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The Creative Industries in Scotland: Flexible Friends or Foes?

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Introduction and Background

In its response to the Cultural Commission's review of culture in Scotland (Culture Commission, 2005), the Scottish Executive (2006a) described Scotland's creative industries sector as 'a real success story – a tribute to the nation's long-established talent for innovation and entrepreneurial skill, which also contributes significantly to the economy'. Indeed, recent figures indicate that the Scottish creative industries generate £5 billion and contribute 4% to Scottish GDP, and that up to 6.7% of Scotland's employment is within, or related to, the creative industries (Scottish Executive, 2006b).

The creative sector is perceived by many to be liberal and egalitarian in nature (see, for example, Holden and McCarthy, 2007), and therefore one that is arguably particularly attractive as a career option to women. Yet very little has been written on the numbers and status of women in Scotland's creative industries. Indeed, as is illustrated in Appendix 1, obtaining a clear and accurate profile of the Scottish creative sector (in terms of employment statistics and patterns, gender representation, the size, nature and location of constituent companies, etc) from published sources is difficult, largely due to differing definitions of the creative/cultural industries and disparate methods of data collection and analysis. However, while opinions differ on the extent of employment in the industries, and in the overall representation of women within these industries, most commentators are in general agreement on three issues: that the industries are concentrated in Scotland's Central Belt; that they are dominated by small and micro-businesses; and that there is a heavy reliance on part-time, self-employed and freelance labour (the last two issues being common to the cultural/creative sector throughout the EU (MKW GmbH, 2001)).

While the Scottish creative sector specifically has been largely ignored in the published literature, there have been several national (i.e. UK) and international studies of women's employment in the creative or cultural industries, which indicate that women, despite forming a large part of the creative workforce, are still failing to achieve parity in terms of entry, retention, progression and remuneration. For example, in a major study of the status of

women in the cultural labour market throughout Europe, Cliche *et al* (2000) established that, while women occupy on average 40% of cultural jobs, they earn between 15-30% less than men in the same occupations. This study also established that women were under-represented in administrative and artistic decision-making positions (particularly in the advertising, film, music and publishing industries), and that female artists in the fields of architecture, music, literature, and the visual and performing arts generally receive far less public recognition (in terms of awards, grants and scholarships) than their male counterparts.

Studies such as the one described above, however, have tended to consist of surveys, which have gathered somewhat superficial data about the numbers of women working in the sector, their salaries and their status. Few have explored in any depth the factors which have resulted in these inequalities. With this in mind, throughout 2004 and 2005, a team of researchers from the Aberdeen Business School at The Robert Gordon University undertook a two-year research project, funded by the European Social Fund, which investigated the barriers, problems and difficulties encountered by women in the creative industries¹ in Scotland, in terms of employment, career progression, work-life balance, training and income-generating opportunities, and which sought to improve understanding of best practice in implementing active gender policies from the perspective both of creative companies and the women they employ.

Year One of the project explored the extent to which gender equality policies had been introduced by companies in the Scottish creative sector (more specifically in the media and communication industries), and whether gender-related issues had been, or continued to be, encountered by those working in the sector. It consisted of a postal survey of Scottish creative companies, and telephone interviews with 138 individuals (84 women and 54 men) working in the Scottish creative industries. It established that formal, written gender equality policies are not widespread throughout the Scottish sector, largely because it is a sector dominated by small and micro-businesses who regard themselves as too small to require a policy level approach or who describe themselves as having “informal” or “unwritten” policies. Those companies who *had* introduced policies, however, cited a number of benefits to be gained, including increased loyalty and trust amongst staff, and improved levels of staff

¹ The (sometimes widely) varying definitions of the creative/cultural sector, and the associated lists of constituent industries, used by institutions such as the Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise, the European Commission, UNESCO, and the UK’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport, led the project team to construct its own list of creative industries for use in this study. These were: Advertising; Architecture; Art and antiques markets; Computer games and leisure software; Crafts; Design; Designer fashion; Film and TV production; Marketing; Music; New media; Performing arts; Press/newspaper publishing; Public relations; Publishing (book and periodical); Radio; Visual arts.

retention. The individuals working in the Scottish creative industries, meanwhile, cited a wide range of barriers and problems facing women in the sector, including: sexist attitudes; male-dominated organisational cultures; perceived 'female' roles and competencies; the existence of 'Old Boys Networks'; unequal pay and conditions; ageism; difficulties in reconciling family demands with work in the sector; as well as personal, 'self-imposed' barriers. Interestingly, there were some significant differences in the perceptions of the female and male interviewees, in terms of the extent and nature of gender inequality in the Scottish sector (Marcella *et al*, 2005).

