Towards a Bourdieusian analysis of the social composition of the UK film and television workforce

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Abstract

The social composition of the workforce of the UK film and television industries does not reflect the diversity of the population and the industries have been described as white, male and middle class. While the lack of specific demographic representation in employment (for example gender or ethnicity) has been highlighted by both industry and academic commentators, its broader social composition has rarely been addressed by research. This article draws on the work of Bourdieu, particularly the concepts of field, habitus and capitals, to explore perceptions of the barriers to entry into these industries and the way in which individuals negotiate these by drawing on the various capitals to which they have access.

Keywords

Bourdieu, capitals, diversity, film, social composition, television, workforce

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The social composition of the UKFTV workplace

The purpose of this article is to contribute to a wider understanding of the social composition of entrants to employment in the UK film and television industries (UKFTV) by identifying the mechanisms that intersect to impede access to work. The lack of diversity in the UKFTV workforce is acknowledged by its lead bodies and the major broadcasters who have collectively committed themselves to work towards improving this (BECTU, 2000; BFI, 2001; BSAC, 2001; IES, 2004; PACT, 2007; UKFC, 2002, 2003). That these industries are dominated by 'white, middle-class men' has also been acknowledged in the academic literature (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012) as well as being identified across the wider creative and cultural industries, raising 'concerns about social inclusion, lost talent and suboptimal creative output' (McLeod et al., 2009: 1012).

If the 'white' and 'male' characterization of film and production is well documented (Christopherson, 2009; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013), a focus on broader social composition has been less forthcoming, despite Banks's (1999) argument that the skewed demographics of the cultural and creative industries require the traditional sociological concern of class to be present in any analysis and Crompton's wider assertion that 'the association between "class" and "employment" is firmly established' (2010: 10). Alongside the call for this traditional concern to be included in analysis has been a call for a greater focus on the 'major hole in the middle' (Thompson et al., 2007: 626) between conception and consumption in the creative industries – the space occupied by work, employment, labour and management.

It is argued here that while the underrepresentation of a range of specific demographic groups that are relatively fixed and physically apparent in UKFTV is acknowledged, other social characteristics may be a stronger determinant of the ease with which an individual can expect to enter and gain a foothold in the industry than factors such as age, race and disability although, of course, these are not mutually exclusive and the evidence is that these intersect. The analysis is underpinned by the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Significantly the article does not draw on his writings on cultural consumption (Bourdieu, 1984) or on film and television (Bourdieu, 1998), as these offer little by way of insight into the social composition of the producers of cultural goods, or indeed the field of mass or large scale production itself (Hesmondhalgh, 2006) which is the predominant concern. The focus is instead on his work on practice, language, habitus and forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1999).

Characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity are often the only categories considered when thinking about organizational diversity (Daniels and Macdonald, 2005). While some potent forms of disadvantage are based on these social categories it has been argued that a focus on gender and race can, in turn, obscure underlying class inequality in organizations (Acker, 2006). Social class may mediate the disadvantageous impacts of certain demographic characteristics, in some cases softening their impact, in others reinforcing it (Healy and Bradley, 2008) but it is often excluded entirely from discussions around diversity (Scully and Blakebeard, 2006) and is one basis of disadvantage for which there is no UK legislative imperative to eradicate or control.

This article fully acknowledges and endorses Crompton's point that the way in which capitalist production is organized 'generates a structure of employment in which material

rewards, as well as other desirables such as autonomy, esteem and capacities for self-expression are unequally distributed' (2010: 22). However, it is not the intention here to contribute toward debates about the identification of occupation based classes or, indeed, the way in which specific classes identified in this way benefit or otherwise from their location. The aim is rather to explore the mechanisms whereby individuals experience barriers or gain entry to employment in a given sector and the extent to which they identify their positioning in the sector as derived from the symbolic value of their capital portfolio. The focus, therefore, is on the perception of social positioning in relation to other demographic characteristics and awareness of the impact of this on life chances within an occupation.

