they do on caring and domestic work. These fathers are spending as much time at their job as a senior-level worker without children in their home.

The final part of this analysis concerns respondents reporting on their ability to balance the demands of the organisation with the demands of the home. These questions measured perceptions of the conflict between the organisation and the home, and how easy, difficult, or impossible this conflict is to manage, with a sliding scale of 'never', 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always'. Sixty-six percent of respondents not living with children (twenty-two female, fifteen male) report that they 'never' cannot balance the demands of the organisation with the demands of the home. Thirty-five percent of respondents (one female, four male) who do live with children reported the same. Forty-three percent of parents living with children (one female, five male) 'sometimes' cannot balance these demands compared to twenty-three percent of respondents not living with children. Fourteen percent of parents (one female, one male) 'often' cannot balance these demands and seven percent (one male) 'always' cannot balance these demands, compared to nine percent, and two percent of respondents not living with children, respectively.

The ambiguity of this measurement is that it does not determine in which direction the conflict is pointing. Is it that the demands of the home are in conflict with their attempts to favour the demands of the job? Or are the demands of the job in conflict with their attempts to favour the home? What this means for fathers compared to mothers is a matter of knowing their own individual orientation - are they leaning towards the job or the home to begin with?

This survey does not provide those answers. But evidence provided by parents who were interviewed does provide some answers, discussed in chapter six.

When asked how often they find it difficult (a lesser degree of conflict to 'cannot') to manage these demands, thirty percent of respondents not living with children reported 'never' compared to fourteen percent of parents living with children (figure 54). Twenty-one percent of parents (one female, two male) always find it 'difficult' compared to zero percent of respondents not living with children. Some common ground is established, where sixty-four percent of parents (two female, seven male) living with children reported 'sometimes', compared to fifty-five percent of respondents not living with children. It may be the case that there are other demands on respondents not living with children not captured here. It could also be due to the orientation of these respondents within the conflict itself, and the E&R of the job which apply to all workers, regardless of family status.

Looking across the board at the responses to these questions, parents who live with children consistently report a higher degree of difficulty in managing the relationship between the organisation and the home than respondents not living with children. Seventy-one percent of respondents not living with children reported that they 'often' or 'always' find it easy to balance these demands compared to twenty-eight percent of parents living with children (one female, three male). Just over sixty percent of parents (two female, seven male) 'sometimes' find it easy. Almost the same number 'sometimes' cannot balance these demands at all. Of these parents, three (all male) are at senior level, and three (one female, two male) are at middle level.

5.3.3 Class and the wider picture

The most popular regions for respondents' primary and/or secondary education are Dublin, and the Eastern/Mid-East region (figure 17). Respondents could select multiple options for this question. Six respondents did not complete their primary or secondary education in the Republic of Ireland and did not answer this question. Of all seventy respondents, seventy-six percent attended a publicly aided secondary school (twenty-eight female, twenty-five male), twenty percent attended a private secondary school (nine female, five male) and three male respondents were unsure which they attended. Ninety-seven percent hold a third level qualification (thirty-sex female, thirty-one male), thirty-four percent have done a Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) course (seven female, seventeen male), and thirty percent (eleven female, ten male) have attended an education institution that prepares students for music performance or industry work (such as the British and Irish Modern Music Institute (BIMM)). Just fifty-one

percent (eighteen female, eighteen male) reported that their employment with music organisations relates to their education.

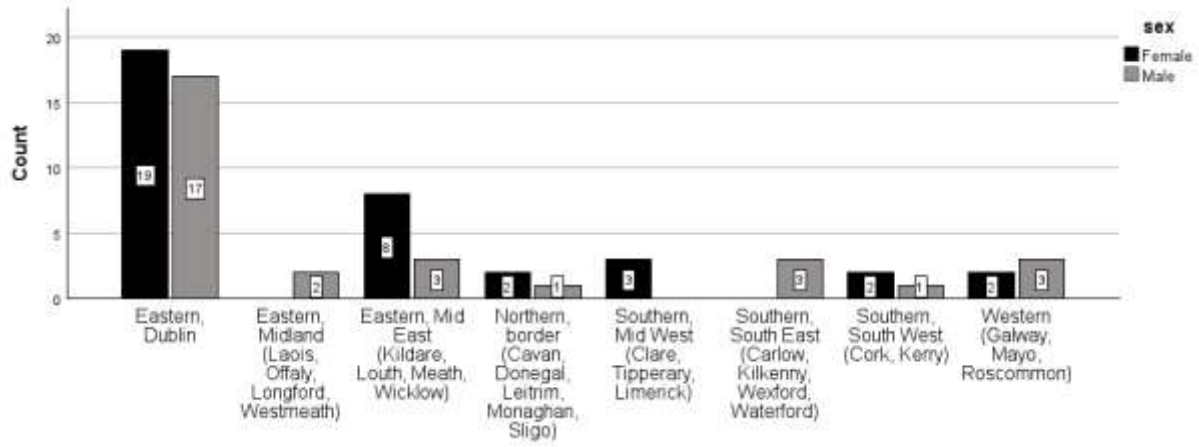


Figure 17: All respondents whose primary and/or secondary education took place in the Republic of Ireland, the counties this education took place in.

Overall, men have spent a greater number of years working for music organisations than women (figure 18). Two thirds of women who have worked less than one year for music organisations are at junior level. Both men with this time served are at middle or senior level. For those who have worked sixteen to twenty years, men and women are at middle level and above, with four women and three men at senior level. The term 'male dominated' has been used by some authors to describe music industries, and when speaking to interviewees, several used this term in the same way. Some commented on how there are more women than ever before in their organisation. The data for time served with music organisations suggests that music organisations have also been male dominated for some years. This means that men have held the few jobs available in greater numbers than women - jobs that offer more stable employment with a contract, a salary, and access to employment benefits and protections. Time served also contributes to access to senior-level jobs, which men tend to occupy.

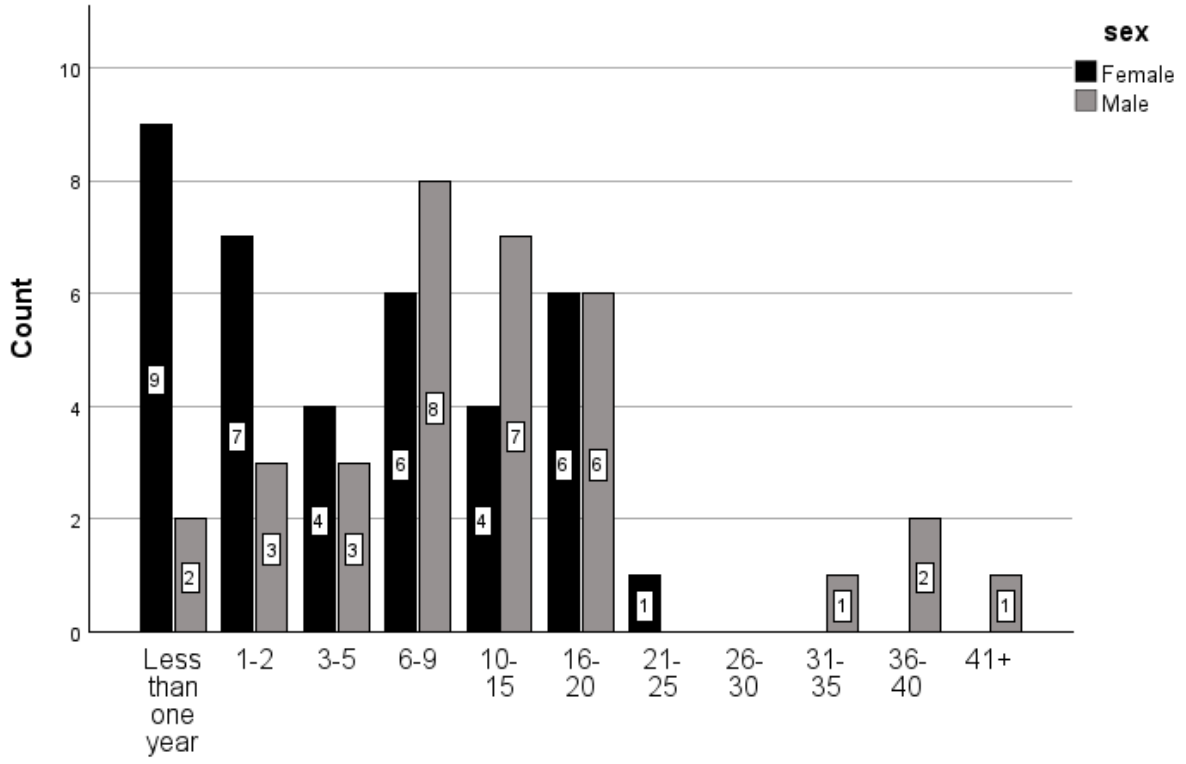


Figure 18: All respondents, total years spent working for music organisations

Some respondents left comments that speak to the class relations of music organisations. The majority of junior-level respondents are earning between €10,000 and €40,000. A male respondent left a comment at the end of the survey, highlighting the prevalence of 'people from wealthy backgrounds' who can take a risk with low paid jobs, because they can rely on family support. Another male respondent suggested that the study look into the role that educational backgrounds play in people being hired for jobs, as opposed to 'real-world experience'. Referring back to the slow churn of job vacancies, one female respondent who works as both a part time junior-level employee and a session musician felt that working for music organisations was difficult because higher-level jobs are never on offer. Another female respondent spoke about redundancies being commonplace across music sectors. One male respondent questioned the survey's classification of childcare as work, arguing that while they do a lot of it, they do not consider it to be work at all. This respondent reported that sometimes they cannot balance the demands of the organisation with the demands of the home. Even if they disagree on what the concept of work is, they acknowledge that their senior-level job with the organisation is in conflict with their responsibilities as a father.

Finally, just seven percent of respondents (three female, two male) reported that they are members of a music industry union. There is a musician's union in Ireland, and there are unions that represent workers across music sectors in addition to workers across other non-music related sectors such as healthcare and education. The specific wording of 'music

industry union' may have been confusing in this respect. However, this low figure corresponds with what was found during the interview stage of the research, that workers of music organisations are largely non-unionised, and many music organisations have no recognised union at all, and no collective bargaining processes in place. The role of unions in music organisations, and whether or not the issues facing workers, and women, can be remedied by greater union activity, is discussed in the following chapter, among other findings from interviews.

5.3.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter analysed survey data to provide an overview of the gendering and racialising class relations of Ireland's music organisations and practices that contribute to these class relations. While these results are not representative, they are indicative of worker's realities, and the patterns observed in the survey correlate with patterns observed in interviews and in the data gathering stage. All male and female respondents are the racial majority in their organisation. The absence of racial minorities from the survey is reflective of the overall racial homogeneity of Ireland's music organisations. The importance of contextualising divisions of labour in music organisations with the racial demographics of Ireland's labour force is highlighted here, because the socio-economic context of organisations plays a role in shaping these patterns.

Considerations must also be given to the organisational make-up of music sectors, the size of each organisation in each sector, and their activities. The gendering of music sectors is influenced by these structural and sectoral factors, in addition to the actual practices of each organisation. For those who do wish to access jobs in music organisations, the fact that these organisations are small, seldom grow in size, with employees who stay for a long time, means that entering the organisation in the first place is difficult. Once inside, the private allocation of jobs, where promotions are doled out on a one-to-one basis without advertisement, and the conflict posed by parenthood shapes men and women's access to higher level jobs. Overall, men are more often at senior level, and becoming a father appears to have little impact upon their hours worked in the job. Data from mothers indicate that becoming a mother reduces the number of hours worked in the job, and their low representation in the survey corresponds with findings from interviews, where there are fewer mothers than fathers employed by music organisations. For men and women in all sectors, at all hierarchical levels, it appears that having a third level degree is a standard feature of being an employee of a music organisation.

5.4 Interviews: The gender order of Ireland's music organisations

In total, twenty-seven current and former employees (twelve women and fifteen men) from thirteen music organisations were interviewed from the live, publishing, recording, education, and television industries. Of these, twenty-six are the racial majority and one is the racial minority in their respective organisation. Among the twenty-seven participants are twenty current employees, and ten former employees[6]. This chapter provides a high-level analysis of the gender order of Ireland's music industries, drawing from all twenty-seven interviews and viewing realities through the combined frameworks of Connell (2021, 2011) and Acker (2006).

One of these participants comes from a music organisation that does not operate in Ireland, and this worker was included to understand differences and similarities in another territory. Of the twelve music organisations in Ireland, one operates without the use of formal employment contracts, and this worker was included to understand differences and similarities in realities related to the use of employment contracts. Another of these Ireland based music organisations is no longer in operation. Aside from the music organisation not operating in Ireland, the organisation that does not operate with formal employment contracts, and the organisation no longer in operation, the remaining ten organisations represent eighteen percent of music organisations in Ireland. This is a large proportion of the total population, which provides a wide ranging and detailed overview of how music organisations in Ireland operate, that is also complementary to the data gathered from the survey.

The breakdown of organisations by sector type is illustrated in figure 19 (live: five organisations; recording: four organisations; education: two organisations; publishing: one organisation; and television: one organisation). Organisation sizes range from micro (fewer than ten employees) to medium (up to 250 employees). Five organisations in the study operate within a multinational ownership structure. Among the interview participants, eight (four female, four male) are junior level, six (four female, two male) are middle level, five (three female, two male) are senior level, and eight (one female, seven male) are the head of their organisation.

[6] One male and two female participants are current employees of one organisation in the study, and former employees of another organisation in the study.

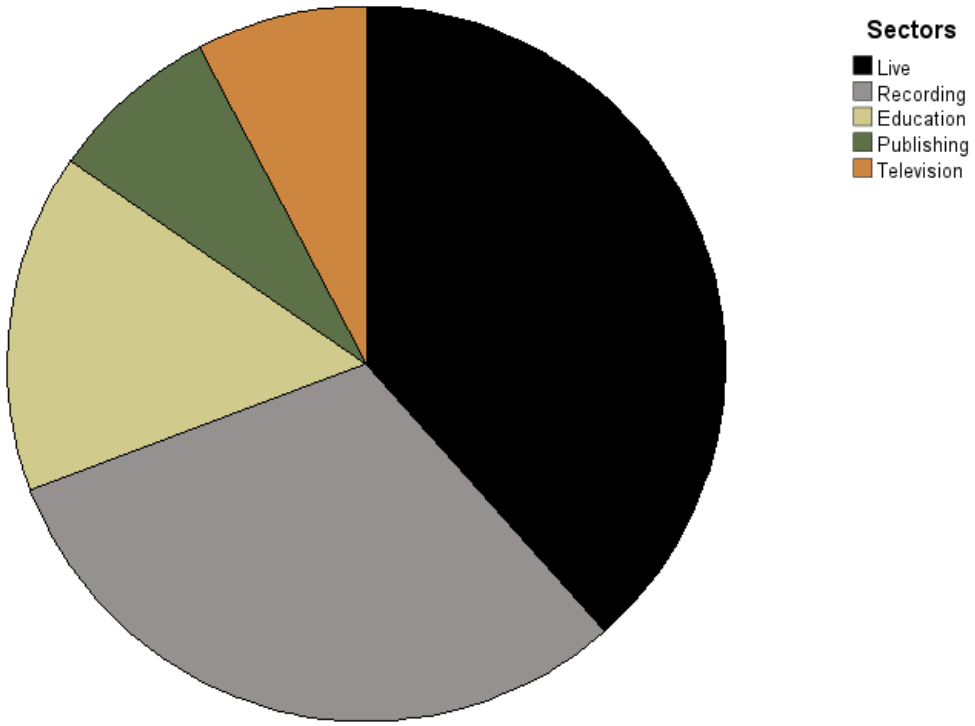


Figure 19: The sector breakdown of participants' organisations

5.4.1 Education and musical knowledge

Of the twenty-seven participants, twenty (nine female, eleven male) had a Level 8 third-level degree before entering their organisation. Two women were undergraduate students while working at their organisation and one male participant had a PLC (Level 5-6) and advanced certificate. Four participants who did not have at least an undergraduate degree (one female, three male) were encouraged to attain one relevant to their job after they entered, and this degree was chosen and paid for by the organisation. While it may not be a listed requirement on all job advertisements for music organisations, someone with a degree 'would stick out to me' (female, middle level) above other applicants without one. Consequently, those who have the resources and aptitude to study at university are in a more advantaged position than others, even when a university education is not explicitly a requirement.

The argument that those without these qualifications will not be promoted, 'because my education isn't there' (male, middle level), has some validity. Several described how getting a higher level of education can result in a higher rate of pay, and access to higher level jobs that would otherwise be inaccessible. For the four workers who received their degree after joining, most expressed gratitude for the positive impact it had on how they do their job, something which also has benefits for the organisation. All workers who have reached senior level have a third-level qualification. For those who do not have this qualification, access to

jobs and education becomes all the more significant, where 'well educated people…certain people of a certain background of a certain education, certain skill set' (male, middle level) find it easier to move up.

> 'You were better off not being super passionate about music to get a promotion…people who came up with the systems and that kind of thing, and crunched the numbers that you know, I suppose, was easiest for them to get opportunities' (male, middle level)

Whether or not you need to be a 'music head' (male, junior level) - someone with a particular interest in music - came up in conversation with some participants, with mixed opinions. Twelve participants (five female, seven male) described having prior knowledge of musical performance or production, usually through education in childhood or from playing with bands. All but three (one male head of organisation, junior level male and female) expressed a personal interest in music industries - but their entry to their organisation was more related to their background in finance, or for the junior-level workers, a basic desire to just have a job. For organisations that engage in music education, musical knowledge is listed as an essential requirement. For organisations in the music business, one participant with musical expertise argued that most workers have an interest or are musical themselves, but that people working at high levels of their multinational organisation are 'absolute accountants' (male, head of organisation) with no knowledge of music industries. The idea that being a musician or someone with a background in the arts is not essential, but preferable because it would help people do the job better, was expressed by several male and female senior-level workers involved in hiring, all of whom are musical themselves. One participant with no musical background felt that for some jobs it was essential, but 'if you're not in sales, marketing and A&R, there's no need for you to be interested. You could be selling kind of, kitchen tables, and it makes no difference' (male, head of organisation).

Although having a university degree, or musical knowledge, does play a role in workers' access to jobs, having this education does not necessarily mean that workers continue to be in an advantaged position after entering the organisation - other factors like the needs of the organisation, parenthood, and sexist work cultures play a role in constructing divisions of labour. Nevertheless, music organisations are more likely to open the door to those with a certain education. Looking at the survey and interview data, patterns suggest that the typical worker of a music organisation in Ireland is a white Irish person, from Dublin, with a third level degree.

5.4.2 Gender and race divisions of labour

Music organisations in Ireland overwhelmingly employ white, Irish workers at every hierarchical level, in all organisation types including multinationals, and when racial minorities are present, they are most often at junior level in very low numbers. Participants were asked about why they think this is the case. Some attributed it to external reasons, pointing to a lack of interest among racial minority artists in the music business, a lack of interest in advertised jobs reflected in the number of applications they receive, and the wider population demographics of Ireland. Some looked internally, highlighting how jobs are seldom vacated to make way for new workers, that organisations are not advertising jobs in places where people will see them, and that music organisations play a role in their own racialising when they allocate jobs privately among friends and peers. Music organisations in Ireland also seldom increase in size, thus posing an obstacle to 'diversity' practices - 'I can't fire people just to make the company more diverse' (male, head of organisation). An argument was made by the one racial minority participant that while music industries offer insecure career prospects for just about everyone, these jobs are especially unattractive for racial minorities who may tend to look towards careers with better pay and security, highlighting cultural and family backgrounds as factors.

Given that gender is by far the most salient differentiator in the realities of interview participants, it forms the analytical focus of the analysis. Gender divisions of labour across music organisations in the study demonstrate two broad patterns: men and women are employed in roughly equal numbers at junior and middle level, and men outnumber women at senior level. These patterns are common across industries. There is one organisation in the study that is an exception to this pattern, where there are more women overall and at senior level than men. A participant expressed mixed feelings about this, recognising it as 'unusual', 'great', while feeling 'uneasy' (female, senior level) about the skewed numbers, because problems with working conditions can still persist regardless of gender. The occupational and hierarchical gendering of jobs is most stark at the very top of the organisation, where only one out of eight heads of organisations are female, a pattern reflected across music organisations in Ireland. In the entire country, there are six female heads of music organisations. This figure is based on employee information gathered when quantifying the fifty-six music organisations in Ireland. This means that a little over ten percent of music organisations in Ireland are female-led, and almost ninety percent are male-led.

> 'There's not a lot of women in the leadership positions, in the upper management positions, but there is a lot in the lower level…that's their gender balance there' (female, middle level)

Gender divisions of labour at senior level, occupational segregation, and access to jobs are analysed in detail in chapter six. The main occupational role of each interview participant is outlined (figure 20). For the three participants that are current and former employees of multiple music organisations in the study, only their current role is defined. The seniority of participants (figure 21) divides them into three groups, where senior level includes senior management and heads of organisations.

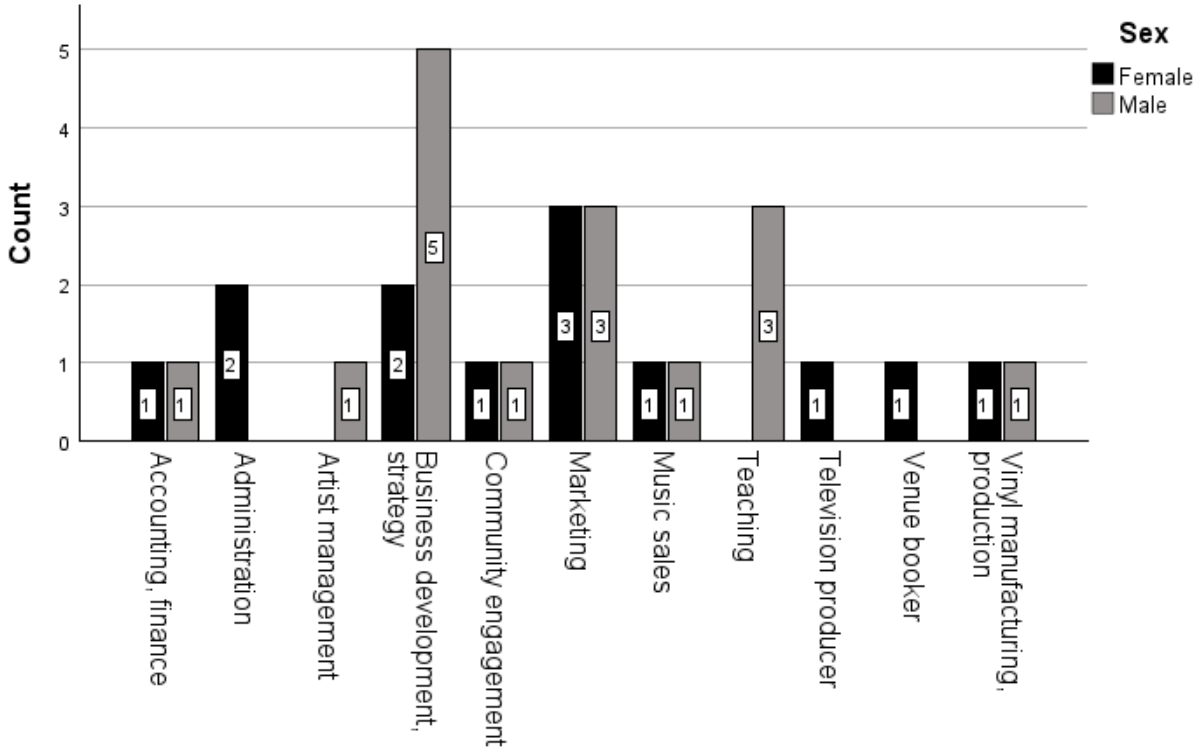


Figure 20: Occupation of interview participants

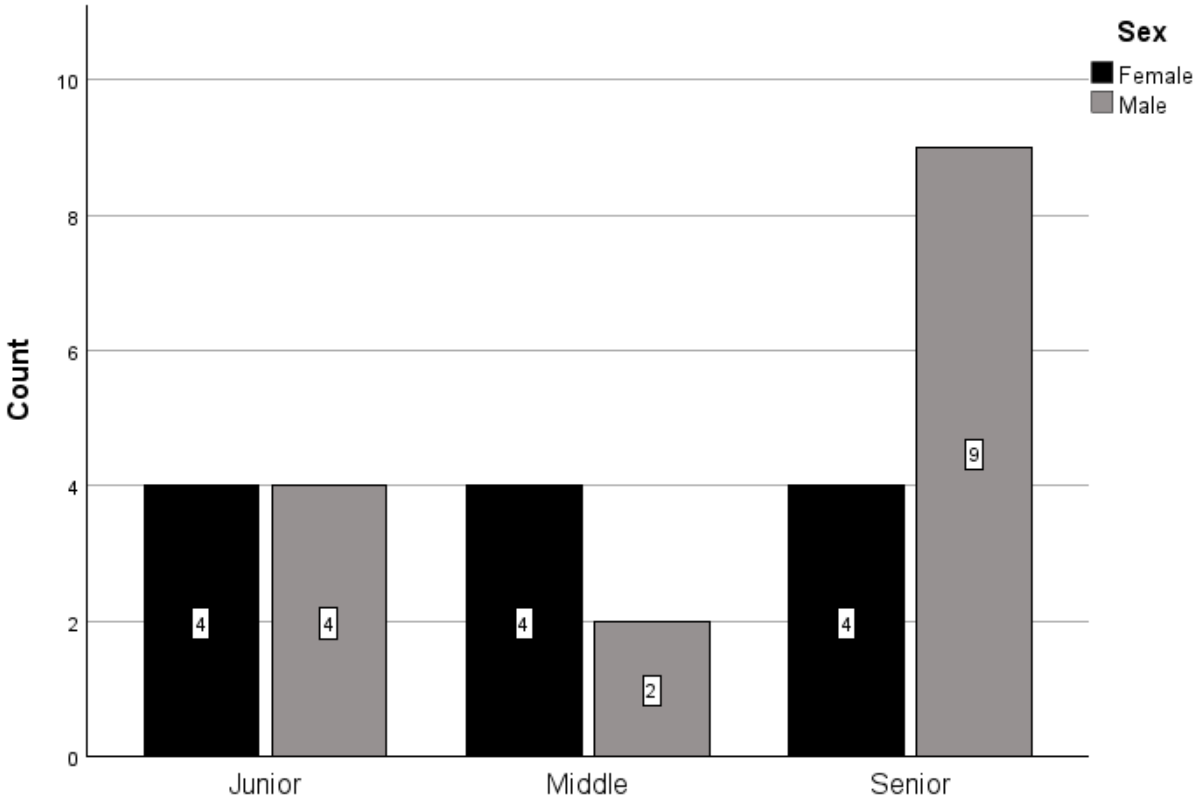


Figure 22: Hierarchical level of interview participants

5.4.3 Money and contracts

Full time incomes range from €31,000 and €100,000 for women, and €22,000 and €400,000 for men. Across industries, senior-level earnings for men and women employees do not fall below €55,000. Participants from multinational record companies have higher salaries at each job level compared to others, with publishing and live organisations coming in second, and education organisations having the lowest. It is difficult to compare incomes of workers within industries, as the earnings of junior, middle, and senior-level workers vary across organisation ownership types and sizes. Overall, women at senior level are earning between €55,000 and €100,000, and men at senior level are earning between €48,000 and €400,000. But each case is not comparable to another because of differences between organisations (such as multinationals versus locally distributed organisations, and if they receive public funds, whether or not workers are trying to negotiate their salaries, and if men's and women's requests for higher pay are treated the same). Of the four participants with part-time contracts with hourly rates (two female, two male), their range is between €10,000 and €31,000.

Five participants, all male senior level, refused to answer questions about how much they earn, with responses like 'that's a very personal question' (male, head of organisation),

'it's a private thing' (male, head of organisation), and 'I'd prefer not to' (male, senior level). The offense expressed by some senior-level male participants when asked to discuss their salary briefly negatively impacted the atmosphere of those interviews, and resulted in the researcher feeling reluctant to ask this question in subsequent interviews, for fear that the interviewee would be less forthcoming to other questions. As a consequence, this question was omitted from the interview with one male senior-level participant. Of the female senior-level interviewees who were asked their salary, all shared this information, while on few occasions interviews were too short to touch on salary, or the researcher forgot to ask. The reactions of male participants gave the impression that one of two considerations were on their mind: they are self-conscious about their pay because they think it could be considered too high, or they are self-conscious because they think that it's too low (indicating a connection between sense of identity and salary).

Money arose as a sensitive issue for male and female workers across all levels, highlighting issues with pay that cut across gender lines. Five junior-level workers (two female, three male) from organisations across the live, publishing, and education industries expressed dissatisfaction about their pay, feeling that they are underpaid for the work that is expected of them. One of these women tried to negotiate a higher starting salary and to her dissatisfaction received twenty percent of the increase she asked for. One of these men hasn't received a raise in almost ten years, and another man felt that he was carrying out multiple jobs for one salary. Those at middle level fare slightly better in terms of satisfaction with income. One felt their income was 'nice' because it was 'substantially more than what I was on' (female, middle level), and another thought 'it was good' but 'you'd work very hard for it' (male, middle level). One woman qualified her satisfaction with her salary by pointing out that it's good, 'for the arts' (female, senior level). The highest paid participant (€400,000) placed a great value on controlling his salary and he acknowledged that he 'earned a disproportionately large amount of money for such a small company' (male, head of organisation). A female head of an organisation in a different sector feels that she is underpaid for the scale of the work she does (€100,000). There are different evaluations between workers as to what a 'good' salary is, but a common critique among many is that they are not paid enough.

Some men and women from the live and education industries described how their employer was slow to provide them with contracts, that they had to repeatedly inquire until they received one, and in one organisation, men and women simply didn't receive updated contracts when they were entitled to them (which also meant no changes to their pay), and this issue was observed predominantly at middle and junior levels. In one organisation in the recording industry, most workers did not receive contracts at all, and at times received no pay at the end of the month. Issues with contracts also cut across gender lines, demonstrating how

organisational processes can operate as a form of class control, where employers can exercise power through their stronger bargaining position. These kinds of class practices also represent 'gendered and racialised agreements' (Acker, 2006, pp.57) that determine workers' income, hours of work, and shape their access to other financial benefits such as pension, paid maternity leave, and sick leave. Evidence of the gender effects of employment contracts was found, which speaks to how contracts can, with legitimacy, shore up existing divisions of labour and maintain trajectories of gender relations for men and women. For instance, most organisations in the study offer paid maternity leave, but only for those with permanent contracts. For one woman on a temporary contract, she is keenly aware that 'if I don't get a permanent contract, I wouldn't have access to that…So that's the challenge' (female, senior level). Female freelance workers also cannot access this benefit. Three participants (two female, one male) described their experience as freelance workers, where the two women eventually moved to a formal employment contract, with one of these feeling happier about the guarantee of a salary. The male participant described the benefits of freelance work positively in terms of higher income. He argued that if he offered the people working for his organisation a formal employment contract, 'they wouldn't take it' (male, head of organisation) for this reason. A woman employed by an organisation in the television industry that overlaps with music industries spent several years as a freelance worker with no employment protections or benefits, in a country with weaker employment protections than Ireland, where 'there's very little protection for people' and 'the day could have been literally twenty-four hours' (female, senior level).

> 'Most of my friends that had kids around thirty, if they were in this business, don't work in it anymore…if you were a freelancer which most of them were, you did not have any safety net of maternity leave…And then, once you're out of it for three, four, five years, it's very hard to get back in' (female, senior level)

The contrast between this woman's critique of the insecurity of freelance contracts, compared to the positive critique posed by the man centres on access to an employment benefit that is only of value to women, that can only be granted with a formal employment contract - paid maternity leave. Maternity leave is a key finding discussed in detail in a later chapter.

5.4.4 Parenthood

Fourteen parents were interviewed (three female, eleven male). The three mothers and eight fathers are senior level, one father is middle level, and two are junior level. Realities presented by participants indicate that overall, there are more fathers than mothers in the selected organisations. The fact that most of the interview participants are fathers could be due to this pattern, in conjunction with other factors, such as mothers not responding to interview

requests, or fewer interview requests being sent to mothers - it is not possible to selectively target mothers and fathers for interview, as people do not usually advertise their status as a parent online. Two mothers commented on the fact that there were no other mothers at senior level in their organisation. Judging from the overall contributions of participants, it seems that there are far fewer mothers than fathers employed by music organisations in Ireland.

The E&R of the job place substantial demands upon workers, especially at senior level, and these demands pose a conflict for parents that is more severe for mothers than for fathers. Prioritising the E&R of the job over personal life was described by one father as completely necessary, likening the commitment to that of 'professional sportsmen' where 'at a certain level…there's sacrifice' (male, head of organisation). He acknowledged that he missed many family occasions in his career, and also expressed a hint of pride at how workers in the organisation follow the same work ethic.

> 'I do an average of about fourteen hours a day every day…other people in here would easily do sixty, seventy hours a week…These people base their lives around what we're doing…They don't go on holidays, they don't go to weddings, they don't go to christenings' (male, head of organisation).

The gender effects of parenthood and the realities faced by mothers and fathers at senior level has implications for divisions of labour. For six organisations with expressed commitments towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', mothers and fathers have differing access to the highest levels of the organisation, and this pattern is not acknowledged by these organisations. The gender effects of parenthood are discussed in detail in chapter six.

5.4.5 Privately allocated jobs

In conjunction with the small pool of jobs that are seldom vacated, gaining access to music organisations is further impacted by management making use of the personal relationships of existing workers to allocate jobs. Ten participants (five female, five male) from seven organisations gained entry through this process, in the majority of cases, entering into a junior-level job. This kind of practice mirrors the informality of the 'word of mouth' (female, middle level) reality of freelance work in music industries. But the difference here is that the request is coming from management itself, rather than through a 'meet…graft…ask' (female, middle level) process directed by the freelance worker.

The gendering of organisational hierarchies is also impacted by management privately allocating promotions to workers. Nine men and four women have accessed privately allocated promotions. Six of these men have reached senior level while benefiting from this process, with five of these men becoming the head of the organisation, along with one woman. One

participant described how 'automatic promotions' (male, head of organisation) were commonplace in his organisation, where when one person moved up, so too did the person directly below them - usually men replacing men. All participants who accessed a privately allocated promotion reported a targeted experience, with management selectively choosing them. The logic of this practice was described by one woman (who has experience with this practice) as one that makes good business sense.

> 'If you really want to keep somebody, it's not the norm to advertise it…you bring people into the organisation and you're like, these people are good, I can see a role for them in the future, how could I keep them?' (female, head of organisation).

Three organisations explicitly commit to advertising all jobs at all times, and position this commitment as a feature of their alignment with 'EDI'. All three organisations, in reality, sometimes allocate jobs privately depending on the organisation's needs at the point in time. The needs of the organisation were presented as the primary motivator for management privately allocating jobs, and in organisations with hiring procedures governed by HRM paradigms and 'EDI' alignment, the needs of the organisation can easily override these procedures. Seventy-four percent of interview participants have accessed at least one job in their organisation that was not advertised to anyone else, and this practice is analysed in detail in chapter six.

5.4.6 HRM paradigms

Ten out of thirteen organisations operate with HRM paradigms in the live, publishing, recording, and education industries. HRM paradigms have a substantial impact upon the logics of music organisations, aided by their establishment as a standalone job. It was often the case for music organisations in Ireland that HR did not exist as a standalone job. Rather, it was defined as a role attached to another related responsibility, such as 'finance and HR manager', and in five organisations where fifteen participants are drawn from, this has traditionally been the case. This ties in with older conceptualisations of the HR function, where employee benefits and pay related matters were the main concern. As detailed in the literature review, the HR function has evolved far beyond this. Within the last fifteen years, two out of five of these organisations have developed HR as a standalone job within the organisation. Two others are multinational organisations, one of which defers all HR decision making to HR in a larger territory as part of a centralised process, and the other has ceased to operate, though they also had centralised HR processes in another territory in addition to a hybrid HR function in Ireland. The fifth still has HR attached to another role, but they are intending to establish it as a standalone job. Two other organisations (one based in Ireland and one based abroad)

already had a standalone HR job in place when the interviews were conducted. Another two make use of HR consultants who are not employees of the organisation. The tenth organisation is a multinational that has always deferred to HR in a larger territory, and has never had a HR role on site in Ireland. A breakdown of HRM paradigms and functions in each organisation is outlined in table 3.

Organisation pseudonym	Industry	HRM paradigm	HR function in org	HR function centralised in other jurisdiction	HR function sourced externally	HR as standalon job in org
Open Records (no formal employment contracts)	Recording	No	-	-	-	-
Paper Records	Recording	Yes	In the past	Yes	No	No
Loud Records (no longer operating)	Recording	Yes	In the past	Yes	No	No
Miracle Vinyl	Recording	No	-	-	-	-
Commitment Promotions	Live	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Network Promotions	Live	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Family Venue	Live	No	-	-	-	-
Unofficial Venue	Live	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Big Demand Venue	Live	Yes	Yes	No	No	No (intending to)
Certified Publishing	Publishing	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Efficient Education	Education	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Flexible Education	Education	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Persistent Television (operating outside of Ireland)	Television	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Table 3: HRM paradigms of each organisation

Participants' motivations for developing HRM paradigms in the organisation represent a shift in perceptions of the relevance and importance of HRM, where previously, music organisations decided 'we'll just give someone the HR tag, cause we have to' (male, middle level). Now, in several of these organisations, HR is recognised as a standalone, high level corporate function that has higher authority for hiring, firing, appraising, discipline, culture, and how the organisation engages with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. This is the culmination of an evolving trend where perceptions of HRM elevate it to the level of necessity. As one participant in an organisation that previously allowed HR to be tagged onto another role argued, 'if you're any kind of size at all you really do need it…we absolutely do need it' (male, head of organisation). HRM logic is embedded in hiring procedures, grievance and disciplinary procedures, and 'well-being' programmes. The most common reasons provided by participants for why they have HRM in their organisation are changes in employment legislation, and commitments to 'EDI'.

HRM inside music organisations is in a relationship with HRM outside music organisations. Participants from two organisations described how external HR consultants were brought into the organisation to provide training on conduct and 'well-being' and to

conduct surveys and focus groups on culture for management, and both organisations engage with external HRM advice and accreditation services. External HR specialists are used by two other organisations to manage their HR function, and the development of HR as a standalone job in several organisations demonstrates how management actively makes space for HRM paradigms in the organisation. Evidence of music organisations seeking out HRM paradigms accompanies evidence of their outward communication of HRM paradigms to public audiences. This is achieved through public statements (such as job advertisements, websites, social media, news articles), mission statements, and value statements, by expressing alignment with 'EDI', 'equality', and 'equal opportunity'. In organisations with HRM paradigms, the organisation endorses the idea that access to jobs is a meritocracy based upon HR procedures for competitive assessment, and workers are equally measured and disciplined by the organisation.