This paper discusses, in some detail, Year Two of the project, which aimed to build and expand upon the first year results. In particular, it sought to explore equality policy and practice in companies in the Scottish creative industries, from the perspective of both employers and employees, and to identify examples of good practice that might then be adopted more widely in the creative sector.

Methodology

Year Two of the project consisted of two distinct elements. Firstly, 51 best practice case studies of companies based in the Scottish creative sector were conducted between May and October 2005. The aim of each of these case studies was to enable an in-depth examination of company policy, its implementation and operation, and the attitudes and experiences of the company's managers and employees. The participating companies were recruited using a combination of personal email invitations and general appeals for assistance posted on online discussion fora and in online trade publications. While precise details of company size, in terms of employees and turnover, were not systematically sought during these case studies, all but three of the 51 companies visited could be described, in the Scottish Executive's terms, as sole traders or as micro or small businesses (Wiseman *et al*, 2006).

During the case studies, 125 people (95 females and 30 males) were interviewed. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the industries in which these individuals worked. As can be seen, public relations was the industry with the greatest number of participants, providing 15.2% of the sample, followed by radio and theatre (both 12%). Unfortunately, no companies from the advertising, art and antique markets, or press/newspaper publishing industries could be persuaded to participate in the research.

Table 1: Case studies sample, by industry and gender				
Industry	Female	Male	Totals	
			No.	%
Architecture	2	1	3	2.4
Crafts	12	0	12	9.6
Design	5	3	8	6.4
Designer fashion	2	0	2	1.6
Film and TV production	6	1	7	5.6
Computer games	2	0	2	1.6
Marketing	3	2	5	4.0
Music	2	1	3	2.4
New media	2	1	3	2.4
Performing arts (Theatre)	9	6	15	12.0
Public relations	14	5	19	15.2
Publishing (book/periodical)	6	5	11	8.8
Radio	11	4	15	12.0
Visual arts	9	1	10	8.0
'Cross-industry' ²	10	0	10	8.0
Totals	95 (76%)	30 (24%)	125	100

Table 2, meanwhile, provides a breakdown of the sample by employment status. As can be seen, 14.4% of the sample were at a directorial or senior management level, 16.8% were in middle management roles, almost half (48.8%) were of 'other employee' status, while the remaining 20% were sole traders or self-employed individuals.

Table 2: Case studies sample, by employment status and gender				
Employment status	Female	Male	Totals	
			No.	%
Managing Director/Director	12	6	18	14.4
Middle management	15	6	21	16.8
Other employee	47	14	61	48.8
Sole trader/self-employed	21	4	25	20.0
Totals	95 (76%)	30 (24%)	125	100

The second element of Year Two consisted of a series of focus groups held throughout Scotland during November and December 2005, which enabled discussion of the issues raised during the case studies by a mix of professional, organisational and employee representatives.

² The 'cross-industry' category applies to those interviewees who were employees of companies whose services encompassed more than one industry category (e.g. radio and TV; radio and newspaper publishing; graphic design, marketing and new media), and where the employee's role and responsibilities could not be assigned to one industry only (e.g. administrative staff, business development manager, IT manager, HR advisor).