Where identities and forms of awareness are concerned Bourdieusian perspectives 'now command the stage' (Devine et al., 2005: 13) or are at least 'promising' because, argues Flemmen (2013: 326), they have enabled us to adopt an approach to analysis which allows 'a subtle appreciation of the connections between social class, lived experience and identity'. The article now continues with an account of the characteristics of employment in the UKFTV industries, before directing its attention towards Bourdieu's writings on the struggle for capital among relationally positioned actors in an organizational context (what Bourdieu describes as a 'field'). A methodological note follows. Empirical data is then presented to explore barriers to entry into the UKFTV industries before conclusions are drawn.

Social positioning in organizational spaces: a Bourdieusian perspective

Social class represents a major, if contested, sociological category. Much contemporary thought on class and work organizations is traceable back to the work of Marx (1969, 1974) and Weber (1964). In the case of Marxist theory class refers to a position within relations of production (Flemmen, 2013) and from this it can be concluded that a large majority of those working within UKFTV would be regarded as propertyless workers who share a class position. However, the concern here is with the awareness of resource-related differences within this group, which lead some to see themselves as having been socially advantaged while others see themselves as disadvantaged in their efforts to enter or progress within the sector.

Analysis of work and labour in the creative media industries has been hampered by imprecision which tends to reduce labour down to a 'creative class' (Florida, 2002). This characterization of a largely undifferentiated mass of creative workers, united by many of the 'values and credos of the early bohemians' (2002: 195) including those of 'cultural eclecticism', provides little that is useful for explaining the particular make-up of the UKFTV workforce. However, an engagement with Bourdieu's work is of value in understanding the effect of social positioning in advantaging or disadvantaging individuals in the UKFTV sector. At the heart of his theory are three important constructs: field, habitus and capitals. Bourdieu (1986) conceives of a social field as a pattern of practices in which conformity to rules and roles is played out by actors endowed with certain field-appropriate and field-recognized capitals. Individual social actors are initiators, consumers and reproducers of social practices based on their resources (capitals) and in

accordance with particular logics of practice (habitus) within a given context (field) (Bourdieu, 1986).

The organizational context of UKFTV

The majority of employment in UKFTV is freelance, based around short term contracts (Bhavnani, 2007; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Holgate and Mckay, 2007; Randle et al., 2007). Word of mouth recruitment practices predominate (Lee, 2011; Skillset/ UKFC, 2008) and consequently there is a reliance by workers on informal networks as a means of finding work (Holgate and Mckay, 2007; Lee, 2011). For many prospective employees the only viable route into the sector is through internships which often oblige them to work for free or for very little pay (National Union of Journalists, 2007; PACT, 2007; Percival and Hesmondhalgh, 2014). Working for free is becoming increasingly common (Holgate and Mckay, 2007) with between 40 and 50 per cent of entrants spending some time in unpaid internships (Siebert and Wilson, 2013). While internships exist in many sectors they appear to be particularly common in cultural and media work (Low Pay Commission, 2011). The Milburn Report (Milburn, 2009) highlighted unpaid internships as a major barrier to potential working class entrants to the professions, suggesting that their social base had narrowed rather than widened, and recent work (Siebert and Wilson, 2013) has reinforced the exclusionary consequences of unpaid work in the sector. People from socially and economically disadvantaged groups are likely to face challenges when attempting to enter the industry.

The most important theme in Bourdieu's writings for analysing field processes is the multi-level interplay between the positions of agents and the relations of production within the field and the social context (Wright, 2009). UKFTV can be recognized as a field of practice within which individuals make their moves, in the sense that it operates relatively autonomously within the broader field of what Pratt (1997) terms the cultural industries production system. For Bourdieu, the field of cultural production intersects with other fields; namely those of political and economic power. Historically, the field of cultural production has been associated with notions of civilization, education and improvement (Pratt, 1997). More recently its ideological power and prestige has emanated from the importance attached to it as a key economic growth sector in the UK (Garnham, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2006). This has enabled the creation of a coalition of disparate interests which has normalized an artist centred, supply-side dominated industry and legitimized the perception of artistic products and producers as unique. This, Garnham (2005) argues, has produced relative creative autonomy for creative workers, albeit within a capitalist structure. Clearly, not all workers within this system can be considered artists but non-artistic skills make a significant contribution to the maintenance of prestige and autonomy in the UKFTV production system (Pratt, 1997). Recent fragmentation of the sector (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012) has enabled it to operate relatively independently in accordance with its own rules, technologies of production, practices and organizational structures. An important characteristic of the sector is the project based nature of production which has been identified as a significant contributor to the reproduction of social inequalities within the creative industries more widely (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013).