This relational process of music organisations constructing themselves with HRM paradigms from outside the organisation, and feeding these paradigms back out for the eyes of audiences and stakeholders, acts as the circuit for how social expectations and legal obligations for the treatment of workers are interpreted by and embodied in the logics of these organisations. 'Equality' and 'equal opportunity' are ideologically constructed in this relationship, where there is little room for contestation or conflict over how these concepts are treated by music organisations. The growth of HRM paradigms as the de facto means of engaging with gender and race has developed with wider societal discourse around 'equality', producing a 'best practice' approach defined by 'EDI' alignment. The hegemony and widespread acceptance of HRM paradigms affords the public communications of music organisations with legitimacy and authority, especially when contradictory practices are not known to the public, and in some cases to workers inside the organisation. Thus, an official reality regarding the organisation's satisfaction of social expectations and legal obligations is constructed, reinforced, and proliferated within and beyond the organisation.

5.4.7 Managerial directives

Managerial directives are non-negotiable instructions from management that impact upon the realities of workers. They are used routinely across organisations in the study, predominately in the form of redundancies, discipline, and efforts to change how jobs are allocated, and organisational culture. They are deeply enmeshed with HRM paradigms.

For six organisations from the live, recording, publishing, and education industries, evidence was found of managerial directives that articulate the organisation's commitments towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. For some of these organisations, these

commitments look like 'EDI' alignment, and in all cases, they are managed through HRM paradigms and practices. These commitments are the focal point of the discussion of this thesis and are discussed in detail in chapter six.

Redundancies enacted by management were accounted for in five organisations across the recording, publishing, and education sectors, where eighteen participants are drawn from. The term 'restructuring' was used by some managers to describe this directive. Redundancies are used by management from these organisations for two reasons: to respond to external economic conditions, and as a form of discipline for workers who 'weren't good at their jobs' (male, junior level) or are disliked by management. The latter practice is prohibited under Irish law (Workplace Relations Commission, 2024). For two organisations, the economic motive was evident in the admission of one head of organisation to a participant that 'he didn't have any more money to pay me' (female, middle level), and for another organisation, redundancies were voluntary, suggesting that discipline was not the underlying motive. Two male heads of organisations (both from multinationals) detailed how they made jobs redundant as a way of responding to workers who were 'atrocious', 'terrible', 'bad', 'cruising', 'old fashioned', or posing a threat of industrial action. Most of these workers were management level and their removal did also provide some economic benefit to the organisation, because their work was then spread out amongst other workers. For a fifth organisation, changes in the multinational structure resulted in redundancies in the Irish office, which provided an opportunity for management to 'get people out' (male, junior level) that they disliked. Access to jobs for workers is therefore a matter of satisfying the E&R of management, in addition to the job, with no formalised documentation of what these E&R are, which are liable to change and are potentially informed by personal feelings.

Directives are also enacted in softer forms, through the introduction of employee focussed programmes, training, or initiatives that are designed to instruct employee behaviour in desirable ways for the organisation. This feeds into codes of conduct for worker behaviour, and grievance and disciplinary policies. In these kinds of directives, gender is often implicitly recognised, and the intent to construct a course for gender relations is not overtly communicated. For three organisations from which sixteen participants are drawn, HR has guided efforts to change the way workers interact with each other, and how they behave in their jobs. These softer directives also encourage alignment with 'EDI' (observed in four organisations where twenty participants are drawn from). In all cases, HRM paradigms guide and govern this alignment. This is done through the use of policies and procedures, formalised organisational values, questionnaires, workplace socialising, initiatives about 'well-being', and training programmes around bullying and harassment (discussed in detail in a later chapter). At times, directives explicitly demonstrate an intent to steer the direction of gender relations.

In one organisation, management has created rules around the language workers should use when talking about gender at work. Through 'EDI' alignment, workers are instructed to use language associated with 'gender identity', such as pronouns, and are provided training on how best to do this. One participant finds this reality difficult to navigate due to the confusing nature of the changing rules, as 'it can be quite difficult to know how you refer to somebody' and some people 'are just overly sensitive to everything' (male, junior level).

Directives consistently demonstrate an intent to control and inscribe a certain direction to gender relations among workers. They set out a single understanding of what the plan is, what will happen, and what the outcome will be. In doing so they seek to simplify complicated realities of being a worker, and being a male or female worker. Conceptions of what 'the right thing' (male, head of organisation) is, are inscribed in the logic of these actions, which can shape access to jobs, access to justice, and understandings of conduct that is or is not acceptable. Directives co-exist with lived realities that are at odds with or contradict simplified official realities, and conflict is sometimes an outcome of directives that can motivate more overt forms of control by management. The power of music organisations to intervene in worker relations on the basis of their own interests can be realised in a variety of direct or indirect ways. Lived realities demonstrate how management practices can be used as tools for control, without oversight or scrutiny, that can serve to stay the course of gender relations. These practices support the interests and needs of the organisation, and are legitimised by the taken for granted nature of hierarchy, which grants this power exclusively to senior management. With the increased acceptance of HRM as a high-level strategic partner of music organisations, the boundaries between management directives and HRM paradigms are no longer distinguishable from each other.

5.4.8 Safety and harm

The physical safety of workers in music organisations, irrespective of gender, can be compromised by organisational processes. In a vinyl manufacturing organisation with no health and safety procedures or training, workers faced dangerous working conditions. The physical environment was made up of old pressing machines that regularly broke down and oil covered floors that workers had to cover with sawdust. Workers were using 'very, very, toxic' (male, middle level) chemical baths without masks, and 'reusing chemicals that shouldn't be reused' (male, middle level). One serious incident was described, where a pressing machine fell and nearly left the head of the organisation paralysed from the waist down. This is an example of direct physical harm that the negligence of organisations towards workers can contribute to.

Two female participants described psychological harms, with 'staff being shouted at by senior people' (female, senior level) referring to both men and women carrying out this behaviour. Two female participants (middle and senior level) described their experience with reporting sexual harassment by a male senior manager to HR. One female participant (junior level) reported bullying by her male line manager to senior management, and one male participant (head of organisation) expressed knowledge of sexual harassment being carried out by a male senior manager against female workers. Each woman who reported bullying and harassment committed by male members of senior management was silenced or censored by the organisation. In once case, the HR manager pressured one participant to change her story in order to create more distance between the incident and the organisation. For another, HR listened to her report but carried out no investigation, and the male senior manager in question left the organisation in good graces with a financial package. For a third woman, the male HR manager was inaccessible due to his close relationship with the man bullying her. The role of HRM in shaping how the organisation responds to reports of sexual harassment and bullying is discussed in chapter six. When looking at harmful practices like sexual harassment and bullying, the bureaucratisation of the experience through grievance and disciplinary procedures can produce a less visibly harmful, but equally damaging chilling effect, more often felt by women. The exercise of patriarchal power by men over women is enabled by hierarchical relations between workers, where men are more often in senior-level roles.

One female participant attempted to access justice outside of her organisation. Her organisation had no policies in place for anything, including grievances, but she did have a formal employment contract. When the organisation could no longer afford to pay her and her role was made redundant, her request for redundancy payment after several years of work was met with intense anger by the male head of the organisation, who was adamant that he didn't owe her anything. She took the issue to an external organisation that deals with employment disputes and faced him in a court room. She lost her case, she claimed, in part due to her unfamiliarity with Irish law, and his greater level of legal representation. Breaking down in tears, she said, 'I was quite kind of traumatized by how it went because he, he almost got violent with me' (female, middle level). Increasingly during the data gathering processes, the parallels between access to justice in music organisations and access to justice in wider society became evident, particularly when speaking to female participants. Music organisations are not just sources of jobs and income. They are also systems of procedural justice, where hierarchical management structures can selectively afford workers access, and like justice systems in wider society, they are marked by gendering effects that can cause harm.

5.4.9 Emotion

Jobs carry emotional requirements (Connell, 2021), and the experience of being a worker in the organisation can elicit emotions that are antagonistic, or supportive, towards this employment relationship. Forms of stress were by far the most common emotions felt by workers, expressed in various ways by sixteen participants (eight female, eight male) from junior to senior level; stress related to the workload, the E&R of the job, employment contracts, low pay or in one organisation a complete lack of pay, hours of work, the culture of the organisation, the behaviour of management, the conflict posed by being a parent and an employee, interactions in board meetings, management directives, external conditions like a pandemic, and a lack of career progression in the organisation or job security. Ten participants (four female, six male) did not express personal experiences with stress, and this includes four male heads of organisations, one male senior manager, one female middle manager, one male and three female junior-level workers. For those at senior level who didn't express stress, there was a sense of acceptance about the demands of the job, or playing down its significance, because 'everybody moans about their job' (male, head of organisation). Two participants (one female, one male) described what they felt was a successful strategy for managing their issues with the organisation; separating themselves from the job, and detaching from it personally and emotionally. This detachment was presented as a necessary coping mechanism that enabled them to continue doing the work.

> 'It comes to a point that you have to leave your personality at the door and you've to just do the business of the day…It's actually quite a powerful thing to understand, because you can do anything. Once you kind of understand that you separate the human from the job' (female, head of organisation)

Anger and disappointment towards the organisation were expressed by some male and female workers in relation to poor handling of employment contracts, low pay, feeling overworked, and among women, how their grievances and concerns were handled by HR and senior management. Two of these women also expressed fear due to the response they received from HR and senior management. A third woman felt anxious and fearful of the female head of her organisation, because she has seen her use redundancy as discipline. Sadness was expressed by another woman who felt forced out of her job due to bullying. It was only women who expressed fear towards HR and senior management.

Negative emotions are present in the realities of these workers in complex ways, and participants most often singled out management and the employment relationship as the source of these issues.

> ‘We’ve been all pissed off to be honest, with the contracts, with the lack of security, with how the place is being run…If I could leave [organisation name], I’d leave it in a heartbeat’ (male, junior level)

It would be unfair to portray management as cold and unfeeling in these accounts. One man expressed sympathy towards workers who he acknowledged are ‘totally overwhelmed’ (male, head of organisation). Another male head of an organisation is aware that workers are under stress and he tries to ‘protect them from too much grief’ (while using redundancy as discipline). Several management level participants expressed an awareness and, at times, sympathy towards the stress and demands that workers face. Yet their engagement is predominately through HRM paradigms and ‘EDI’, which prioritise the organisation in the employment relationship, leaving the root cause of these issues intact. Pride towards their organisation’s ‘EDI’ alignment was expressed by three male senior-level participants and one female middle-level participant. Pride was connected to a belief in ‘trying to do the right thing’ (male, head of organisation). A sense of morality guides music organisations’ alignment with ‘EDI’, and while this alignment can instil a feeling of pride for those steering it, workers continue to feel the emotional stress and strain of the demands placed upon them.

Many of the same workers who expressed anger, sadness, fear, disappointment, and feelings of stress also communicated positive emotions, with passion for working in music industries being the most common of these. Conflicting emotions were communicated by participants, often articulated around personal cost and reward; ‘it does get stressful you know. But ultimately it is rewarding’ (male, junior level). This complex relationship between the demands of the job and personal passion for the work was commented on by one participant.

> ‘There's a kind of a vocational element to it as well, and some sort of sickness…I genuinely love it, genuinely love music…when you logically think about all this…you're like, oh, wait actually, this is objectively bad, isn't it?’ (male, head of organisation)

Feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction among workers in cultural industries can coexist with problems with working conditions (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010), and passion appears to be a motivating factor for workers in these organisations.

5.4.10 Attitudes and beliefs

Six women and six men acknowledged gender as an issue in music industries and in society, pointing out the problem of male dominated music industries, the prevalence of sexual harassment boys clubs, ‘abuse of power’ and ‘casual misogyny’ (male, head of organisation) and sexist workplace cultures, that gender reform of music industries is overdue, that women are treated poorly across all of society and that this is getting worse, that mothers are at a

disadvantage, and that 'it's so tough to even just comprehend' (female, middle level) how to fix the problem. Some of these men believe that seeing more women in general in music industries is an indicator of change. Three of the six men argued that music industries have been male dominated, but that they're not anymore or they are improving, and one feels that music industries have 'an unwritten thing in there' (male, middle level) about being respectful and avoiding being misogynistic. Two argued that 'they're getting better' (male, head of organisation) and that they were run by men 'until, the last, let's say fifteen, twenty years' (male, junior level). One man pointed to the prevalence of high-profile female pop stars as evidence of male dominated industries changing. No female participant expressed the view that women's position in music industries has improved, even when acknowledging that they see more women in management roles.

There was a distinction between beliefs that were only expressed by women, and beliefs that were only expressed by men. Ten women discussed specific, material conditions and practices that impact negatively upon women's realities, with most using these specifics to contextualise expressed beliefs. Six men made observations about gender issues related to music industries (as above). Two men in the study linked these beliefs to material conditions and practices (sexist treatment of women managers, and unfavourable working hours for certain jobs). Women demonstrated an awareness of a range of specific practices that impact upon them as women (such as sexist cultures, the E&R of the job, employment contracts), and it was clear that they have to problematise their relationship to the organisation in a way that men do not. Men's and women's lived realities also inform their attitudes towards their position in the organisation and the organisation itself, and these beliefs sometimes extend to HR. Seven participants (two female, five male) expressed confidence in their organisation's capacity to protect them or follow the rules. One man and one woman feel 'cared for' (female, junior level), and two (one male, one female) feel secure about the organisation's grievance and disciplinary procedures having seen them being carried out to completion. None of these five workers have experienced bullying or sexual harassment at work, and none have had to make reports to HR. A woman who had a harmful experience when she reported sexual harassment to HR holds a defensive attitude towards the organisation, and a view that policies about conduct in the workplace would never have been introduced if her incident hadn't happened. Another woman who tried reporting bullying to senior management believes that if the organisation had a stronger HR presence from the London office, her experience wouldn't have been so harmful.

Only men tried to downplay the role that gender plays in their organisation. By omitting gender from their own perspectives, three men were able to construct a logic of meritocracy in their belief system, by arguing that they see all colleagues the same way because

'the gender thing has never been an issue for me' (male, head of organisation), 'if they're good enough for the job, it doesn't matter what gender' (male, junior level), and divisions of labour are not about gender but about 'availability and who's around and who wants to do the job' (male, junior level). Beliefs about gender that serve to obscure the realities of gender were also expressed by men from two organisations who consider themselves to be doing all the right things when it comes to gender by aligning with 'EDI', and these beliefs are supported when external HR accreditation services validate their efforts; 'we've done it right from from the start' (male, senior level). A reliance on 'EDI' as a measure for 'best practice' on gender results in beliefs about meritocracy being reinforced, which supports the message of official realities that gender-neutrality is achievable and in effect. Ten participants (four female, six male) from six organisations believe that access to jobs is, or should be, a matter of meritocracy, and several linked this belief to HRM paradigms.

5.4.11 Labour unions

Of the twelve Ireland-based organisations, evidence of labour union activity was identified in four, across the recording, education, and live industries. From two of these four organisations, four participants (one female at middle level, three male at junior and senior level) are themselves members of a labour union. Including the music organisation that operates outside of Ireland, nine organisations in the study do not have any collective bargaining agreements in place, any recognised or unrecognised union activity, and none of the participants from these organisations are members of a union.

Four workers were motivated to join a union because they felt the need to protect themselves in their relationship with the organisation. Issues related to employment contracts and remuneration were common across all of their realities prior to their decision to unionise. One male worker and his colleagues used the bargaining power of the union to change their employment relationship with their organisation, by pressuring the organisation to provide them with contracts that reflected their actual work and relationship to the organisation. This resulted in new contracts being issued to them, with changed rates of pay, formalised working hours, and offerings of employment benefits that they were already entitled to. A female worker and her colleagues consulted with their union when the organisation finally did follow through with new employment contracts. The union rep was 'in the pocket of HR' (female, middle level) and gave them bad advice. One senior-level male worker joined a union, cautiously, due to 'a certain feeling of organisational uncertainty', which followed issues relating to workload, and contracts. A male worker sought advice from their union before approaching their line manager to negotiate a new contract with better pay that would better

reflect their actual workload. These realities demonstrate how labour unions can act on behalf of workers to change, or maintain, asymmetries in power relations between workers and the organisation. The female participant who consulted with her union about new contracts, did not consult the union when she faced difficulties reporting sexual harassment to HR and senior management. It's likely that the experience that this woman had in that initial meeting with HR and senior management (detailed in a later chapter) had a chilling effect and impacted upon her ability to speak to others about the matter. Quinn (2004) outlines how labour unions in Ireland are reluctant to take on 'equality' claims and issues relating to gender, due to perceptions of their complicated, time-consuming nature, and their poor success rates. If she had gone to the union, there is no guarantee that they would have supported her in the matter.

Two organisations have a long and established history of collective bargaining, and there was a sense of acceptance among these participants (including those at senior level) of union membership as a normal feature of doing business. Both organisations have an ethos of commitment to the arts and the public, which likely impacts upon how labour unions are accommodated by their logic. By contrast, the other two organisations have a highly antagonistic relationship with their unionised workers. One of these organisations no longer operates, but when it did, management had to respond to threats of industrial action, and did so aggressively, using redundancies to resolve the matter. The other did eventually engage in a bargaining process, but only after a protracted period of industrial action and campaigning by workers. Both of these organisations operate with a strong market-oriented logic and corporate ownership structure. As organisations built according to a rights-based logic intended to support workers irrespective of the impact of asserting these rights on profit, labour unions offer the possibility of worker resistance to class controls of management paradigms.

Despite the majority of participants in the study reporting issues with contracts, pay, hours, the E&R of the job, and working conditions, very few have ever engaged with a union. Some put this down to the informal, loose, freelance culture and mindset of music industries, their non-standardised structures, and the vocational element of music industries where people feel 'lucky' (a word used by multiple participants) to be doing something they love. The idea that this is 'by design' (female, senior level) was also suggested, where management do not actively discourage unionising, but 'you knew not to unionise' (female, senior level) for fear of repercussions. Evidence of the capacity of labour unions to support workers of music organisations in pay and contract related issues is provided by this study. No evidence of their capacity to support women, or challenge patriarchal relations of power was found. This capacity has yet to be proven or disproven. Based on all evidence provided here and in the

literature review, a meaningful challenge to the direction of gender relations would require a labour union constructed by a feminist, social justice logic, and no such labour union exists in Ireland.

5.4.12 Concluding remarks

Realities from almost twenty percent of music organisations in Ireland are analysed by this study. The lived realities that men and women workers navigate are seldom articulated outside of music organisations, and the near absence of labour unions acting to challenge dominant practices means that the messages and ideologies of the organisation are the official reality, considered to be representative of everyone. HRM paradigms work in tandem with managerial directives to ascribe a logic of gender-neutrality and individualism in the relationship between workers and the organisation. Through this logic, the occupational and hierarchical sex segregation that characterises jobs in music organisations is understood as a legitimate outcome of adherence to 'best practice'. Conceptualisations of culture and conduct are also constructed by this logic, with directives that seek to define the ideological boundaries of what is considered right and wrong, in ways that support the organisation and its current trajectory of gender relations. Adherence to 'best practice' is measured by the strength of HRM paradigms in policy and procedure and of the organisation's 'EDI' alignment. The legitimacy of this logic can be supported by attitudes and beliefs about meritocracy and improving conditions for women, predominantly expressed by men in management roles.

Shared realities of class relations among men and women construct lived realities where many workers have restricted access to what they consider to be fair remuneration for the work they do, which is subject to changing E&R that are disproportionately high in relation to pay. The needs of the organisation also direct the private allocation of jobs - a practice unacknowledged by official realities which impact upon who gets into the organisation and who moves up its hierarchy. External economic conditions, social expectations, and legal obligations impact upon decisions of management to abandon HRM procedures and allocate jobs privately, and it is also these expectations and obligations that motivate the adoption of HRM paradigms and 'EDI' alignment. Men and women are not only subject to the E&R of the job, and difficulties accessing employment contracts with accurate terms, but to the consequences of music organisations' outward pursuit of legitimacy and market success. Music organisations' market-oriented logics are enacted through managerial directives that can be used to reinforce HRM paradigms and 'EDI' alignment, which give legitimacy to the official reality and obscure contradictory realities. They can also be used in legal or illegal ways to sever workers' relationship to the organisation. These practices amount to practices of class

control that maintain the organisation's economic and power relations through the legitimacy of HRM paradigms. That workers are stressed, angry, tired, and resentful is a reality that is dampened by ideological constructions of workers as lucky, dedicated individuals in their relationship with the organisation.

Women's relationship to the organisation is differentiated from men's relationship by the biological realities of becoming a mother, and the real threat of harm in the form of sexual harassment and gender-based bullying enabled through organisational hierarchy. Fear of management is a potential feature of the lived realities of women, informed by harmful behaviours of more senior male colleagues and the discretion that management uses when responding to their reports and enacting discipline. Women are further defined as out of place in music organisations by the needs of the organisation and the E&R of the job, which pose a conflict between the organisation and the home that substantially impacts upon mothers' access to senior-level jobs. Assumptions about the 'right person' for jobs in music organisations are embedded and articulated by workers and organisations, and they tell us that not only are workers with third level degrees more preferable, but that male workers, without childcare responsibilities, are the best match for the working conditions and demands of the organisation. The harms of women's lived realities are obscured by the dominant blanket reality of the organisation that is communicated outward and fed back into itself, thus legitimising its engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' in the eyes of those steering its approach. The outcome of these contradictory practices and realities is the construction of a paradox of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

Participants in the study provided evidence of their own lived realities, and the official reality of their organisation, and these realities were analysed through a framework designed to interrogate the day-to-day organisational processes and practices of the organisation and their impact upon male and female workers. It is through this analysis that the gendering logic of these organisations was uncovered, where contradictions reveal the meanings embedded in the operation of the organisation. This discussion answers the primary research question of the study, by analysing the operation of the logic of HRM paradigms, the organisational processes that embody them, and their impact upon the lived realities of male and female workers in their relationship with the organisation. In organisations that operate with an HRM logic for managing the relationship between the organisation and workers, a paradox is created, where men and women are both 'equal' (in official realities) and 'unequal' (in lived realities). HRM communicates that the needs of the organisation and the needs of workers can both be met, through HRM processes, and that these needs can be complementary. This is how HRM managed the moral dilemma facing organisations, which find themselves facing expanding external pressures to engage with 'equality', 'equal opportunity', and the ethical treatment of workers, while also continuing to operate as a market-oriented employer. In practice, this balance of needs tilts in favour of the organisation, and the logic that supports these contradictory realities is rooted in the individualist, neoliberal logic of HRM that maintains patriarchal relations between workers. As a consequence, women face harms and barriers in the workplace that are obscured by the official reality of the organisation and the legitimacy of HRM paradigms. The same processes that are intended to satisfy obligations towards 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' are the same processes that construct differential access to jobs and justice between male and female workers, and this is the outcome of the gendering logic through which the organisation manages its relationship with workers.

6.2 Interviews: The paradox of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'

A paradox of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' operating across the logic that governs workers' access to jobs and justice arose as the key focal point for analysis. The organisational realities captured by this study are heavily patterned by contradiction. Where these contradictions endure under the auspices of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', a paradox is created that calls into question the logic of these concepts that music organisations lean on to legitimise their operation. A paradox in gendering logic is identified in six organisations across the live, recording, publishing, and education industries where twenty-one participants are drawn

from - the majority of participants in the study. Paradox arises in the gendering logic of these organisations with the inclusion of the concepts of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', where men and women workers are both 'equal' and 'unequal', in what is *said* by the organisation, and what is *meant* in the lived realities of workers. This paradox is a feature of the gender order of Ireland's music industries. A comparison of these realities provides insight into the inner workings and embedded assumptions and contradictions of capitalist music organisations and the proposed remedies for gender problems that they champion.

In interviews and secondary sources, evidence of commitments to the concepts of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' was identified in the policy, procedure, values, and public statements of six organisations in the study across the live, publishing, recording, and education industries. Like all public and private organisations in Ireland, music organisations also have a statutory obligation towards 'equality' under Irish law which influences their activities. Policy and procedure encompass organisational processes related to jobs, such as hiring practices, or justice, such as grievance and disciplinary practices. Practices are the actions of people employed by these organisations, mostly evidenced by participant interviews. Values are the concepts or ideas that the organisation deliberately aligns itself with as a means of communicating to workers or to public audiences its commitments, or identity as an organisation. Public statements include job advertisements, reports published by the organisation, quotes by the organisation in articles, the organisation's social media posts, and statements from their website.

6.2.1 Paradox and access to jobs: The private allocation of jobs

Official reality

(i) Alignment with 'EDI' and meritocracy

Across the publishing, live, and education industries, the concepts of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' are constructed within the realities of three organisations, from which sixteen participants are drawn. These values supposedly underscore the rationale for allocating jobs according to a competitive process with multiple applicants. These concepts are integrated into the organisation and impact upon the lived realities of workers, acting as components of an organisational logic with gender effects, referred to as gendering logic.

These are a mixture of multinational and nationally distributed organisations, and all three express commitments to advertising vacant jobs. As well as being constructed internally in policy and procedure, these commitments are evidenced publicly in job advertisements and public statements with the use of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. Evidence of these commitments was also provided by interview participants. The allocation of jobs is

underpinned by procedures built around the rationale of matching skills and qualifications of candidates to predetermined job requirements, with the view of inviting several of these successful matches for interview and narrowing down that selection to one person. As one participant summed it up, 'it is the best person for the job' (male, senior level).

Legal obligations for employers to commit to 'equality' regarding access to employment, and the 'principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment' (Government of Ireland, 2024), with allowances for 'equal opportunity', have been enshrined in Irish legislation since the Employment Equality Act 1998 (preceded by the Employment Equality Act 1977 which refers only to 'equality'). The Act prohibits employers from discriminating against 'an employee or prospective employee…in any arrangements the employer makes for the purpose of deciding to whom employment should be offered' (Government of Ireland, 2024). There are exemptions to these rules, for example an employer is not obligated to hire someone who cannot do the job properly, which could allow them to exclude applicants with certain disabilities, and a person receiving care in their home can choose to hire on a gender basis if they feel more comfortable with a man or a woman (see Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2015). While the Act describes obligations towards non-discriminatory practices with respect to job advertisements, promotion opportunities, and selection procedures, Irish law does not dictate that private companies must advertise jobs. Meanwhile jobs in the public sector are governed by a Code of Practice under the Commission of Public Service Appointments (established in response to the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act, 2004), where rules to uphold 'standards of probity, merit, equity and fairness' (Government of Ireland, 2004) dictate procedures for 'marketing the vacancy and selecting appropriate assessment mechanisms' (Commission for Public Service Appointments, 2022, pp.12). For the paradoxical organisations in this study, it is a question of whether or not the allocation of jobs through procedures through some kind of competitive process is actively constructed in a relationship with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. This relationship is part of the reality put forward by organisations themselves, and can be observed in participant interviews and in secondary sources.

From the three organisations who communicate the advertisement of jobs as a matter of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', nine (four female, five male) described their first entry point to their respective organisation through a job that was advertised online or in print, or advertised to others resulting in multiple candidate interviews for the job, or in a small number of cases through a recruiter who matched them with a job vacancy. After gaining entry to the organisation, of these sixteen participants, three (two female, one male) described moving into a higher-level job that was advertised to other workers in the organisation.

Commitments to advertise jobs and to enact a standardised hiring procedure are explicitly connected to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' by one organisation under the umbrella of 'EDI', a term cited by multiple participants from this organisation without any prompt from the researcher. They asserted that procedure 'gives everyone an equal opportunity to apply' (male, senior level) and it is made known to potential applicants that 'we're an equal employer when it comes to selection' (male, senior level) in public statements and in job advertisements with 'our EDI disclaimer on it' (female, middle level). The reality that all jobs are advertised, internally or externally, was expressed by senior and middle management, justified by an imperative to ensure 'it's the best person for the job' (male, senior level) and a desire to integrate 'EDI' into the hiring process. The language of meritocracy arose in a second organisation amongst senior management in relation to the allocation of jobs according to a competitive candidate process, again, within an expressed organisational alignment with 'EDI', where the 'best qualified and best suited' (male, senior level) candidates are offered jobs. For a third organisation, the allocation of jobs is governed by a commitment to merit-based selection processes in conjunction with the principles of 'EDI', where all jobs are allocated according to a competitive process, with the job being advertised. Commitments to 'equal opportunity' with respect to the allocation of jobs are evidenced across public statements from all three organisations. The idea that open and standardised hiring procedures are applied to all applicants equally in itself offers a route to challenging entrenched gender divisions of labour, where those allocating jobs are applying the same selection methods as each other and 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' are positioned as overarching goals in the process. But what happens when these goals are directed by HRM paradigms, such as an alignment with 'EDI', is that HRM logic informs understandings of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. As outlined in the literature review, the needs of the organisation are always supported by this logic, and this is how these three organisations construct their relationship with these concepts - irrespective of how these concepts are understood outside of the organisation.

Within each of the realities of these organisations, their alignment with 'EDI' is framed as evidence of 'best practice' towards gender (i.e. efforts to create 'gender balance' across the organisation or to increase numbers of women employees). 'Best practice' is also framed as aspirational, that requires commitment to changing HRM standards external to the organisation, where alignment with 'EDI' coexists with the idea of 'room for improvement' (male, senior level). HRM paradigms concerning gender and jobs are brought into these organisations and are articulated as part of their gendering logic, specifically where organisational processes for the allocation of jobs are constructed according to an alignment with 'EDI' and meritocracy. For these three music organisations, the influence of HRM

paradigms upon the allocation of jobs is most strongly evidenced in the HR manager job, and the organisation's formalised commitments.

(ii) HRM procedures for the allocation of jobs

Policies and procedures for the allocation of jobs in these organisations are under the remit of a HR manager, and in the case of two organisations, the HR function was over time formalised into a standalone job. In one case, 'a rash of employee legislation' (male, head of organisation) was a contributing factor to this change, demonstrating the significant impact that forces external to the organisation can have upon the construction of labour relationships and the gendering logic of the organisation. The tightening of the relationship between the logic of the organisation and the HR job as the most legitimate adjudicator for 'effective diversity management' (Carbery and Cross, 2013, pp.128) was signified by another senior manager, who argued that 'EDI' had become so important to the organisation that 'it merited having a separate person managing the sole aspect of what we do' (male, senior level). For another organisation that formalised their HR function into a standalone role, it is the responsibility of the HR manager to manage the allocation of jobs according to a competitive process, through internal or external advertisement. Along with 'EDI', 'equal opportunity' is also positioned within this commitment to an open hiring process that the HR manager is responsible for overseeing. A third organisation operates with an external HR function, where a HR manager in another territory retains responsibility for the hiring process that is carried out locally, where the applicants invited for interview are chosen by this HR manager. The allocation of jobs according to a competitive process with candidate applications is presented in alignment with the desire to see more 'gender balance' (male, senior level) across the organisation through this process. This suggests that these music organisations are identifying the existence of hiring biases towards men, that they are seeking to remedy. They locate the issue on an individual level in the decision making of managers, who are the carriers of these biases.

In terms of hiring policy, 'everything kind of flows through [worker name], the HR person' (female, middle level). This centralisation of hiring policy under the remit of HR has resulted in the introduction of procedures intended to render the process for the allocation of jobs gender-neutral. The redaction of names, and 'any indication of race, gender, orientation' (female, middle level) from CVs is communicated as a measure to ensure that 'the selection process is not based on sex at all…making sure it's gender neutral' (male, senior level). This procedure was described as a means of rendering gender invisible in the hiring process. HRM supports both an argument for merit-based hiring practices based on professional

achievements, skills and abilities that align with the requirements of the job (Wood, Brewster and Brookes, 2014) and for hiring practices that emphasise the fit between the personal qualities of candidates and the values and goals of the organisation, referred to as 'selective hiring' (Machado, 2019). Both arguments boil down to the idea of people management, which under 'EDI' alignment means looking at who is in a job and implementing strategies to remove subjectivity, or bias, from the decision making of the people carrying out the hiring processes.

The assumed gender-neutrality of jobs is a core tenet of a 'neoliberal outlook' (Connell, 2011, pp.37) embedded in contemporary management styles, where the meritocratic position is the favourable approach compared to strategies to promote women under 'equal opportunity'. This is a typical approach for work organisations (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009) where commitments to efficiency override wider societal preoccupations with ethics, and can also construct gender-neutrality as an organisational conceptualisation of ethical practice (Connell, 2011). In other words, organisations want to argue that men or women could equally carry out any job as competently as each other. What is missing from this argument is the real possibility that a male or female worker may be deemed preferable or the only suitable candidate for certain jobs, such as private home care, sex-segregated healthcare facilities, prisons, or schools. There may also be perceived benefits to having a male or female worker in a certain job that are less obvious (and possibly more sordid) than these examples, such as the desire for record labels to hire young female receptionists to greet artists and their managers (where the latter occupation is still male dominated). The jobs-are-gender-neutral argument does not eliminate these rationalisations, but rather, pushes them away from view by deeming them incorrect in an enlightened, neoliberal workplace that does not see gender.

The conceptualisation of the job as a set of objectively measurable tasks and responsibilities was demonstrated in a detailed breakdown of one organisation's hiring process, whereby a digital HR tool and a marking system that provides candidates with a score is used to evaluate each application according to 'a grid system of questions…it's the criteria to match what the requirement is for the job…it's on like a general person' (male, head of organisation). Policies that favour the implementation of predetermined criteria for the selection of applicants are constructed within a meritocratic framework of HRM. The juxtaposition of merit-based processes that strip hiring procedures down to their neutral core, with procedures that are designed to support certain social groups speaks to the different approaches of 'diversity' and 'equal opportunity'. 'Diversity' was a concept put forward by multiple participants from two organisations when discussing the allocation of jobs, without any prompt from the researcher, positioning its logic in conjunction with efforts to implement fair and meritocratic hiring procedures. The compatibility of 'diversity' with 'equality' was evident in the realities presented by participants. 'Equality' and 'diversity' are side-by-side

under the popular term 'EDI', and some participants appear to make no clear distinction between these concepts. The increased melding of 'equality' with 'diversity' in discussions of gender divisions of labour indicates a shift in the ideological construction of gender by HRM paradigms and their host organisations.

(iii) Measuring merit for gender balance

Adopting a priori set of criteria for the allocation of jobs is considered a means of creating a fair and balanced process so 'the right candidates could come through…following best practice' (male, senior level). Again, these procedures are linked back to the HR manager and the organisation's commitments to making jobs accessible to applicants. A male senior manager described their opposition to quotas, which they feel represents the imposition of rigid rules that would hinder 'the very best' candidates from being selected, whereas the predetermined merit-based criteria are not deemed to hinder the best from being selected. Quotas are viewed as a means of overcoming longstanding biases, by reconstructing understandings of acceptable divisions of labour and compelling employers to match these understandings in practice.

> 'I think that change happens organically…it should happen in a natural way, you know, rather than it being a forced, a forced criteria…it does go back to my thoughts that you know the right person for the right role at the right time' (male, senior level)

Opposition to quotas, like the opposition expressed by the male manager just mentioned, centre around the idea that they are incompatible with the pursuit of 'the best person' for the job, which makes far more sense to the organisation. There is no clear-cut answer to the question of quotas. Given that music organisations approach power from a spectator position, without recognising their own processes and logic as part of the problem, quotas pose an effective challenge to entrenched divisions of labour (particularly at senior level) and the baked in sexism of hiring practices and the E&R of the job. But quotas still treat gender as a numerical reality and there is a tendency for music organisations to rely exclusively on numbers-based measures to deal with gender reform, ignoring the day-to-day realities that women navigate. It is also likely that even if the organisations in this study adopted gender quotas, they would be managing them through HRM paradigms, which would invariably position these measures as subordinate to the needs of the organisation. Quotas may assist in changing divisions of labour, but the gendering logic at the heart of the matter is maintained.

The positioning of merit at the forefront of these organisations' hiring processes for the purpose of selecting candidates for interview, and for determining who the job is allocated to, is justified as a part of a suite of commitments underpinned by 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. 'Best practice' is communicated as the most appropriate means through which

these concepts can be best brought to fruition, and according to the commitments of one organisation, hiring processes are of a 'high quality', informed by 'best practice', and are carried out by persons who are qualified to do so (their HR manager). In all three organisations, HRM paradigms of gender-neutral, merit-based hiring processes are weaved into a logic that understands gender solely as a feature of individual behaviour in organisations, not as a feature of organisational processes themselves and their capacity to communicate and legitimise ideologies. The rhetoric of HRM distinguishes between gendering processes that inhibit fair and meritocratic hiring located in individual behaviour (discrimination), and the fit for purpose, 'best practice' informed organisational tools used by these individuals to carry out hiring. In this sense, gender is allowed to be actively constructed in the selection stage as long as it is for the purposes of rendering the process gender-neutral - a confusing proposition that treats gender as a zero-sum game. Participants from two organisations provided evidence of the active construction of gender for the purposes of gender-neutrality. Interview panels that are 50/50 male and female are there to ensure that 'there's no gender bias built into the interview process' (male, senior level), and gender is 'a very serious consideration for when people are being taken on' (male, head of organisation). The gendering of the job allocation process at this stage is considered a positive method for countering gender bias. By deliberately constructing an interview panel along gender lines, HRM argues that organisations are creating 'a more inclusive interview experience for candidates and a fairer decision-making process' (Woods, Tharakan and Brown, 2021, pp.201) - the assumption being that biases against women will be cancelled out by presence of a woman. In the case of the organisations in this study, interview panels can only purport to mitigate gender bias, as all workers involved in the allocation of jobs are the racial majority.

The heads of two organisations construct the degendering/gendering approach as a procedural hierarchy. For one department that is entirely male, the idea that they should positively discriminate for any future jobs there and hire a woman is favourable, while qualifying that this is 'not quite a quota' (male, head of organisation). However, this action cannot be justified if a man applying for the job meets the predetermined merit-based criteria to a higher standard than the woman.

> 'It's an area that you gotta be really careful of…you gotta be really careful if you give it to a woman under those circumstances…if you're positively discriminating because she's a woman. Because you're potentially discriminating against another person there' (male, head of organisation)

Trepidation regarding affirmative action and its perceived conflict with meritocracy and just rewards for 'the best person' is evident in this organisation's approach. The neoliberal moral philosophy that underscores the merit-based approach ascribes it with a legitimate moral

standing against which other approaches are measured, and this standing is evident in the argument put forward by the quoted male head of the organisation. He presents a confused argument, where he wishes to hire a woman because of the obvious gendering of an all-male department, but doesn't want to hire a woman if gender is part of the rationale for hiring her. He wants to hire a woman on the basis of merit, but that in itself is a contradictory statement, because 'the best person' is not gendered. This organisation's efforts to change division of labour with affirmative action fall short because its logic favours the moral superiority of the merit-based approach.

The acknowledgement of gender having a material role within the job allocation process is justified only when fair and equal conditions have first been created by an unbiased, gender-neutral HRM informed procedure, *and* when those men and women competing for the job are deemed to have equally met the predetermined criteria set out by this procedure.