The focus group participants were recruited using appeals placed in the local and national press, and in online discussion fora and trade publications. Unfortunately, the numbers participating in these groups were generally low, with a grand total of only 18 participants throughout the seven groups held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Inverness. Indeed, two planned focus groups in Aberdeen had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest. Whilst men *were* invited to attend these groups, the eventual participants were all female. However, these women did come from a relatively wide range of industries and occupations, as is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Total number of focus groups and participants		
Focus Group Locations and No.	No. of Participants	Occupations
Glasgow (4)	9	ex-TV Producer; ex-Musician; ex-Film/Theatre Props; Film/TV Editor; Journal Music Editor; Advertising Account Directors (2); Visual Artist; Architect
Edinburgh (1)	4	MD Publishing Company; Illustrator; Local Authority Arts Officer; PR Consultant
Dundee (1)	3	Graphic Designer; Cultural Enterprise Officer; ex-Graphic Designer
Inverness (1)	2	Community Arts Development Officer/Theatre Manager; Glass Artist/Retired Journalist

Research Results

Gender-related barriers and issues in the work place

The case studies and the focus groups further explored and, in many cases, reinforced the findings of the first year of the research. For example, 29% of the participants believed that women are still under-represented in senior, decision-making positions in the Scottish creative sector; although it was felt that the situation was not so extreme in public relations, publishing and the theatre, and was improving in the film and TV industries.

Within middle management, from the companies I've worked in, yes, there's always been women. But the higher up you go there certainly is the lack of skirt in the boardroom. (Communications Consultant in a marketing company)

In terms of the number of people who own their own PR companies, or who are directors of companies, there's probably a far bigger percentage of women in Scotland who are directors or who do occupy these positions, in comparison to other industries. (Account Director in a PR company)

Meanwhile, 17% of the participants believed that females were more inclined than males to enter the creative industries at the lowest levels, often in administrative roles, in order to get their “foot in the door” of what is a highly appealing yet competitive sector; but also that women can remain clustered at these administrative levels, particularly in the architecture, music and radio industries.

It's predominantly females that say, yes, I'll go in and start making tea, answering phones, doing anything. (Marketing Executive in a commercial radio station)

Women are still mainly found at the admin levels within the music industry. (Director of a record label)

When participants were asked to suggest possible reasons for the lack of women's career progression in the sector, two main themes emerged. Firstly, almost 27% of the female participants felt that women can lack the confidence and self-belief required to progress in the creative industries.

I think men on the whole are better at pushing forward their own case and fighting their corners. I think women go 'What shall I do?', and agonise over it a lot more, and maybe play down their successes. Everybody's different, but I do think women can sometimes be their own worst enemy. (Account Director in a PR company)

Secondly, 18% of the female interviewees believed that women are more ambivalent than men about career progression, although it was recognised that having children, and a subsequent change in personal priorities, can be an important factor here.

There's probably more competitiveness within men, that they're going to be 'number one'. For women, I think they're maybe sometimes happier to get to a certain level and say, right, I've achieved what I wanted, I'm happy here, without feeling they need to take the next step up or whatever. (Marketing Executive in a commercial radio station)

It's a fact of life that there's a lot of powerful, very talented women out there that make the choice along the way to stop and have a career break. And then quite often their priorities change because they've got a family. (Managing Director of a PR company)

Indeed, the impact of motherhood on career progression and on work-life balance was raised by over 40% of the participants (both female and male). It was felt that achieving a healthy work-life balance in the creative sector can prove extremely difficult, particularly for women with children, with one of the major factors being the long and flexible hours required in the industries.

It's very difficult. A lot of the work that we do is emergency response, on-call work. You've also got a lot of functions to go to. We do a lot of events management and organising dinners and conferences and things like that. (Director of a PR company)

I'm thinking about leaving theatre to get a more regular job, so I can spend time at home. It becomes quite tiring, and it's very difficult to organise a life around working theatre. (Technical Stage Manager in a theatre company)

It takes an enormous toll on your relationship. My husband is 'long-suffering'. Not everybody might be able to survive it. (Visual Artist)

In fact, 17% of the participants believed that long and unsociable hours, coupled with family commitments, results in a significantly higher turnover of women than men in the creative industries, with these women moving to part-time positions, becoming freelance or self-employed, or simply leaving the industries altogether.

There does come a point where people question 'Is it worth the long hours in the office?', 'Where am I going?', 'What will I do?'. Some people take time out, four or five years. Others just leave completely. It all depends on your family situation as well, and your support networks, and all the rest of it. (Events Manager in a PR company)

It is perhaps worthwhile noting that, while these participants could offer little 'hard' evidence of this gender-based difference in staff turnover in the creative sector, their perceptions are in line with a number of published studies. For example, in the screen and audio-visual industries, a succession of studies have established that women are far less likely than their

male counterparts to be married (or living as part of a couple) and/or have dependent children, and that large numbers of women leave the audio-visual workforce in their thirties (e.g. Sheppard *et al*, 1999; Women in Film and Television, 1999; Skillset, 2001; Skillset, 2004; Skillset and UK Film Council, 2005).