UKFTV habitus and the logics of employment practice

The practices, rules and regulations of the field are legitimized through the 'habitus', a construct via which UKFTV structures are embodied in individuals through socialization and reproducing processes: a practice-acceptance-internalization-practice cycle with the result that the structures are reproduced (Coradini, 2010; Webb et al., 2002). Habitus is therefore reflected in both the conformity with norms and their production (Camic, 2000) and is secured through routine and custom, not conscious acquisition (Lovell, 2000). When examining work in the German theatre Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) have suggested that human resource management practices are executed within a tension between artistic freedom and economic efficiency logics of practice. These logics of practice create a field within which short term project management has developed an employment paradigm that results in precarious, yet elitist, employment. However, in as much as a field has its own logics of practice, these practices and understandings can exclude those who do not know the 'rules of the game' (Atkinson, 2010) of UKFTV. Bourdieu argues, 'Those who talk of equality of opportunity forget that social games […] are not "fair games". Without being, strictly speaking, rigged, the competition resembles a handicap race that has lasted for generations' (2000: 214–15). In the UKFTV context habitus refers to the implicit assumptions and values that underlie the processes though which people are evaluated, marginalized and excluded.

The difficulties workers face with regard to 'getting in and getting on' are not unique to UKFTV and can be found in other creative industries, for example theatre (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) and in other countries including the USA (Randle and Culkin, 2009). While all entrants to these industries, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or social class, find gaining entry challenging, the closed nature of the industry means that insiders tend to conform to the historically entrenched employment profile of white and male (BSAC, 2001; Christopherson, 2009) and are predominantly middle class (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012).

Production centres in the media industry are concentrated in London and the South-East, the most expensive parts of the UK for living accommodation, with 74 per cent of those working in film production living in those areas (Skillset/UKFC, 2008). Awareness of regional domination of media employment was a factor in the BBC's strategy to strengthen its regional presence when in 2007 it announced that it would move five of its London based departments to MediaCityUK at Salford Quays, transferring or creating 1800 jobs in the area from 2011. However in 2012 Hazel Blears MP complained that of the 680 newly created jobs (out of 1846 BBC staff working on the site in total), only 26 had gone to local residents (see http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-16618243, consulted 30 July 2013).

Positioning and capitals within the UKFTV field

Capital in its different forms is at stake in the struggle among agents within the field. Agents are endowed with particular forms of capital, for example: social networks, recognized and legitimized forms of qualifications, experiences and behaviour. Economic capital refers to income and other resources such as time that can be

converted into money, for example taking up a paid supermarket job during the school or university holidays, rather than an unpaid industry internship. Social capital consists of the benefits that flow from relationships at group (membership of a family or school) or individual (knowing important people) levels (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is linked with educational qualifications, cultural knowledge and status and the subtleties of language, attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours and credentials used for both social and cultural exclusion (Lamont and Lareau, 1988: 156). Related to this are the 'micro-interactional processes whereby individuals' strategic use of knowledge, skills and competence comes into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation' (Lareau and Weininger, 2003: 569); for example, the impact of a regional accent at an interview.