> 'I would be maybe more mindful of that, of the gender balance on the team. And it would be more of a factor than, like if you had people who were roughly equally qualified…I would rightly or wrongly, I would be inclined to maybe consider a female candidate more favourably' (male, head of organisation)

According to this logic, organisational processes informed by HRM paradigms are, in essence, ideal tools for the fair allocation of jobs that satisfy the organisation's alignment with 'EDI', as long as external influences of bias on the part of employees involved in carrying out these processes are not allowed to impact upon them. The argument that organisational processes, such as job evaluations and selection criteria, may themselves be laden with assumptions that have gender effects (such as E&R that assume no caring responsibilities outside the organisation) is not part of this logic.

Commitments to changing numbers of men and women in the organisation are evidenced by these organisations, with the view that more women overall and at senior level is desirable. Alignment with 'EDI' and meritocracy is directly related to procedures for the allocation of jobs, and HR managers are the central point through which this alignment is articulated. Due to the presence of their expertise in the organisation, legitimacy is afforded to the official reality that dictates 'if an opportunity does come up, it's advertised' (female, middle level), and 'fit for the job itself' (male, senior level) is the primary method of selection. Gender was communicated in conjunction with the concept of 'diversity' (within 'EDI' alignment), with senior management providing arguments as to why 'diversity' is important to the organisation. The desire to reflect the organisation's customer base was presented by two organisations as a significant driver for HR policies and strategies to change gender divisions of labour, with the terms 'strong', 'well developed' (male, senior level), and 'better' (male, head of organisation) used as evaluations of the numbers of men and women in the organisation,

wrapped within acknowledgements of 'we're not where we should be with that' (male, head of organisation), and qualified by the need for the processes to be a 'natural environment' (male, senior level). Such is the desire to change these numbers according to this logic, that one organisation has hosted workshops from organisations that promote 'EDI', specifically with the intention of modifying hiring policy and procedure in response to their advice.

In adopting a 'counting bodies approach' within 'EDI' alignment, the logic of these organisations constructs gender as a numerical reality, where access to jobs is first and foremost a matter of unsullied, competitive conditions enabled through the application of HRM methods. The individual(s) involved in the allocation of jobs are the means through which meritocratic conditions may break down and result in advantage or disadvantage impacting upon candidates' access to the job. These organisations propose that the remedy lies in HRM, which continues to lay the ideological foundations for the organisational construction of gender through 'EDI' alignment. The external, legal obligations upon the organisation towards 'equality' in the job allocation process are also channelled through the HR manager function, which has the responsibility for ensuring that the organisation is acting in compliance with these obligations. Thus, the organisation's alignment with 'EDI' through HRM paradigms and their purported claims to expertise regarding 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', acts as a way of seeing these concepts that constructs the organisation's gendering logic in line with HRM paradigms. This gendering logic is connected to the organisation's external legal obligations through HRM's claims to expertise regarding these obligations, which legitimise its authoritative role over the organisations' engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', and the reality put forward by the organisation around these concepts.

The role of HRM paradigms in the gendering of organisational realities for workers is substantiated upon analysis of the lived realities of these workers. Enduring contradiction is at the heart of Connell's (2021) and Acker's (1990, 2006) frameworks, and this study elaborates upon their theorisation of the contradictions of capitalism and organisations with a new theorisation of 'paradox', as a means of critiquing the organisational construction of gender through class relations. This new contribution draws attention to the logics of HRM, 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' in order to understand the trajectories for men and women at local levels in the organisation, and at industry level, where patterns allow for the theorisation of the gender order of Ireland's music industries.

Lived realities

(i) The private allocation of jobs in small and unchanging music industries

Twenty participants (seventy-four percent) have accessed *at least* one job in their respective organisation that was not advertised to anyone else, and in several cases, participants have had multiple experiences of this practice in the same organisation, moving between jobs and across hierarchies without competition. Results from the interviews and survey indicate that the private allocation of jobs is a practice taking place across Ireland's music organisations regardless of industry type, and that it is a practice not equally applied to all workers, with some benefiting from this practice multiple times in their career, and some not benefiting from it at all.

Anecdotes about jobs in music industries tend to circle back to the idea of a closed network of opportunities, where it's 'a bit of a who you know…how much you're willing to kind of go, 'don't forget me don't forget me'' (female, senior level). Evidence from this study points to some truth in these anecdotes, with the additional proviso that it is also about 'where you are' (are you inside or outside the organisation to begin with). Music organisations in this study favour internal hires for jobs, thus limiting competition to existing employees in the form of promotions or lateral moves across departments. Internal competition is sometimes enabled by making the vacant job known to employees and inviting expressions of interest, and sometimes, it isn't. Participants who answered questions about the official hiring and promotion practices, and questions about their own experience with hiring and promotion, often provided two different, conflicting realities.

Within the three organisations across the live, publishing, and education industries who have aligned themselves with the concepts of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' for the advertisement of jobs, eleven participants (four female, seven male) described accessing at least one job in their organisation that was not advertised to others. The private allocation of jobs was most consistently observed across all three organisations in the form of promotions. The private allocation of jobs as an initial entry point to the organisation was predominantly observed in one organisation. Seven men and four women gave evidence of lived realities which contradict the official realities presented by their respective organisations regarding commitments to a competitive process for the allocation of jobs in alignment with 'equality' or 'equal opportunity', where vacant jobs are, purportedly, advertised to others. While the private allocation of jobs was evidenced by multiple participants from the recording sector, for example in record labels, this section of the analysis is solely concerned with organisations that carry out this practice in conjunction with commitments to advertise jobs, where these commitments are constructed in alignment with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. No

evidence of this alignment was found in participant interviews nor in public statements from these organisations in the recording industry. However, that does not mean that these organisations are not paradoxical in their practices for the allocation of jobs - it means that this study did not find evidence of ideological alignment with 'equality' or 'equal opportunity' for the advertisement of jobs. This kind of alignment may well exist internally within these companies in written documents.

In addition to internal practices and policies, the external aspects of music organisations are also significant. The relatively small size of Ireland's music industries compared to other countries, and the consistently low supply of vacant jobs within music organisations was evidenced routinely across interviews as a factor in why gender divisions of labour are slow to change. This illustrates another contributing factor to divisions of labour - what one male head of an organisation described as 'our perennial problem, that causes the most stress' - where workers have nowhere to go when they want to move up. With most jobs concentrated in a small number of organisations that seldom increase their employee numbers (with some decreasing their numbers over recent years) that favour internal hires, the ability for workers external to the organisation to enter is extremely limited regardless of whether the job is advertised. Favouring internal hires means that efforts to change divisions of labour are hampered by the organisation limiting potential candidates to whoever is already there. A low supply of jobs and favouring internal hires, coupled with informal hiring practices which favour men, amounts to a more restricted access to jobs for women that is far more complex an issue than HRM and 'EDI' acknowledge. The ability for workers inside the organisation to move upward is also limited by the lack of vacancies at higher levels. This stagnation of access to jobs was evidenced across organisations in the study regardless of their size, with men and women acknowledging its impact upon their organisational realities - 'the team never grew, and no one left' (female, junior level).

The internal structure and societal context of music organisations are significant factors in the gendering of access to jobs, which is partly constructed prior to any job being allocated, privately or not. Organisations in this study have high staff retention, particularly at middle and senior level, with little or no increases to the overall number of jobs over time. They are embedded in Irish industries constructed by a patriarchal system of advantage and disadvantage (for prior analysis see O'Shea, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2018; Hanlon, 2023; Monaghan, 2021) where men have privileged access to mechanisms of recognition and reward and women face structural barriers in accessing these mechanisms - several male and female participants across the study acknowledged the historical dominance of men in music industries, sometimes referring to 'the music industry' as 'male dominated' in this context.

When management of music organisations privately allocate jobs, they are doing so within this context.

The gendering logic of these three paradoxical organisations, is discussed by this chapter as a circuit for the gendering of access to jobs, constructed by personal relationships, the needs of the organisation, and the gender meanings associated with jobs whose E&R are designed to function in accordance with these needs. These are the three components that this analysis of privately allocated jobs focuses on. The gendering of access to jobs functions as an expression of the market-oriented needs of the organisation. It is through an analysis of the needs of the organisation that this study presents its most substantial contribution to the development of a new feminist theorisation of paradox and organisations.

(ii) Personal relationships and the needs of the organisation

The most common rationale provided by participants for their experience with privately allocated jobs as an entry point to the organisation, was knowing someone already inside. Six men and two women gained entry to their respective organisation in this way, in five cases (two female, three male) going through a 'very casual' (male, junior level), informal interview-like interaction with management that was described more as a formality than a process that could potentially have consequences for their selection. The remaining three men did not have any interaction with management that resembled an interview. For five men and one woman, recommendations to management from friends, or in one case a relative, inside the organisation (where five recommendations came from a man, and one from a woman), and the corresponding decision by management to allocate the job without a competitive process, led to these workers being provided access to a hiring procedure that bypassed the merit-based selection method referred to as best practice. In none of these cases did the five men and one woman approach the organisation first to see if there was a vacant job to apply for - one participant aptly summed it up as 'somebody asked me' (male, senior level). For the remaining woman, she sent her CV to a member of management that she already knew, not knowing that there just happened to be a recently vacated job that they needed to allocate. The observed pattern in this study of men being the main benefactors and beneficiaries of privately allocated jobs as an entry point to the organisation speaks to the internal gender divisions of labour in the organisation and their historical patterns, where men hold more jobs in upper management than women in each of these organisations and are more often making these decisions at the outset.

Three male and one female members of management across the three organisations sanctioned the private allocation of jobs via the personal relationships of five men and one

woman, five of whom recommended a man. These participants were put in a position where they themselves must make a judgement call as to who 'the best person' for the job is, which is invariably influenced by the strength of these relationships (which were in all but one case were described as friendships), and considerations of who will best validate their recommendation in the eyes of management. Five out of six men gained entry to their respective organisations via privately allocated jobs through existing friendships - 'he would have been a friend of mine, you know, through, you know the scene' (male, junior level). Personal relationships outside the organisation inform the gender arrangements of music organisations, and this relationship between music organisations and their societal contexts is not part of the argument of 'EDI'. Reaching outward from the organisation to access the personal networks of workers, for the purpose of allocating jobs without a competitive process, bypasses 'best practice' and contradicts professed principles of 'EDI' alignment - though it is unacknowledged by the reality put forward by these organisations. Similarly, the impact of personal relationships was for the most part unacknowledged by participants who benefited from them, who tended to emphasise the significance of their experience, which one man firmly believes was 'everything, it was everything…them hiring me was entirely based on my CV and experience' (male, head of organisation).

A practice not confined to music industries, the role of recommendations in the decision making of management when allocating jobs in creative and cultural industries has been documented by Milestone (2015) in her analysis of UK media sectors, where the private allocation of jobs is an accepted practice and the idea of hiring 'people like us' and the importance of 'fitting in' (pp.507) supersedes the legitimacy of gender-neutral merit-based selection. Even when industries and organisations do claim to be meritocratic and egalitarian, the lived reality of workers can serve to dispel such myth making. In the case of Gill's (2002) study of new media workers in six European countries which includes Ireland, the informality of supposed non-hierarchical, egalitarian structures while appearing an attractive prospect, creates problems for women, who are more likely to lose out from the similarly informal job allocation practices that largely depend on insider recommendations. Gill also notes the dominance of meritocracy as an explainer for access to jobs in these workplaces, acting as as a vehicle for an individualistic understanding of realities that makes it difficult for women to make an argument that gender plays a part in these realities, despite the open practice of personal-connection-based hiring. Parallel to professed loyalties to meritocracy as an explanation for access to jobs in the film industry, Wreyford (2015) finds the logic of risk reduction for organisations at play in practices for the private allocation of jobs through worker relationships - a contradictory yet legitimised practice amongst employers that is justified as a response to the market-oriented needs of the organisation. This is an example of

how organisations can rationalise practices that make good business sense, even if they deviate from official procedures or public commitments towards gender. The needs of the organisation are the primary driver for action.

One participant described how the private allocation of jobs as an entry point to the organisation can be a tried and tested, normalised practice in certain departments, regardless of commitments to advertise jobs.

> 'They don't usually advertise for it…because it's all just word of mouth. So kind of leads to a fair bit of nepotism, you know, just family, friends and that kind of thing. Now, everyone that gets the job is good at their job. So it's not just like anyone is hired for the sake of them knowing someone' (female, junior level)

The prevalence of nepotism is qualified by the argument that these workers demonstrate a deservedness to have the job to begin with (after they gain entry to the organisation via their family or friend connection). In this sense, it is possible for meritocracy to retain a seat in the gendering logic as a means of justifying practices that govern access to jobs. This is sometimes validated by the inclusion of an informal, 'interview-like' process - akin to the selection process endorsed by HRM paradigms - *after* the worker has been chosen via these personal relationships. An interview-like process that followed a recommendation from an insider was described by multiple participants across the three paradoxical organisations in question. The maintenance of gendering class relations hides in plain sight when organisations use personal relationships to inform hiring practices (Acker, 2006), and the normalisation of such methods for the allocation of jobs is apparent in the realities of the workers of these organisations.

The implicit rationale for the private allocation of jobs for these five men who gained access to the organisation through friend recommendations, evidenced by each of them, was the needs of the organisation. The overriding need 'to get someone in, and quickly' (male, middle level), took shape in various contexts; existing workers going on leave from the organisation, a new project that justified bringing a new worker in at short notice, and the organisation being in a stage where it required multiple workers that embodied a certain desired industry status. It is on this point that the critique presented by this study is in agreement with the assertions of HRM paradigms, in acknowledging that the market-oriented needs of the organisation are the governing authority for how they allocate resources. Obviously, this makes good business sense. But HRM argues that the needs of the organisation are complementary to ethical 'people management', and that these aspects can support each other, because increased productivity is an outcome of workers that are satisfied and motivated, and organisations that perform well can invest in their people. Market-oriented needs are fused with a moral code when HRM argues that the needs of the organisation *should be* the guiding principle for practice and that HR practitioners are those best placed to offer a

‘critical source of competitive advantage’ (Biron et al., 2025) while managing the organisation’s commitments to ‘gender balance’. The critique presented by this study challenges this argument, and judges the role of the market-oriented logic of HRM that guides organisational practice as a potent ideological force for the undermining of possibilities for the reform of gender and class relations. HRM proposes ‘EDI’ as a way of providing for the needs of workers and the needs of the organisation. In actuality, the needs of the organisation are presumed to be the needs of workers, and the statements about bringing women in because it’s the ‘right thing to do' amount to no real change in practice. Practices for the allocation of jobs by music organisations are guided by the primacy of the needs of the organisation, which sits at the helm of both contradictory realities, where jobs are allocated with competition, and without.

The simple reality of ‘I got an interview and then I got the job’ (female, junior level) aligns with the design of access to jobs endorsed by HRM. When this reality is considered in light of the personal-connection-based hiring practices that the quoted participant described benefiting from, moments earlier in the interview, the logic that these organisations employ to construct ‘equality’ and ‘equal opportunity’ begs questioning. Music organisations can dip in and out of HRM procedures for alignment with ‘equality’ and ‘equal opportunity’, because the logic of HRM paradigms support the needs of the organisation. A paradox is constructed in music organisation’s engagement with these concepts. Official realities say that access to jobs for men and women is equalised through alignment with ‘equality’ and ‘equal opportunity’. The lived realities of workers tell us that adherence to ‘best practice’ for realising this alignment is discretionary, and access to jobs is as much an ad hoc process of responding to the needs of the organisation as it is applying procedure. The reality of ‘equal access’ presented by music organisations and their meritocratic systems cannot be validated by this study. Yet, this reality is dominant. These coexisting contradictory realities construct a paradox of ‘equality’ and ‘equal opportunity’, where men and women are both ‘equal’ and ‘unequal’. As this chapter will continue to demonstrate, a logic that prioritises the goals of production, that is legitimised by HRM, operates across both realities and sustains this paradox.

(iii) The Expectations and Requirements (E&R) of the job

Once inside the organisation, the private allocation of jobs continues as a practice sanctioned by management, in parallel with HRM procedures. Eight participants (two female, six male) have been allocated at least one higher-ranking job in their organisation without the job being advertised to anyone else, without any formal process.

> ‘When it came to kind of being asked to step up as a [higher level job title], there wasn’t a process in it’ (female, moving up from junior level)
>
> I became [higher level job title] of my second year there, I was told the day we started that I was [higher level job title], without even asking me (male, moving up from junior level)
>
> ‘I was kind of just moved into this position…I didn’t, you know, apply for it, or anything like that’ (female, moving up from junior level)
>
> ‘I was offered [higher level job title]…Again, not a job I pursued, and I was a bit surprised when they came to me (male, moving up from junior level)

Four of these participants (two female, two male) commented directly on the fact that they were promoted without a process. Four male participants from two of these organisations have benefited from privately allocated jobs as both an entry point to the organisation, and as promotion, with two of these men subsequently reaching the most senior level of their organisation.

A combination of timing - being ‘there at the time’ (female, middle level) or being able to ‘get the timing right’ (male, senior level) - with internal and external organisational conditions (such as social and economic crises, employee absenteeism, changes to recruitment practices) and beliefs about successfully meeting the E&R of the job, were the most common contributing factors against which participants contextualised their experience with privately allocated promotions. Amongst the eight who have accessed a privately allocated promotion, three (one female, two male) feel that their ability in meeting the E&R of the job to a good standard informed the decision by management to offer them the promotion. They felt confident in the belief that ‘they saw something that they knew, she’s capable’ (female, middle level) and ‘I was obviously demonstrating that I could do the job’ (male, senior level), and that even in the absence of procedure ‘you had to be capable’ (male, head of organisation). Just one manager tentatively acknowledged appraisals as potentially connected to the allocation of promotions. It may be the case that evaluations of how workers are meeting the E&R of the job are motivating privately allocated promotions. But as decision-making for privately allocated promotions is not formally recorded, the role of these evaluations is unknown, and there is the potential for management to abuse their power by bypassing formal procedure for evaluating each worker. However, each of these three organisations does have HR procedures in place for appraising employees, and even when they are applied, they do not necessarily lead to workers being rewarded for their work.

Two workers who felt they were meeting, and surpassing, the E&R of their job felt that they had to put forward a persuasive case to their line managers for the actual work they were doing to be recognised by the organisation, in the form of a title change and salary increase.

Both eventually succeeded, despite the argument that 'there's no room to give anyone a raise right now' (male, junior level) being put forward by management.

> 'I just realised after a few years, you just have to fight and push for everything. And so I did that a few times…It was so draining, pushing and fighting for certain things that I just felt I should be getting anyway' (male, middle level)

The reality where 'the workload was becoming like, unmanageable' (male, junior level) and 'people are spread, I won't say too thin, but thinly' (male, middle level) was presented by participants across multiple organisations in this study.

> 'There really is, honestly, *so* much to manage. There's so many plates to spin all the time…I do think there's a lot expected for the one person on the one team' (female, middle level).

> 'Not just in my organisation but I think across the sector, it's characterised by too few people doing too much work…Other departments in my organisation would be in a similar position of feeling that. Certainly, everybody's vocal about needing more resources' (male, senior level).

The expansion of E&R for workers, and the disproportionate amount of E&R allocated to one person - both of which were evidenced by the majority of participant interviews - were in no case met with any proactive response from HR managers or managers involved in the allocation of jobs to offer a change in job title or salary. While the implementation of HRM in organisations is considered a means of motivating 'higher levels of employee and firm performance' (Townsend, Cafferkey, Dundon and Riaz, 2021) which entails more productive labour, the rewards on offer in several of these organisations are limited to bonus payments related to targets. The terms of the job itself remain the same, while its E&R can still increase or persist at levels that cause stress for workers. In their socialist critique of capitalism, Chibber (2022) describes the outcome of the capitalist imperative to extract as much labour effort from employees as possible, as the construction of a reality where 'no amount of effort is ever enough' (pp.102).

While meeting the E&R of the job was significant in the minds of a small number of workers who accessed privately allocated promotions, the lived realities of most demonstrate the overriding significance of a different rationale at play. For those who have accessed privately allocated promotions, the internal and external conditions of the organisation that impact upon its pursuit of market success, and its response to them, is the consistent motivating factor for this practice. The needs of the organisation that motivate the sanctioning of privately allocated jobs, in tandem with the worker relationships that allow friends privileged access to jobs, constructs the gendering of access to jobs in a hierarchy of privilege, where men stand to benefit to a greater degree than women. Because in small industries with

few job opportunities, personal relationships matter. The prevalence of a culture of 'let's get this person a job. I don't wanna say jobs for the boys, but at times it felt like that' (female, senior level) means that friends inside supporting friends outside, in industries that are male dominated feeds into the maintenance of organisational cultures that support men's advancement over women's, referred to as 'boys clubs' (Prior, Barra and Kramer, 2019, pp.19). The contradictory practices that bring these gendering realities to bear upon workers, and that uphold HRM procedures and 'EDI' alignment, are sustained by a single logic that governs the allocation of jobs - the needs of the organisation.

(iii) The needs of the organisation and the E&R of the job

'The needs of the organisation' is a term used by this study to describe the response of the organisation to changing internal conditions (such as workers going on leave), and external conditions (such as market conditions, legislative changes, HRM paradigms, social and economic crises). The latter category of conditions is encompassed by a new concept coined by this study; industry orientations. Industry orientations describe the changing external conditions of music organisations that impact upon their gendering and racialising logic (though only the gendering aspect is explored here due to the racial homogeneity of workforces). This concept is informed by data collected by this study and findings of the systematic literature review. The organisation's response to industry orientations was the most commonly evidenced rationale behind the private allocation of jobs. The idea that access to resources is by design, following some kind of meritocratic logic that any worker could benefit from if they were deemed to be 'the best', was rendered invalid by multiple participants. Worker's access to privately allocated jobs is heavily structured by conditions of uncertainty, unpredictability, and events that are outside the control of workers themselves, and members of management who allocate these jobs. They described economic crises that motivated significant changes to hiring practices and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the structure and operation of the organisation, as drivers for the private allocation of jobs, usually as promotions. Combined with increasing E&R of the job and existing workers going on maternity leave or sick leave, the conditions were set for workers from these three paradoxical organisations to benefit from a different job allocation procedure than their coworkers.

While the official reality upholds a system of merit while serving the needs of the organisation, the job allocation procedure of the lived realities of these workers serves the needs of the organisation without an HRM paradigm. When the Covid-19 pandemic began and restrictions were imposed on music industries in Ireland and music industries worldwide, a large round of redundancies paved the way for one participant to access a higher-level job

without any process, and without any celebration of this promotion, despite the presence of a HR manager and policies for the allocation of jobs. This worker felt the difference of accessing jobs privately compared to accessing them in a competitive process; 'I don't feel as rewarded by the promotions…it just kind of worked out that people left, and it was open for me' (female, middle level). Evidence of increased pressure on workers and on senior management caused by the Covid-19 pandemic - 'a very busy, very stressful time' (male, head of organisation) - was evident across multiple organisations in the study, regardless of industry type. This pressure filtered down from the top through the practices of management, with consequences for the allocation of jobs. In several cases, the need to prioritise the continued functioning of the organisation in the face of market uncertainty and decreased revenue from customers during the pandemic displaced commitments to policy and procedure.

How music organisations respond to industry orientations points to a close relationship between the E&R of the job and the needs of the organisation, where 'the workload increased, the pressure increased, we were trying new things…there were extra hours involved' (female, middle level). Sometimes this change in E&R happened with no notice provided by management - 'I got a call from [line manager] to say…you're gonna have to lead on this…we need a plan by twelve o'clock' (male, head of organisation). The significant broadening and increasing of E&R over short or long periods of time that, in practice, amounts to workers undertaking the E&R of a higher-level job, without the allocation of a promotion to reflect this change. This is a very common pattern across organisations in this study. In the absence of enough workers in the organisation to carry out all available jobs and the collective E&R (which are subject to irregular change), existing workers are stretched across these E&R, essentially carrying out work of a different job in addition to the work of the job they are already carrying out, without recognition or reward. The needs of the organisation can make demands on workers that justify expanding their E&R to those of higher-level jobs, without affording official recognition to this change, because 'we still needed people, the work had to happen' (female, middle level).

Moving workers across jobs and hierarchies, privately and without formal recognition via increased pay or title change, is a practice that can be sanctioned by management through the manipulation of E&R in response to industry orientations, with no oversight as to its compliance with organisational policy and commitments for the allocation of jobs. For those who experienced these changes in E&R, sometimes they received confirmation from management that they were being offered a higher-level job (privately allocated) and sometimes changes to contract terms came much later (again, as a privately allocated job). Industry orientations appear to motivate the logic of these organisations in a direction that allows management to move workers around the organisation, without following official

procedure. In combination with internal conditions, such as workers going on sick leave or maternity leave and therefore leaving the E&R of their job unattended, this practice is hardly contested, as the ease at which these extra E&R are added to workers existing roles was evident across interviews, as was its normalisation. The near absence of labour unions and collective bargaining processes from music organisations in Ireland means that workers have no viable mechanisms to challenge practices that prioritise the organisation's market performance over the fair treatment of workers.

(iv) The needs of the organisation, E&R, and the hierarchical gendering of jobs

The pattern of men hiring men through unadvertised jobs, both as an entry point to the organisation and as promotion, was described with frustration by one woman who observed this happening in a structured way with these decisions made by men at senior level.

> '[Job type] being promoted to certain roles, they might not necessarily have been advertised…it'd be all done very, more discreetly…it's all male that would be managing [department]…and a lot of the office staff, support staff, were female. And that was always something that we raised, we always raised it, saying why aren't there more female…that was definitely something I noticed at [organisation name]' (female, senior level)

This woman raised a concern about the private allocation of jobs according to occupation and sex. She observed a pattern dividing office support and administrative roles mostly carried out by women, and creative and strategic roles that require the demonstration of industry specific expertise mostly carried out by men - and that it was men in these roles that were benefiting from privately allocated jobs. Not a new phenomenon, the relationship between creative work and gender has been documented across cultural and media industries. Gender divisions of labour across occupations in media and cultural industries, including music industries, have been accounted for under the topic of sex segregation (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015) where analysis has tended to focus on the associated gender stereotypes of sex segregated occupations, for example, UK-based creative roles in film and TV being predominantly carried out by men, and creative roles in libraries and galleries being predominantly carried out by women (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020), with the association of masculine and feminine meanings to each of these occupations acting as a segregating force. For creative roles in Ireland, interviewees of O'Driscoll (2023) describe the role that sexism has played in hindering their ability to be recognised and rewarded for their work compared to their male colleagues, offering evidence of the need to 'challenge the engrained misconceptions of creativity as a fundamentally male capacity' (pp.95).

Creative roles in music industries tend to occupy the focus of academic inquiries into jobs and music industries, and evidence of the gendering of occupations for employees of music organisations is overwhelmingly located in industry-led reports. Overall trends in these reports tell us about realities that are constructed on a gender-base regarding access to jobs. Contributors to an international survey observe that access to jobs for women is concentrated at entry-level and 'non-management positions' that do not involve strategy or creative work (Tunecore, 2023, pp.20), and women in Australian music organisations must 'work harder for longer' (MAPN Consulting, 2022, pp.42) in the face of men's opinions and contributions being favoured above their own. Eighty percent of production staff in Dutch live music venues are male and twenty percent are female (VNPF, 2019) and women hold sixteen percent of top executive level jobs across organisations in the recording industry worldwide (Smith et al., 2025). For Ireland's music organisations, no such data exists, apart from the data collected by this study.

Across multiple organisations, including organisations which are not deemed to be paradoxical, privately allocated jobs amongst women more often than not occurred for traditionally feminised roles (customer facing roles, PR/marketing, community-oriented roles). For privately allocated jobs amongst men, this practice took place across a broad range of roles, with the distinguishing feature of this work being a responsibility for organisational strategy, operations and development, which increased as they moved into higher-level jobs, with some reaching the highest level of their organisation. Regardless of whether the job is allocated with or without competition, men still access the highest levels of their organisation in greater numbers than women. Evidence regarding access to senior-level jobs calls us to pay attention to the gendering of access to roles where organisational strategy and high-level decision making are a core element of the job, as it appears from the lived realities of workers that men and women who benefit from privately allocated jobs do not benefit equally when it comes to seniority. Out of the eleven workers from the three paradoxical organisations who have accessed privately allocated jobs, eight (three female, five male) described their experience with jobs with E&R designed around the needs of the organisation (customer relationships, PR/marketing, community relationships, organisational strategy and budgets). Both women in customer relationship roles reached middle management while benefiting from privately allocated jobs, with one man in this role remaining below middle management. Via the same means, two men whose E&R encompasses strategy and budgeting have reached the highest level of their organisation, and of the three workers in PR/marketing roles (one female, two male), one man has reached senior-level management, with one woman and one man reaching middle management.

None of the three female workers in jobs with E&R designed around the needs of the organisation, who have benefited from privately allocated jobs, have reached senior level, with all three reaching middle management. Of the five men in these types of jobs who have benefited from privately allocated jobs, three have reached senior level. The two men who did not reach senior level are the two who pushed for the realities of their increased E&R to be recognised by management. Men tend to access the most senior-level jobs in their organisation at a higher rate than women, in roles where the E&R of the job are designed around the needs of the organisation, including executive jobs (CEO, CFO, CMO). What distinguishes the realities of men's and women's access to privately allocated jobs, compared to jobs that are allocated according to HRM paradigms, is that the logic of the former is identifiable in a 'natural', unaffected state. The role of the needs of the organisation in motivating management to sanction hiring practices that contradict professed commitments to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' is laid out by workers' lived realities. These realities do not materially differ from each other in their outcome - men remain the main beneficiaries of jobs at senior levels in the organisation, benefiting from their higher position in the gender order, with women's access to senior level inhibited by their relatively lower position in a gender order that allocates resources according to a patriarchal system of economic and social privilege. When music organisations rely on remedies for gender problems from HRM paradigms, such as 'EDI', the result is more of the same, because HRM constructs gender problems on favourable terms for itself and always positions itself as the solution. An official reality is produced through this alignment, which doesn't change the lived realities of workers. Gendering realities continue for workers, behind the more visible reality communicated by the organisation that argues something very different. Both coexist in a paradoxical relationship.

Gender hierarchies of access to the highest levels of seniority in the organisation, where the needs of the organisation are most explicitly expressed in the E&R of the job, was particularly evident across the entire study in multinational music organisations. Overall, of the five men in this study who have reached the highest level of their organisation while benefiting from privately allocated jobs, four are from an organisation that operates within a multinational ownership structure, and one of these is a paradoxical organisation with respect to hiring practices (two others are discussed in the next paradox chapter). The development of international markets and growth of multinational organisations under the logic of neoliberalism represents the continued gendering of a patriarchal world order and the maintenance of a hegemony of gender politics (Connell, 2000) with consequences for the lived realities of workers. The pressure exerted by investors on the organisation for improved market performance shapes the E&R of the job for individual workers, who must respond to this pressure within their own job, in spite of a lack of knowledge amongst these investors of

what these lived realities entail; 'they could be selling rubber ducks…they just want to see numbers and progress and growth' (male, head of organisation). A focus on profitability and customer numbers from a global perspective, without local knowledge or interest, meant that workers in the Irish organisation were under immense pressure 'because we weren't growing at the same rate as [territory]' and 'they were always looking for opportunities to grow and expand without kind of looking at putting any time in or putting any research into the industry itself and seeing if it's possible to grow, or if there's a market there' (female, senior level). The E&R of the job in multinational music organisations are responsive to industry orientations in a manner that differs in some respects from music organisations that are locally or nationally distributed, where the needs of the organisation are not only in conversation with external factors, but economic interests that do not have to navigate the realities that they are affecting.

4.3.2 Concluding remarks

Within tight networks of personal relationships that inform who stands to benefit from privately allocated jobs as entry points to music organisations, and within labour arrangements of music industries that place greater value on labour undertaken by men, the odds are stacked against women who seek to enter into music organisations. The lack of opportunities for upward mobility in these music organisations is influenced heavily by the fact that new roles are seldom created, if at all, and that existing workers tend to stay in jobs long term. Faced with the fact that 'there's so few opportunities' (female, middle level) in music organisations in Ireland where 'it's your own responsibility to be kind of taking care of your own progression' (female, junior level), workers are in competition for a stagnant pool of jobs that becomes smaller as the level of seniority increases. While workers in general face obstacles to reaching senior-level jobs, how women must navigate these realities differs from their male counterparts, who are more likely to reap the rewards of carrying out work in jobs whose E&R have a tight relationship to the needs of the organisation, while using privately allocated jobs as steps towards higher levels of seniority.

Positions of seniority in music organisations, while being scarce resources, are also valuable resources that embody 'assumptions of legitimate power and control' (Acker, 2006, pp.113) built upon legacies of male authority. Some participants expressed a belief in HRM as a progressive step forward in the reform of gender divisions of labour. However, if practices that replicate gender hierarchies of access to senior-level jobs are consistent across realities where HRM procedures and in effect and realities where they are not, then HRM paradigms may not represent the kind of reform that these participants expressed a desire for. In fact, these paradigms legitimise a gendering logic of 'business as usual' under an agreeable market

rhetoric of meritocracy. This allows for practice to stay loyal to the needs of the organisation irrespective of commitments to 'EDI'. Contradictions to the official realities presented by organisations - the lived realities of privately allocated jobs - allow for the hegemony of HRM paradigms to be brought to light, and for the inner workings of the gendering logic of these organisations to be exposed to critique.

These contradictions tell us that commitments to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' regarding the allocation of jobs are motivated by the organisation's pursuit of legitimacy, rather than any pursuit of transformed divisions of labour or access to jobs. By managing their engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' through HRM paradigms, these music organisations are appealing to 'social judgment' and matching their attributes to an external 'system of beliefs, norms, and values' (Lamertz and Bhave, 2017, pp.131). Even if those inside the organisation consider this engagement a matter of morality and 'doing the right thing', and appealing to external judgements are not foremost on their mind, the kinds of actions that make sense will always offer a benefit to the organisation. HRM offers these organisations a morally satisfying neoliberal solution for gender divisions of labour that is also good for business. This means that nothing really changes for men and women workers on the ground.

The paradox described by Burton (1992) indicates that procedures that are designed according to principles of neutrality or merit, may still favour some and exclude others in ways that contradict these principles, even when these principles are positioned in alignment with 'equal opportunity'. The 'how' aspect of 'equal opportunity' clearly matters. By framing gender reform as a matter of getting more women in, and having better 'gender balance', music organisations argue that the ends justify the means. For music organisations in Ireland, HRM is the means, which results in the official realities of the organisation obscuring lived realities of gender hierarchies of access to jobs that confer advantage to men and disadvantage to women. When 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' are made sense of in this way, music organisations operate with a paradoxical logic, where both realities coexist.

Traces of meritocracy can still remain even in the face of ad hoc job allocation practices; 'you got moved around the building, if you were capable' (female, middle level). The idea that regardless of whether a worker accesses a job privately or through official procedures, that merit still applies, assumes a rationality in the allocation of jobs by music organisations, where under any circumstances 'the best person for the job' is still hired. Under alignment with 'EDI', the best person for the job is the person who is selected through 'best practice'. In the alternate reality where 'best practice' is absent, the best person for the job is the person who is selected. This speaks to a conceptual confusion between the concepts of 'equality' and meritocracy argued by Cavanagh (2002), where the 'equality' argument 'doesn't *start* with an appeal to

equality: it starts with an appeal to competition' (pp.85), and equality comes in later to justify the allocation of jobs. The lived realities of parents further exposes the gendering logic of these organisations, where the relationship between the organisation and the family acts as the stage for the contradictions of capitalism that are not remedied, but remodelled under 'EDI' alignment.

4.3.3 Paradox and access to jobs: parenthood and senior-level jobs

Official reality

(i) A special kind of meritocracy and 'work-life balance'

This chapter looks at parents' access to senior-level jobs, drawing from the official realities of six organisations from the live, publishing, recording, and education industries, from which twenty-one participants are drawn. In addition to the three organisations discussed in the previous chapter, three more organisations are added to this discussion of parenthood and access to jobs. These additional organisations also demonstrate a commitment to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' regarding access to jobs, in policy, procedures, practices, values, and public statements. The gendering of the relationship between the organisation and the home was only evident with regard to parenthood, in official realities and lived realities. Three participants (one male, two female) have acted as a carer for an older relative during their employment, and none cited this as an impediment to accessing higher-level jobs in the organisation. Of the fourteen parents in the study, eleven (two mothers, nine fathers) come from the six paradoxical organisations discussed in this chapter.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 list 'family status' as one of the nine grounds that employers are prohibited from discriminating on. Family status refers to having responsibilities of a parent, or taking on the role of a parent, or being the resident primary carer for someone eighteen years or older with a disability (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2025). The Acts prohibit employers from treating one person less favourably than another due to their family status when allocating jobs, and the non-discriminatory treatment of parents is positioned by law as part of the organisation's obligations towards 'equality'. Music organisations in Ireland have neither the authority nor the jurisdiction to construct an alternative statutory relationship towards 'equality' than the one set out in Irish law, and any attempts to refute the validity of the existing relationship could serve to undermine their pursuit of organisational legitimacy and expose them to litigation. With regard to this pursuit of legitimacy, requirements for statutory compliance with rules external to the organisation reflects 'the power of external, cultural and contextual factors in constructing organisations and the standards by which they are judged' (Kuruppu, Milne and

Tilt, 2019, pp.2065), and the role that these factors play in the official realities constructed by organisations. Ensuring that the image of the organisation reflects the expectations of society is a feature of the successful maintenance of organisational legitimacy. In accordance with a logic that seeks to support the needs of the organisation and protect the interests of the organisation, the official reality of these organisations is, implicitly, one that is in ideological alignment with 'equality'.

'EDI' alignment in the official realities of the three organisations discussed in the previous chapter applies a standardised logic of meritocracy to how jobs are allocated to all men and women, whether as entry points to the organisation or as promotions. Among the three additional organisations, one expresses commitment in public statements to 'diversity', and 'inclusion' (otherwise known as 'D&I') in hiring processes, with the omission of 'equality'. This organisation expresses a commitment to 'equality' separately in public statements, and as part of a larger suite of values towards the treatment of employees. Another organisation is aligned with 'equal opportunity' in public statements. The third organisation adopts an informal approach to 'equal opportunity' and its principles of positive discrimination, without enshrining this commitment in policy. A participant described how he was 'well known for promoting females' (male, head of organisation), and he provided examples of how women were supported in maintaining their employment, e.g. by allowing mothers to sidestep into roles that were more accommodating to their responsibilities at home.

(ii) Senior-level jobs: meritocracy (plus leadership)

Three out of six of these organisations express commitments to advertising vacant jobs as part of their alignment with 'EDI', and these commitments to 'EDI' were discussed in the previous chapters. All six organisations communicate the logic of meritocracy in how jobs are allocated, with the argument that people who are 'good' at the task and have the right skills, attributes, and achievements will get the job for which they are considered appropriate. Simultaneously, beliefs about leadership are embedded within this logic, specifically when it comes to senior-level jobs. What official realities demonstrate is that when it comes to the topmost positions in the organisation, meritocracy means something different.