When offering their thoughts on those women who *had* progressed in the creative industries, two recurring themes emerged from the female participants. Firstly, there was a perception amongst 19% of the female participants that women have had to try harder than men to succeed in the sector.

I always think that women have to put in twice the effort and do twice as well to get the same recognition as men. (Radio Producer)

Secondly, and echoing the thoughts of a number of commentators (e.g. Morna, 2002; Falk and Grizard, 2003), 19% of the female participants believed that women have to adopt male traits and characteristics in order to progress in the creative sector; although five women stated that displaying a more feminine side can be equally effective.

Some women do assume that once you get to a certain level you've got to stop being female, and put on the suit and the tie and start acting like a man. (Events Manager in a PR company)

I've seen some who are like that – adopt blokeish behaviour. There are others who've gone completely the opposite way. Totally girly. Putting on lipstick at the table during meetings, and this sort of thing. And yet they're doing just as well as the other ones are. (Director of a marketing company)

Interestingly, six of the female participants noted a tendency for women occupying senior positions to bully or be unhelpful to other women.

There's no-one as cruel to a woman as another woman. They may choose not to help you. (General Manager of a theatre company)

A number of authors (e.g. Grunig *et al*, 2001; Delano, 2003) have highlighted the existence of male-dominated social networks in the creative industries, where business is done, and where decisions are made, in the pub or on the golf course. Indeed, 39% of the interviewees in Year One of this research cited such a phenomenon. In Year Two, however, just 11% of

participants noted the existence of male-dominated networks. In industries such as PR, publishing and theatre, it was felt that the sheer number of women working in the industries precluded a male dominance.

Certainly there are things like the golf outings, or the five-a-side football and so on. Those are very bonding for the males in the marketing department. And the girls are excluded from that. (Director of a marketing company)

In my experience, it's more the opposite, it's more big groups of women in the pubs. Because there are a lot of women working in the theatre. (Marketing and Education Manager in a theatre company)

The importance of networking, in terms of raising their profile and gaining work, was emphasised by 25% of the female participants. However, a lack of self-confidence, time constraints (particularly for women with families), as well as geographic location, meant that many of the female interviewees could not participate fully in these networks.

If you're a good networker you do get on, and women are not as great at networking as men. It's about shyness, it's about time – 'I've got to get home and make people's tea, I don't have time to go for drinks'. It is hard for women. I really struggle with it. I have to push myself to do it. (Managing Director of a PR company)

Seven of these women were members of female-only networks, and these were generally regarded favourably. Four women, all from the PR industry, felt that they have to come up with “creative”, “clever” alternatives to the sports-based networking events organised and enjoyed by their male colleagues, and therefore concentrate on attending or organising more “female-friendly” events such as awards ceremonies, business breakfasts and dinners.

Several studies have highlighted occupational segregation in the creative sector, identifying particular industries and/or occupations where women are particularly well, or badly, represented (e.g. Gibbons, 2000; Cliche *et al*, 2000; Klein, 2000). Almost 38% of the Year Two participants highlighted some form of occupational segregation. For example, it was noted that males still tend to dominate the technical roles in a range of industries, including film and TV, games, music and theatre; while females are dominant in the likes of film and TV production roles, commercial radio sales, PR consumer accounts and events management, and theatre stage management. In observing these patterns, however, the participants did not believe that there were any premeditated barriers preventing women entering male-dominated

domains, or vice versa. Rather, it was suggested that women, and men, are traditionally and perhaps naturally attracted to specific jobs.