Bourdieu offers a relational perspective for understanding capital acquisition and use (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2005) and refers to symbolic capital, the form that the three other capitals take when they are esteemed and valued in a particular field. Professional reputation, for example, may have a certain value in one sector but loses its value in another when it is not recognized as legitimate. It is the symbolic nature of Bourdieu's capital, which makes its primary characteristic of interchangeability possible. Forms of capital can be acquired, exchanged and converted; for example, social capital enables individuals to advance their interests through the acquisition and use of other forms of capital (Tanova et al., 2008). To illustrate, once individuals gain access to UKTV they may be able to build social networks and acquire the right connections as well as the relevant skills and experience that provide them with further work (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; McLeod et al., 2009). It is the particular combination of work experience, social connections and interactions with key agents that produce symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Özbilgin and Tatli (2005) suggest that a Bourdieusian framework for the analysis of management and organizations offers several advantages over traditional perspectives. Firstly, Bourdieu's concepts enable a multi-level analysis of organizations, providing a relational perspective on organization and capturing 'the layered intersubjective, interdependent nature of social phenomena' (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2005: 856). Secondly, Bourdieu proffers a dialectical relationship between agency and structure, between objectivism and subjectivism and between the macro and the micro levels of organizational analysis. This allows for the employment relationship, for example, to be studied within a broader sphere such as the industry and the wider society, as well as in relation to individual subjectivities. Thirdly, Bourdieu's starting point of analysis is the field within which actors are positioned unequally as a result of a structure that endows people from certain social positions with power due to their uncontested positions within the capitalist organizational social space (Flemmen, 2013). The enablement accorded to people further up the social hierarchy to acquire and hold on to specific forms of capital perpetuates positionality within that space (Mayrhofer et al., 2004). Finally, Bourdieu's micro-theoretical approach allows for the incorporation of mundane practices in an analysis of power relations (Moi, 1991). Details such as who one's friends are, dress codes or accent can all be examined for sociological clues. In employing Bourdieu's concepts, therefore, the relationship between potential recruits to UKFTV and the circumstances through which their employment intentions are realized or thwarted can be examined.

Methodology

The research, which took a qualitative, inductive approach, was undertaken in three phases. In phase one, 28 semi-structured scoping interviews were carried out with industry experts and stakeholders from key sector organizations and broadcasters with a responsibility for, or interest in, promoting diversity. This process helped to identify the key issues for investigation. In phase two a further 71 biographical interviews were carried out with practitioners from underrepresented groups in selected occupations within UKFTV across the value chain from production to exhibition. This took a mini life history approach (Robson, 1993) which allowed participants to describe their UKFTV work experiences over time.

The data for phases one and two was collected in 2006/2007. In phase three (2011–12) further data was collected when a number of the original 99 respondents were recontacted and 13 took part in telephone interviews or email exchanges which explored what, if anything, had changed in the intervening period. All but two of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Content analysis has been undertaken using NVivo software. A total of 54 interviewees agreed to complete a monitoring form which recorded demographic information including gender, age, average annual income, professional qualifications, ethnicity and disability.

Purposive snowballing techniques were employed to ensure that the interviews would yield data that covered the research topics. At the research design stage a sampling grid was created identifying work roles from the entire value chain and this formed the basis for contacting potential interviewees. In the case of harder to reach roles databases such as Production Base and mandy.com were searched. The practitioners interviewed included: 32 production 'creatives' (actors, producers, directors, writers); 15 production workers (researchers, accountants, HR professionals, assistant producers and production managers); six technical production workers (camera crew, make-up, sound technicians); four post-production staff (assistant producer, editor, subtitler, artist), two stunt co-ordinators, three distribution and exhibition workers, two individuals specifically in TV roles (camera crew and engineer) and seven from other categories including CEOs of media companies, consultants and representatives from training organizations.

Of the 76 per cent of the original sample who completed monitoring forms 54 per cent were male and 46 per cent female; and 31 per cent[1] reported a disability. While 76 per cent were located in London, the remaining 24 per cent were spread across the South-East, the South-West, the Midlands, the North-West, Yorkshire and Scotland. Ethnicity was reported by 44 per cent as white British with the next largest group (11%) being Chinese. While over 7 per cent were black African and over 5 per cent either black Caribbean or Indian Asian, other ethnic subdivisions were represented by only single individuals, representing less than 2 per cent each of those who completed forms. However, in total nearly 54 per cent reported their ethnicity as something other than white British. More than three-quarters (76%) were educated to degree level or above. Less than 4 per cent reported having no qualifications. The largest age group was 30–39 (42.5%) while the 18–29 and 40–49 age groups each made up 26 per cent. Only 5.5 per cent fell into the 50–59 category.

The practitioners occupied job roles with different employment status including free-lancers and industry professionals on both temporary and permanent contracts. The interviews explored job roles, entry into the industry, education and social background, employment status, work history, sources of labour market information, barriers to progress, training and feelings about their future in the sector.