Being at the top of the organisation was described as 'a very specialist job, in the music business', because 'it's not like most other businesses' (male, head of organisation). The view that the highest-level jobs in the organisation require a unique skill set was shared by another participant, who feels that 'so many people aren't able for senior management…it's really hard to find [someone with the skills]' (female, head of organisation). The most senior-level jobs in music organisations play a direct role in shaping how money is spent and who it is spent on

inside and outside the organisation (signing new male or female artists, salaries for employees, and programming for concerts). The plans that the organisation makes for investment in wider music industries, and the tone that the organisation sets on issues like sexual harassment and 'equality', are overseen by the people at the top and by the head of the organisation. These jobs have unique implications for workers inside music organisations, and wider music industries, so who gets to access these jobs is an important question for feminist research to answer.

Public statements from three of the six paradoxical organisations describe the competencies that are required of senior-level jobs, whether at the top or just below that. The ideal candidate should demonstrate 'business acumen', 'strategic leadership', 'operational leadership', 'strong leadership', 'strong commercial focus', 'strategic thinking', 'performance delivery', 'resilience', 'responsibility', 'vision', 'desire to lead', 'team management', 'negotiating skills', 'high performance', 'specialist expertise', and 'adaptability'. The stated requirements of the job reflect what HRM considers markers of leadership. HRM makes a distinction between leadership and management. Leadership is more concerned with the 'vision' of the organisation, 'motivating employees' in line with the organisation's goals, and managing 'change and transformation' (Higgs and Dulewicz, 2024, pp.86), whereas management is about effective control of resources and evaluating performance. Women in leadership is investigated through an HRM lens by Lenihian (2000) via interviews with senior female managers, identifying cultural norms about women as mothers and attitudes about 'who managers are' (pp.33) that act against women and favour men. Hopkins, O'Neil, Bilimoria and Broadfoot (2021) also find gender biases in perceptions of women's leadership, where they are evaluated poorly when they engage in softer, interpersonal forms of leadership, and when they engage in harder, direct forms of leadership. Leadership is a masculinised concept, and women leaders don't align with expectations. Hausmann and Zischler (2023) argue that leadership skills are part of what it takes to be successful at the top level of an arts organisation, with an acknowledgement that 'a blurring of private and professional life' (pp.36) is also part of the job due to the working conditions of arts sectors. A common point that these critiques make is the need for whoever is in the organisation's topmost positions to ensure organisational success.

Across these six organisations, there are ten participants in senior-level roles (three female, seven male) including six heads of organisations (one female, five male) and nine parents (two mothers, seven fathers). Among the six heads of organisations, four described their role with the same terminology and ideas predominant within leadership literature. Being the one with the bird's eye view and 'keeping everyone focussed' (male, head of organisation) in the midst of multiple projects and budget limits aligns with the idea that leaders are goal-oriented motivators whom employees respond to. A keen awareness of their

job as different from others was expressed by a participant who understood her purpose 'to lead the organisation…to be the leader of strategy and to drive it and to kind of push it through' (female, head of organisation). She stressed the role of creativity in this purpose, to 'have a vision and bring the organisation to where I see it needs to go'. Beliefs about the strategic and creative qualities of the job (qualities more often associated with men) allows for a distinction between this job and others in the organisation to be made, along the lines of 'innovative leadership', a kind of leadership associated with market success (Zhu, Yang, Yang and Sosik, 2024).

Senior-level workers from all six organisations explained the allocation of jobs as a meritocracy. In line with this logic, whether or not the person is a mother or father does not influence decision making, because it's about finding 'the best person for the job' (male, head of organisation), and what matters is 'how good they are' (male, head of organisation). This belief in meritocracy coexists with beliefs about leadership, communicated by five of these organisations. For the sixth organisation, members of senior management described their responsibilities to oversee the people and operations of the organisation, without using the language associated with leadership literature. Two heads of organisations (one female, one male) expressed the view that senior-level jobs, such as the one they hold, require a rare and unique skill set that justifies a more selective hiring process, where it is not just about facilitating competition and allowing the best to shine through. Though both participants also endorsed ideas about meritocracy in the hiring process. The importance and rarity of 'leadership skills that you need to be a senior manager' (female, head of organisation) was put forward as the rationale for why senior-level jobs are provided for some and not others. This participant underwent a three-stage interview process with panels made up of internal and external members. For one head of the organisation who was headhunted by an agency, his access to this job was dependent upon not just a face to face meeting with HR, but a psychometric test conducted by a psychologist. Another male participant was also head hunted and went through a multi-stage interview process with a panel, where he had to present his strategy for how he would 'attack the job' (male, head of organisation). Among the six heads of organisations from paradoxical organisations, these are the three who described going through an interview stage process (though only one of these was advertised). Two female and one male worker accessed senior-level jobs through an interview process, for a job that was advertised.

Within HRM, gender and access to senior-level jobs is largely covered under the topic of 'women in leadership', and parenthood is sometimes discussed as an aspect of this topic within critiques of 'family friendly' policies (Wanger, 2024), and 'work-life balance' (Sani and Adisa, 2023). The business case for 'diversity' also provides 'the case for women in leadership'

(Franczak and Margolis, 2022, pp.2) which points out that, by leveraging positive perceptions of them doing well on gender and culture, organisations with women at the top are perceived more favourably by customers and prospective employees, and are more profitable. Senior-level jobs, and in particular being the head of the organisation, are rooted in the same meritocratic logic discussed in the previous chapter, with a modified interpretation of what counts as being the 'best'. These jobs are connected to abstract qualities that are less easily measured by skill and experience matching procedures used at lower levels of the organisation. The multitude of interpretations and definitions of leadership have prompted some criticism of the concept itself and whether or not it is a useful one for organisations to adopt (Yukl, 2013). No evidence of participants explicitly adopting the concept of leadership was found by the study - this is also true for meritocracy. But the logic of meritocracy is diffuse across all of these organisations, working in tandem with beliefs about leadership in five of them.

(iii) Parenthood: legal obligations and 'work-life balance'

The most common way that music organisations acknowledge the fact that some of its employees are parents is through maternity leave policies. All six organisations allow employees to take maternity leave. Five offer paid maternity leave where the employee receives all or part of their salary depending on how many months have passed, and one offers only statutory maternity leave, where the state pays maternity benefit to the employee. The second most common means of acknowledgement is paternity leave. Five out of six organisations offer employees paternity leave on a statutory basis (paternity leave did not exist in law during the operation of the sixth organisation). The third means of this acknowledgement is the organisation affording employees the ability to work from home on a minority of weekly work days, such as two specified days at home. Four out of six organisations allow their employees to work from home. Working from home is not solely a benefit for parents, but it was commented on by participants as something that is particularly useful to parents. The fourth and final provision has to do with specified core working hours, which are communicated by two organisations as adjustable, to provide flexible work hours for employees. This provision is not only for parents but for all employees. In practice, those at senior-level work beyond their contracted hours and do not make use of this policy. All four of these provisions are formalised organisational processes, and all are underwritten by employment legislation. Other statutory provisions for parents (parental leave, parent's leave, adoptive leave) were not discussed by participants. On an informal basis, parents from three organisations described being afforded minor flexibility in their work regarding family responsibilities, such as arriving at the office late if their children are sick.

Evidence of how the organisation acknowledges its relationship to the home and constructs its official reality around this topic was identified through participant interviews, in addition to public statements from two organisations. Five of these organisations offer paid maternity leave that goes beyond statutory obligations, in the main, according to a policy where female employees will receive their full salary for six months, half pay for an extra number of months, with an extra few months unpaid. This is more than the statutory maternity leave offered by the sixth organisation, where employees can take twenty-six weeks leave with only the state maternity benefit to support them. Despite most of these organisations offering more than the minimum, only one of these organisations communicates maternity leave as a benefit in job advertisements. For these six organisations, parenthood is presented as the organisation offering employees flexibility in their job, within the boundaries of legal precedence - in this sense, parenthood is confined to an argument of legal obligation. The role of law in shaping what is offered to parents was explicitly acknowledged by participants from three organisations. Participants from five organisations discussed maternity leave and paternity leave in the context of legal entitlements, or things that are simply part of a standard employment contract, alongside sick pay or overtime. Across all of these organisations, maternity leave and paternity leave were communicated as aspects of employment law. From four organisations, HR managers were identified as those responsible for managing and overseeing employees' legal entitlements. For the remaining two organisations, HR functions are being carried out, but participants did not discuss the role of employment law in relation to the E&R of this job.

When the HR manager brought in a new maternity leave policy that offered more than the minimum time and financial support set out in law, it had a substantial impact upon one female participant, who at the time of making use of the policy, was the only mother at senior level in the organisation.

> 'It's an extraordinarily good maternity policy, and they have a lot of women who now have gone through that, you know, a few times and they still haven't changed it, which I think is a credit to them…I couldn't fault how well all of that was managed' (female, senior level)

The importance of having 'that kind of HR person' who puts measures in place to support a 'work-life balance' (female, senior level) was emphasised by this mother. None of the fathers from these six organisations have made use of their organisation's paternity leave policies. For most, this entitlement was introduced several years after their children were born, with the Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016. Official realities tend to adopt a broad outlook on the relationship between an employee's job and their life outside the job. The allowances that these organisations make for employee's lives outside the job are not specific to someone's status as

a mother or father, as maternity and paternity leave policies are only applicable during a certain window of time under certain conditions. In HRM, parenthood is embedded within a broader conversation of 'work-life balance' - an aspect of the job that organisations who are interested in promoting and recruiting employees are encouraged to signpost as something that they care about (Wanger, 2024). 'Work-life balance' encompasses more than just mothers and fathers being allowed to take time away from the organisation in the early stages of parenthood. HRM guidance on work-life balance largely falls into two categories: 'family friendly' practices and 'well-being'.

Participants from four organisations gave evidence of working from home policies, revealing the extent to which working from home has become ingrained within the practices of music organisations, as 'the standard that's expected' (female, middle level). Working from home arrangements and flexible working hours are communicated by two organisations in public statements as features of a suite of employee benefits. For a mother who started working from home one day a week after becoming a parent, she put the introduction of more flexible arrangements down to the head of the organisation being a father and 'having a really good attitude for that stuff and trusting his staff' (female, senior level). The framing of working from home policies as an offering of a 'family friendly' organisation is put forward by one organisation, which emphasises the role this policy plays in supporting employee 'well-being' and enhancing productivity. Offering employees the opportunity to work from home is intended to support the organisation, because the 'work-family conflict is a generator of stress' (Ferrer, and Garrido, 2014, pp.449) that can impact upon employee performance. This conflict is also cited to be most often felt by women (Wanger, 2024; Milner and Gregory, 2022; O'Brien, 2016), but these music organisations do not frame 'family friendly' practices as gender related. Three organisations offer informal flexibility across the day-to-day work of its employees, where they could call and say 'it's raining today, I'm not gonna come in' (female, middle level) or 'I've a bit of trouble with childcare today' (male, head of organisation) with confidence that they would meet no resistance in their request to work from home.

Each of the four organisations who are aligned with 'EDI'/'D&I' provide working from home arrangements for employees, and three of these organisations have also expanded their 'well-being' initiatives over recent years. The importance of 'soft touch benefits' in creating 'a good working environment' (male, senior level) is positioned under 'EDI'/'D&I' as a means of attracting and retaining employees, and enhancing employee performance and productivity. A focus on 'well-being' is considered a means of achieving the goals of 'EDI' (Wolbring and Nguyen, 2023). The shaping of organisational culture with 'well-being' initiatives, in line with teachings of HRM, was observed in much the same way across three organisations with 'well-being' programmes and initiatives. The aim of making the organisation 'a more attractive place

to work' (female, middle level) is realised by establishing 'well-being' as a feature of 'work-life balance', including free healthy food, yoga, health-based workshops, social events, gym discounts, mental health supports, and book clubs. In several of these organisations, workers are encouraged to take all of their holidays in any given year, and this is framed as a commitment to 'well-being' and something that is 'important for the long term success of the individual and the company' (male, head of organisation) - though this participant doesn't follow this creed himself, and the E&R of senior-level jobs does not necessarily support this practice. In each case, efforts to develop 'a real community within the workplace' (female, junior level) were linked back to the head of the organisation or the HR manager. The reason that 'well-being' is discussed here in conjunction with parenthood, is that the increased attention to 'well-being' that has 'kicked off' (male, middle level) in these organisations has not been accompanied by equal attention to policies or programmes aimed specifically at parents. 'Well-being', or its accompanying term 'wellness', is part of a suite of measures endorsed by 'EDI' alignment, where organisations are encouraged and rewarded in their efforts 'to balance diversity and wellness' (male, senior level). This encouragement is sometimes enacted through 'EDI' oriented accreditation programmes and awards, as is the case for two organisations. For each of these six organisations, parenthood is communicated as an aspect of the job with legal backing. For those organisations with 'EDI' alignment, parenthood is a smaller aspect of the organisation's approach to 'work-life balance', that casts a wide net, designed to capture the needs of all employees, regardless of gender or family status.

Lived realities

(i) Gender divisions of labour: the organisation

Five of these six paradoxical organisations are led by men, and one is led by a woman. Below this position, one organisation is entirely male at senior level. Two others are twenty-five percent female and seventy-five percent male. Another organisation is thirty-five percent female and sixty-five percent male at senior level, with one participant describing how this had become 'more balanced over the last number of years' (male, senior level). One organisation has a sixty percent male, forty percent female split. The final organisation is evenly split at senior level. Of the nine fathers from these six organisations, seven are senior level (including five heads of organisations) and two are junior level. Of the two mothers, two are senior level, including one who is the head of the organisation.

Looking at overall divisions of labour in these organisations, without zoning in on hierarchical levels, the most common jobs that see a clustering of men are jobs that require

technological expertise (such as IT, stage production, engineering), sales jobs, jobs that centre around managing day-to-day operations, and executive jobs (such as CEO, CFO, COO) that entail high level strategy development and are inherently senior level. The most common jobs that see a clustering of women are promotion jobs (promoting artists or music in record labels), front of house jobs, administration jobs, and marketing jobs. When looking at seniority within this clustering, a vertical pattern of gender relations emerges. Overall, men occupy most jobs at senior level, regardless of how many women there are in those departments at lower levels. Several participants described how there are more women than before working in their organisation, comparing present day divisions of labour to patterns in previous years. This aligns with patterns observed when quantifying the number of music organisations and their employees, where it is clear that men and women are carrying out jobs in roughly equal numbers in many organisations, at middle levels and junior levels. At senior level, where job titles include the words 'director', 'chief', 'senior', or 'head of', the number of women drops off.

Among senior-level workers, some described gender divisions of labour at this level with positive language, arguing that they are 'more balanced' (male, senior level), 'pretty good' (female, head of organisation), and 'really good on senior management team level on gender' (male, head of organisation). Others used less positive language (without being negative) to critique gender divisions of labour at senior level, saying 'the balance is not so good' (male, head of organisation), and pointing out that the division of the organisation in another territory has 'a lot of women in top positions' (male, head of organisation). Workers at senior level, and a small number at middle and junior level, presented the most accurate numerical accounts of gender at senior level, where 'men are holding more higher positions in the company' (female, junior level). A participant who was enthusiastic about 'upper management and leadership' being 'more equal' (female, middle level) also presented figures where women are in a small minority of those jobs. One female middle manager believed that there were more women at senior level than men, even though women occupy less than half of those roles.

Two workers at junior level over-estimated the number of women at senior level. In organisations where women are carrying out fewer senior roles than men, one felt that there are more women than men in management across all departments, and they 'haven't noticed any sort of lack of women in the organisation' (female, junior level). Another expressed the same view, that there are more women than men across all departments, and that management is 'heavily female' (female, junior level). Junior-level workers more often interact with middle-level managers than those at senior level. Women are entering middle management in much the same numbers as men in these organisations, and the gendering of jobs at this level may influence upon junior-level workers' impression of gender and the entire organisation. The idea that there are 'more female staff' and 'more opportunities' for women

(male, junior level), in a general sense, was an answer given by two workers from two organisations (both with 'EDI' commitments) when asked about numbers of women. In this context, 'more' does not mean more women than men, it means more women than before. In these organisations, there has been an increase in the number of women in junior and middle-level positions in recent years. The idea that on a world scale, there are more women in senior-level jobs in record labels and publishing organisations was put forward by a senior manager, who considered this is a sign that things are 'getting better' (male, senior level). Regardless of how many women are at senior level, perceptions of greater numbers of women in the organisation at other levels (and in other territories) may lend support to what official realities have to say about gender and jobs - that change is happening throughout the organisation.

That there are only two mothers from organisations based in Ireland in the study (the third is from an organisation outside of Ireland) certainly begs further scrutiny. Interview invites were distributed to women across music organisations, at every hierarchical level, with no preference to family status. Close to half of the worker population were invited to take the survey, and this resulted in a similarly small number of mothers participating. The low representation of mothers at senior level is telling of a gendering logic that is connected to the home. Future studies would benefit from developing a more outright focus on parenthood at senior level to investigate this on a deeper level. Though, this chapter provides a thorough analysis of this topic based on the collected data. The mothers from these organisations noticed the absence of other mothers at senior level. This was internalised by one mother as a feeling of being different - being the one who was 'running late because I was on a school run' (female, senior level) while other senior-level colleagues, including fathers, were not. This was facilitated by the divisions of labour these fathers had at home, where their wives 'didn't work, or they worked part time' (female, senior level). Another mother pointed to a 'lack of patience and understanding' (female, head of organisation) within the organisation as a factor in this pattern. From the three organisations with 'EDI' alignment and the one organisation with 'D&I' alignment, workers only acknowledged gender and senior-level jobs within wider conversations about number-focussed commitments to 'diversity' and 'gender balance', but they did not acknowledge the realities of gender, *parenthood*, and senior-level jobs as part of this strategy. The fortunes of mothers who wish to reach senior level, or are at this level already, are not accounted for by the business case for women in leadership or by the guidance of 'EDI'/'D&I' frameworks, and nor are they part of the official realities of the organisations in this study.

(ii) Gender divisions of labour: the home

Participants were also asked about gender divisions of labour in the home, and the kind of work that they do at home. Each of the eleven parents are in heterosexual relationships. Both mothers went on maternity leave and were working at senior level in these early stages of their child's lives. Of the fathers who are at senior level in their organisation, all had children before entering into these jobs.

All seven senior-level fathers described how their wife spends more time in the home than them, and some described how their wife does more work in the home than them. The most common factors in this pattern are these women spending more time parenting at home, either full time or part time, and making greater use of working from home arrangements with their job. Of the five senior-level fathers who gave details of divisions of labour in the years following the birth of their children, two wives were parenting at home full time, two moved from full time to part time, and another whose children are still young, works part-time from home. Two other fathers did not give details of divisions of labour in these early stages, but described their wives' current work status. One of these wives currently works from home full-time and another works outside the home, in a location close to the house. All of these fathers continued working full-time when their children were born and did not take any time off from their job. Two fathers are at junior level. One detailed how they were away touring for most of these early years, and that family members stepped in to help with childcare, as their partner was also working outside the home. The other father has an arrangement to see their child on weekends.

Two fathers (who work full time) have negotiated schedules with their wives (who work part time), so they can 'structure things so that one of us is there with them' (male, head of organisation) and 'compromise at home' and 'divide up the tasks' (male, head of organisation). Five fathers gave an overview of the kind of tasks that they do at home. Doing the school run with children is the most evenly split job described by parents, with two fathers dropping off their children to school on their way to work, and their wives picking them up later on. Another father emphasised the amount of time he spends in the car with his children 'driving to football, to training, bringing them here, collecting them' (male, senior level). The idea that they have a 'non-traditional set-up' (male, head of organisation) where he does most of the cooking was put forward by one parent, who also acknowledged that his wife spends more time helping the children with their homework and managing their relationship with the school - 'she keeps me up to speed on it…bears the brunt there' (male, head of organisation). Three expressed the view that the workload at home is 'split fairly evenly' (male, senior level). One of these fathers then conceded that, 'my wife probably does more' (male, senior level), and

controversially, one of these fathers (who works evenings and weekends) felt it was 'probably skewed more to myself…if you were talking to my wife she'd probably say the other way' (male, senior level). Two fathers expressed the view that their wives carry out more work at home than them.

Of the two senior-level mothers, both returned to work full time after taking maternity leave. Later, one of these mothers started working from home one day per week. The other mother started working from home two days per week. One mother described how her husband is, for the time being, taking time off from their full-time job to care for their children at home. The second mother negotiated a schedule with their husband, 'where we would tag team it' (female, senior level), and this was enabled by his ability to work flexi time with his job, where his start and end times could be adjusted. Similar to some of the wives of the fathers in the study, the husband of one of these mothers took time away from his job to spend more time at home caring for their children, while this mother continued to work full time. However, the relationship between the organisation and the home is still different for mothers than it is for fathers, even when husbands spend more time at home. This is due to the biological reality of being a mother, and the E&R of senior-level jobs.

(iii) The impact of pregnancy on divisions of labour

Divisions of labour in the home, and in the organisation, are impacted by the biological reality of pregnancy for mothers, and this distinguishes the experiences of mothers from the experiences of fathers. A mother expressed the view that her husband, who has taken time off from his job, carries out as much of the childcare as she does, and perhaps a bit more. Still, even when care work is evenly split between mothers and fathers, 'the burden of the responsibility of the baby is on you as a woman' (female, head of organisation) because 'you have to take six months off, your husband can't' (female, head of organisation), and women are expected to breastfeed - 'because it's culturally unacceptable not to' (female, head of organisation). One mother pointed out that they were feeling the effects of the transition into menopause, which in addition to the biological realities of being a mother, makes the conflict of being an employee and a parent all the more difficult to manage.

Both mothers took paid maternity leave from the organisation. One received six months full salary and three months' half salary. She praised the policy as 'extraordinarily good' (female, senior level), as it effectively enabled new mothers to take a year's leave, 'which was a huge privilege' (female, senior level). The other mother had a different experience. She received half of her salary for six months, which she was unhappy about but acknowledged that it 'was better than nothing' (female, head of organisation), given that the organisation

officially only offers statutory maternity leave. Regardless of how leave is financed, this time away from the organisation can have an impact upon women when they return to the job, because particularly at senior level, 'there's no space for like a few weeks warm up…you're either on or you're not' (female, head of organisation). This is where the E&R of the job come into play.

Of the nine women in the study who are not mothers, three are in their early twenties; one is in her late twenties and stated she was not interested in having children at this time; one was working in Ireland temporarily; one is in a same-sex relationship; one is in her thirties on a fixed-term contract with no access to paid maternity leave; one is in her thirties and renting a room in a house share, and one was in her early twenties during her time with the organisation. Only two of these women are at an age where typically, parenthood is a consideration. For the woman with no access to paid maternity leave, pregnancy and the time away from paid work that this entails would leave her in an insecure situation. She stated that she is 'not currently' (female, senior level) a mother, but she expressed a desire to move to a permanent contract that would provide her with access to a paid maternity leave policy provided by the organisation. The second woman in her thirties does have access to paid maternity leave. She did not give any indication in her interview that this was something she would consider in the future. Parenthood has different implications for men and women (Thompson and Walker, 1989) not only with how care work is divided. When female employees become mothers, they have to make different plans for their job and career than male employees, because their male counterparts do not experience pregnancy as part of their transition into parenthood. If it were the case that all of these nine women expressed a desire to become mothers, three would be able to access paid maternity leave from their organisation. Due to the nature of their part-time or fixed term contracts and the policies of the organisation, six would be dependent on maternity benefit from the state, if they have the minimum number of social insurance contributions to qualify for this payment.

The significance of the biological reality of being a mother and taking maternity leave is an essential feature of this discussion of parenthood and senior-level jobs. Data about the impact of pregnancy is limited to the small number of mothers in the study. But the impact of mothers taking maternity leave is accounted for by mothers themselves, and by male and female workers who described the impact of maternity leave on the organisation. The gendering of the relationship between the organisation and the home for mothers and fathers is most clearly evidenced by the lived realities of senior-level workers in relation to the E&R of these jobs.

(iv) E&R and the gendering of access to senior-level jobs

Both mothers and fathers described a conflict in the relationship between the organisation and the home, where the demands of the job are at odds with the responsibilities of being a parent. Yet, the way that mothers and fathers spoke about this conflict differed in intensity. Fathers spoke about it being 'tough' (multiple male heads of organisations said this), 'challenging' (male, senior level), and 'full on' (male, head of organisation). Mothers spoke about it being 'very hard', 'extremely complex', and 'impossible' (female, head of organisation), and that they were 'burnt out' (female, senior level) from it. Two parents (one mother, one father) from two organisations shared observations of their female colleagues who returned from maternity leave, who ended up resigning from their job, due to this conflict. One of these colleagues was able to stay employed by the organisation by switching to a job with different E&R, which allowed them to better manage this conflict. The other colleague tried to manage this conflict by working from home, but 'with the baby at home…it was just probably unworkable' (female, senior level). Two out of three mothers in the study cited parenthood as an obstacle to them accessing senior-level jobs, and one of these mothers is from a paradoxical organisation. None of the eight fathers in the study cited parenthood as an obstacle to career progression, and seven are from paradoxical organisations.

All of the fathers at senior level became parents before they entered into these jobs, and both mothers became parents after reaching senior level. This is a significant difference between the realities of mothers and fathers. These fathers did not perceive their family status as a threat to their ability to access higher-level jobs, and this was evident in how they spoke about the conflict between being a parent and an employee. For a mother who made the transition from middle management to senior level before having children, she was adamant that 'I was lucky I was in this job before I had my children, if I wasn't it would never have happened' (female, head of organisation). Another mother experienced burn out from managing these responsibilities. Parenthood is not a feature of the 'EDI/D&I' frameworks of these organisations, and none of the six organisations discuss gender, parenthood, and senior-level jobs in their official realities. They focus on the broader HRM theme of 'work-life balance', and parenthood as an aspect of employment law. The 'work-life balance' conversations of these organisations do not account for the gendering of access to jobs for parents. Additionally, the framing of parenthood as a legal obligation that is satisfied through maternity leave and paternity leave policies positions parenthood outside the remit of endeavours to reform access to jobs.

This study identifies the logic of HRM as a feature of the gendering of access to senior-level jobs in music organisations. This logic masks the role that the E&R of the job and the

needs of the organisation play in the conflict faced by parents, and the gendering of this conflict for mothers.

(v) The E&R of senior-level jobs

Workers detailed how the E&R of jobs at various levels of the organisation entail 'late hours' (male, head of organisation), evening work, going to 'a lot of night time gigs' (female, senior level), attending meetings after gigs, taking on an 'extra workload' (male, junior level) at certain times of the year, having to 'stay till whenever' (male, head of organisation) at evening events, 'working weekends' (multiple senior-level workers mentioned this), and travelling abroad. The most commonly cited job types were ones related to organisational strategy and operations, sales, marketing, promotion, and hosting/managing events. Overwhelmingly, it was senior-level workers who gave evidence of this kind of relationship to the organisation, and these realities contradict what the organisation says about 'work-life balance', flexible hours, and taking time off. Most junior-level workers interviewed do not have to do out-of-hours work or weekend work, and of the few that do, they framed it as an infrequent feature of the job that is compensated for with extra time off or extra pay. For junior-level workers, there is a clear delineation between the hours of the job and personal life - 'once I am off the clock, I am off the clock' (female, junior level). The E&R applied to junior-level workers, who can 'go in…go home…switch off' (male, junior level, father), are not shared by their senior-level colleagues.

Six heads of organisations (one female, five male, all are parents) described the lived realities of their E&R in similar ways. Five gave evidence of how being in this role means giving more of your time and energy to the organisation than other workers, and four of these six gave evidence of how the demands of the job affect their personal life and family responsibilities. Two of these heads of organisations explained that working at this level of the music business requires deep relationship building with artists and their managers. The dominance of men in this role could have consequences for female artists. Taking them out to rugby matches, dinners, and lunches is just part of it, as one participant argued, 'it's not just a job, it's, it's completely a lifestyle' (male, head organisation). Perceptions of the demands of being the head of the organisation gave one father a reason to question whether 'I would want to put myself in that position' (male, senior level), acknowledging that the workload he has in his current job is far too high as it is. Descriptions of what a CEO of a music organisation does might feature in music business handbooks (such as Baskerville and Baskerville, 2010), but there has been no previous academic research into the E&R of heads of music organisations, from a feminist perspective or otherwise. Looking to media industries in general, leadership

paradigms are the main modes of engagement with these jobs, with a focus on typologies, presentations, and perceptions (Painter-Morland and Deslandes, 2017; Tahir, Abdullah, Hasan and Alsagoff, 2021). The emphasis on how heads of organisations are perceived by stakeholders, investors, and employees ties in with the proliferation of coverage of CEOs by business media, and what Kantola (2014) describes as a media logic that reinforces the 'personality cult' of corporate management (pp.33). The language of leadership is part of the realities that these music organisations communicate regarding the competencies and requirements of top-level jobs, and the need to manage the reputation of the organisation is sometimes listed as part of the job. Most of the heads of organisations in this study have been profiled by Irish business media, and unsurprisingly given their responsibility to be the face of the organisation, none discuss the negative impact of the job on their personal life in these features. The actual E&R of heads of music organisations on a day-to-day basis, and their gender effects on parents are not accounted for anywhere beyond this study.

Heads of organisations generally have the capacity to manage their time independently, but are expected to be reachable at any time, usually in case of an emergency. Three male heads of organisations contextualised the extra workload as a manageable, typical feature of such a high-level job, where 'if you need to do something you'll stay and do it' (male, head of organisation), and 'there's a certain amount of always on at certain levels…this would apply to any CEO' (male, head of organisation). These basic requirements range from attending events into the evening, to responding to unfolding crises and legal cases, at any time. A more conflicted account of the E&R of the job was presented by another parent at the top, who acknowledged that between them and their wife, 'nobody has enough time, we're constantly exhausted' (male, head of organisation). The challenge of managing operations, strategy, scheduling, and budgeting means that 'I don't take a huge amount of time off' (male, head of organisation). For the only mother at the top of the organisation, a constant slew of meetings dominates more of her 'highly planned' (female, head of organisation) week, where much of her energy is spent on social interaction, and her evenings at home are spent sending emails. The reality of having to commit evenings and weekends to a job does not add up to 'work-life balance'.

Two male heads of organisations described how they participate in the organisation's 'work-life balance' programmes, joining in with lower-level workers at events and making use of health-based programmes, such as yoga. For the three organisations with these programmes, 'work-life balance' is mostly about 'wellness' and 'well-being'. The 'well-being' literature presents a narrative of how HR can provide resources and tools to employees to help them 'offset' the negative impact of 'high job demands' for the purposes of productivity (Kowalski and Loretto, 2017, pp.2236). The concept admits that there is an issue related to the

demands of the job that needs to be addressed. But the issue's source and solution is located in the individual. Harvey (2018) distinguishes between 'wellness' programmes predicated on a neoliberal inspired business case, and more favourable employee programmes that promote healthy living due to commitments to corporate social responsibility (CSR). Yet, CSR is itself a feature of corporate strategy that has been critiqued for its capacity to conceal contradictory practices (Alves, 2009). Mental health, healthy eating, workplace socialising, and healthy living are the core themes of the 'well-being' programmes of these four organisations. These programmes add features to the job that have a strategic purpose for the organisation, designed around extracting more from workers towards the E&R of the job, as part of a trade off interaction (Bhoir and Sinha, 2024), even when these E&R are contributing to issues such as burn out, or stress. The logic supports the orientation of the worker towards the organisation, without reciprocal support for the orientation of the worker towards the home. Organisations are not obligated to provide this support, in either direction, and the business case for these activities only has to make sense for the organisation.

(vi) The E&R of senior-level jobs and maternity leave

Financial compensation for overtime is not a feature of senior-level employment contracts. Compensation is built into the salary - though at the topmost level, what this means in terms of numbers is mostly unknown, because among the six heads of organisations discussed in this chapter, only two (one female, one male, €100,000, and €400,000 respectively, where the higher figure is from a multinational organisation) disclosed their salary. Three (two female, one male) out of four senior-level workers from these organisations disclosed theirs, and their range is approximately €55,000 to €80,000. Differences in salaries are due to a multitude of factors: industry type, organisation type, and changes in pay scales over time. One participant pointed to gender as a factor in how much somebody is paid at senior level. After being informed that her male counterpart was being paid thirty percent more than her, she tried to discuss her concerns with HR. HR pushed back with threatening questions such as 'do we not treat you well?' (female, senior level), and they never investigated the matter. This led to her feeling uncertain about her future in the organisation, and unhappy about the prospect of staying 'in a working environment where I'm certainly suspicious that I'm being paid less than my male counterpart' (female, senior level, mother). Differences in pay in cultural industries are critiqued under the heading of the gender pay gap[7], where comparative analyses of earnings in various professions find that men earn more than women (see Dowd and Park,

[7] An overall comparison of pay between men and women that is not covered under pay equity law in Ireland.

2024; Coulangeon, Ravet and Roharik, 2005; Berkers, Smeulders and Berghman, 2019). Jobs that have E&R specific to music industry work pose particular issues for mothers (such as being on tour, attending concerts) due to long working hours and the inability to plan long term. Taking extended leave from the job for childbirth and care for a newborn is a practice exclusively carried out by female workers, and how the organisation responds to this practice, plays a role in the gendering of access to senior-level jobs.

The business case for paid maternity leave suggests that women are more likely to stay in their job after returning from leave (Barrett and Mayson, 2008). Some suggest that the business case only partly informs the introduction of paid maternity leave, that beliefs about it being 'the right thing to do' are also relevant (Charlesworth, 2007, pp.166). In these six organisations, no evidence of a business case, or a social justice case for maternity leave was identified. The negative impact of workers taking maternity leave on the organisation, and the problems that it creates, was discussed by one participant. When multiple women announced their intention to go on maternity leave, their absence meant that everyone else had to take on their workload over the course of a few years, as nobody was hired to fill in for them. To do so would mean paying the salary of a new employee, while still paying the salary of the employee on leave. The financial cost was one that the organisation simply 'couldn't afford' (male, head of organisation). He also described how the needs of the organisation can overrule women's requests for additional maternity leave. During a busy period, they may not grant a mother's request for additional leave, and may reschedule this extra leave for a more favourable time for the organisation. Maternity leave being constructed as something to be mitigated against was also evidenced by the practices of an organisation that offers women a financial incentive to return from maternity leave after nine months. Paid maternity leave is a worker related expense that does not yield any productive labour in return. Not only do perceptions of married female managers construct them as a liability to the organisation (Linehan, 2000), female managers are also a potential liability because they are the only managers who can enact this policy. It would be too cynical to argue that senior-level personnel are actively evaluating how much of a threat female managers' reproductive capabilities are to the organisation, and collectively conspiring to restrict their promotion opportunities. But biases are often unconscious features of decision-making. When a logic that supports the needs of the organisation is so deeply ingrained and diffused across processes and realities, behaviours that support this logic can make sense, unconsciously or otherwise.

While one mother praised the organisation's 'supportive environment' (female, senior level) when she requested maternity leave, she stipulated that 'there was support because the ball was never dropped…I never under-delivered…the work still got done' (female, senior level). As long as the E&R of the job are met, the organisation responds with some flexibility.

In the previous discussion of privately allocated jobs, the close relationship between the E&R of senior-level jobs and the needs of the organisation was discussed as a factor in divisions of labour. Across these six organisations, jobs at senior level involving strategy, operations, finance, human resources, sales, technology, marketing, and executive jobs are predominately carried out by men. The extent to which the E&R of these jobs are met has a more direct impact upon the operation and financial performance of the organisation than lower-level jobs. The day-to-day impact of holding such integral E&R, where 'you do work weekends sometimes. It's not a big deal' (male, head of organisation) is supplemented by the constant awareness that you are 'ultimately responsible' (male, head of organisation) and 'accountable' (female, head of organisation) for everything. HRM uses the term 'commitment' to theorise an employee's 'psychological bond and responsibility' (Klein, Solinger and Duflot, 2022, pp.137) towards targets in their job, which can be encouraged by HR practices. High levels of commitment are beneficial to the organisation (Canals, 2014), and a conflict between targets, such as those related to job and family, can undermine organisational performance (Reina, Peterson and Zhang, 2017). The E&R of senior-level jobs, and what the gender effects of these E&R are on mothers and fathers is not part of this critique. Women taking leave, which is paid for by the organisation, for six months or more, potentially multiple times in their career, is incompatible with the E&R of senior-level jobs. The ideal senior-level worker is someone who can make the best promise of a commitment to these E&R on the most consistent basis, which makes this ideal worker implicitly male (Acker, 2006). Because 'the job is difficult by the very nature of the amount of responsibility that's involved…and I don't think that will ever change' (female, head of organisation). The subtext of 'the best person for the job' is the worker who is most advantaged in the conflictual societal arrangements of paid and unpaid work.

The reality that 'the job stayed the same' (female head of organisation), with no accommodation for the fact that she had recently given birth, had a substantial impact on one mother.

> 'Being on maternity leave is really hard when you're the boss. When you're the leader and coming back from maternity leave, it's like, traumatic…you're not looking for six months and you come back and it's gone that way, so you've to spend like double the effort getting it back over here again. And I definitely found that really difficult…to the point where I wouldn't do maternity, I'd have no more children' (female, head of organisation)

In these six organisations fathers have greater access to senior-level jobs than mothers. While the number of mothers in the study is much lower than the number of fathers, evidence supports the argument that the E&R of senior-level jobs exacerbate the conflict posed by being a parent and an employee, and what this conflict means differs by sex. By contextualising these findings in a wider analysis of parenthood and the relationship between the home and the

organisation, the logic by which music organisations construct their non-responsibility towards workers is more easily understood.

4.3.4 Concluding remarks

Divisions of labour in the home are in a relationship with divisions of labour in the organisation. One person dedicating time to childcare in the former means there is less time for them to dedicate to paid work in the latter. The choice for any parent to be a full-time caregiver for their children is not one that they can make freely, unless they already have the wealth to do so. In order for the nuclear family structure, which all of the parents in the study are part of, to have the resources that it needs to survive and provide for its members, then the care needs and the economic needs of the family have to be satisfied. For most of these families, both parents have paid jobs that they carry out to varying degrees for mothers, outside the home. The development of the nuclear family under neoliberal capitalism has resulted in dual-earning households becoming the norm, though the gendering of labour in the home has not undergone any massive transformation, and this labour remains feminised even when fathers participate more often in childcare. Meanwhile, the E&R of senior-level jobs in music organisations require workers to prioritise their relationship with the organisation, resulting in a conflict that is felt differently for male and female parents. The consequences of these demands are acutely felt by a mother, who is very aware of this conflict.

> 'It is impossible to be a successful mother and a successful employee…something will give. And it's usually, unfortunately, your parenting. Because the stakes aren't as high at home as they are at work' (female, head of organisation).

Several of these fathers were enabled to work full time by their wives staying at home full time or part time during the early years as a parent. One of these fathers acknowledged how they benefited from this arrangement. Detailing how their wife stayed at home full time, this parent admitted that he 'couldn't have done the job' otherwise (male, head of organisation). Due to the amount of time that he spent working in his job, he barely saw his daughter, and now years later about to become a grandfather, he recognises that 'I'll spend more time with that grandkid than I ever spent with her' (male, head of organisation). Overall, mothers who are the spouses of senior-level fathers spend more time in the home than these fathers, not only in the early years of their child's lives, but in the years after. The biological reality of becoming a mother is part of this. Sociological critiques of the family acknowledge it as an ideological concept and as a culturally produced institution (e.g. Fine-Davis, 2017; Sarkisian and Gerstel, 2012; Bielby, 1999). They point to 'the impact of gender and gender ideology' (Bielby, 1999, pp.395) on how work is divided among mothers and fathers, and on the cultural scripts of motherhood and fatherhood.