In a lot of offices I have worked in, everybody that sits behind a desk has been female, and the minute you go out filming, all the guys on camera, sound or editing are men. So there is a definitive division between the technical side and the production based stuff. (TV Producer and Director)

We've always had more female sales people. It's just performance – we seem to get a better response from using females in the role. (Research Executive at a commercial radio station)

The vast majority of engineers, or audio engineers, have always been men, that I've worked with. Maybe I'm old fashioned, but I just think women are maybe not quite as attracted to those jobs as men are. I just don't think women go for it. (Radio Reporter and Presenter)

Just four of the female participants had personally experienced a gender-based pay gap, where they had been paid less than their male colleagues for work of equal value. However, making accurate, informed comparisons proved difficult for many participants, because: their particular company was dominated by females; they worked on a part-time basis; pay is often individually negotiated and performance- or bonus-based; and/or that pay is simply not discussed in the workplace.

Almost 42% of the participants believed that there was an age bias in the creative industries, although, importantly, the vast majority of these individuals believed that such ageism was not gender-related. This bias was aimed both at older individuals, who were perceived as lacking energy, dynamism and a connectivity with the more youthful target markets of industries such as games, music and fashion design; and at younger individuals, who were regarded as lacking the necessary gravitas, particularly in client-focused roles. Older individuals, particularly in the crafts and the visual arts, also noted discrimination from galleries and funding bodies.

I would say the younger the better to be honest in this sector. From the design point of view you find it difficult to convince people that you are fresh and dynamic. I suppose, once you hit middle thirties, it seems to sort of lose its grip a little bit, and

you are not so finger on the pulse anymore, despite the fact that you might have a lot of experience. (Jeweller and Fashion Designer)

When going out to clients it's much harder work if you are a younger person, because as soon as they see you you have to work harder to gain credibility. (Accounts Manager in a PR company)

Elements of 'lookism' were also cited by 17 participants, largely in communications roles, who believed that attractive young women were regarded more favourably by employers and clients. Fifteen female participants also provided examples of sexist behaviour and comments, from male colleagues, clients, and (for architects and architectural glass artists) construction site workers.

I think the pretty young girl, when she's invited in, the patronising factor goes stratospheric at that stage. We do have a couple of very pretty blondes, with the emphasis on pretty. They're soft, they're gentle, they're blonde. And they will be invited to a lot more meetings than perhaps they want, but they won't be taken terribly seriously, so that's an issue for them. I don't envy them that. (Account Director in a PR company)

Policies and practice

A major part of Year Two of the research was, of course, to explore equality policy and practice in Scottish creative companies. While there have been relatively few studies of gender-related policies in the creative workplace (see, for example: Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, 1996, on Australian media companies; Gallagher, 2002, on media companies internationally; Falk and Grizard, 2003, on US communications companies; Siegle, 2005, on UK PR companies), most of these commentators are in general agreement that, where such policies exist, they have had limited impact on the workplace in terms of equality. Indeed, the Culture-Biz study of European film production and book publishing companies (ERICarts, 2005) notes that examples of policies and good practice are the exception rather than the rule.

This, it has to be said, was also the case in the Scottish creative companies studied here. Of the 51 case study companies visited in Year Two of the research, just 10 had any form of formal gender-related policies in place. Where policies *did* exist, employees were generally vague as to the type and extent of the policies, even when these were readily available for

inspection on the companies' intranets. It was felt that they would only be investigated when needed personally.

I know they exist, but I haven't gone into the detail of them, because I've had no need to make use of them. But I would know where to go to find the details. (TV Director)

I think that if I looked into it I would find them. We do have the intranet, and we do have the corporate policies on there. (Radio Broadcast Engineer)

Instead of formal, written policies, many of the other companies attempt to foster "informal", "flexible", "family-friendly" cultures in the workplace, where employees are given time off, or enter into alternative working patterns, as and when family-related problems, issues and events arise.

I think we are quite flexible. I know a lot of people have kids to get to school, and all sorts going on. So if somebody's in here at half-past-nine, not a word is ever said, because you trust people either to give us it back in other ways or whatever. There's other stuff, like people have had issues with illnesses and all sorts, and we've always said whatever time you need, take it. (Director of a PR company)

We try to be flexible about people having their working times, and making appointments, and taking time off. (Director of a publishing company)

Employees generally spoke positively of these arrangements, and an important factor in the success or otherwise of these informal approaches seemed to be whether or not the company directors and managers themselves had families.