Barriers to employment in the UK film and television industries

One of the most salient points that emerged from this study was the wide acceptance by participants that the field of UKFTV was 'definitely white … middle class and … Oxbridge' (female, BME, BBC, senior role) and that this organizational and institutional environment generated and preserved a habitus of prestige and elitism. Possession of, or access to, certain forms of cultural, economic and social capital that complemented the middle class habitus were seen as fundamental to gaining and maintaining employment in the industry. For those lacking these capitals to draw upon, it was more difficult, although clearly not impossible, to break into UKFTV. This respondent's comment characterizes the industry as informal, middle class, privately educated and subject to exclusive codes of behaviour:

> … so many jobs are kind of got through word of mouth and people who are friends recommend someone. A lot of people in the industry, most people, have a degree or … you get people who really sometimes they've had a … like private education, it's quite a kind of middle class … upper middle class industry … in a lot of respects. The people that tend to get to the top tend to be well educated and I think people who've got a disability or sometimes come from an ethnic background, they're probably less likely to have had that kind of upbringing, so even if you're a perfectly intelligent person, you might not understand some of the kind of codes of behaviour, or just how to get on, because I think it's quite subtle, like how to impress people and how to make them feel like you're someone to kind of recommend or look up to. I think those are things that are kind of barriers there and it's … it's partly the way the industry's set up…. (White, male, disabled, writer and researcher)

In the sections which follow, this characterization is explored using Bourdieu's categories of cultural, social and economic capital to identify how education, accent, reputation, networks and the spread of unpaid internships combine to reinforce and reproduce a habitus of privilege within UKFTV employment.

Cultural capital – education

Research participants repeatedly cited educational background as being a significant contributory factor to class identity in their organizations and the sector and to how these identities helped or hindered their career trajectories. In this sector being rich in cultural capital was often associated with a public school and Oxbridge education. An actor commented: 'All through my career, I have noticed, it's not a fallacy, having been to Oxford does make a difference. And it's not that you put it down on application forms because I don't. I'm afraid it does whether it should or not' (white, male).

This was a view supported by others whether with or without access to this symbolic resource. The discourse of 'elite' education equalling 'best' created a practice-acceptance-internalization-practice cycle. A filmmaker (white, female) commented on how her 'upper middle class background' combined with an Oxford education that placed her within the 'educational hierarchy' of the industry meant that she 'fitted in' while her African Caribbean colleague from 'definitely a working class background' did not.

The attachment of this notional importance to educational status characterizes recruitment practices within the film and television industry. Thus, the habitus is reproduced as those with access to this form of cultural capital 'employ in their own image and background' (white, female, head of production) and continue to dominate in UKFTV, while those who lack such access continue to be excluded. This was summarized by a television director: 'If you compare the television industry to the UK's overall stats, there would be more people in the industry who'd been privately educated than there are in the UK as a whole' (BME, male, director).

It could be argued that although having had a public school education is of itself not a basis for sectoral recruitment, it is valued because it is associated with knowing the 'correct codes of behaviour' (white, male, researcher). It provides beneficiaries 'with a confidence … to go and talk to people and communicate with people … that lends itself well to the television sector and film sector' (white, female, HR manager in independent production), a form of cultural capital that is essential in a sector where career opportunities revolve around social networking.

Cultural capital – accent

A second theme which permeated the narratives of some interviewees was the perception that social positioning was characterized by regional accent. Accent was seen as an important signifier of the possession (or otherwise) of the 'right' cultural capital for engaging successfully in the sector by one participant who acknowledged that 'there was an association with a strong Liverpool or a Geordie or Manchester accent with class' and lamented the fact that certain accents were associated with lower levels of intelligence: 'some people can be quite definite … [saying] "I don't want to employ someone because he's got a Birmingham accent, because all people from Birmingham are stupid"' (BME, female, broadcaster, diversity management).