Among those fathers who expressed a commitment to childcare, all gave evidence of how they prioritise their job in the organisation over responsibilities in the home. Several expressed a fondness for their job, and one father argued that this contributes to him spending 'more time than I should in work' (male, senior level). Mothers also expressed a fondness for their job, and a genuine interest in the work. The choice that some mothers make to prioritise childcare over employment outside the home, and the choice that some fathers make to prioritise employment over childcare, is situated among a myriad of mores and meanings in a gendering political economy. While someone could have a fondness for their full-time job, it could also be true that someone could have a fondness for being a full-time parent. But this argument isn't made by music organisations, HRM paradigms, 'EDI' programmes, or the Irish government when they talk about 'equality' or 'equal opportunity'. The push for women to be full participants in the labour market can be traced back to a logic of western liberal feminism from the nineteenth century, where foundational conversations about women's rights advocated for 'equality' according to a moral philosophy of liberalism and individual freedoms. Calls for suffrage, property rights, and education sought to bring women into other areas of the existing system without calling into question the gendering of the system itself - which rings true with how music organisations in this study engage with gender. Bring more women in while locating gender at the level of individual behaviour and choice. The contradiction lies in the push of the commitments and messages to bring women in, and the pull of the logic that renders the realities of parenthood for female workers invisible, despite their material impact. For these six music organisations, the product of this gendering logic and contradictory realities is a paradoxical engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'.

The adoption of certain feminist talking points by capitalist music organisations is filtered through an organisational logic that maintains capitalism's gendered substructure (Acker, 2006). The valorisation of labour market activities by this logic is critiqued by feminists as the neoliberalisation of feminism (Prügl, 2015; Fraser, 2020). The 'gender *dynamic* [author's emphasis]' (Connell, 2011, pp.45) of neoliberalism affords organisations the ability to create new patriarchal relations through individualised de-gendering strategies (seen here as 'EDI'/'D&I'), even when old gender divisions of labour are changed. These strategies legitimise the non-responsibility of music organisations. For parents this means that the home transforms to meet the needs of the organisation, but the organisation does not transform to meet the needs of the home. The conflict that arises from this relationship causes stress and fatigue for parents, exacerbated by the E&R of the job, and the 'work-life balance' concept is one way that the organisation seeks to manage this relationship. The omission of the biological reality of parenthood from the official realities of music organisations means

that mothers face a different, more severe conflict than fathers - a conflict that is legitimised by the same logic that motivates commitments to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'.

4.3.5 Paradox and access to justice: Sexual harassment and bullying

Official reality

(i) Individual responsibility

Realities of access to justice in three music organisations across the live and recording industries, from which eight participants are drawn, are demonstrative of a discontinuity between legal obligations regarding the non-discriminatory treatment of employees set out in the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015, obligations towards the welfare of employees set out in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, and the compliance of music organisations with these obligations. Similar to realities of access to jobs in music organisations, a paradox is created across the gendering logic of these organisations due to the presence of contradictory, synergistic realities where men and women are both 'equal' and 'unequal'. The Employment Equality Acts construct the concept of 'equality' around principles of anti-discrimination regarding access to jobs, where harassment under any of the nine protected grounds constitutes discrimination which employers are liable for. Sexual harassment is defined by law as any harassment on a gender ground, including but not limited to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature. In this sense, sexual harassment of workers is a matter of 'equality' that organisations are legally compelled to concern themselves with. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 provides legal protections for workers against bullying and unsafe working conditions. Employers have legal obligations to protect workers from these harms. Obligations and expectations towards alignment with 'equality' can have a clear relationship with the construction of official realities, which is the case for two out of three of these paradoxical organisations. For a third organisation, engagement with these obligations and expectations is shallower, though still expressed in the statements of senior management.

In contrast to official realities of access to jobs, where music organisations are forthcoming in publicly professing commitments to hiring women via alignment with 'EDI', music organisations in this study are less forthcoming with public commitments to preventing, and responding to, the sexual harassment or bullying of workers employed by the organisation. The official realities of these three organisations regarding access to justice are much more inward facing, taking the form of grievance and disciplinary procedures, training programmes, and codes of conduct for employee behaviour. In all three organisations, HRM paradigms are in effect. Public statements on the topic of harassment within the organisation, have only been identified for one organisation, where the potential existence of such behaviour

is condemned, as a violation of the principles the organisation abides by. All three organisations operate with codes of conduct for employee behaviour, and for two organisations, a description of how workers should report a grievance, and how management should respond, was provided by participants. For one organisation, a copy of the internal grievance and disciplinary procedure was obtained. Directives from HR managers and senior management for mandatory training programmes on the topic of harassment and worker behaviour were evidenced by participants from two organisations, where workers are required to complete the programme provided. In two of these organisations, HR managers oversee the implementation and provision of the various organisational processes that construct official realities regarding access to justice. In a third, HR decision making is carried out by a senior manager not specifically trained in HRM, but who carries HR responsibilities. Additional constructions of 'equality' in relation to employee conduct and the treatment of employees are offered by two organisations in public statements and values. The message of these statements and values reinforces the reality that the organisation's treatment of workers is, at all times, consistent with the standards of conduct set out by principles of 'equality'. Finally, alignment with 'equal opportunity' in addition to 'equality', as a matter of significance to the organisation's treatment of workers, was identified for one organisation.

Communicating standards of behaviour to workers through codes of conduct is a facet of how organisations manage ethics as a business practice, and is sometimes positioned under the umbrella of CSR as an expression of altruistic orientations towards society (Gilmore and Williams, 2009). Through HRM paradigms, these documents create a standardised, universal set of rules intended to regulate the behaviour of all workers in line with a 'normative' ideal (Nakhle and Davoine, 2016, pp.411) of organisational culture and behaviour that is desirable for the organisation with respect to a range of topics, such as interactions with co-workers, interactions with customers and clients, rules for accepting gifts, and rules for communicating with the public and the press. When asked about codes of conduct in their organisation, most participants from these three organisations were able to confirm the existence of documents that were related to rules for employee behaviour. One participant described the scope of the code, emphasising the breadth of its coverage across worker activities, and the enthusiasm by which the organisation is 'very, very hot on it' (male, head of organisation). Within employee handbooks that are well endowed with policy - 'our current staff handbook is about 300 pages' (female, middle level) - codes of conduct function as a means of constructing a reality of individual responsibility over one's own commitment to standards of behaviour. This is demonstrated by the requirement for workers to sign these documents, confirming that they are aware of their contents. Their signature acts as confirmation of this reality. However, this signature does not confirm whether or not workers agree with these rules, have the same

interpretations of them, if they intend to model their behaviour on them, or indeed if they have even read them; 'people sign to say they've read it. So beyond that, you can only assume that they have' (male, senior level). It is common practice across most organisations in this study for workers to be presented with a code of conduct within a larger employee handbook at the beginning of their employment, which they are required to sign. Organisations cannot force workers to comply with these rules. The idea of forcing certain behaviours could lead to significant abuses of power by organisations themselves. But they make a promise of consequences for non-compliance. These promises are only convincing when they are backed up by action, which these three music organisations fail to deliver on in relation to their treatment of women

The concept of 'ethics' is constructed in a way that allows the organisation to make sense of the relationship between itself and the individual worker according to a logic where duties towards workers are rules defined by a business case. Within this logic, a balance between the organisation's market performance and duties towards employees must be achieved, with the parameters of the employment relationship acting as the limiting force on these duties (Gilmore and Williams, 2009). This balancing act is observed in these organisations' use of codes of conduct, which are an element of a 'risk assessment approach' (Treviño, 2018, pp.462) towards legal obligations, where the document can act as evidence of compliance, or as a mitigating factor against sanctions placed on the organisation following investigations of misconduct. The codes do not exist in isolation, and in two organisations, standards of worker behaviour are supplemented with training programmes and courses that revolve around the idea of personal responsibility. A link between parameters of acceptable and desirable employee behaviour and the values of the organisation was also identified in two organisations. This reflects a common trend in HRM, where values are defined in accordance with the expectations of the organisation towards workers, and codes of conduct act as more detailed elaborations of these values and expectations (Treviño, 2018)

Individual responsibility is further constructed by management directives for compulsory training programmes and educational courses built around these codes and their boundaries for acceptable and desirable conduct. Four of the eight participants (two female, two male) described their experience with such programmes and courses, and they were described as directly relevant to sexual harassment and bullying. These directives operationalise the moral considerations of the relationship between the individual and the organisation as an attribute of 'ethical HRM practice', which HRM paradigms present as 'responsible management' or SRHRM (socially responsible human resource management) (Findikli, 2024; Abdelmotaleb and Saha, 2019). The introduction and monitoring of mandatory training programmes and courses is overseen by the HR department. Participants

in management roles were supportive of the idea of mandatory training programmes and courses, describing them as 'very good, actually' (male, head of organisation), as indicators of 'an exciting, positive time' (female, middle level) for the organisation, and 'very useful' (male, senior level). The importance of personal responsibility, as an aspect of their relationship to the organisation that workers should be concerned with, is communicated through the reinforcement of organisational values within these individually oriented programmes and courses. Values are understood by HRM as 'the conscience of the organisation' (Gutiérrez-Broncano, Rubio-Andrés, Jiménez-Estévez, Opute and Giraldo-Giraldo, 2024, pp.161) because they are communicated as shared and collectively owned. The official realities of these organisations are ones that argue for the need to empower individual workers, 'to ensure that people *are* comfortable coming forward' (male, senior level). In accordance with the idea of continuity between rules of behaviour and actual worker behaviour, these organisations attempt to socialise workers into compliance by connecting these programmes and courses with the defined values of the organisation. Training programmes and courses are part of a wider scheme of work amongst management who are tasked with 'figuring out how we can bring them [the values] into our day to day' (female middle level), and the responsibility for figuring out how to achieve this goal is diffused across management roles, with HR as the central point of contact.

(ii) Standardised rules overseen by management

The organisation's pursuit of legitimacy requires confidence in the organisation's compliance with legal obligations and social expectations for working conditions (Monteiro, Aibar-Guzmán, Garrido-Ruso and Aibar-Guzmán, 2021). Pressures from employment legislation and trade unions are framed as potentially coercive forces (Biron et al., 2025) upon organisations that force them to adopt policies and practices considered legitimate amongst stakeholders. In turn, these legal obligations and the organisation's response to them, informs official realities, and the lived realities that men and women must navigate. Two organisations publicly communicate values regarding the treatment of workers and the existence of a robust system for realising them in practice. This acts as a display of transparency for multiple stakeholder groups: employees, customers, shareholders, government, and the wider public. Gender relations are implicated within these communications through the organisation's alignment with 'equality', sometimes communicated as 'EDI'. This alignment reflects a reality constructed by music organisations where the treatment of workers and their working conditions falls under the 'EDI' banner. However, the strength of ideological alignment with 'EDI' in relation to the treatment of workers and working conditions does not match the

strength of alignment evidenced by these same organisations, and others in the study, when talking about 'gender balance'.

The reality that sexual harassment is most often experienced by women, and most often enacted by men against women in music organisations is not acknowledged by the official realities of these paradoxical music organisations. The neutrality of the language used in public statements, mission statements, and descriptions of values on the topic of working conditions, the treatment of workers, and standards of worker behaviour is bolstered by internal processes that acknowledge a uniformity of power relations amongst men and women, and within the relationship between the organisation and workers.

Standardised rules of behaviour accompany training programmes and courses that seek to engineer a culture of 'productive and positive' (male, senior level) communication within the organisation, where universal guidelines on how to communicate on potentially 'challenging conversations' (female, middle level) are presented as skills that all workers should acquire and practise in their day to day work, 'to improve the quality of conversation' (male, senior level) in the organisation. This kind of instruction can, if needed, be applied to disclosures of sexual harassment or bullying between lower-level workers and management, where management has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the difficulties of the conversation are navigated in accordance with these guidelines. By pre-emptively setting the course of conversation with tools that steer workers away from targeted criticism or condemnation, in the direction of more regulated communication, the organisation reinforces desirable behaviour within a narrative of professional competence and commitment to ethical conduct. Again, rules of engagement are institutionalised in the realities of workers. It is not solely in response to coercive external forces that music organisations adopt these processes - with the application of HRM paradigms, 'ethics' can add value and support organisational goals by normalising an organisation-led approach to defining 'knowledge of how the game should be played' (Mills and Murgatroyd, 1990, pp.19).

The organisation's values can be instrumental tools in constructing individual accountability towards standards of behaviour. To enshrine a sense of ownership over worker's commitment to their embodiment of values, 'we developed a group of values that we adhere to as an organisation…it was workshopped by staff' (female, middle level). Methods of involving employees in the construction of values, and then feeding them back to those same employees through training programmes, courses, or policies, were observed across these paradoxical organisations. Standards of ethical behaviour and personal responsibility to uphold these standards, and observe if others are upholding them too, was communicated by participants in management roles at an organisation where work has been done to instil these

values throughout the organisation, with a top-down approach towards the education and training of members of management. The idea that management can demonstrate competency in normative moral judgements is an aspect of the 'ethical HRM' approach, where HR managers have the capacity to develop skills for 'moral competence' (Felgate, 2020, pp.7) and through a form of leadership, can enable managers of organisations to act as ethical role models (Dutta, Mishra and Budhwar, 2022). In practice, managers can then act as judges for 'how a particular individual is living those values' (male, senior level), facilitated by training that gives them a sense of competency regarding their duty 'to help call out when we're seeing people aren't living the values' (female, middle level).

For the two paradoxical organisations that endorse high-level values externally and internally, these values are viewed as a compass for ethical practice and are positioned as guiding principles for the attainment of 'equality' or 'equal opportunity', consistently applied in the decision making of the organisation. Regarding rules of behaviour, responsibility to comply with these rules is constructed as a matter for all employees, with evaluations of compliance constructed as a matter for management. Given that these organisations employ rules that call for a culture of respect amongst staff, one can assume that this training is also geared towards empowering workers to call out sexual harassment and bullying. If evaluations of conduct are carried out formally in response to reports from workers, commitments to 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' are then commitments to procedural justice, under the authority of grievance and disciplinary procedures.

(iii) Organisational discipline

Given that music organisations cannot force employees to behave in accordance with rules set out in codes of conduct, and training programmes and courses can never be more than efforts to encourage compliance through the inscription of individual responsibility, penalties for non-compliance are intended to act as a deterrent. Grievance and disciplinary procedures allow for the formal evaluation of workers who are observed or reported to be in breach of rules of conduct, or are deemed to be failing to meet standards of job-related performance. Grievance procedures govern issues reported by workers and how the organisation will respond to them, and disciplinary procedures are enacted by managers when action is deemed to be warranted against workers with respect to conduct or performance. Those who do not meet expected standards for conduct or performance can be subject to a disciplinary process that can escalate from verbal warnings to written warnings, and dismissal.

Rules, penalties, and managerial discipline are part of a suite of measures in an HRM framework for organisational justice, where the ultimate goal is to maintain 'mutual

satisfaction with the employment contract' (Torrington et al., 2014, pp.397) between workers and management. Dissatisfaction can lead to grievances or unrest amongst workers, and managerial discipline is framed as an extension of a consistent business logic that can reassure workers that rules are enforced within the boundaries of fair, equitable, and transparent practice. Discipline from management is required so that the mission and goals of the organisation remain a priority (Okolie and Udom, 2019) and HR managers are positioned as those best placed to be the arbiters of justice in organisations. Grievance procedures tend to be evaluated by HRM with respect to their influence on productivity and performance, the idea being that when workers perceive themselves to be valued and respected by an organisation that enacts transparent grievance procedures with consistency and fairness, improved performance, teamwork, and productivity may follow (Wesonga and Westhuzien, 2024).

When asked about grievance and disciplinary procedures, participants responded on the grievance aspect of this process. Most demonstrated knowledge of the lines of communication for reporting a grievance (four female, one male) with this knowledge demonstrated by workers at junior, middle, and senior levels from these three paradoxical organisations. In each case, HR, line managers, and senior management are the point of contact for workers who wish to report a grievance. The reality of management as reliable sources of appropriate discipline in response to grievances was endorsed by some who believe that 'management would deal with it immediately…they have a very strict procedure' (female, junior level), and 'it would be dealt with very quickly' (male, head of organisation). The extent that HR managers act as advisors to those tasked with disciplining workers and responding to grievances was evidenced by multiple participants, with one male head of an organisation describing how they lean on HR to 'talk through everything, what I have to say, how to say it, all the possible outcomes…I'll always take [their] advice'. In one case where a participant's experience with the grievance process was described in detail, the HR manager was a central figure in how the organisation responded to the report and how the subsequent investigation was carried out, and for another who described their experience reporting a grievance, the HR manager was their first point of contact.

When discussing why 'hiring for diversity' (Cascio, Boudreau and Fink, 2019, pp.xi) is good for business, the idea of organisational accountability is used to ensure that people see the processes, calculations, and the steps taken, to feel confident that decisions are fair and justified. HRM paradigms construct HR managers as figures of moral authority in the organisation who can make these calculations. This moral authority is communicated as an integral part of how the relationship between employees and the organisation can be best managed for the benefit of the organisation - 'to protect the organization from adverse behaviours' (Patterson, 2023, pp.16). While the moral authority of HR managers extends to

how best to respond to employee grievances, HRM paradigms do not provide a cost/benefit calculation for responding to grievances, or for being proactive on the matter. The 'EDI' aspect is also weaker, and at times absent, on the topic of grievances. This is evident in the language of HRM which does not establish a close relationship between 'EDI' and the organisation's responsibility towards grievances or employee conduct. Organisational transparency is the relevant concept here, rather than organisational accountability.

Official realities are consistent with the premise of transparent, equitable, and consistent application of the rules of the organisation. A conceptualisation of 'ethics' as rules that individual workers are held responsible for, that management are capable of fairly adjudicating according to an equitable procedure, is how these organisations make sense of justice. While the collective aspect of responsible conduct is not absent from these realities, the application of 'the collective' across organisational hierarchies still produces a system in accordance with HRM paradigms, where those at a higher level and those at a lower level, have different relationships to organisational rules and the procedures designed to implement them. As the following discussion will demonstrate, access to justice is not a straightforward or uniform process, and the distance that music organisations create between themselves and workers is not just a strategic choice, but a means of managing its own contradictions.

Lived realities

In their philosophical critique of morality and organisations, Ladd (1988) argues that 'for logical reasons it is improper to expect organizational conduct to conform to ordinary principles of morality' (pp.115). Where ordinary standards of morality govern the actions of individuals, these same standards are at odds with organisational practice, where the organisation utilises a business case. Yet, we comply with and accept the authority of organisations. This amounts to 'an inherent logical paradox' of social relations (pp.118), that the author does not prescribe a remedy for.

Official realities position ideas of ethical conduct as a feature of the organisation's commitment to moral standards that are compatible with wider society (such as respect, dignity, equality, honesty). From the same three organisations discussed previously, three female workers and one male worker provided accounts of sexual harassment and gender-based bullying that contradict these official realities. The response of these organisations to reports of sexual harassment and bullying made by women provides a window into the functioning of the cultural categories of 'men' and 'women' practised by male and female members of the organisation, and the gendering logic of the organisation. These consequences exist in harmony with the day-to-day operations of the organisation, even when these

consequences are formally disputed by women themselves. The accounts discussed here are few in number, and are not in themselves intended to be generalisations of all women's realities in music organisations. But that similar behaviours, when reported resulted in similar responses through the same management structures, were described in organisations across different industries is significant. These accounts closely resemble the news stories discussed in chapter one, where sexual harassment and bullying in music organisations can happen, repeatedly over long periods of time, and at times, with the knowledge of senior management. These women's realities are indicative of patterns that we already know about in other jurisdictions, and in light of their descriptions of how commonplace and routine the behaviours were over time, it is reasonable to assume that these women were not the only women in these organisations experiencing them. Even though sexual harassment is also a feature of women's lived realities outside music organisations, when it happens in the workplace it is treated differently in law, as something that affects one's access to a job. It matters in a different way. In this sense, 'the government promises more' (MacKinnon, 1979, pp.7) when sexual harassment is a work issue.

(i) The legitimation of patriarchy through hierarchy and culture

A woman described an organisation with 'serious cultural issues' (female, senior level), where bullying and harassment were happening regularly in the workplace, with a male senior-level worker cited as the instigator of this behaviour. Another woman described their experience of physical sexual harassment at the hands of a male colleague in the workplace. A third woman described their experience with gender-based bullying by male members of senior management. A man expressed knowledge of physical sexual harassment happening in their organisation, carried out by a male senior manager against junior-level female workers; 'groping and all that stuff' (male, head of organisation).

Descriptions of organisational culture provided by participants outline how female workers can face a day-to-day reality that is different from their male counterparts, where distinctions between acceptable practices for men and acceptable practices for women maintain 'a boys club vibe in certain circumstances' (female, junior level). In these cases men in senior management were enabled to exert authority over women in lower-level positions, reinforcing and normalising asymmetrical relations of power.

> 'I felt like I was being bullied out of the place…I felt like, why are they coming at me? They're coming at me like wasps, that I've attacked their nest or something' (female, junior level)

> "There was definitely some serious cultural issues, and ones that I would have gone to HR having witnessed…bullying, inappropriate touch, inappropriate language…I was the first touch point of saying, something very wrong is happening and I'm seeing it day in, day out' (female, senior level)

A woman described how male colleagues were able to respond to inappropriate behaviours differently and with more success. When female workers attempt the same strategies with opposite outcomes, this speaks to the gender component of these behaviours; 'He stood up to them. I tried, and was just treated differently…I'm not gonna be listened to like a guy in his forties' (female, junior level). Successful strategies for women managers in a 'very sexist' organisation (female, junior level) were observed by one worker as 'a little bit more gentle…she was really brilliant at getting her point across…in a really kind of tame way…not as loud' (female, junior level). Succeeding in these environments means being 'stealthily fantastic' (female, junior level) at the job. Several female participants described how women must employ strategies directly relevant to their status as women to navigate these realities; adopting more subdued approaches to asserting themselves, and not challenging the discomfort caused by colleagues.

In small organisations where workers across departments interact on a regular basis, those at senior levels who have disciplinary authority have greater opportunity to be privy to these problems, without the need for formal reports to come to their desk. The capacity of management to be an enabling force for patriarchal power is observed when '[head of organisation] sat back and let it happen…He knew what was going on' (female, junior level), and in spite of a formal report to HR, the head of the organisation offered the accused 'a redundancy and a golden handshake' (female, senior level) without initiating any investigation. One woman was pressured to change crucial aspects of their story to create more distance between the incident and the organisation. The idea being that 'whatever way I wrote my statement, I should be mindful that I wasn't going to upset him [the head of the organisation]' (female, middle level). The creation of 'environments that foster sexual harassment' (Reskin and Padavic, 1994, pp.129) is a mechanism of the organisational construction of gender that sets the boundaries of constraints and possibilities for how men and women can respond to their position in the gender order of the organisation (Connell, 2021).

While hierarchy was positioned by some in management roles as a helpful source of guidance for workers, such as managements' visible endorsement of the organisation's values, the relationship between hierarchy and culture was more often evidenced as potentially harmful for workers. Organisational hierarchy was observed as an enabling feature of sexual harassment and bullying carried out by men against women in all three organisations, where

power exercised by men and women in HR roles manifested as an oppressive force. For men and women in one organisation, this resulted in day-to-day realities of 'absolute distrust' and 'unhappiness' where 'every wall had ears…confidentiality didn't really exist. So if we were doing a survey on like staff satisfaction, it was very clear that they knew who had said what' (female, middle level). In another organisation, HR responded to concerns about gender pay gaps with hostility; 'they fumbled it for sure…enough to scare me to be quiet about it' (female, senior level). For a third woman, the person with HR responsibilities was unapproachable due to his close relationship with the all-male senior management team and the man she needed to report; 'I felt I couldn't go to any of them with any issues that I had' (female, junior level). Not only can sexual harassment and bullying become an ordinary aspect of life in the organisation, other practices by those working in positions of authority can become commonplace sources of discomfort that are similarly facilitated by a relationship between organisational hierarchies of 'power and reward' (Acker, 2006, pp.107). This can result in realities for female workers where they are, 'I'd imagine, maybe afraid to say anything' (male, head of organisation).

Management structures can act in opposition to women who challenge power by utilising their higher-level position to put boundaries upon these challenges. As one participant described, the loyalties of HR managers lie with the organisation and its interests, and those at its upper levels. By advising her to change her story, HR made it clear that there is a hierarchy of privilege in the organisation that needs to be maintained. The effect of this was the installation of fear in the lower-level woman who bowed to the pressure, because 'I don't want him to lose his shit with me' (female, middle level). Fear of negative consequences is a reason for the non-reporting of harassment cited by participants of UK (Williams and Bain, 2022) and Australian (MAPN Consulting Pty Ltd, 2022) surveys of music industries, and fear was evident in interviews with women. The idea that it's better not to speak up and not to rock the boat was expressed in relation to these issues, because 'it might affect your next role somewhere else' (female, junior level).

From a liberal feminist perspective, HRM argues that solutions to women's access to management jobs lie in practices that allow women to participate alongside men, and empower them to overcome 'the glass ceiling'. Adapting oneself to the environment fits this framework, and satisfies the teaching of HRM paradigms, where discriminatory policies and practices that obstruct individuals from reaching the top are the extent of the problem. By comparison, for radical feminist and socialist feminist theories, the strategies that women managers must employ are telling of the relations between men and women in wider society (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009), and individually oriented solutions are insufficient. This framework acknowledges organisational realities as ones that are in conversation with

patriarchal relations in wider society, whereas the liberal framework does not. The agreement between HRM and liberal feminism has implications for the lived realities of workers, where patriarchal gender systems are fortified, rather than dismantled. The interrelated realities of what goes on inside the organisation and what happens outside the organisation, and the impact that this relationship has on the gendering of realities for workers, was demonstrated particularly in the case of an organisation that was going through a period of significant financial instability and restructuring. Senior management were able to foster a culture of 'shouting and a lot more aggressive management' practices (female, junior level) in this highly pressurised context, and 'when it got really crunch time for business' it was the workers who 'felt it ripple through the entire company…It was a bit feral' (female, junior level).

The lived realities of these workers offer a window into the functioning of power in the organisational construction of gender, where men's power over women can be organised by the bureaucracy of the organisation. The subordination of junior-level workers to senior-level managers is enmeshed with power relations, where the junior-level worker without job security can be subject to sexual harassment by a senior male colleague who has the security of their position. The circumstances by which harassment is 'initiated, accepted or punished by fellow workers or managers' (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009, pp.132) and how these circumstances differ for men and women are markers of gender systems that operate according to hierarchies of privilege. The appearance of the acceptance of sexual harassment and bullying carried out by senior-level men in the organisation is validated when this behaviour is carried out against female workers in front of the most senior-level persons in the organisation, with no criticism or penalty for this conduct. The targeted nature of these actions was clearly felt by women, who themselves were subject to these behaviours, or were witnesses to them. The legitimation of patriarchy by music organisations as a feature of the labour relationship for women undermines the official realities of music organisations.

(ii) Individual responsibility, organisational non-responsibility

HR positions harassment and bullying as issues of personal responsibility towards good conduct, and personal development or learning. Sexual harassment is not recognised as a cultural issue of the organisation. Organisational culture is understood by HRM as a transferable phenomenon carried across generations of employees, comprising shared practices, values, beliefs, and assumptions (McCarthy and Murphy, 2016). It is desirable to have a 'strong' culture by establishing and reinforcing these elements to achieve the greatest continuity between what the organisation expects from employees and how employees behave or perform. Efforts to provide management-led instruction and guidance about appropriate

conduct in the workplace is part of a suite of measures intended to engineer a culture favourable to the performance of the organisation that is, ideally, uniformly adopted by all employees. Workers from these organisations did not explicitly make any connection between the training, policies, or values of the organisation to its culture, however an acknowledgement of these processes as forces of influence upon the conduct of colleagues was noted by several male and female workers across hierarchical levels.

While the idea of training programmes was generally well received by participants, questions were raised about its usefulness in practice, because 'it's never black and white when you're looking at it, when you're actually in it…I didn't feel quite empowered by it' (female, junior level). The generalised content of the training programmes themselves did not resonate with a part-time worker, who outlined that she had never been provided with a code of conduct, and had no knowledge of how complaints are handled, or who the HR manager was. A female senior manager who voiced support for training programmes also argued that having a training programme 'doesn't necessarily help' (female, middle management) generate any real change, rather its true value lies in its ability to make people aware that the problem exists. In this sense, these programmes offer more surface-level solutions to deeper problems.

The ease by which senior management were able to separate themselves from the behaviours that they were witnessing was communicated by these three women. In both cases of sexual harassment and in the case of gender-based bullying, these behaviours were known amongst the male heads of the organisation, in two cases being a witness to them, and in another being made aware of them by a female worker who was a witness. At no point did these men use the power afforded to them by their hierarchical position to respond to these realities on behalf of their female colleagues. The head of the organisation is the person with the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the organisation and its compliance with ethical codes and employment law. The assertion from one of these men that they 'would deal with it straight away' (male, head of organisation) doesn't seem to bear out in practice. One of these women commented on the absence of responsibility amongst senior management who 'felt a bit godly' (female, junior level).

The result of these practices is the construction of different realities for men and women, where women face unique challenges. Hierarchies of privilege by their nature benefit some while disadvantaging others. While a small number of men across the study acknowledged sexism as a major obstacle for women in music industries, at times commenting on music industries as male dominated or misogynistic, none acknowledged the possibility that they themselves or their male peers benefit from patriarchal cultures. This speaks to the role of meritocracy in beliefs about jobs, and the lack of urgency for men to 'problematise social

conditions in relationship to their sex in the same way that women have done' (Alvesson and Due Billing, 2009, pp.71). The bottleneck of women at middle management and the unchanging pattern of men as the heads of the organisation is a numerical expression of this privilege. The qualitative evidence of this privilege is in the accounts of sexual harassment and gender-based bullying carried out by men against women.

The non-responsibility of the organisation is constructed through management structures, where on the one hand the issue is framed as a matter of individual responsibility, and on the other, management are afforded with a unique status as enforcers and adjudicators of discretionary discipline. The gendered nature of the concept of non-responsibility as it is applied in this study distinguishes it as a feminist tool for organisational critique. But non-responsibility is not an unchangeable phenomenon. The subordination of women to men is a characteristic of capitalist society (Connell, 2005), yet the nature of gender relations as a historical, social process (Connell, 2021) allows for the possibility that the direction of this process can be changed, as well as maintained. Those at the upper levels of the organisation can utilise their hierarchical position to challenge patriarchal power relations, as one female worker who did make a formal complaint described, 'I was permanent and slightly more senior at that point' (female, senior level) and therefore able to make a report with less fear of negative consequences from the organisation. Still, what women expect from the organisation when they report a grievance, and what the organisation delivers, can be two very different things.

(iii) Responding to disclosures: managing contradiction for the organisation

Formal reports of physical sexual harassment from two female participants were made to the HR managers of their respective organisations, and another female participant reported their experience with gender-based bullying to senior management. In all three cases, these behaviours happened in front of members of senior management, at times, on a regular basis. In all three cases, the head of the organisation was aware of these behaviours. None of these cases resulted in disciplinary action being taken, and none resulted in a satisfactory outcome for these women. In the only case where an investigation was carried out, the complaint was upheld, but still, no disciplinary action was taken.

A disclosure of sexual harassment to HR was met with immediate push back from HR and her line manager, due to the perception that the content of the disclosure could pose a threat to the organisation. Perceptible tension 'between protecting the organisation or protecting me' (female, middle management) was expressed by management as coercive authority over the participant, resulting in her submitting a modified report that did not detail

the extent of the role of the organisation in the incident. For another woman, despite making a report of sexual harassment to HR regarding the conduct of a male senior-level worker, 'there was never actually any formal action taken…He wasn't let go for misconduct…It was very Catholic Church, move the problem' (female, senior level). This male colleague was offered a financial package and he left the organisation in good graces, with this exit portrayed as an ordinary redundancy, and no investigation was initiated by management.

The unapproachability of those carrying out HR functions, as people who were 'quite tight with the lads' (female, junior level) can make it difficult for lower-level workers to make reports. For one woman, this meant that she had to approach a member of senior management instead. Similar to the first disclosure, she was met with immediate push back, this time in the form of blatant aggression, where 'he just put it back on me. And I'm trying to make a complaint about someone's way of management. It was awful' (female, junior level). No action was taken in response to her disclosure, and the bullying continued.

In two cases of sexual harassment, the position of the HR manager as a member of the organisation with unique and important moral authority for how the organisation should respond to grievances, played a contributing role in the silencing and censoring of women who came to them to make formal reports. Not just the point of contact for complaints, the HR job can act as an extended consciousness of the organisation and a legitimising force for patriarchal gender systems, which was evidenced in the literature review. Official realities say that all workers are equally subject to the punitive powers of the organisation. Decisions by HR and senior management to abandon procedures is demonstrative of the non-responsibility of organisations and the gendering of realities that arises as a consequence of this form of market-oriented management logic. Contradictions between how the organisation says they respond to grievances, and how they do respond when those grievances are the sexual harassment of women, is an expression of the relations of power that the non-responsibility of these organisations renders as 'ordinary', regardless of the opposition communicated by women workers. This is telling of how sexual harassment of women can be both highly prevalent and nearly invisible (MacKinnon, 1979). The only legitimate method of challenging patriarchal power that these women are afforded is one that can be used as a means of suppressing their voices. The logic that guides practices for the allocation of jobs is the same logic that guides how music organisations respond to worker grievances, with material consequences for the lived realities of female workers.

Evidence provided by workers demonstrates that each of these three organisations do have the capacity to deploy penalties against workers who are deemed, by the evaluation of those at senior level, to be failing to meet expected standards (which are subjectively

measured). Two men from two of these organisations gave evidence of how they have used their hierarchical position to use redundancy as a disciplinary practice.

> 'And told them [the workers in the union] exactly what was gonna happen if they didn't toe the line…You're not comrades anymore, you're kind of employees at this company, and if you don't want to do the job that is here, or you're not doing it correctly, then I have to find some way that it's done correctly. Because that's *my* job' (male, head of organisation).

The inaction of each organisation in the face of behaviours that contravene the principles and rules that the organisation itself creates a pattern of contradiction that brings to light the gendering logic of the organisation. The kind of patriarchal power being exerted over women by the organisation in these cases is indirect, in that it is not simply the organisation implementing sexist rules that explicitly oppress and punish women. But the practices of male colleagues who harass women are direct forms of patriarchal power exerted over women as violence and aggression.

Proponents of HRM argue that legitimacy is supported through the organisation's display of 'employee-related disclosures' (Monteiro, Aibar-Guzmán, Garrido-Ruso and Aibar-Guzmán, 2021, pp.2). Organisations voice support for the idea of employee disclosures and endorse HR as a point of contact for workers. Yet, avenues for workers to effectively voice concerns about the practices of HR itself, appear from the realities presented by participants to be extremely limited, if not non-existent. In the grievance and disciplinary procedure acquired from one organisation, no such guidance is provided about how to report issues with HR practices, or who to report these issues to. In one of the few organisations with a union, collusion between HR and a union representative, where 'there were kickbacks for certain things to be smoothed over' (female, middle level) contributed to a difficult climate for workers where they couldn't report concerns.

In societies where gender is an embedded feature of practices and processes (Acker, 1989), organisations that employ codes of conduct and HR procedures offer no effective protection for women from patriarchy and violence. Different lived realities for men and women persist, enabled by practices that ensure 'the occurrence of sexual harassment moves in one direction, while the legal and disciplinary processes move in the other' (Meyersfeld, 2020, pp.303). In the accounts of harassment and bullying that these women provided, the inaction of the organisation amounted to a form of discipline in itself, directed towards the women who tried to assert themselves or speak up for others. One woman felt that she had no choice but to leave the organisation, another lives with a sense of regret over their inability to get the response they were looking for (in part, blaming herself), and all three retain feelings of anger and disappointment. What these lived realities demonstrate is that the logic of the

organisation distinguishes between discipline in support of the organisation, and discipline in support of women. Sexual harassment and bullying in music industries is overwhelmingly reported to be carried out by men against women. When music organisations push women to the margins by ignoring or censoring them when they make reports, they protect the interests of those men and position men's interests on a par with those of the organisation. Findings from this study draw attention to the mechanisms through which music organisations can construct themselves as institutions of male dominance that are complicit in the harms inflicted upon women.

4.3.6 Concluding remarks

The only example in the study of HR following their grievance and disciplinary procedure reveals more about the underlying logic of HRM and the organisation. In an organisation not included in this paradox chapter, an antagonistic interaction between the head of an organisation and a junior-level worker (both male) resulted in HR making the decision to get involved, despite a request for the issue to be handled informally. Their reasoning offers some insight into what motivates HR practice.

> 'HR's position was, hang on a second, if that person has said or indicated that they're being bullied, and we don't do anything about it, further down the line they could very legitimately come back and say, 'I expressed that I was being bullied and you guys did nothing about it'. So that's why it was looked into' (male, head of organisation)

The possibility of opening up the organisation to potential disputes, because of perceptions of how they handled a grievance, brought the full procedure into play. The fact that this was a matter between two men is significant, because gender is not salient in the hierarchical power dynamic between them. This brings the issue more in line with the idea of a gender-neutral workplace that HRM and 'EDI' procedures endorse, making it a compatible reality to deal with, because 'it wasn't a gender thing' (Connell, 2011, pp.37). While this is just one account, when compared to the others, it suggests that gender plays a bigger role in the operation of music organisations than official realities let on.

The dominant mantra of music organisations is that all are invited to participate in the life of the organisation and that men and women are equally enabled by the organisation to succeed. The idea that men and women can and should compete on an equal basis is supported by industries, government departments, HR consultancy firms, and academic researchers who develop HRM paradigms. The concept of 'equality' is also favoured by the general public in Ireland. A survey conducted by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2023) found that eighty-five percent of people believe that everyone should be treated equally,

irrespective of who they are, and ninety-two percent believe that human rights are important components of a fair society. In their official realities, music organisations align themselves with public concerns for social justice, and position themselves as separate, but influential leaders with the capacity to champion remedies for social problems that find their way into the organisation. But behind these statements, lived realities are different for men and women.