From a mother's point of view, the directors have young children themselves, and they fully appreciate and support any problems you have with childcare. (Administrator in a publishing company)

The directors have got families themselves. And because they've got their own kids, they understand completely. When they've had to go away themselves because something's happened, they can't turn round and say 'Well, you can't do it, but I've just done it.' And they wouldn't, because they know exactly what position the staff would be in. (Multimedia Designer in a 'cross-industry' company)

Flexible working methods (e.g. part-time, compressed hours, staggered hours, job share, home working) had been introduced in 13 of the case study companies. In all of these companies, directors and managers had considered flexible arrangements on a case by case basis, with their introduction being dependent on the resources available at the time, the nature of the roles being considered for flexible working, and the potential impact on company performance.

You have to consider each individual case in its context. And however unfair that is, you actually have to look at it as a business and think 'What is right?'. We'll always try and accommodate people. We don't just say no, but at the same time we don't just say yes to everybody as well. (Financial Controller of a radio station)

However, there was also evidence of some female employees with children, who had moved to part-time contracts, but who were still effectively working full-time hours because of workload pressures, or who had lost disproportionate levels of pay and benefits through moving away from full-time, and who were therefore effectively being disadvantaged by moving to a more 'flexible' arrangement (Interestingly, six of the 18 female focus group participants cited similar disadvantage).

Flexible working methods were regarded, by both managers and employees, as more suitable for administrative roles, or for some industry-specific occupations (e.g. copy editing and proof reading in publishing).

Most of the roles wouldn't work. It's only the copy editing and proof reading that can be done at home. And it's better done at home, because you don't want disturbances - you want someone to be able to sit and concentrate for a good while. (Director of a publishing company)

In contrast, it was felt that flexible working would be very difficult: in client-focused roles (e.g. in PR and in commercial radio sales); in roles requiring almost constant interaction with colleagues and/or subordinates; in deadline-orientated roles; and in roles requiring long and unsociable hours (e.g. in theatre and in film and TV production).

We tried to go down the job-share route. We tried it and it failed, not because of the employees but because of the clients. (Director of a PR company)

There's no question now that a sales role in commercial radio is not a part-time job. That's a full-on job, given the significance of the revenue stream. We need people working a five-day week. It must have continuity – the minute you don't have that you lose business. People spend money elsewhere, or they drift away from the station. (Radio station Planning Manager)

However much it's nice to think that some of it could be done at home, the people have to be here. Phone, fax and email. Making up a journal issue is not something that one person can do on their own, they'll have to talk to at least one other person. (Director of a publishing company)

Creatively, I would be a bit worried about part-time working. If they were an account manager, not an issue. But in the creative studio. Technically, it would be okay I guess. But because it's so deadline-orientated, could you really stipulate which three days they work? (Director of a marketing company)

While managers and employees were in general agreement about the difficulties in introducing flexible working in the creative industries, a small number of employees did feel that their employers could be doing more in terms of at least experimenting with flexible methods.

I can see why it's more difficult, but to be honest I think that's something the company needs to look at. There's no point in the Government bringing in incentives and trying to increase the population, if jobs like sales jobs are maybe not going to be part of it. (employee at a radio station)

There was also some evidence of family-friendly policies and approaches creating resentment amongst male employees or amongst female employees without families.

There is sometimes a perception that if you don't have children, then fine, you have no excuse for not working on and being involved in whatever you're asked to do. I think it's slightly unfair. It's perceived that you've got nothing to go home to. I think there's a few of us here that have partners or girlfriends or wives, but not a family. And you do get asked for things that people with families wouldn't get asked. (male employee in a 'cross-industry' company)

I think we should also be raising the question about women without children having to absorb the extra work when flexible working is used by mothers. And about having second choice of holidays behind mothers who choose the school holidays. (female employee in a 'cross-industry' company)

In Year One of this research, a small proportion (8%) of female interviewees had indicated that training and personal development opportunities made available to their male colleagues had not been made available to them, thus having a potentially detrimental effect on their own career progression. In the Year Two case studies, however, no such inequities were reported. Forty-five (36%) of the case study interviewees were conscious of having a current training or professional development need, ranging from basic business skills to communication and presentation skills, and from the use of specific software packages to people management. The vast majority (90%) of these employees with training or professional development needs felt confident that their employer would assist them in addressing these needs, if the relevance, benefit to the company, and cost effectiveness of doing so could be argued and justified. Indeed, three of the case study companies pay the fees of those employees undertaking work-related, part-time degree courses; while one PR company pays employees' subscriptions to a local professional organisation.