Interviewee narratives appeared to suggest a hierarchy of accents where some were described as 'mainstream', 'posh' or 'southern' while others were 'light' or 'in between' and others still 'strong' or 'too strong'. A disabled actor described how, because his voice sounded 'very mainstream and deep and male and English' he could 'do anything on the radio. So [he is] not really disabled when it comes to radio work' (white, male, actor/writer). The implication was that there were able bodied actors who were 'disabled' by their accents and voices. These ways of perceiving were embodied in the structures of the sector through practice, became the norm and were reproduced. Even organizational systems and processes including voice recognition software systems had 'trouble with some people's accents. The more sort of posh and southern you sound, the better recognition you get' (BME, female, subtitler).

Social actors, however, strategize to combat structuring processes within the field as insider status can be gained by acquiring the external characteristics that symbolize 'fit' with the habitus. One experienced and successful black crew member had, despite his expertise, felt handicapped by his lack of a 'white middle class' accent which, in his estimation, was necessary to move up from stunt man to stunt co-ordinator. To combat this he had deliberately developed such an accent, which he calculated he needed to get beyond the telephone interview stage. The point here is not whether securing the 'right' accent did ultimately help him, but that he felt a need to change his accent, making him complicit in the perpetuation of the dominant practices in a way which would presumably continue to discriminate against those from a similar background to him. Another participant talked about 'playing the game and once you get into a company you can be yourself ... but to get in, you kind of need to play the game' (BME, female, diversity manager, broadcaster).

Others acknowledged 'hearing more regional accents around' (BME, female, broadcaster, diversity management) and recognized the benefits that a not so posh accent could offer (e.g. to actors when specific roles were required in a production). The same participant argued that people who spoke 'Queen's English' had accents 'like everybody else' and 'could not be told apart'.

At the intersection of social position with other strands of inequality, the middle class habitus of UKFTV was seen to be the dominant exclusionary factor to employment, as opposed to ethnicity, gender or disability, although it was clear that there was an inter-relationship between all these strands. A TV researcher pointed out that there was a barrier to getting work experience: 'maybe not [for] ethnic minorities ... but people that come from poorer backgrounds' (BME, female), factors which are not, of course, mutually exclusive. A journalist's disability had provided him with access to the cultural capital acquired through 'a much better education' (white, male, journalist, broadcaster) than his working class background would normally allow. Indeed, 'getting in' was strongly associated with social and cultural capital: 'those people who have managed to infiltrate, who are not white, are often just as middle class and have been to Oxbridge or whatever' (white, female, diversity manager, broadcaster).

Social capital – reputation and networks

In a sector where you are 'only as good as your last job' (Blair, 2000) a 'good reputation' is a highly valued form of capital which provides a basis for career development and progression. One participant suggested:

> It's all about ... communicating and making relationships and so that was definitely invaluable. People see that, you know, 'Oh right she knows what she is doing; she'd be good at that job' whereas sending your CV in and writing letters isn't so great really…. (White, female, freelance cinematographer)

Another explained how 'in this business you've got to be seen to be ... biddable' and importantly, not to develop a 'reputation for being a trouble maker' (BME, female, diversity manager, broadcaster). In this fragmented environment project opportunities depended upon the continuing reputation of the whole team, so in order to protect the

reputation of the project recruiter, before taking a person onto a project it was usual to 'check what they are like' (white, female, freelance make-up artist). Even the reputation of the recommender is at stake: 'It comes down to the fact that your recommendation reflects on you and if you recommend somebody and they don't work out, it could lose you clients' (white, female, camera crew). This word of mouth referral system, with its inherent risks, necessitated the accumulation and use of social capital across and between different professions within the industry because one might have 'an exceptionally talented operator who's telling you, my mate's better than me … [and] you're going to go after that person first' (white, female, HR, independent production company).

Social capital was therefore significant on entering the profession in order to build an initial reputation. Throughout the interviews participants pointed to the advantages and disadvantages of social networks which can aid recruitment but also restrict entry to those perceived to lack the correct capitals. A freelancer who had been out of work for 18 months met 'a very good friend of a very good friend' who said 'use my name' (white, female, freelance camera crew). She drew upon this vicarious social capital to gain entry into an organization that had previously eluded her and was ultimately employed. The fact that her 'very good friend' had said '[Name]'s great, you can trust her' meant that she had been endowed with a level of cultural capital that fitted with the legitimized norms of the sector.