What came across in these interviews was a feeling of being confined, or walled in by the organisation; trying to use the official channels, not being listened to, being pressured to retreat and to be quiet. As one participant described it, 'I feel like they're trying to force me out' (female, junior level). Such was the intensity of this hostility, that one woman became physically ill and required medical intervention due to the psychological impact of working there. As an interviewer, the impact of these realities came across in observations of the look on their face and in their eyes, the change in their tone of voice compared to other topics in the conversation, and changes in body language, all of which indicated that this was still real for them, but only behind a veil of concealment and restraint. The emotional impact of these realities is an important aspect of how power relations between men and women are constructed and maintained. Not only because this impact is felt by women long after the event has taken place, but because it shapes how they respond in the future. The concealed feelings of what it is like to be a woman in the organisation, compared to what it is like to be a man in the organisation (none of the men interviewed described experiences with sexual harassment or gender-based bullying), are evidence of ruptures in the hegemony of patriarchal social structure. These women's realities of how sexual harassment and bullying can continue unabated, enabled and unpunished by the organisation, are evidence of a system that contradicts itself. Connell (2021, 1983) calls these 'crisis tendencies'. Official realities act as a stabilising force upon these contradictions, to the benefit of music organisations. The transformation of organisational cultures which enable sexual harassment of women, and the silencing of women, has not followed in the wake of these commitments to change.

HRM paradigms approach harms against women indirectly, by speaking to a broad, overall framework of discipline in the organisation where harassment or bullying are among several 'On-the-Job Behaviour Problems' (Okolie and Udom, 2019, pp.96) that may need to be addressed. Similar to the allocation of jobs, HRM frames employee conduct as an individual level problem. Yet, music organisations do not engage with commitments towards addressing misconduct with the same enthusiasm by which they engage with the allocation of jobs. Alignment with 'EDI' is direct and much more visible when talking about how jobs are allocated, whereas it is indirect and less visible when talking about responding to workers who violate rules of behaviour. HRM paradigms do not make sense of sexual harassment in the same way that it makes sense of how jobs are allocated, despite sexual harassment being

framed by law as an access to employment issue and a form of gender-based discrimination. Gender is more easily constructed as a numerical reality that can be solved by having a 'balance' of 'diversity', and on a practical level, a business case for addressing harms inflicted against women by men would require the organisation to open itself up to legal and social scrutiny, in a manner that could pose a threat to its legitimacy. The treatment of this problem by the logic of HRM reflects the non-responsibility of organisations towards female workers - a concept that offers a critical, feminist definition of the basic premise of HRM paradigms. By viewing these realities through a feminist lens that is cognizant of the patriarchal power of capitalism, their contradictions can be challenged in a way that breaks through the hegemonic logic of HRM that always circles back on itself. The paradox that operates across the logic of these organisations is then understood as a matter that must be resolved, because it identifies the source of harmful treatment of women within these paradigms themselves.

7. Conclusion

Music organisations benefit from women's labour while constructing realities that make it difficult for women to reap the rewards of this labour. Men are rewarded for their labour differently to women, and benefit from an organisational construction of gender that they are best suited to accomplish. These same music organisations communicate a strong desire to bring more women in at all levels, as a matter of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', positioning these commitments in an official reality of 'best practice' through HRM paradigms. Overall, more women are working in Ireland's music organisations than ever before, but problems remain over women's access to jobs and access to justice, and these realities contradict the official reality of the organisation. From this a paradox arises, where men and women are both 'equal' and 'unequal'. This is a problem because the processes that contribute to restricting women's access to jobs and justice are the same process that the organisation employs in its engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. Thus, the organisation's complicity in these harms are legitimised, through HRM paradigms. This is a new theorisation of paradox and a new step in theorising music organisations' engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity', aided by the frameworks of Joan Acker and Raewyn Connell. This theorisation of paradox brings the non-responsibility of music organisations into view, and reveals the inner workings of this non-responsibility, and its impact upon the realities of workers. Practically speaking, it provides an empirically informed, feminist argument that calls into question the dominance and legitimacy of HRM paradigms in music organisations. Challenging this paradox requires challenging this dominance, and calling attention to the active role that music organisations play in constructing patriarchal realities.

Problems are also faced by workers in general, who are stressed, overworked, and subject to the powers of management structures with little room to change how power is constructed in this hierarchical relationship and its impact upon their day-to-day realities. HRM responds to stresses caused by the demands of the job with 'well-being' and 'work-life balance' initiatives, as a method of smoothing over the symptoms of a labour relationship that prioritises the needs of the organisation over the needs of workers. This approach constructs these harms as a matter for individual workers to resolve, and further masks the gendering aspects of this labour relationship behind 'best practice' rhetoric. Not only do HRM paradigms not remedy these problems, but their logic also maintains the status quo of the needs of the organisation as the guiding rationale for practice. This has serious implications for workers, and for women, whose lived realities demonstrate the harms that the hegemony of this logic can produce.

Access to jobs

Being able to satisfy the demands of the job and the needs of the organisation is a critical part of being a successful worker, and senior-level jobs in music organisations are built around the idea of high levels of uninterrupted commitment to the needs of the organisation. Because there are differences in the way that mothers and fathers experience parenthood, particularly in the early stages of a child's life where women spend more time away from the job, women by default have less potential to be this version of a successful worker. It is not then that fathers are inherently advantaged simply because of their status as fathers, but that the home is in a relationship to the organisation that poses a conflict more easily navigated by fathers. Mothers must take maternity leave, and in general tend to take on more caring work in the home than fathers, who are able to stay in their job full time, uninterrupted, during the early stages of parenthood. Commitments to meritocracy therefore lack credibility, when 'the best person' for the job is inherently the one who can make the best promise of high levels of uninterrupted commitment, which is a male worker.

This conflict is felt much more acutely by mothers, and as long as the needs of the home are positioned in a subordinate relationship to the needs of the organisation, in a neoliberal society where both parents must work outside the home, this conflict will never be resolved. Bringing the home into existing neoliberal socio-economic logics would not necessarily remedy this conflict either. The business case for making it easier for mothers to participate in the labour market would match up with these logics and if convincing enough, could result in new organisational policy. But even if policy is actually enacted in practice, the root of the issue is unaddressed in this approach, because the relationship between the organisation and the home remains under the authority of the needs of the organisation.

Changing the course of gender relations for mothers in music organisations requires strengthening the position of the home in this relationship, with a logic that supports the differing realities of parenthood for men and women, without resulting in any parent being penalised for taking time away from their job, or leaving it entirely. Acker (2006) identifies this as a socialist logic that can support a changed concept of motherhood, by using the powers of the State to implement free childcare schemes, to strengthen 'equality' legislation by specifically identifying how parents are penalised for taking time away from the job, and to provide income security outside of the labour market. In other words, the societal context of organisations is the site of an alternative logic for policy and practice that can steer the course of gender relations of music organisations in a different direction. Evidence from this study supports this argument. This means that what distinguishes mothers' and fathers' realities is acknowledged, without penalty, rather than rendered invisible in a degendering approach that

still penalises women. In this sense, the most effective remedies for gender relations are antithetical to those proposed by HRM, because neoliberalism is not concerned with social justice (Connell, 2011), and the pervasive influence of patriarchy is not a variable in the equation of this market-oriented moral philosophy upheld by management paradigms.

Advertising jobs as a principle in itself makes sense if the intent is to change gender divisions of labour at all levels, to bring more women in, which many of these music organisations claim is something that they want to do. Closed networks of allocating jobs in music industries and organisations that are male dominated means that friends of men already inside the organisation are more likely to know about opportunities and access them, and women are more likely to lose out because they are less likely to be members of these networks. When there is no oversight for job allocation, it means that promotions are also doled out informally, through one-to-one relationships between management and workers, where assumptions about 'the best person' for the job can implicitly reinforce occupational sex segregation. But a hiring procedure that is consistently applied every time does not necessarily result in transformed gender divisions of labour. HRM selection procedures reinforce conceptions of workers' realities as a numbers game, where what happens to workers when they are in these jobs (such as physical and psychological harm, or barriers to senior-level jobs) is of lesser significance within this conversation about 'gender balance'. These procedures also construct a porous concept of meritocracy, where 'the best person' for the job can equally be someone hired through procedure or someone hired without procedure. Either way, the needs of the organisation are met, and its legitimacy is supported in its strategic engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' through 'EDI'. The contradictory goal of hiring more women through meritocratic procedures is stabilised through 'EDI' alignment, which re-defines this goal as that of enabling more women who are the best to come through. This ideological construction of gender allows music organisations to retain their position as well-informed facilitators of a gender-neutral meritocracy that aligns with the expectations and obligations of wider society.

Acker (2006) and Connell (2021) identify divisions of labour as dimensions of the gender effects of capitalism, shaped by organisational processes. Access to jobs is a core aspect of gendering class relations in Ireland's music industries that this study has provided evidence of and analysed through a critical feminist lens. By critiquing the logic of the HRM paradigms of music organisations, the role of these paradigms in upholding and legitmising patriarchal gender relations and the conflictual relationship between the organisation and the home is brought to light. The gender effects of the neoliberal logic of the HRM paradigms of music organisations upon women's access to senior level jobs were not previously accounted for by academic research. Additionally, the logic of HRM, which justifies practices which support the

needs of the organisation in the allocation of jobs, such as allocating them privately, is for the first time accounted for in the context of music organisations by this study. HRM operates according to an individualist, market-oriented logic that supports official realities of meritocratic gender-neutral reward, and the positioning of workers as those with responsibility for managing the potential negative effects of balancing the demands of the job with their lives outside the organisation. Lived realities demonstrate that music organisations play a far greater role in the problems facing workers and women than HRM admits, and plays a direct role in constructing gendering class relations through divisions of labour. The paradigms of HRM are the logic through which Ireland's music organisations manage their relationship with workers, which is paradoxical in its engagement with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. Through this analysis of HRM, its form, and impact upon the realities of male and female workers, findings related to access to jobs answer the primary research question of the study.

Access to justice

The creation of narratives to justify market activities (Connell, 2013) is a facet of the hegemony of neoliberal regimes, observed in policy that renders gender problems incompatible with the goal of gender-neutral workplaces. This logic simplifies a very complex issue, for which there are no clear solutions. By attempting to render patriarchy invisible, HRM paradigms themselves act as architects for patriarchal systems. The needs of the organisation guide policy and practice, producing a disciplinary regime that provides management with the authority to decide what requires a response from the organisation and what does not. As a consequence, music organisations proclaim to respond to harassment and bullying, while quietly retaining the power to silence women who try to report these behaviours. When access to the important resource of justice is restricted on the basis of sex, class relations are gendering and reinforce patriarchal relations amongst workers. This is the gendering logic of HRM, which constructs the relationship between the organisation and workers in a way that justifies practices that prioritise the needs of the organisation, even on matters of 'equality' and 'equal opportunity'. This logic has distinct consequences for female workers, constructing a different lived reality for them compared to their male colleagues, none of whom reported sexual harassment or gender-based bullying or the need to report such issues to management. The paradox that arises from a logic that positions the needs of the organisations as compatible with the needs of workers reveals how gender is constructed by an HRM-led approach to managing the relationship between the organisation and workers, despite its professed commitments towards making organisations gender-neutral. By identifying and analysing this paradox with

respect to access to justice, this study further develops its answer to the primary research question.

It is not possible for music organisations to eradicate harassment and bullying, and neither is it desirable for music organisations to be able to force compliance among workers with codes of conduct. This would only bestow greater authority onto management that could lead to more abuses of power. The worker from an organisation outside of Ireland felt that her organisation wouldn't have brought in maternity leave 'if we weren't legally obligated to do it' (female, senior level), and the role of industry orientations in changing internal realities was clear in workers' realities. The external conditions of music organisations that impact upon its logic offer the most viable route to challenging the organisation's complicity in harms against women workers, and supporting women workers who wish to make reports. Because the solutions to these problems are not going to come from music organisations themselves, despite what their official realities say. But it is not as simple as adding more amendments to employment legislation.

Anti-discrimination principles in employment have been legislated for by the Irish Constitution since 1998, and has been repeatedly bypassed by music organisations since then. There is a gap between the ideals of law and the realities of workers. The language of the Employment Equality Acts does not account for the neoliberal contexts of music organisations and wider society, and the contradictory nature of doing right by workers while ensuring that the market-oriented needs of the organisation are prioritised. For example, section 8(a) states:

> 'an employer shall be taken to discriminate against an employee in relation to promotion if, on any of the discriminatory grounds — the employer refuses or deliberately omits to offer or afford the employee access to opportunities for promotion in circumstances in which another eligible and qualified person is offered or afforded such access' (Government of Ireland, 2024, pp.21)

This language does not account for how the needs of the organisation can motivate the private allocation of jobs, even when commitments toward 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' are in place. Management paradigms are built to stabilise these contradictions, even paradoxically. Legal obligations have very limited transformative impact when the policies they inform are management policies. External intervention designed to work on behalf of workers, with a feminist logic that is conscious of the societal context of music organisations and their relationship to the home, could offer a meaningful challenge to management structures and their impact upon the realities of workers. Labour unions have already demonstrated that they can support workers of music organisations who wish to challenge management's provision of employment contracts. Whether or not they can offer further challenges to the impacts of the E&R of the job on workers, and the issues facing women in access to jobs and justice, remains

to be seen. Unions that operate with a central feminist logic are unheard of in Ireland, and elsewhere. Women have less availability for activism in labour unions because they carry out higher levels of domestic and caring labour (McAdam, 1987) and there is a reluctance within Irish labour unions to take on 'equality' claims (Quinn, 2004). But thus far, labour unions offer the best evidence of a route to transforming the class relations of music organisations, and feminist activism has demonstrated its capacity to challenge institutionalised patriarchy.

Implications for feminist organisational research

As outlined in the literature review, feminist organisational research has predominately been conducted according to two distinct traditions: research conducted through management and organisation theory, and research conducted through sociological theories of feminism. The latter has the capacity to adopt a critical view on the organisational construction of power, the legitimacy of management structures and paradigms, and the lived realities of male and female workers. The former also looks at the organisational construction of power and the role of management, but through paradigms that inherently consider management structures and the needs of the organisation as potentially beneficial features of workers' realities, with the capacity to remedy harms, including harms related to management structures themselves. The needs of workers are positioned as compatible with the needs of the organisation, and according to HRM logic, any potential paradox that arises in this conceptualisation should be managed, not remedied, with more enlightened management practices.

This study theorises the paradox that arises in the relationship between workers and music organisations through the lens of feminist theory, without the influence of management paradigms and imperatives to produce knowledge that is beneficial to the organisation. In doing so, the study brings to light the roles that management paradigms in research play in maintaining and legitmising the needs of the organisation in analyses of organisations and the realities of workers, irrespective of what the findings are - the same logic deployed by management in practice. This new theorisation of paradox directly challenges the logic of HRM paradigms in research and in practice, by demonstrating how their logic perpetuates harms against workers and women, despite claims to the contrary. This contribution to feminist organisational research is novel in its analysis of HRM inside music organisations and in academia, because it is in this relationship that the logic of HRM is legitimised as 'best practice', and this dimension of the construction of workers' realities has not been previously accounted for by academic research of music organisations. This study can be viewed as offering an empirically informed counter argument to that of HRM. As no prior studies of the HRM paradigms of music organisations has been accounted for, this study establishes new

ground for critical feminist inquiries of music organisations and provides an early design for implementing these inquiries.

The literature review also details how popular management tools, namely ‘EDI', are implicitly endorsed by some feminist organisational research, without critical engagement with their effects or their suitability for remedying worker realities. This study analyses the construction of ‘EDI' in HRM literature and explicitly spells out that ‘EDI' originated in HRM and is a management tool that embodies the market-oriented logic of HRM. That ‘EDI’ is not a tool for change constructed by feminist theory and is a tool designed to be controlled by management, are important points to raise when critiquing ‘EDI' because these aspects of ‘EDI' are not articulated by the studies cited in the literature review. That ‘EDI' is an HRM tool is plain to see when reading HRM literature, but feminist organisational research drawing from feminist theory seldom engages with HRM paradigms themselves, thus the origins and logic of ‘EDI' are not sufficiently presented or accounted for. This study traces these origins from HRM literature to the practices of music organisations and their effects upon the lived realities of workers, and demonstrates the importance of thoroughly interrogating popular concepts endorsed by feminist organisational research, even those that are widely accepted in practice.

The external conditions of music organisations are evidenced by this study as important factors in the construction of workers’ realities, such as parenthood at home, economic crises, legal obligations, and HRM teachings. The relationship between the organisation and the home is thoroughly accounted for by Acker and Connell, and several studies cited in the literature review acknowledge this relationship. Though, applications of their framework often stop short of theorising this relationship, instead focussing on the internal realities of the organisation. To theorise this relationship, according to Acker's and Connell's frameworks, is to engage with the wider logic of capitalism which ascribes market value to labour in the organisation, and none to labour in the home. It is through this approach to feminist theory that class is integrated into a single conceptual framework with gender. This doctoral study encourages feminist organisational research to engage with these capitalist labour arrangements, through its analysis of parenthood and access to jobs. The role of additional external conditions are also accounted for by this study, such as HRM paradigms, legal obligations, and economic crises, and each of these are evidenced as having gendering implications for the lived realities of workers. This line of inquiry offers a wider scope for feminist organisational research that is concerned with the relationship between organisations and society.

The contributions of this study also highlight potential avenues for future research. How can the role of multiple aspects of the external conditions of music organisations be accounted for and what can they tell us about the organisational construction of power in the lives of male and female workers? Some promising evidence gathered here points to the need to investigate legal obligations towards ‘equality' and ‘equal opportunity’ and how these concepts are constructed in laws themselves. This could involve interviewing legislators, politicians, and legal experts. Additionally, the role of HRM advisory organisations in shaping the HRM paradigms of music organisations was touched upon by this study and requires further research. The potential for labour unions to offer workers and women more direct access to justice than that offered by HRM should be investigate by future studies of music organisations with urgency due to the harms being perpetuated by HRM paradigms currently in place. This could involve interviewing workers who have engaged with mechanisms for bringing an ‘equality' claim against their employer, interviewing members of management who deal with such claims, and interviewing union workers themselves.

While race relations did not arise in this study to any significant degree, they should remain on the agenda in future studies of music organisations in Ireland and elsewhere, as we know from this study that management of music organisations position race in policies for hiring of racial minorities in their official realities. These policies are management-led and guided by HRM, usually via ‘EDI' alignment, which means the same logic of HRM that constructs the gendering of worker realities also constructs the racialising of these realities. Further research is also needed regarding the dominance of individualistic approaches to understanding gender relations, embodied in organisational policies as ‘EDI'. Gender ideologies of music organisations do not exist in isolation from wider society, and this study has identified the material impact of reproductive sex in the gendering of female worker’s realities. This evidence is at odds with dominant societal and organisational approaches to discussing gender, where gender is viewed as an identity issue and reproductive sex is considered irrelevant as a distinct category. Risman, Meyers and Sin (2018) describe this as a ‘neoliberal turn' (pp.278) in gender theory that runs the risk of essentialising structural causes of gender as an identity issue, and its focus on gender-neutrality diverts feminist inquiry away from efforts to ‘dismantle gender as a structure itself' (pp.278). This approach is a favourable one for HRM paradigms and aligns with its logic. Calls for critical approaches to feminism can elicit backlash (Lawford-Smith, 2022) and surmounting this ideological obstacle poses a substantial challenge for feminists concerned with investigating power music organisations.

Contradiction as a tool for change

HRM acts as the expert voice for the realities of male and female workers, inside and outside the organisation. Music organisation's adoption of HRM paradigms is not only a reflection of HRM's dominance as the expert voice in wider business discourse, but also of the inclination of management to favour a 'best practice' approach that allows them to engage with 'equality' and 'equal opportunity' on terms that work for the organisation. The legitimacy of this approach is aided by the moral philosophy of neoliberalism embedded in HRM paradigms, which continually constructs understandings of what 'the right thing' is on these terms. This is not as smooth a process as HRM would argue. The inherent conflict between the needs of workers and the needs of the organisation rises to the top when workers recognise it in their lived realities. This offers an opportunity for feminists to use contradiction as a tool for change.

> 'I feel that tension…I feel a great responsibility to look after their wellbeing and to ensure that everyone's happy…at the same time I have an obligation, you know, to the company…to uphold their policies and stand over their decisions…I also have that responsibility, which is probably at the moment, the greater of the two' (male, head of organisation)

The hegemony of HRM poses a challenge for feminist critique, because one of its most popular management tools, 'EDI', has become common ground for organisations and researchers calling for reform in organisations. Feminism and patriarchy are naturally oppositional concepts - but a neoliberal capitalism can appear to offer a reality that appeals to the concerns of feminism, while upholding conditions of patriarchy. The lived realities of women, in particular, expose this deception, because their realities as workers, and mothers, are uniquely articulated by the capitalist logic governing the relationship between the organisation and the home. The contradictions at the heart of this logic are understood more clearly when music organisations and the home are investigated together.

> 'I do talk about it…I try and make people understand that as a leader it's okay to also have children and it's not a dirty word to be a mother, and it's okay for you to put your family first, and it's okay for you to have responsibilities that aren't your job' (female, head of organisation)

The primacy of the needs of the organisation is only further legitimised by the tools that HRM proposes, and the consequences of the dominance of HRM paradigms is evidenced by the lived realities of male and female workers. Even when workers of music organisations recognise the conflict and contradiction of the job, this is not enough to transform their realities. This study argues that the kind of justice that workers and women need is not going to come from music organisations or HRM, but from an external, independent intervention, guided by a feminist logic that identifies these contradictions as important entry points for transformative action. The inadequacies of HRM for addressing the needs of workers and

women is exposed through the paradox it sustains, where patriarchal relations are maintained under the guise of management paradigms and 'EDI' solutions. The conflictual relationship between the organisation and the home, and the primacy of the needs of the organisation, is a clear articulation of the gendering logic at the heart of this paradox. It is through evidence of paradox, and the incompatibility of the needs of the organisation with the needs of workers that this study offers a new critical feminist framework for interrogating the logic of HRM and challenging the legitimacy of the HRM paradigms of music organisations.

In light of evidence, this study argues that the realities of workers require external feminist intervention, that has no loyalty to the market needs of the organisation. When the needs of the organisation are so pervasive, that they are supported by a logic that governs the political economy of music industries, and labour in general, finding a way to radically change these realities appears to be an impossible task. That there are aspects of this logic that music organisations and HRM cannot smooth over, and cannot permanently stabilise, means, however, that the course of gender relations can be steered in a different direction, and that neoliberal capitalism is not total in its hegemony. Feminist class analysis of the lived realities of workers then becomes an important, critical tool in the task of radical change in music industries.

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10. Appendix A: Interview Topics

Participants were asked about:

- Their career journey and route to the organisation.
- Prior education before entering the organisation.
- Their early experience working for the organisation (orientation, training).
- Hierarchies within the organisation, its organisational structure.
- Gender and racial divisions of labour in the organisation: in jobs, occupations, departments, teams, vertical divisions, occupations.
- Explicit employment contracts: minimum hours, benefits, maternity/paternity leave, overtime, schedule, expectations and requirements of the job, security of employment.
- Implicit employment contracts: expectations about appropriate behaviour, dress, language, appearance.
- Career paths in the organisation.
- Promotion practices.
- Hiring and recruitment practices and job interviews.
- People's attitudes about the organisation.
- Current or previous equity projects implemented by the organisation.
- Interactions with co-workers, supervisors, management.
- Sources of support and discomfort in the organisation.
- Wages and salaries across different jobs and levels of the organisation.
- The annual review or progress review practices.
- Knowledge of disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- Workplace culture, informal norms.
- Their work outside the organisation (caring and domestic work).
- Recommendations that they may have about feminist projects in music industries.
- Their racial and ethnic background.

11. Appendix B: Search terms for systematic review

"gender" AND "music industry work"
"gender" AND "music industr*" "work"
"gender" AND "music industry labo#r"
"gender" AND "music industr*" "labo#r"
"gender" AND "music industry employment"
"gender" AND "music industr*" "employment"
"gender" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"gender" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"
"gender" AND "music industr*"

"music industry work"
"music industr*" "work"
"music industry labo#r"
"music industr*" "labo#r"
"music industry employment"
"music industr*" "employment"
"music industry organi?ation*"
"music industr*" "organi?ation*"
"music industr*"

"race" AND "music industry work"
"race" AND "music industr*" "work"
"race" AND "music industry labo#r"
"race" AND "music industr*" "labo#r"
"race" AND "music industry employment"
"race" AND "music industr*" "employment"
"race" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"race" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"
"race" AND "music industr*"

"class" AND "music industry work"
"class" AND "music industr*" "work"
"class" AND "music industry labo#r"
"class" AND "music industr*" "labo#r"
"class" AND "music industry employment"
"class" AND "music industr*" "employment"
"class" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"class" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"

"class" AND "music industr*"

"gender" AND "music organi?ation*"
"race" AND "music organi?ation*"
"class" AND "music organi?ation*"

"women" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"women" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"
"men" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"men" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"

"femininit*" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"femininit*" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"
"masculinit*" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"masculinit*" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"

"labo#r market" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"labo#r market" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"
"globali?ation" AND "music industry organi?ation*"
"globali?ation" AND "music industr*" "organi?ation*"

12. Appendix C: Survey graphs

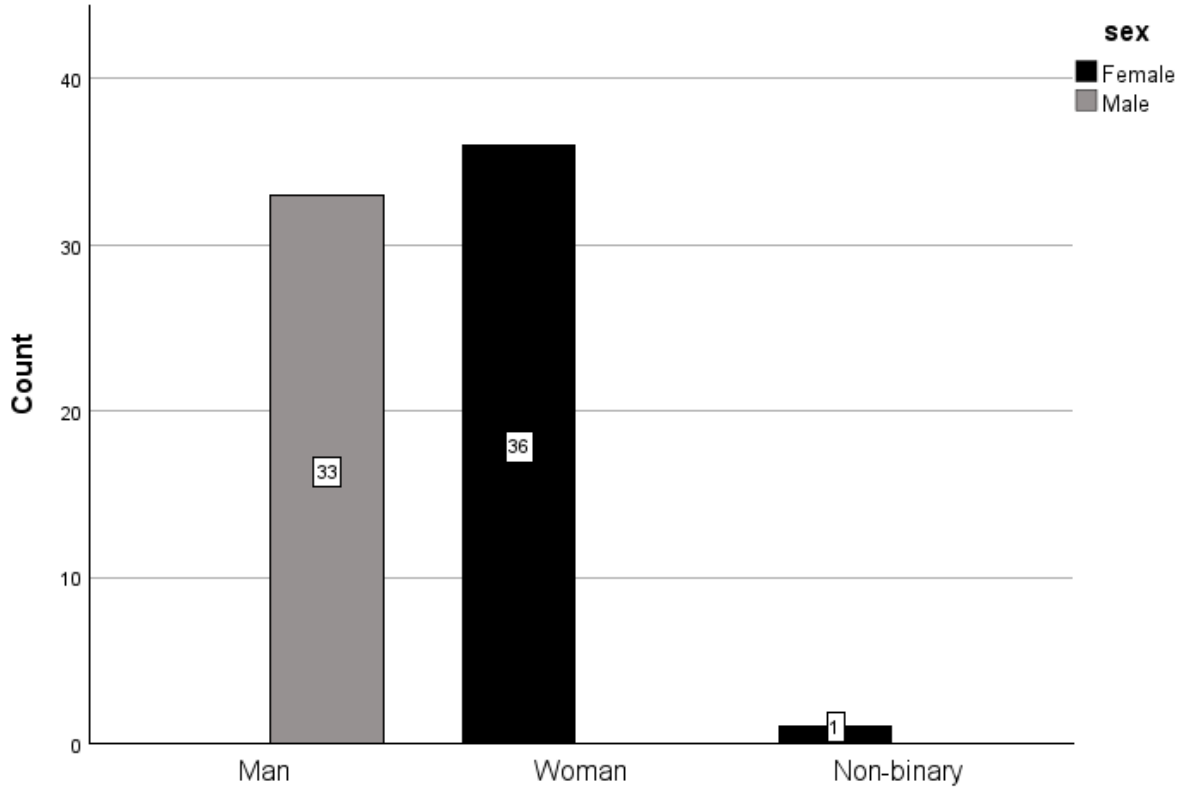


Figure 1: All respondents, how they describe their gender

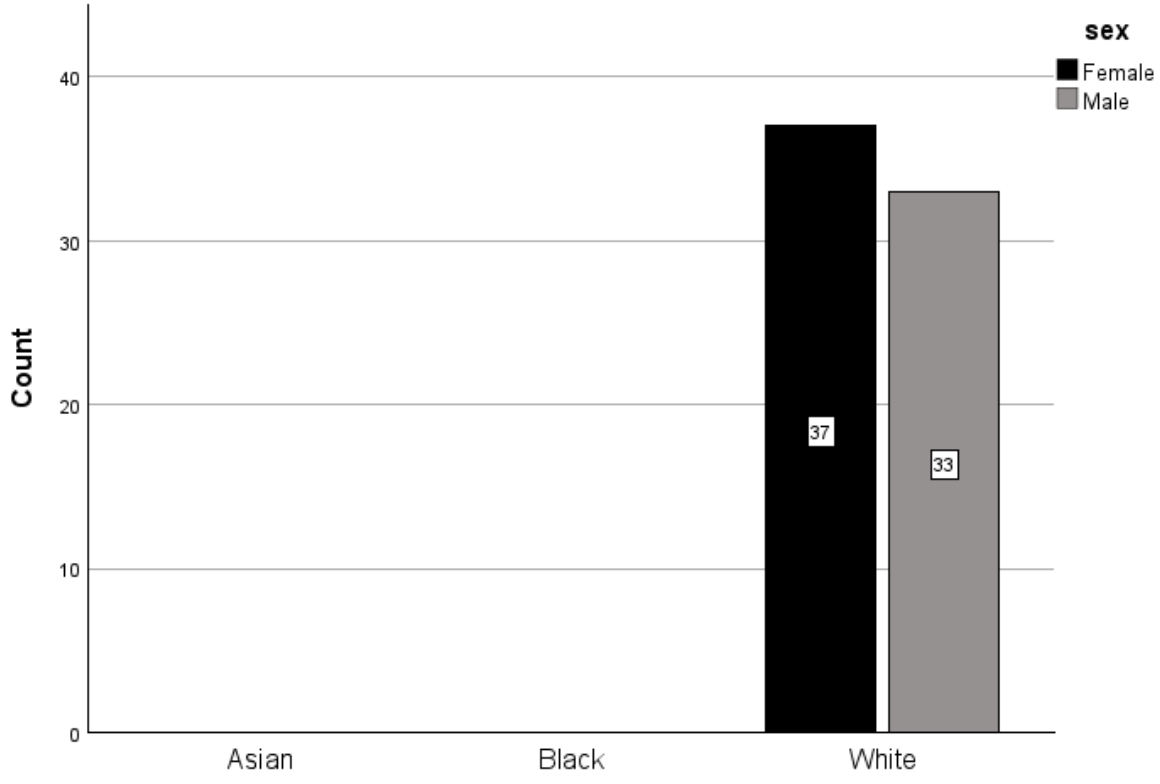


Figure 2: All respondents, their race

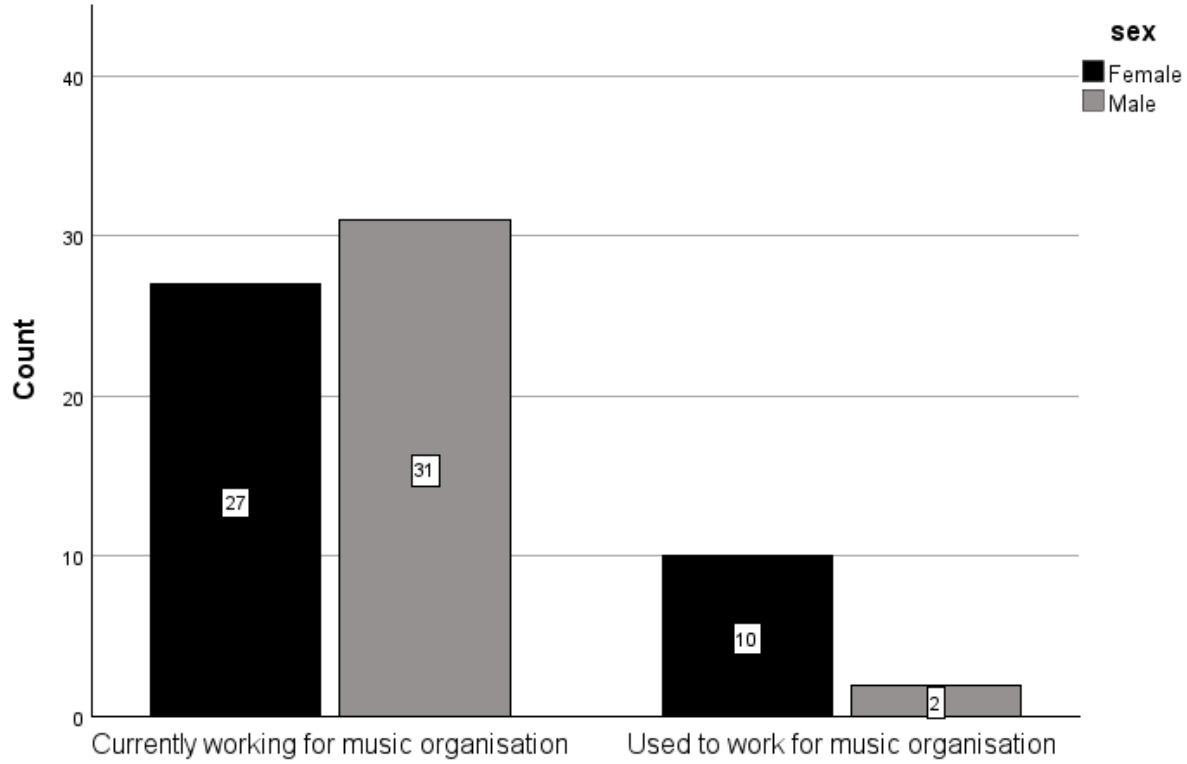


Figure 3: All respondents, their status with music organisations

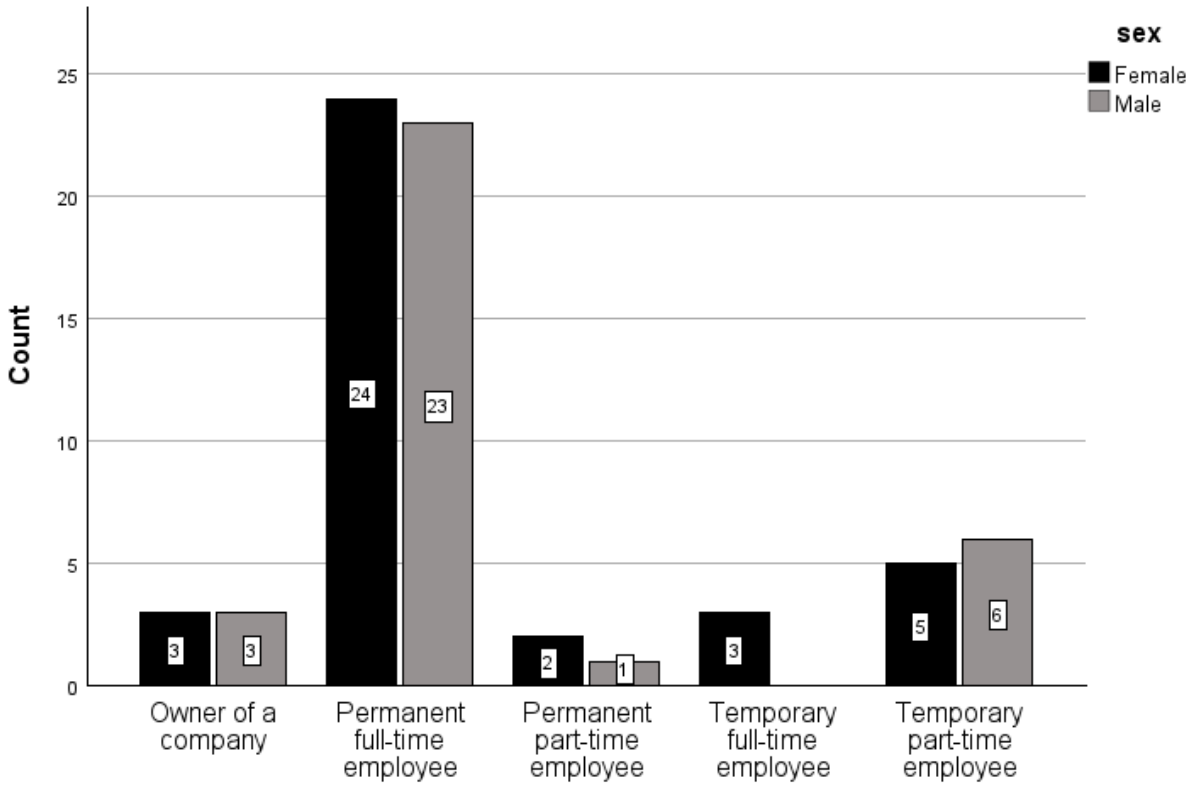


Figure 4: All respondents, their employment relationship with music organisations