The company is certainly very open to people doing training, and very encouraging. And they will be there to support any employee who wishes to further their career. (Finance Administrator in a 'cross-industry' company)

If we can prove that anything is relevant, they will be willing to provide the financial backing. (Communications Consultant in a 'cross-industry' company)

Just six of the case study interviewees had taken part in a formal mentoring or 'buddying' scheme, arranged either by their employer or by a business support agency, while 12 had had an 'informal' mentor at some point throughout their careers. A further 15 interviewees felt that some form of mentoring would be useful for their own development; and indeed three of the case study companies were currently investigating the introduction of a formal scheme. However, the six interviewees involved in a formal scheme had generally been disappointed with the results, citing a lack of time and commitment, inappropriate advice, and a lack of understanding of 'creative' issues on the part of their mentor. Greater levels of satisfaction were reported by those interviewees who had personally researched and arranged their own informal mentors.

Business start-up issues

Many of the case study interviewees were, of course, sole traders, self-employed individuals, or directors of their own small businesses. With this in mind, a number of the interviewees highlighted difficulties relating to the business start-up process, some of which, it should be emphasised, were not gender-specific. For example, 17 of the participants (each one a sole trader or a director of a recently established small company) believed that the start-up advice and assistance provided by various business support agencies was not entirely suitable for creative businesses.

The difficulty of actually finding out what to do, where and why and when was quite substantial because most of the help for new businesses is geared, bizarrely, to people like plumbers and carpenters – an entirely different organisational type. Which meant nobody was able to give me a clue as to how I should run my business, really.
(Manager of a publishing company)

They were applying business standards to a creative subject, which I felt wasn't applicable. (Visual Artist)

For the majority of these start-ups, the source of their advice had been the Business Gateway Network (a partnership with Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish Executive and Scottish local authorities, with the prime aim of supporting economic development in Scotland), and indeed the ability of such generic advice agencies to deal with clients from the Scottish screen industries has recently been investigated more fully by the present authors (Marcella and Baxter, 2007). It is also worthwhile noting that a specialist business development service for creative industry practitioners and businesses, the Cultural Enterprise Office (CEO), has recently been established in Scotland. However, at the time of the case study interviews, the CEO, having just been piloted in Glasgow, was in the process of being rolled out on a more national basis, therefore only two of the case study interviewees (both Glasgow-based) were conscious of its existence.

Many of the sole traders and self-employed interviewees also reported problems relating to financial and cash-flow matters. For example, 13 of the sole traders, largely in crafts and the visual arts, felt that they lacked, or did not pay enough personal attention to, basic business skills, such as bookkeeping and marketing, or found it difficult to set prices or rates for their own work. In line with Whiteley *et al* (2004), a number of these interviewees laid some of

the blame for this situation at the door of higher and further education institutions, which, it was claimed, provided their creative students with too much theoretical, and not enough practical, knowledge and skills, including the basic business skills required when starting up their own company.

Perhaps a big reason is because a lot of the people teaching in art schools have possibly never earned their living through their chosen subject. If you're being taught by someone who's never had to sell a painting to pay their bills, how are you going to learn? (Craftsperson)

For some interviewees, financial problems were exacerbated by difficulties in finding professionals, such as accountants and lawyers, who are aware of the specific problems and issues concerned with running a creative business. Meanwhile, 12 of the 21 female sole traders emphasised the importance of the emotional, practical, and, often most importantly, the monetary support of their husband or partner.

I'm one of the lucky ones – my husband works in a very lucrative job, so I don't have to bring home the bread, so to speak, and sustain my family. If I had to, I couldn't survive. No way. (Craftsperson)

Conclusions

The case studies and focus groups discussed above have reinforced many of the major findings of Year One of the research. Namely, that women can encounter a range of contractual, cultural, social, family, age-related and personal barriers to entering, remaining in and progressing through the hierarchy of the creative industries in Scotland. While the creative industries may indeed perceive themselves to be more egalitarian and female-friendly than other sectors, it would appear that they are still beset with many of the gender-related inequities perhaps more associated with other, traditionally male-dominated industries.