Social capital played a further role in developing a sense of 'belonging' and 'otherness' within organizations in the sector. A researcher who described herself as 'working class' provided an example of how micro-interactional processes combined with institutional norms and social practices could lead to the continued marginalization of certain groups, even after they formally became insiders:

> [I'm] trying to feel as if I belong and if I could stay here. There is a group and they all fit together and … they're usually middle class, the same type of school, so they've known each other for years, so it's not even a case that they're rejecting you; you just don't fit … So you know, lunchtimes, what do you do? (BME, female, researcher)

These interactions between social actors within the institutional habitus embedded class structuring into organizational processes. The researcher's mentor dismissed her concerns suggesting that she was 'making problems' and this unwillingness, or inability, to recognize the exclusionary factors at play reproduced the practices that resulted in disadvantage because they remained unchallenged. Experience is interpreted and understood in the light of prejudices previously encountered and every new such experience resonates and re-configures the accumulation of earlier events shaping understanding of and behaviour in work interactions.

The problem for many was gaining access to the industry in order to begin the process of building a reputation. This situation was exacerbated for some by the widely accepted practice of working for free.

Economic capital – internships

Voluntary work and unpaid internships can be an advantage when looking for paid work. Although working without pay in UKFTV was often related to formal internships offered

by companies to allow aspiring media workers to gain experience, in reality the opportunity to work for free was only available for those with the economic capital to do so. One participant who undertook several stints of unpaid work 'was already sort of known to some of the people in the area' before he 'just got lucky', was 'in the right place at the right time' and 'was offered some paid work' (BME, male, senior position in sector organization). By drawing upon his ability to work for free this interviewee was able to build and develop the social networks, relevant skills and experience and, more importantly, the reputation needed to permanently 'get in'.

Working for free, or for very low pay, was consistently cited by interviewees as a barrier to entry to UKFTV, even by those who had gained entry. The reliance upon their own economic capital, or that of others, was regularly mentioned. This Director's experience related to a small production company:

> I worked there for free for another 6 months, so really I worked for a year, so then I felt I was basically kind of signing on and working for him every day, you know, so living with my parents, like … just sort of … generally had no money and just surviving. (Male, BME)

Despite his negative perspective on the internship, his family provided him with the economic means necessary to acquire the experience he needed for a career in film and television. Those from similar social backgrounds but who had differing levels of financial support would have different experiences of entry into the sector. This participant, for example, had no such resources to draw upon: 'Whilst I did the internship I was sharing a room with three others and that was the only way I could afford to stay in London for those 10 weeks' (BME, female, regional training organization). The emphasis placed by employers on the value of experience – usually gained from unpaid work – disadvantaged the economically marginalized.

A junior researcher provided an intersectional perspective to the challenges faced by certain groups from economically exclusionary barriers:

> The biggest prejudice is against the working class really … I think the reason there's so many white middle class people in the industry is because, you know, those people can afford to do work experience for free. (BME, female, junior researcher, TV)

The inability to take unpaid work could be misunderstood as being 'not keen … not committed' (white, female, senior diversity manager, broadcaster) to the industry, which in turn sets up further barriers. Having the economic capital to draw upon provided the opportunity to be able to take advantage of an unpaid internship, but there was still the question of finding information on opportunities and competing for the small number of these that existed relative to a large group of aspirant entrants to the industry. Social networks and nepotism remained important and this interviewee articulated the interrelationship between the different capitals:

> That's how I got a job on [feature film title] as a camera trainee. That and I kind of knew somebody … but obviously I was working there for free and so, you know, people, certain people may not be able to work for free. (White, female, director of photography)

As internships were a means by which to acquire the appropriate capitals to open doors to employment in the sector, the inability to work for free was a constraint on the acquisition of industry-specific resources. The inter-relatedness and fluidity of the different forms of capital underlined the impact that the absence of one could have on the acquisition of others.