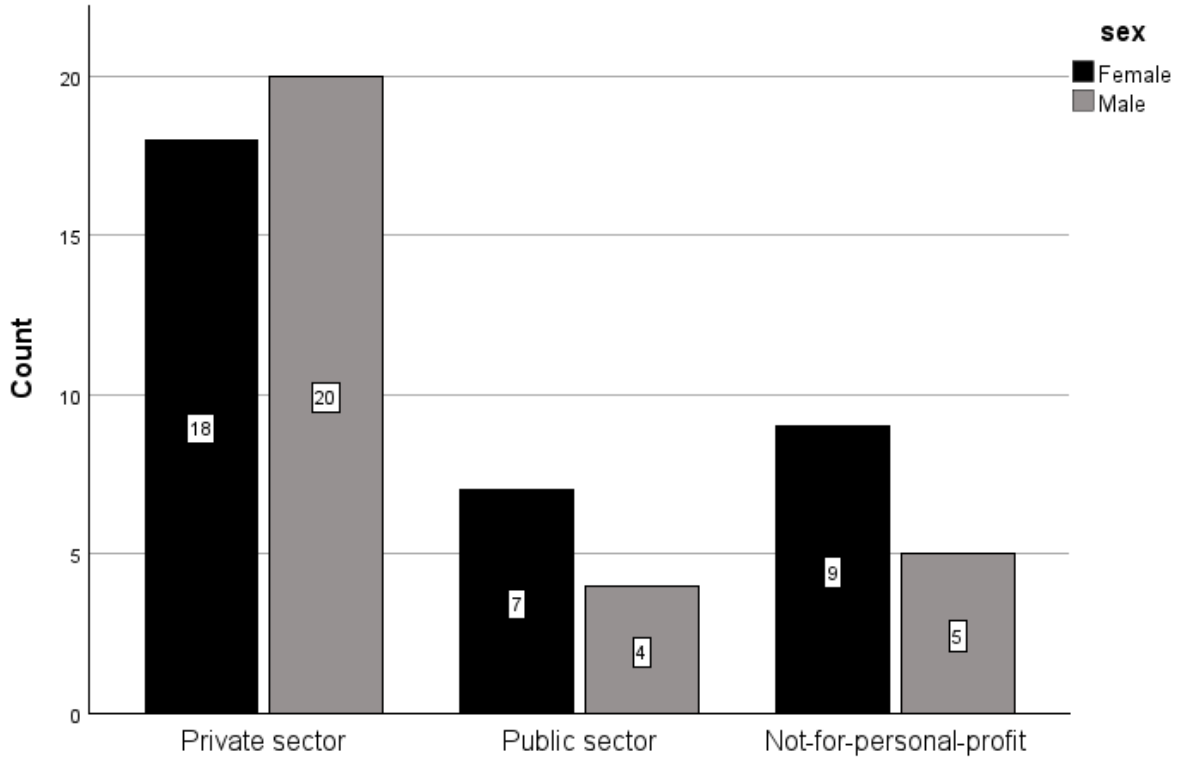


Figure 5: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, their sector

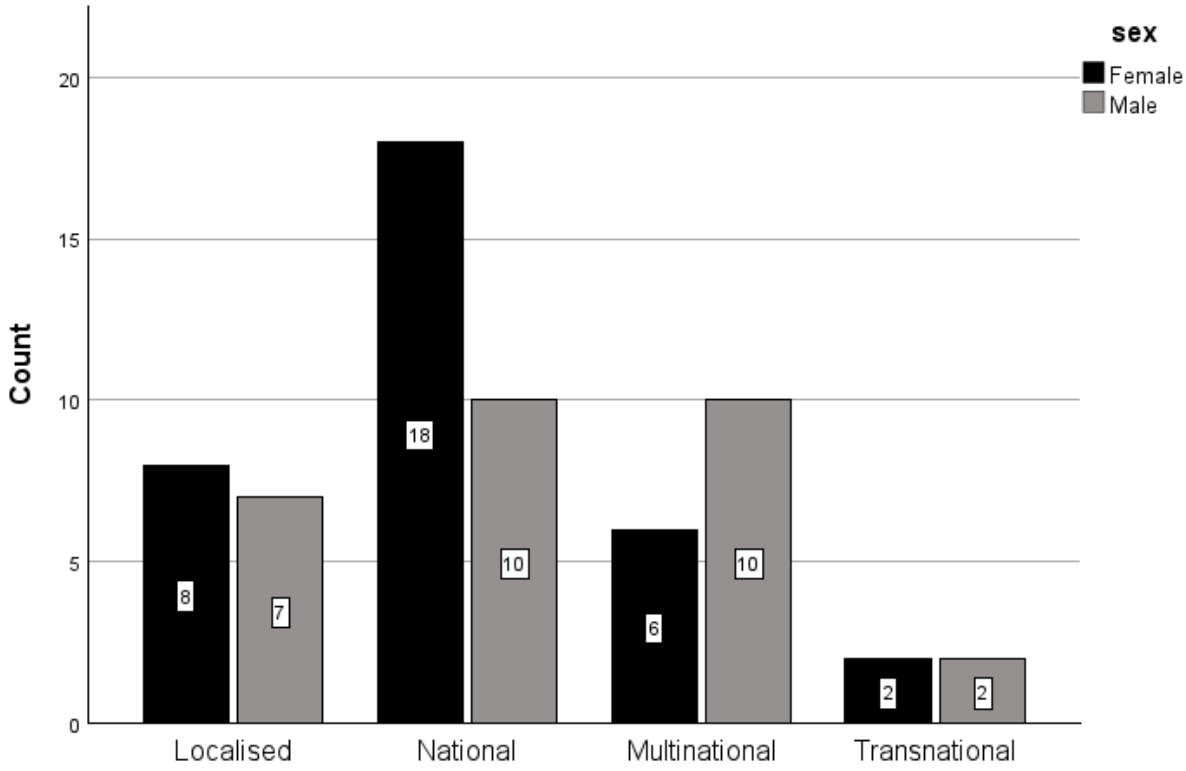


Figure 6: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, its distribution

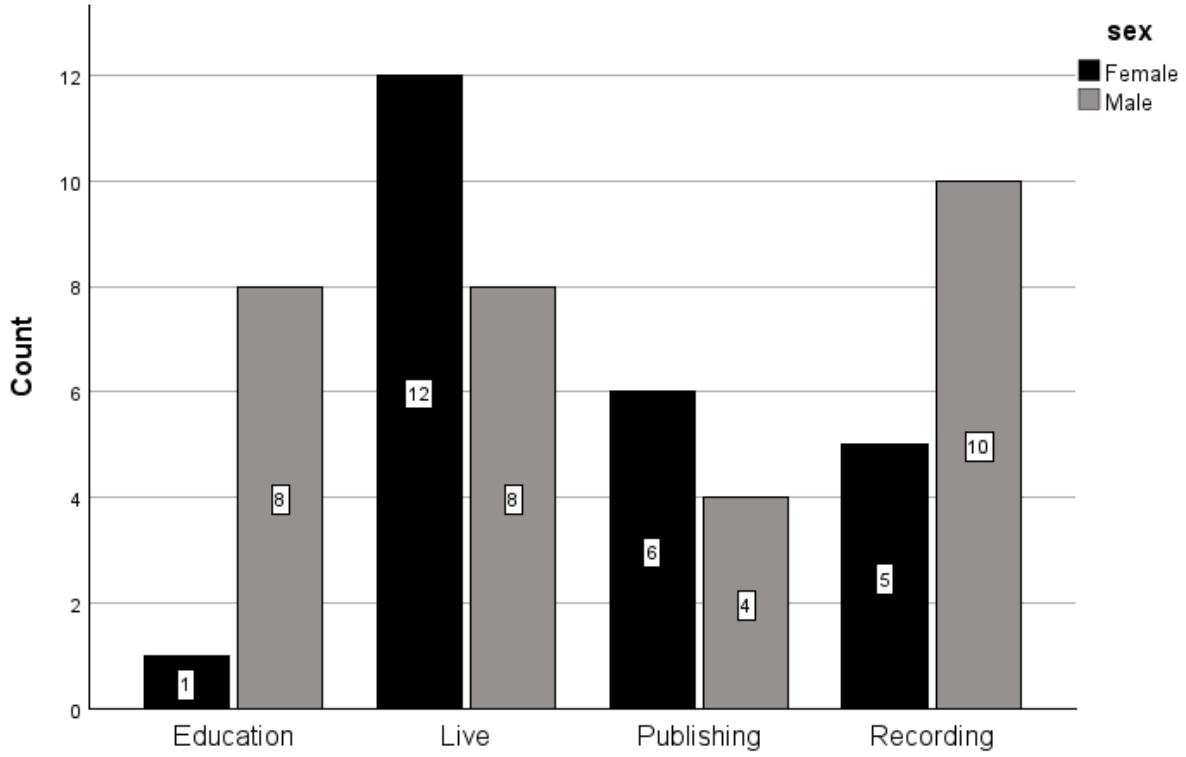


Figure 7:Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, in the private sector, their music sectors

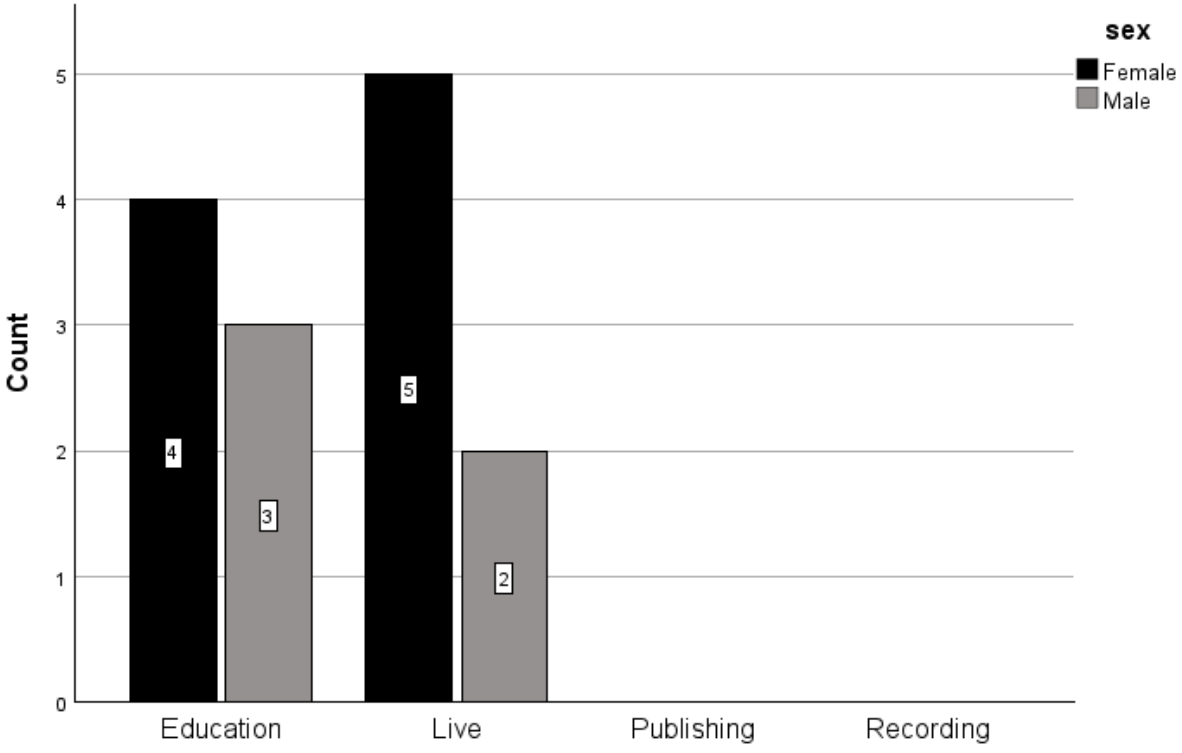


Figure 8: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, in the public sector, their music sectors

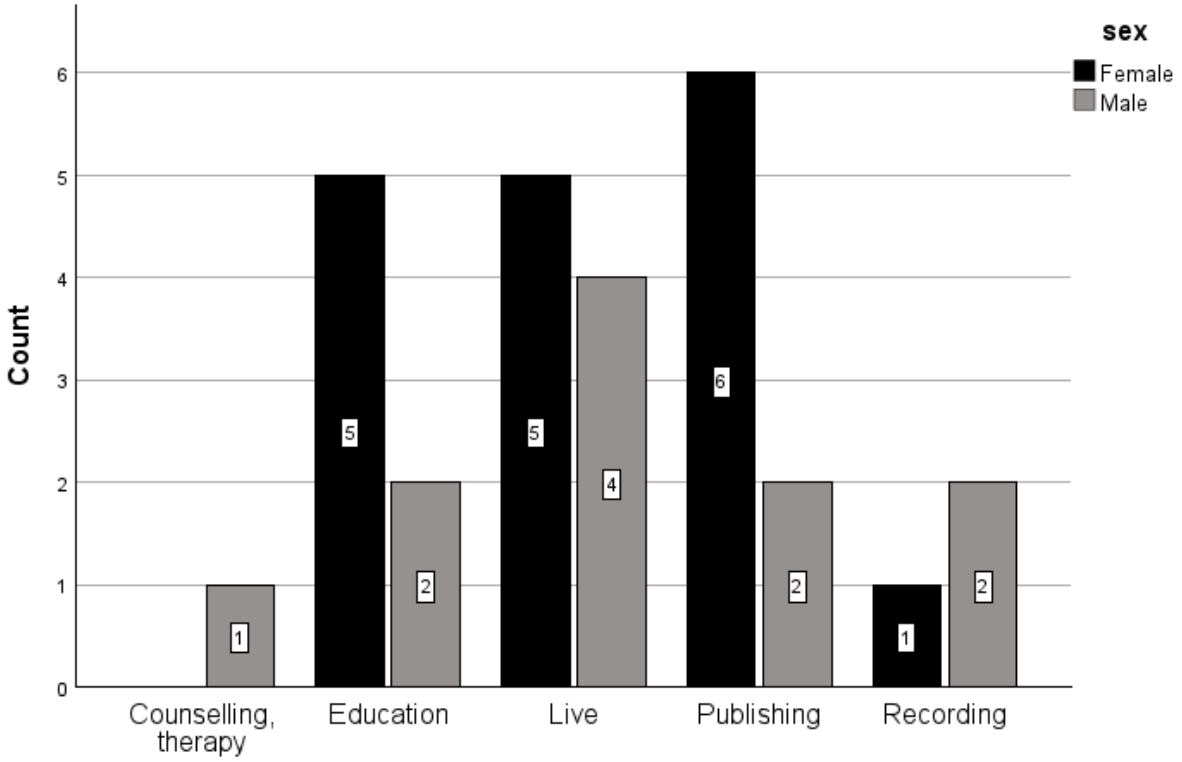


Figure 9: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, in the not-for-personal-profit sector, their music sectors

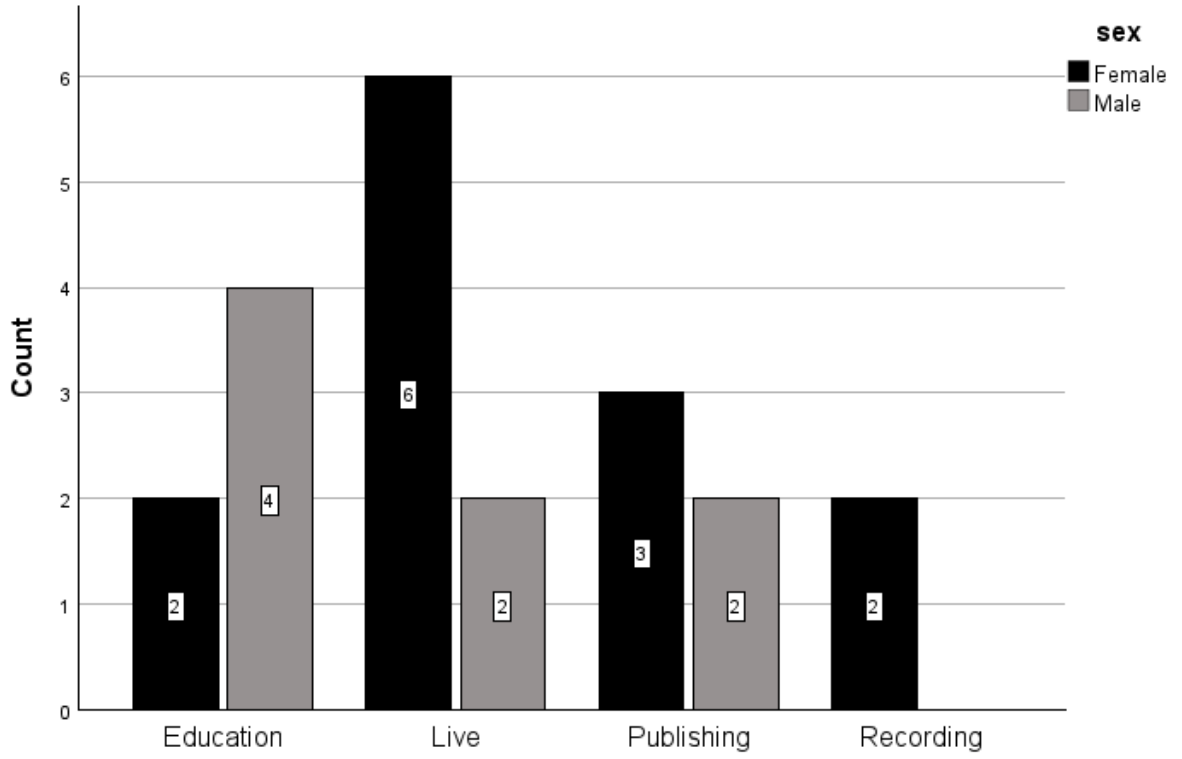


Figure 10: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, at junior level, their sectors

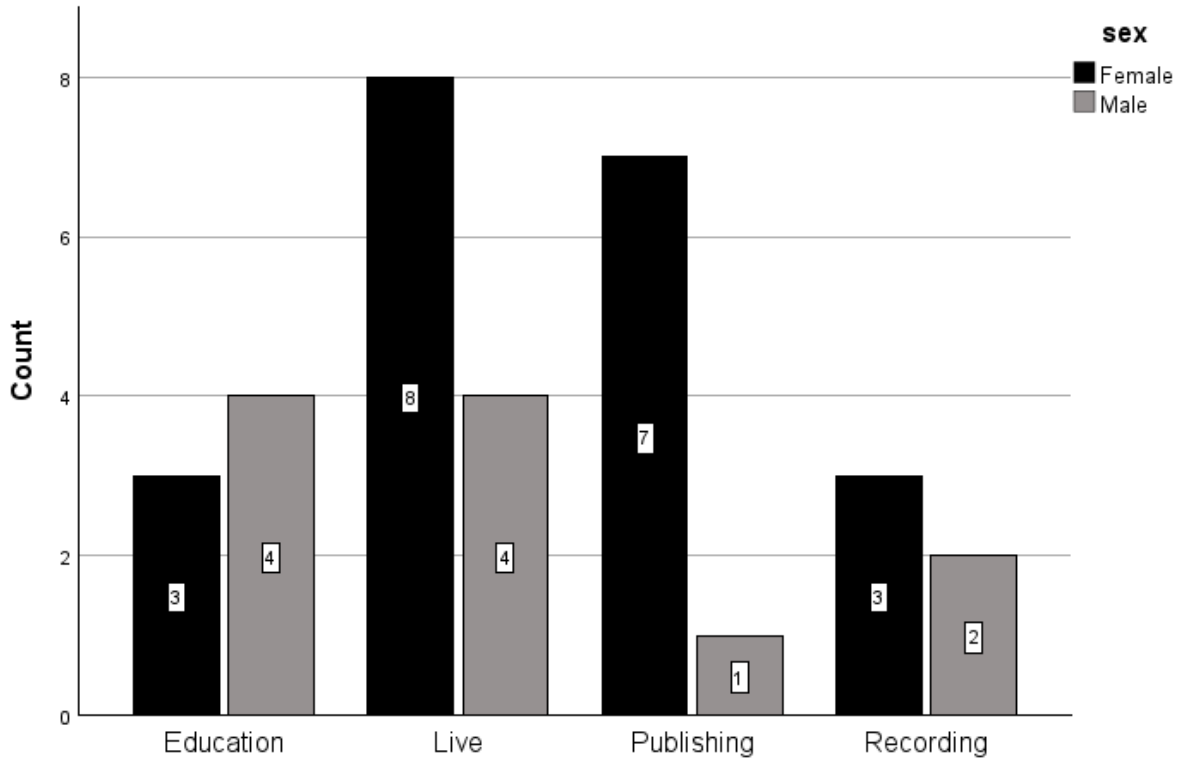


Figure 11: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, at middle level, their sectors

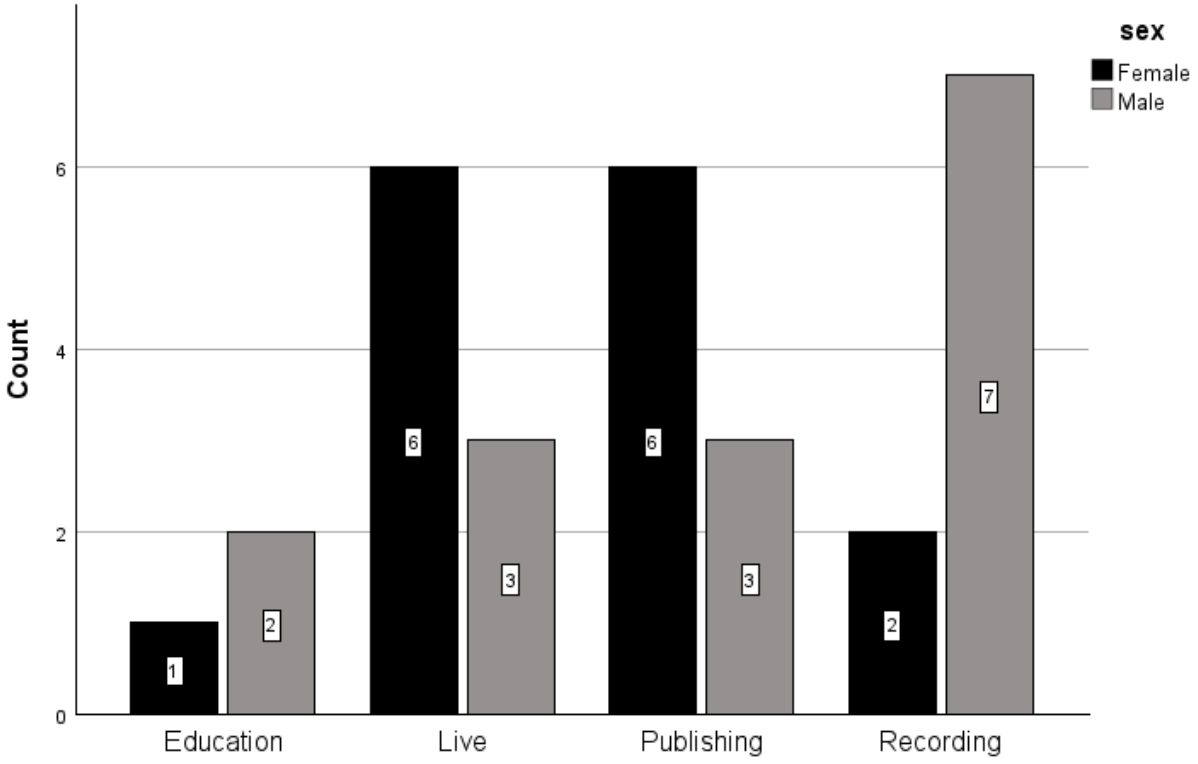


Figure 12: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, who have been offered a promotion without asking for one, their sectors

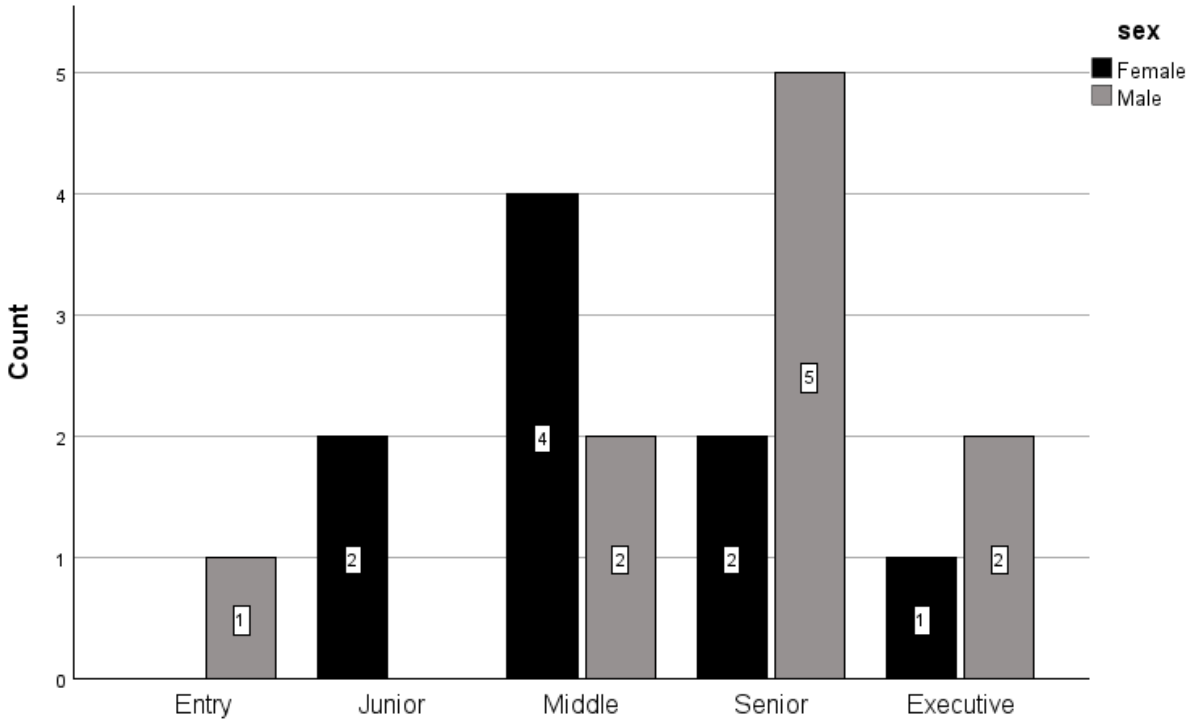


FIgure 13: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, who have been offered a promotion without asking for one, their job level

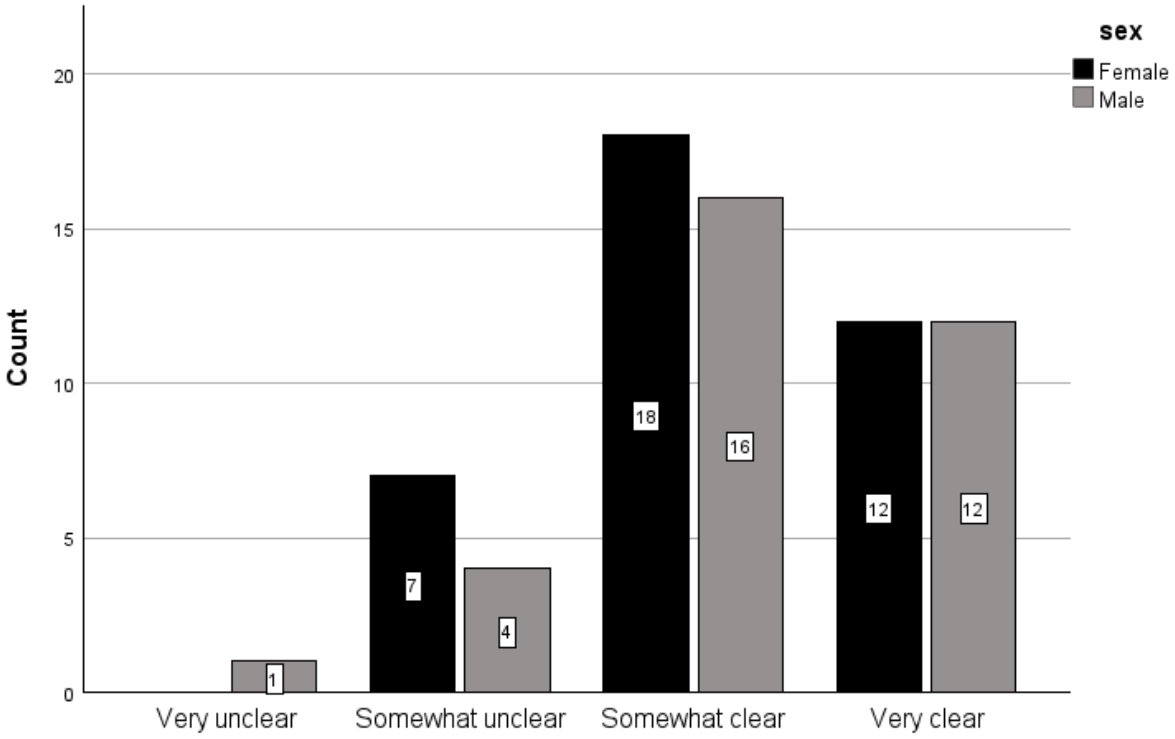


Figure 14: All respondents, the clarity of the expectations and requirements of their job

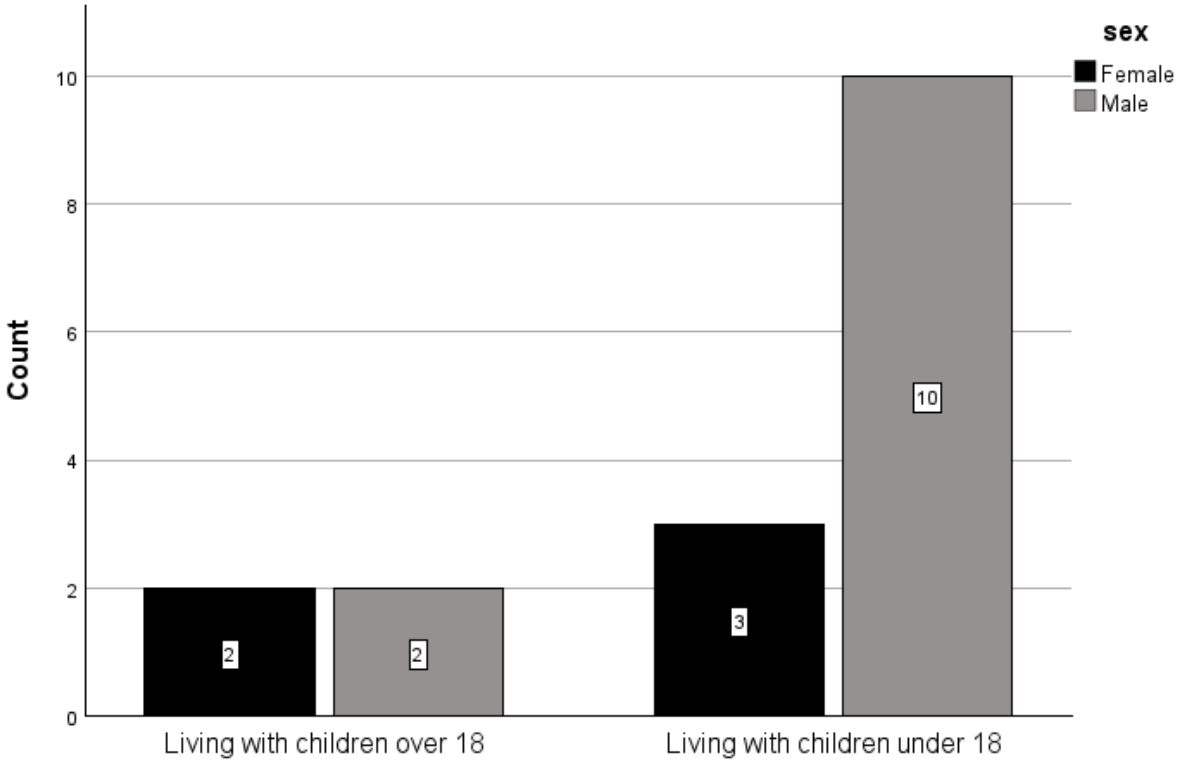


Figure 15: All respondents, living with children (over and under 18 years old)

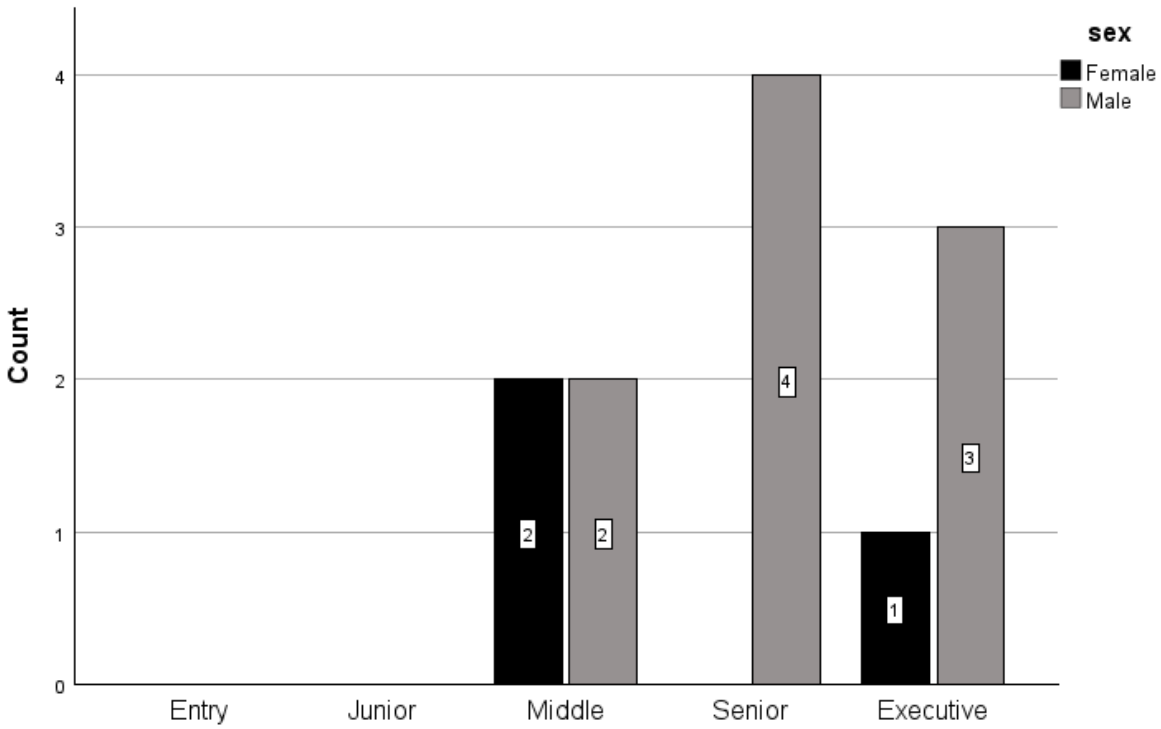


Figure 16: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation, living with children, their job level

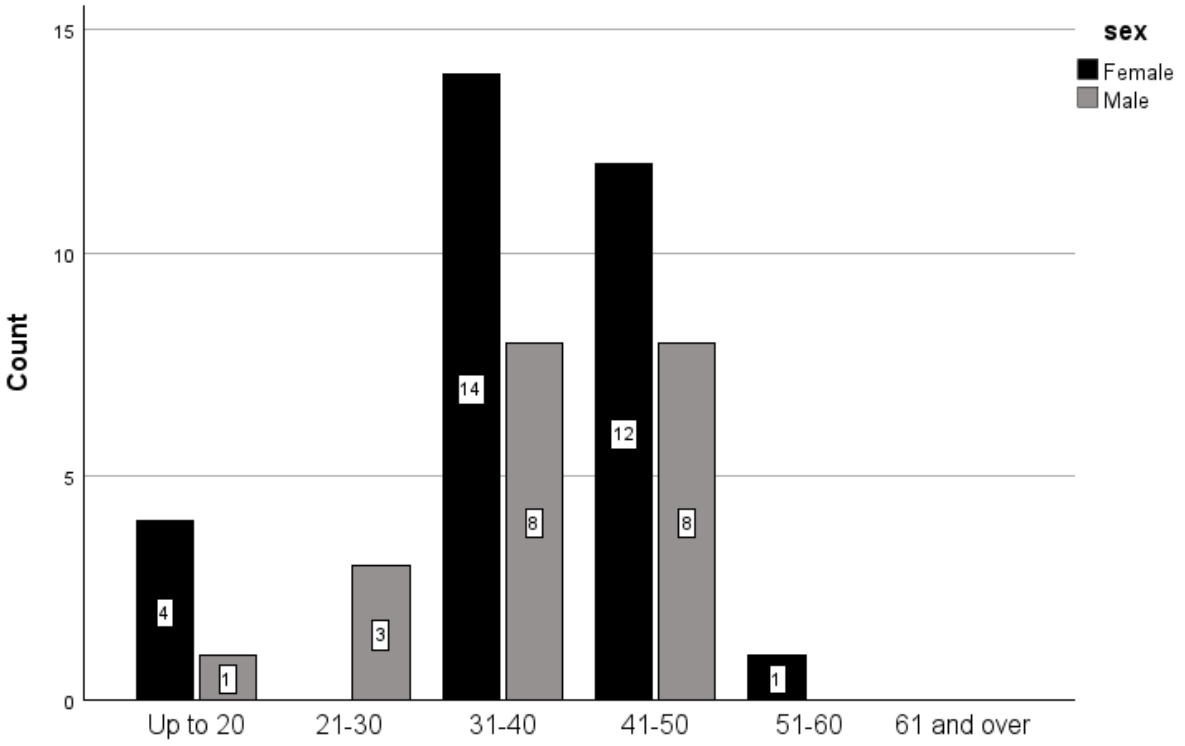


Figure 17: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation who do not live with children, the number of hours they work in their job every week

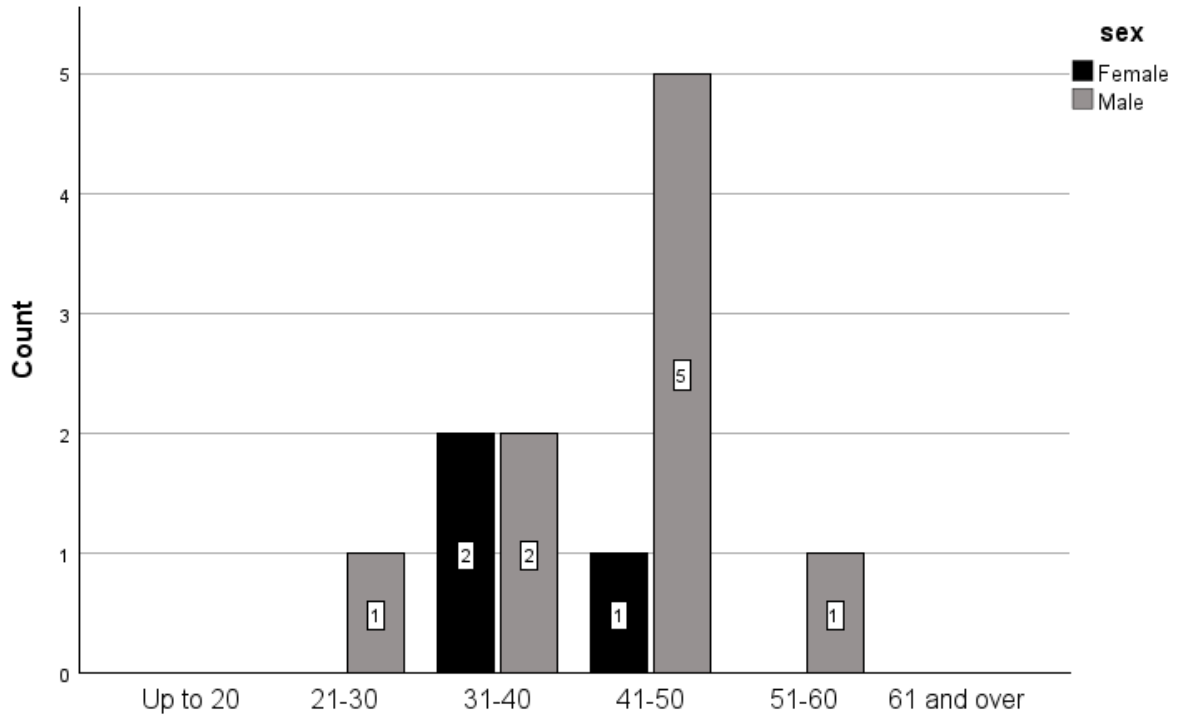


Figure 18: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation and living with children, the number of hours they work in their job every week