Exclusionary cultures in organizations remain dominant in spite of management policies and measures to eradicate them. They are normalized, internalized and reproduced through the values, rituals, rules, patterns of socialization, conversations and communications within organizations, creating institutionalized norms that perpetuate exclusionary practices and processes. The interviewee below, seeing unpaid internship as a normal – and for her valued – practice, framed the change of policy towards internships at the National Film and Television School as a loss of opportunity for gaining experience:

> [I] started off, actually working for free for nine months at the National Film School, doing a couple of films there, which you're no longer able to do, I don't think, but that was a great way to get experience at making drama, and that then meant I had something to put on my CV so that I could get a job. (White, female, head of independent production company)

The data point to a habitus that, through practice, accords value to specific forms of capital in the UKFTV field which in turn generate and perpetuate that habitus by erecting entry barriers for those who do not possess those resources. They also provide insight into the inter-relatedness of these acquired or ascribed field-specific capacities, statuses, competencies and assets and demonstrate how, in some circumstances, the acquisition of one is dependent on the other. Furthermore it is clear that even within UKFTV the symbolic value of a specific competence (such as a 'middle class' accent) varies with the sub-field in which it is employed.

Conclusions

The research from which the data reported here is drawn did not explicitly include class as a theme for investigation. It set out to explore the extent to which specific demographic characteristics: gender, ethnic minority group membership, age, disability and geographical location, were experienced as barriers to entry into employment in UKFTV. Nevertheless respondents often chose to use references to class in describing their experience. The basis on which they did this, how they formulated a class identity and attributed class membership either to themselves or others was not pursued. What was nevertheless clear from the data was that they saw class, however they defined it, as salient in mediating their occupational life chances within this industry. From the data reported here it has been possible to identify some of the elements that underpinned these perceptions of class: educational background, accent and attitudes, parental occupation and domestic circumstances, economic position and access to networks of similarly socially positioned individuals. These elements map closely to Bourdieu's cultural, economic and social capitals and, it is argued here, can provide a more finely tuned multi-level analytical framework for understanding the social dynamics of exclusion than either simple demographic categories, the intersectional layering of these categories,

references to an homogeneous 'creative class' or the more traditional Marxist or Weberian sociological frameworks which were not designed for this purpose.

Use of this framework reveals that the mechanisms by which people are denied access or experience barriers to entry into the UKFTV include both the structural arrangement of organization in the sector and the logics of practice that this generates or perpetuates. In turn these reinforce self-replicating patterns of workforce characteristics. Structural arrangements include: the transient and project based nature of much of the industry; the precarious patterns of employment that result from this nature; the role of networks in disseminating labour market information; the use of informal methods of recruitment; and the expectation that new entrants will work as interns for low, or no, pay.

The interplay between the sectoral structure and its associated logics of practice generates a favouring of particular resources that are of symbolic value within UKFTV such as: a privileged education; a recognized professional reputation; and the ability to network. The article has identified how workers within these creative industries compete based on the capitals they possess, firstly to gain access and then to progress their careers within the sector. Such competition requires people to create strategies to acquire, develop and exchange capitals within their portfolio in order to position themselves advantageously for employment. Individuals are initially positioned unequally as they attempt entry into the sector as a result of a structure that endows those possessing certain forms of capital with symbolic power. One form of capital – social, cultural or economic – may be sufficient to enter the industry and further capitals can be acquired to retain and advance interests. The habitus this creates reinforces the advantage that individuals from some backgrounds have and acts as an exclusionary mechanism for those without these favoured abilities and capabilities. At the same time the former become complicit in reinforcing the norms, leading to a resilient, self-perpetuating habitus. A web of reciprocity endorses and reinforces existing logics of employment practice.

If demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age or disability are clearly recognized as insufficiently represented within UKFTV, 'class' or social position has been less recognized, researched or addressed in policy or legislation. There has been little focus on the social position of entrants to UKFTV and the barriers that exist to entry and career development. The further application of a Bourdieusian framework to life chances in the creative industries or indeed across other sectors with strong relational characteristics could prove fruitful.

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Note

1.   This may appear to be a particularly large proportion of the sample. Of the 71 participants in the
       second phase of the research (biographical interviews with industry practitioners), 20 (28.5%)
       were selected, who would be recognized as disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act
       (2005). The higher figure of 31 per cent above suggests that of the participants who chose to
       complete the monitoring form those with disabilities were slightly overrepresented within the
       sample. The inclusion of such a large proportion of disabled participants was informed by the
       decision to use purposive sampling to ensure previously marginalized voices would be heard.

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