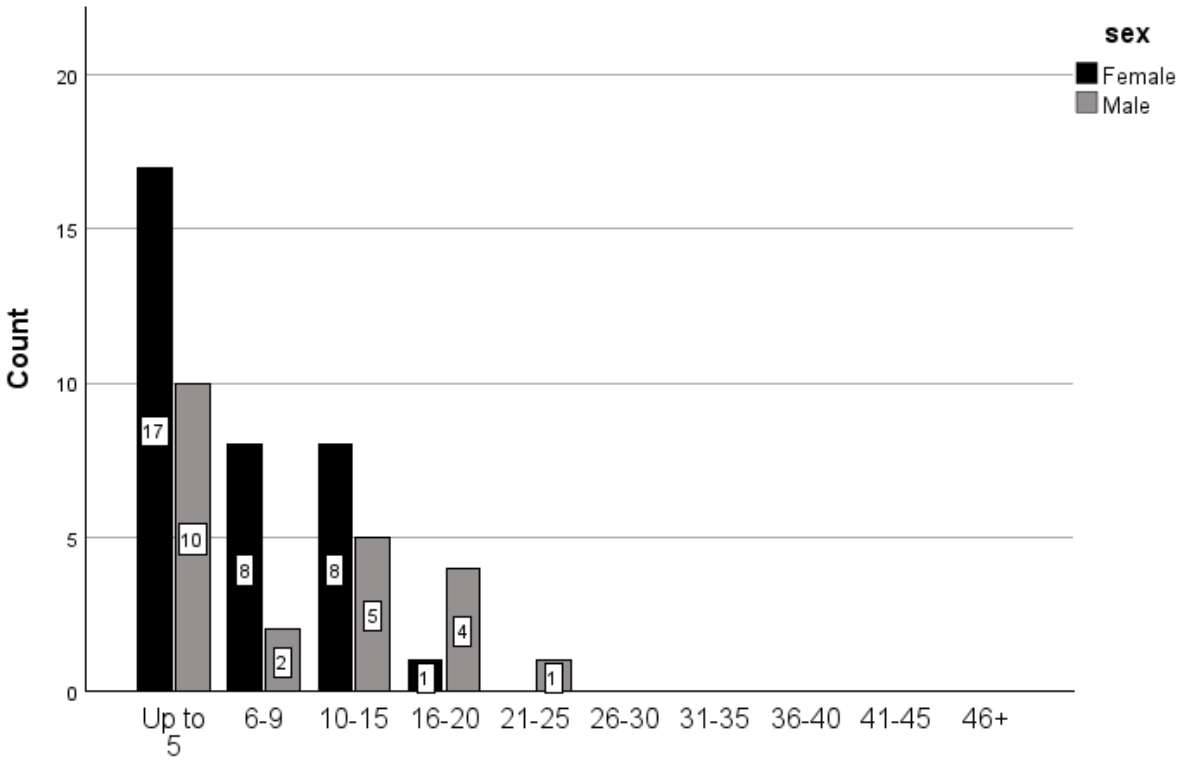


Figure 19: All respondents who do not live with children, the hours of domestic/caring work they do every week

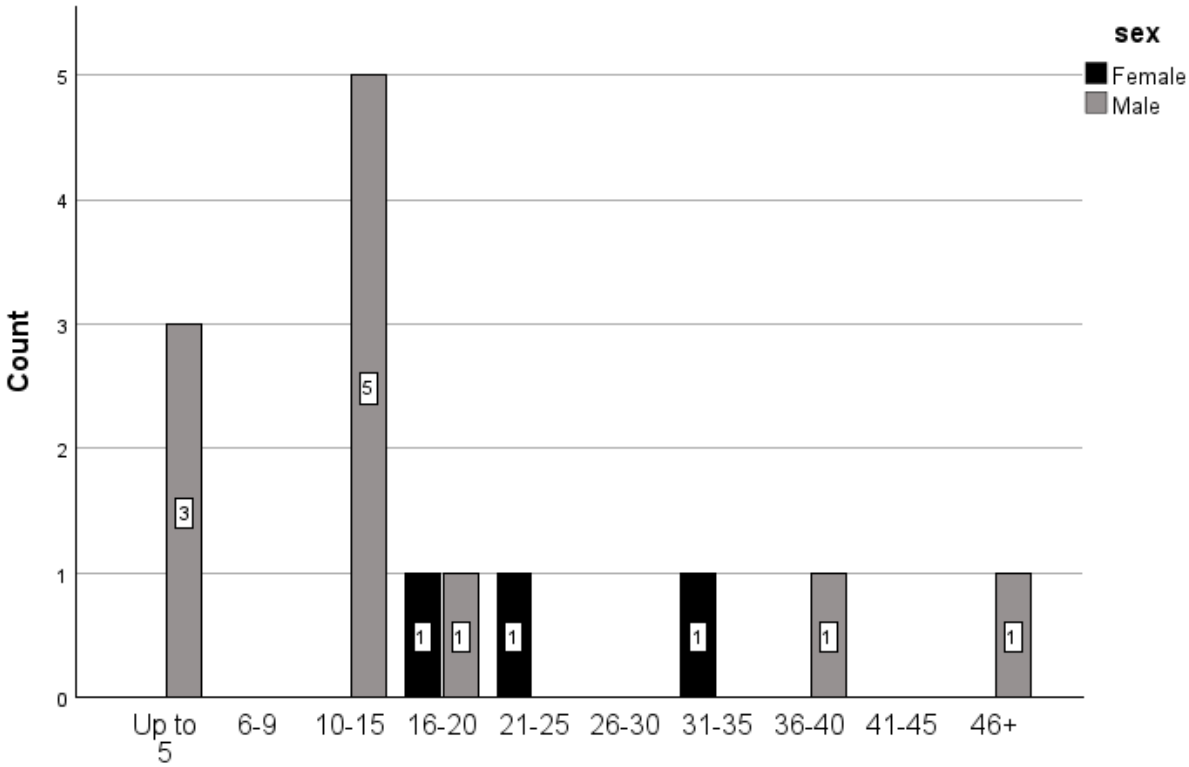


Figure 20: All respondents who live with children, the hours of domestic/caring work they do every week

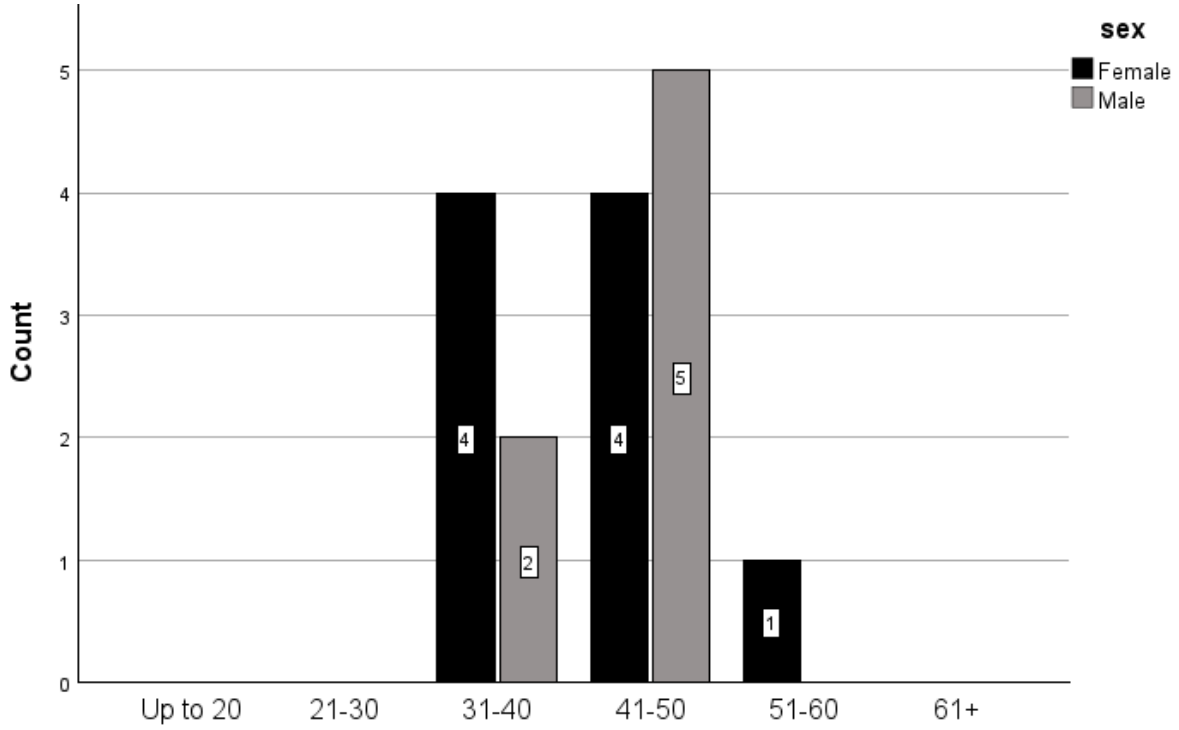


Figure 21: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation at senior level, not living with children, the number of hours they spend at their job every week

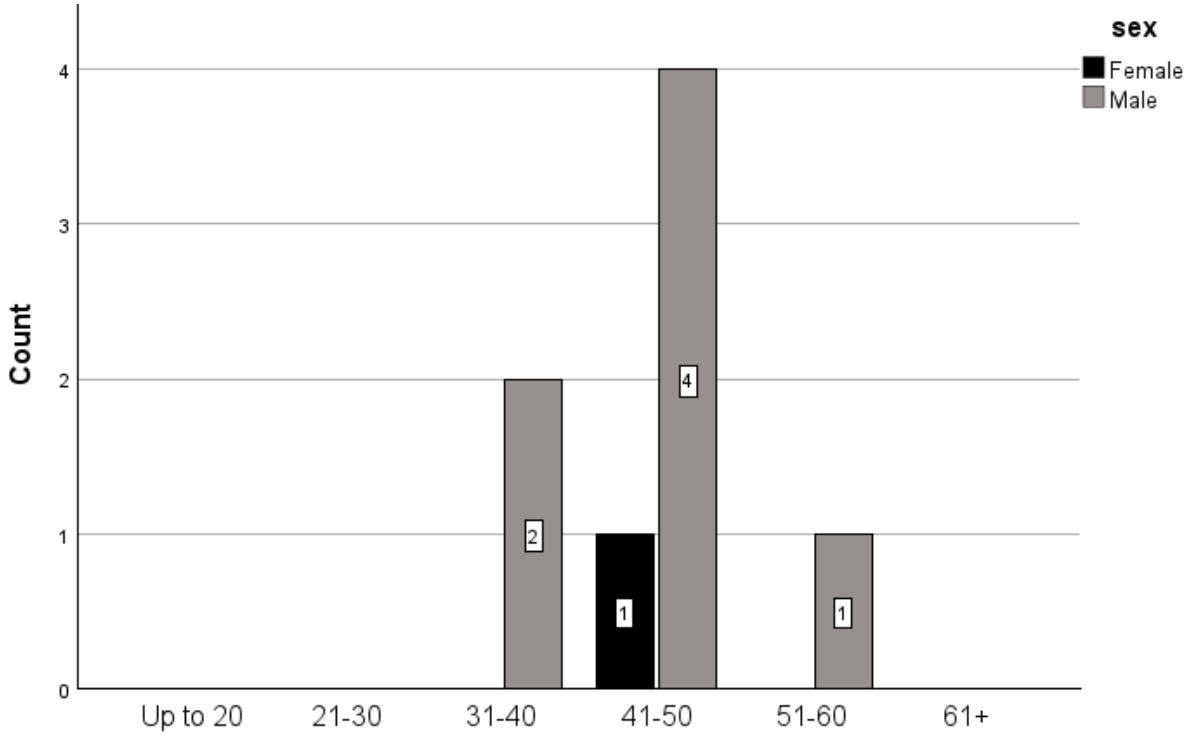


Figure 22: Respondents whose primary job is with a music organisation at senior level, living with children, the number of hours they spend at their job every week

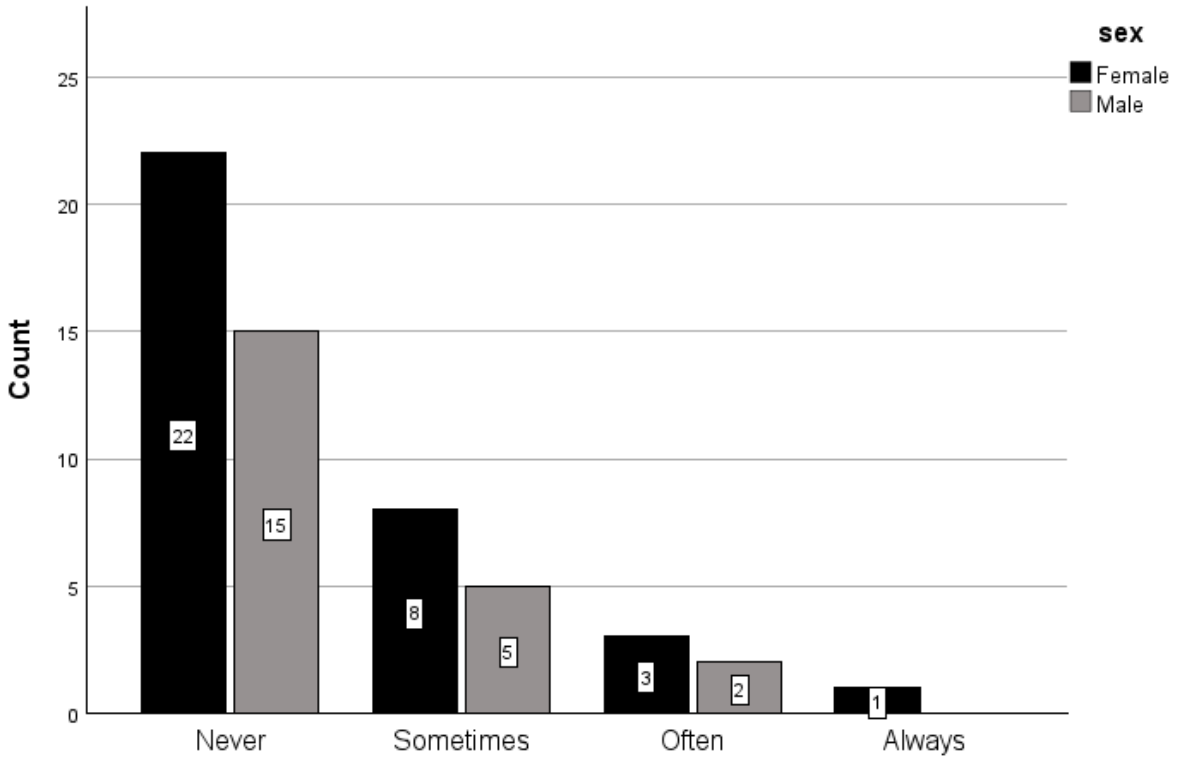


Figure 23: All respondents not living with children in answer to 'I cannot balance the demands of the organisation and the home'

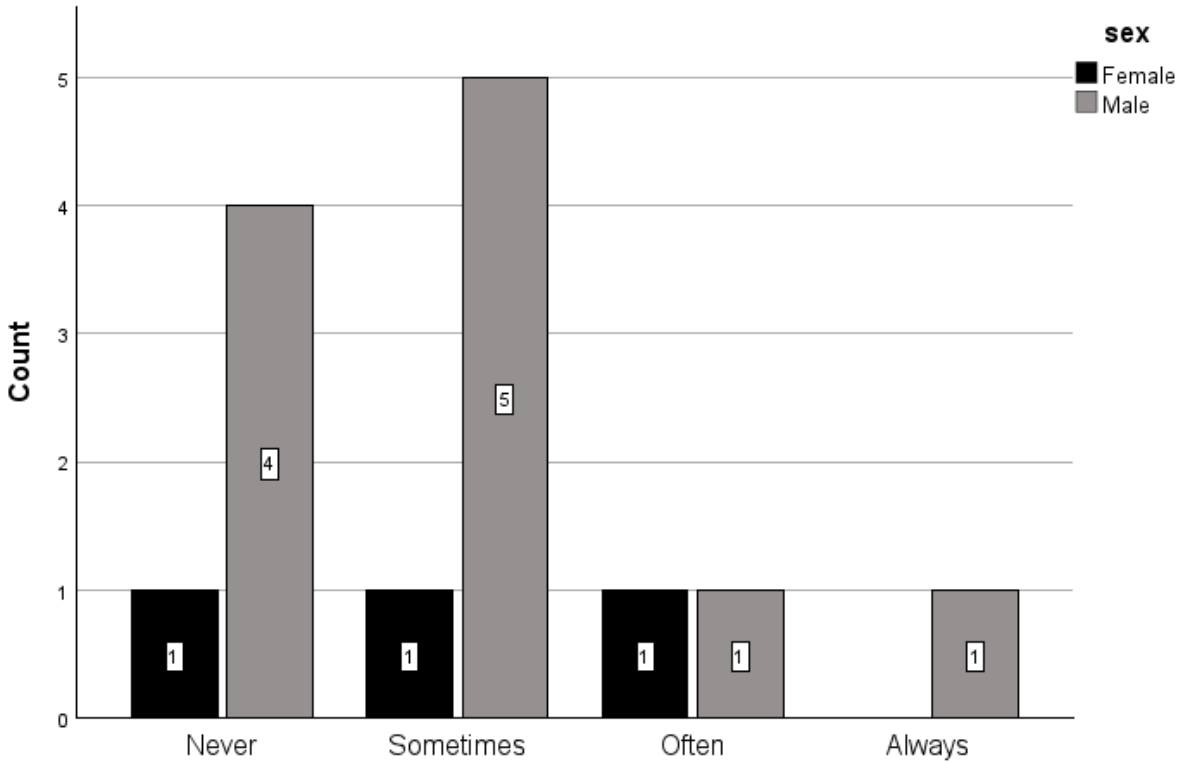


Figure 24: All respondents living with children in answer to 'I cannot balance the demands of the organisation and the home'

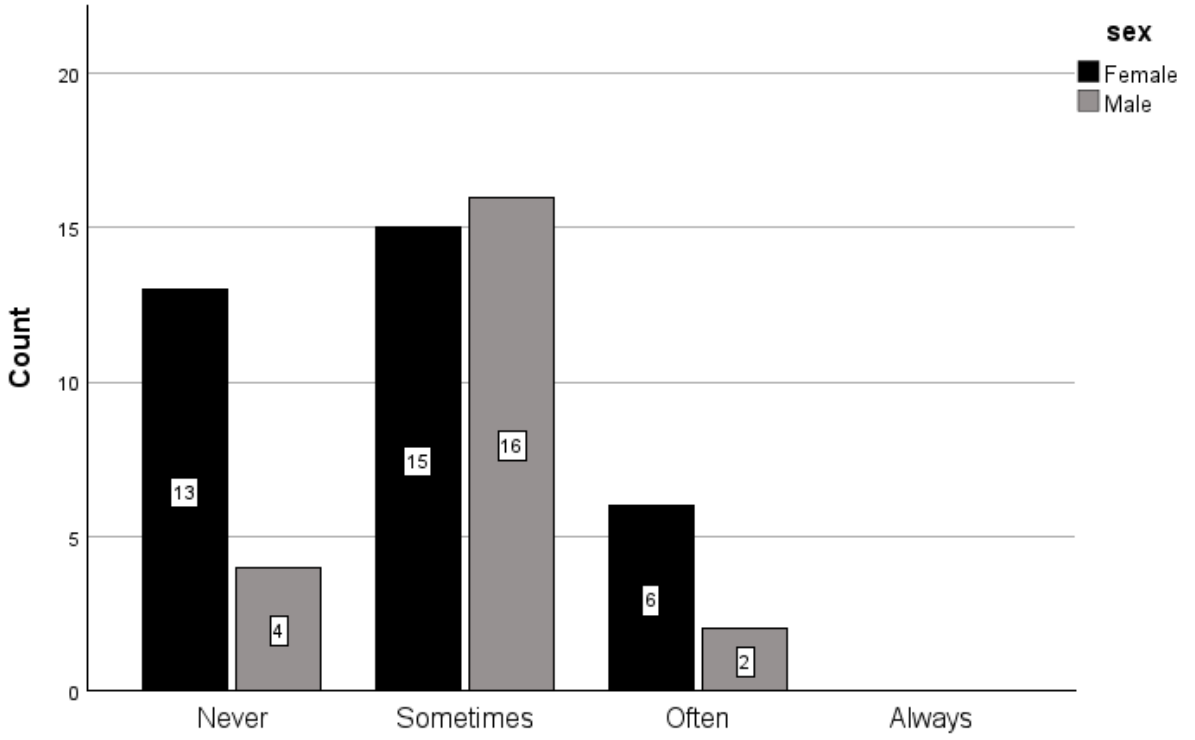


Figure 25: All respondents not living with children in answer to 'I find it difficult to balance the demands of the organisation and the demands of the home'

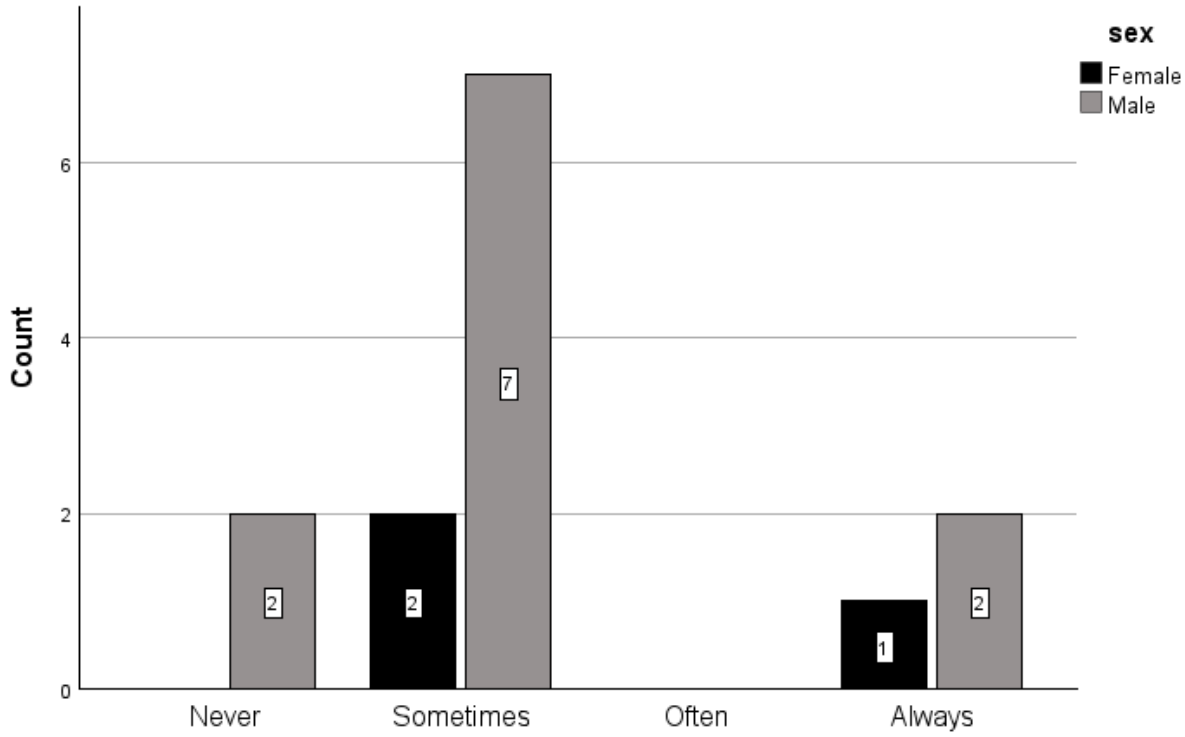


Figure 26: All respondents living with children in answer to 'I find it difficult to balance the demands of the organisation and the demands of the home'

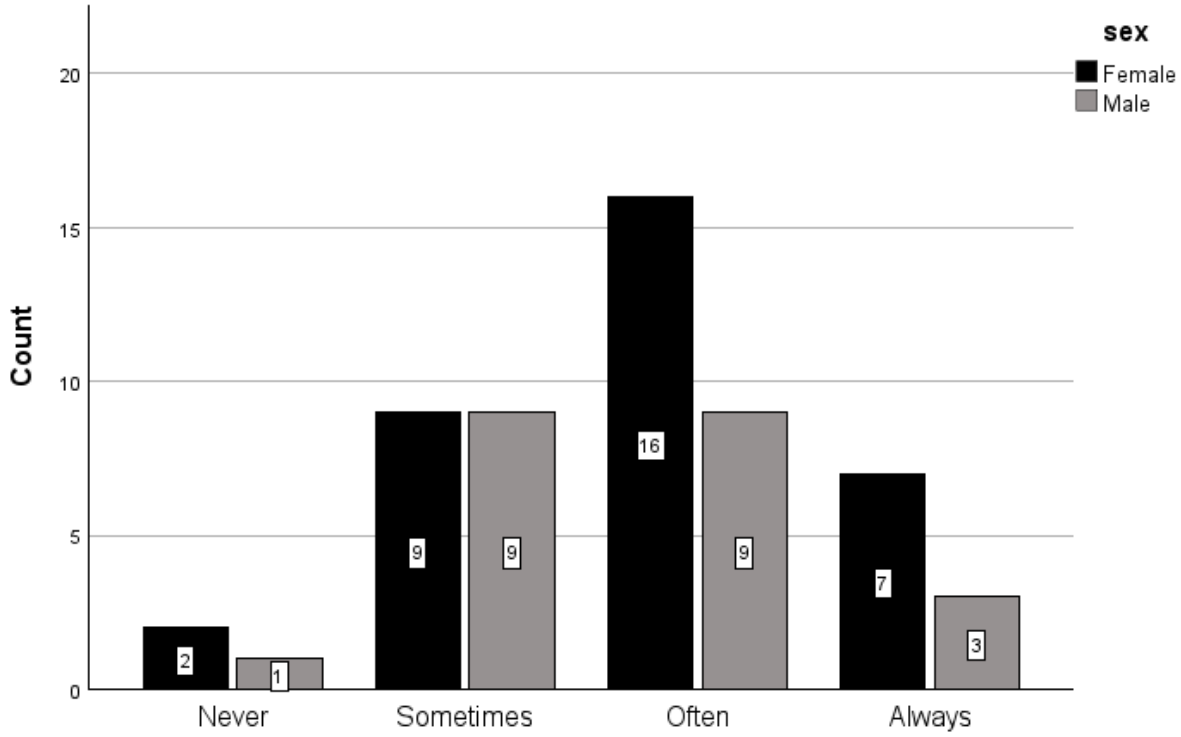


Figure 27: All respondents not living with children in answer to 'I can easily balance the demands of the organisation with the demands of the home'

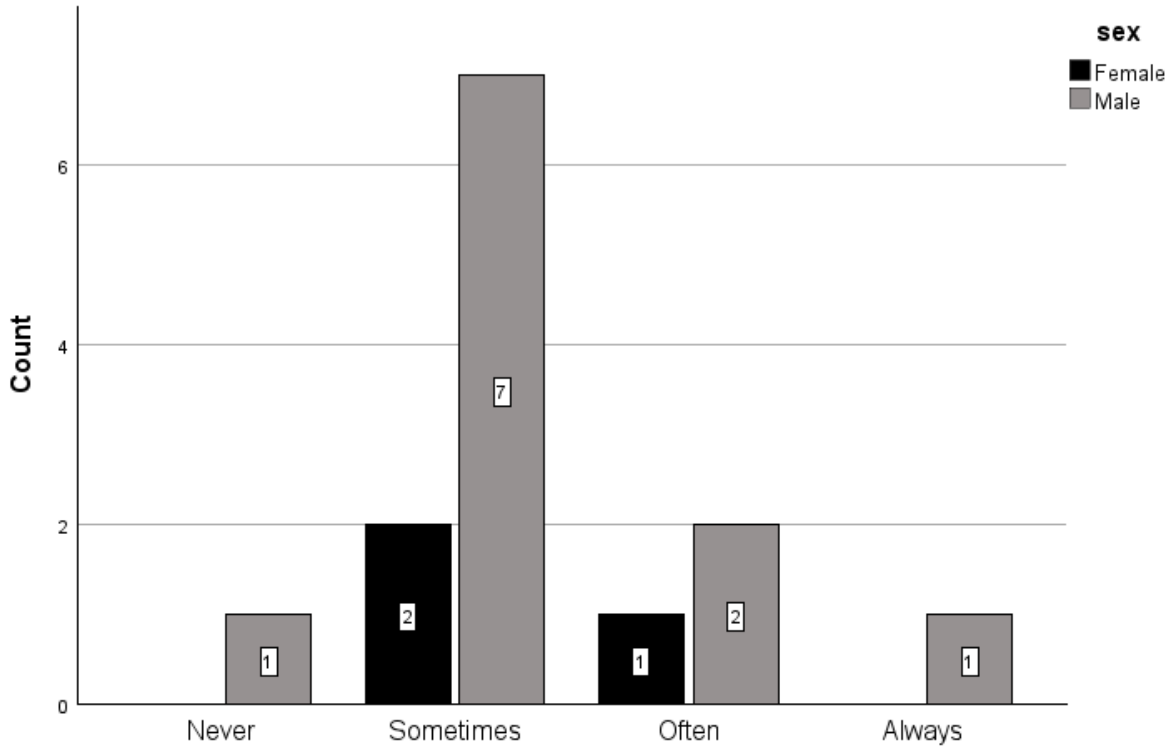


Figure 28: All respondents living with children in answer to 'I can easily balance the demands of the organisation with the demands of the home'

13. Appendix D: Survey questions

1. *What is your age?*

Under 18

18 and above

2. *Do you work, or have you worked for a music organisation in Ireland?*

I currently work for a music organisation in Ireland.

I used to work for a music organisation in Ireland.

I have never worked for a music organisation in Ireland.

3. *Which of these best describes the nature of your employment with music organisations in Ireland?*

Owner of a company.

Permanent full-time employee.

Permanent part-time employee.

Temporary full-time employee.

Temporary part-time employee.

4. *Are any of these music organisation jobs your primary job? (i.e. your main source of*

Yes

No

5. *Currently, which of these best describes the nature of your employment with music organisations in Ireland?*

Owner of a company.

Permanent full-time employee.

Permanent part-time employee.

Temporary full-time employee.

Temporary part-time employee.

6. *Is your current music organisation job your primary job? (i.e. your main source of income)*

Yes

No

7. *What sector does your primary music organisation job relate to? (Tick all that apply)*

Live

Publishing

Recording

Education

Trade body/union

Counselling/therapy

Other

8. *For this same primary music organisation job, which of the following categories describes the site location of this music organisation?*

Single site (one location in Ireland)

Multi-site (multiple locations just in Ireland, or multiple locations in Ireland and elsewhere)

9. *Which of the following categories describes the distribution of the site/sites of this music organisation?*

Localised (distributed in small geographical area in Ireland, i.e. a county, town or city)

National (distributed across Ireland)

Multinational (internationally, with head office in one country & more or less autonomous foreign subsidiaries)

Transnational (organisation operates at a global level & has site/sites in Ireland)

10. *Which of the following categories describes the size of this music organisation?*

Micro (fewer than 10 employees)

Small (10 - 49 employees)

Medium (50 - 249 employees)

Large (250 or more employees)

11. Which of the following categories describes the ownership of this music organisation?

Private sector (individuals or companies, for profit)

Public sector (government run)

Third sector (not-for-personal-profit)

12. Which of these responsibilities best describes your role in this job? (Tick all that apply)

PR, Marketing

Digital Media, New Media

Event, Venue Management

Event, Tour Promotion

Event, Tour Booking

Event Production

Artist Management

Artist Development

Artist Wellbeing, Welfare

Teaching, Education

Music Sales

Music Distribution

Music Publishing

Music Supervision, Sync

Music Journalism

Rights, Royalties, Copyright

Legal Services, Advice

Administration, Accounting, HR

Corporate Management

Business Development

Other

13. How many years have you worked at this job?

Less than one year

1-2

3-5

6-9

10-15

16-20

21-30

31+

14. For this job, on average how many hours per week do you work?

Up to 20

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61+

15. What is your highest annual income from this job?

Less than €10,000

€10,001 – €20,000

€20,001 – €40,000

€40,001 - €60,000

€60,001 - €80,000

€80,001 - €100,000

€100,001 - €120,000

€120,001 - €140,000

€140,001 - €160,000

€160,001 - €180,000

€180,001 - €200,000

More than €200,000

16. *For this same music organisation, what is the highest job level that you have reached?*

Executive

Senior

Middle/Intermediate

Junior

Entry

17. *Do you hold any music organisation jobs that are not your primary source of income?*

Yes

No

18. *For the additional music organisation job that you have held for the longest time, what sector does this job relate to? (Tick all that apply)*

Live

Publishing

Recording

Education

Trade body/union

Legal or advisory services

Counselling/therapy

Other

19. *For this same additional music organisation job, which of the following categories describes the site location of this music organisation?*

Single site (one location in Ireland)

Multi-site (multiple locations just in Ireland, or multiple locations in Ireland and elsewhere)

20. *Which of the following categories describes the distribution of the site/sites of this music organisation?*

Localised (distributed in small geographical area in Ireland, i.e. a county, town or city)

National (distributed across Ireland)

Multinational (internationally, with head office in one country & more or less autonomous foreign subsidiaries)

Transnational (organisation operates at a global level & has site/sites in Ireland)

21. *Which of the following categories describes the ownership of this music organisation?*

Private sector (individuals or companies, for profit)

Public sector (government run)

Third sector (not-for-personal-profit)

22. *For this same job, which of these responsibilities best describes your role in this job? (Tick all that apply)*

PR, Marketing

Digital Media, New Media

Event, Venue Management

Event, Tour Promotion

Event, Tour Booking

Event Production

Artist Management

Artist Development

Artist Wellbeing, Welfare

Teaching, Education

Music Sales

Music Distribution

Music Publishing

Music Supervision, Synch

Music Journalism

Rights, Royalties, Copyright

Legal Services, Advice

Administration, Accounting, HR

Corporate Management

Business Development

Other

23. Which of the following categories describes the size of this music organisation?

Micro (fewer than 10 employees)

Small (10 - 49 employees)

Medium (50 - 249 employees)

Large (250 or more employees)

24. How many years have you worked at this job?

Less than one year

1-2

3-5

6-9

10-15

16-20

21-30

31+

25. For this same music organisation job, on average how many hours per week do you work?

Up to 20

21-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61+

26. What is your highest annual income for this music organisation job?

Less than €10,000

€10,001 – €20,000

€20,001 – €40,000

€40,001 - €60,000

€60,001 - €80,000

€80,001 - €100,000

€100,001 - €120,000

€120,001 - €140,000

€140,001 - €160,000

€160,001 - €180,000

€180,001 - €200,000

More than €200,000

27. For this same music organisation, what is the highest job level that you have reached?

Executive

Senior

Middle/Intermediate

Junior

Entry

28. If this question applies to you, which genres of music does your music organisation work most relate to? (These are broad genres) (Tick all that apply)

Blues

Classical

Country

Electronic / dance

Experimental

Folk

Hip hop

Jazz

Latin

Metal

Pop

Rap

Rock

R&B

Traditional Irish

World / Traditional

This question does not apply to me

29. *In total, how many jobs (primary and additional) have you held in music organisations in Ireland? (Count different job titles with one organisation separately)*

1

2

3

4

5 or more

30. *How many years in total have you spent working for music organisations in Ireland?*

Less than one year

1-2

3-5

6-9

10-15

16-20

21-25

26-30

31-35

36-40

41+

31. *Do you hold any non-music industry related jobs now?*

Yes

No

32. *On average per week, how many hours of unpaid labour do you do at home? (e.g. caring for a relative or friend, domestic day-to-day labour, childcare)*

Up to 5

6-9

10-15

16-20

21-25

26-30

31-35

36-40

41-45

46+

33. *In general, when working for music organisations, how often are each of these statements true? (unpaid labour refers to day-to-day domestic labour, caring for a relative or friend, childcare) Choices are: Never / Sometimes / Often / Always.*

I can easily balance the demands of the unpaid labour that I need to do outside the organisation, with the demands of my job in the organisation.

It is difficult for me to balance the demands of the unpaid labour that I need to do outside the organisation, with the demands of my job in the organisation.

I cannot balance the demands of the unpaid labour that I need to do outside the organisation, with the demands of my job in the organisation.

34. *At home, which of these living arrangements apply to you? Tick all that apply*

I live alone.

I live with a female partner.

I live with a male partner.

I live with my children (under the age of 18).

I live with my children (over the age of 18).

I live with relatives who require my help.

I live with friends who require my help.

I live with relatives who do not require my help.

I live with friends who do not require my help.

I live with housemates.

No statement

35. *During your time working for music organisations, generally, how clear are the expectations and requirements of your job?*

Very clear

Somewhat clear

Somewhat unclear

Very unclear

36. *How often do you engage in a formal performance review or annual review with supervisors or management?*

Weekly/every few weeks

Monthly

Every few months

Annually

Every few years

Never

37. *What is the nature of the contract in your current music organisation job? (if holding multiple music organisation jobs, choose the one which provides you with the most income)*

Permanent contract /contract of indefinite duration

Fixed-term / temporary contract

Zero hour contract

Collective agreement

Don't know

Other

38. *Are you a member of a music industry union?*

Yes

No

No statement

39. *Have you ever been offered a promotion while working for music organisations in Ireland? (without asking for one)*

Yes

No

40. *Has a supervisor or manager ever encouraged you to apply for promotion within the organisation?*

Yes

No

41. *Have you ever asked for a promotion while working for music organisations in Ireland?*

Yes

No

42. *What is the highest level of education from the list below that you have completed?*

No formal primary or secondary education

Primary education

Junior Certificate or equivalent

Leaving Certificate or equivalent

Secondary school category

43. What category of secondary school did you attend?

Publicly aided secondary school

Private secondary school

Not sure

44. Did your primary or secondary education take place in the Republic of Ireland?

Yes

No

45. In what region did your primary and/or secondary education take place? Tick all that apply

Southern, Mid West (Clare, Tipperary, Limerick)

Southern, South East (Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford)

Southern, South West (Cork, Kerry)

Western (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon)

Northern, border (Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo)

Northern Ireland (Fermanagh, Tyrone, Antrim, Down, Derry, Armagh)

Eastern, Dublin

Eastern, Mid East (Kildare, Louth, Meath, Wicklow)

Eastern, Midland (Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath)

Music education

46. Have you completed a Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) course?

Yes

No

47. *Have you attended British and Irish Modern Music Institute (BIMM) or another education institution that prepares students for music performance or industry work?*

Yes

No

48. *Do you hold a third level certificate, diploma, or degree?*

Yes

No

49. *Does/did your music organisation employment relate to your education?*

Yes

No

50. *In the context of the societal and industry restrictions that arose from the Covid-19 pandemic, which of the following are true for you? Tick all that apply.*

I lost or had to leave one or more of my music organisation jobs.

The hours at one or more of my music organisation jobs were reduced.

My hours were not reduced at any of my music organisation jobs.

I retained all of my music organisation jobs.

None of these options apply to me.

51. *What is your sex?*

Female

Male

No statement

52. How do you describe your gender?

Man

Woman

Non-binary

Transgender woman

Transgender man

Other

No statement

53. Which of these best describes your race? Tick all that apply.

Asian

Black

White

Other

No statement

54. Which of these best describes your ethnic background? Tick all that apply.

Irish

Northern Irish

Irish Traveller

English / British

Welsh

Scottish

American

Canadian

Hispanic

Latin American

Caribbean

African

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Arab

Romani

Other

No statement

55. Do you have any comments about this survey (for example, a topic that was not included) or the wider research project?

Yes

No

If yes, please note those comments here: [text box]

56. Would you like to take part in the interview stage of this project? If yes, please enter your name and contact details below. If no, please select 'no statement'.

Name:

Surname:

Email address:

No statement