The primary aim of Year Two of the research was, of course, to explore gender equality policy and practice in creative companies in Scotland, and to identify examples of best practice that might be adopted more widely throughout the Scottish sector. However, in line with the literature and with the findings of the Year One study, this Year Two research has found a lack of formal gender- and family-related policies in place in the Scottish creative sector; and, where policies *do* exist, a distinct lack of awareness of their type and extent

amongst employees, suggesting a lack of effective communication on the part of individual companies.

This research has also identified an apparent lack of formal flexible working opportunities in the Scottish creative sector. Indeed, it would seem that the creative industries are particularly non-conducive to flexible patterns of employment that might enable women, particularly those with family or caring commitments, to achieve a fairer work-life balance. This would appear to be particularly difficult in client-focused and deadline-orientated roles, roles that require constant face-to-face communication with colleagues, and roles that demand long and unsociable hours.

Instead, Scottish creative companies appear to rely heavily on more informal approaches, where managers permit their employees to take time off, or enter into short-term flexible working patterns, as and when family and caring issues arise. While many of the employees interviewed – in particular those who had had cause to require such a flexible arrangement – spoke positively of these informal approaches, some dissenting voices remained, particularly those employees who had had to absorb extra work because of their colleagues entering into flexible working patterns, or who had been asked to undertake work, perhaps involving travel and unsociable hours, which their colleagues with family or caring responsibilities were not expected to undertake. As a result, there was no real consensus on what constitutes ‘best practice’ in terms of flexible working in the Scottish creative industries.

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Appendix I: Profile of Scottish creative industries

Source	Employment estimates	Percentage women	Size of companies/nature of employment	Location of companies/jobs
Creative/cultural industries				
Pratt (1998)	91,113			43% of jobs are in Glasgow and Lothian
DCMS (1999)	70,000			
Davies & Lindley (2003)	55,000	37% ¹	39.1% of workers are self-employed ¹	
Galloway (2003)	221,301 (broad definition) 45,059 (everyday def.)	56% (broad def.) 49% (everyday def.)	9.6% are self-employed (broad def.) 25.9% are self-employed (everyday def.)	27.3% of jobs are in Edinburgh/Glasgow (broad def.) 38.9% of jobs are in Edinburgh/Glasgow (everyday def.)
Dunlop <i>et al</i> (2004) ²			Companies have average of 24.4 FTEs	60.4% of jobs are in Edinburgh/Glasgow
Futureskills Scotland (2005)	13,300 ³	52%		
Odedra (2005)	58,300 ³		Mainly SMEs with <200 employees	Concentration in Glasgow/Edinburgh/West Lothian
Scottish Enterprise (2005)	94,000			
Creative & Cultural Skills (2006)	36,790	39% ¹	Includes 13,370 self-employed	
Scottish Exec. (2006b)	100,000		Industries are 'dominated by micro-businesses'	
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	58,600 ³			
Audio visual industries				
Parker Associates (2002)	5,400	42%	Includes 1,700 freelancers	
Skillset (2006)	9,800	39%	Includes 3,000 freelancers	
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	11,100 ³			
Screen industries				
Scottish Screen (1999)	1,500	50%	56% work full-time, 44% part-time	
Scottish Screen (2000)	Minimum of 251 full-time employees ⁴	54%	63% of companies employ 1-2 individuals	
Scottish Executive (2002)	5,500 (3,500 in executive summary)		'Significant majority' of independent companies are small one- or two-person businesses.	
Film				
Galloway (2003)	2,374	49%		44% of jobs are in Edinburgh/Glasgow
Scottish Exec. <i>et al</i> (2003)	55 employees 977 freelance		Average of 1.5 employees per company	64% of companies and 50% of freelancers are based in Glasgow
Television				
Scottish Exec. <i>et al</i> (2003)	1,312 employees 341 freelance		74.5% of companies have 1-5 employees	55% of companies are in Glasgow
Galloway (2003)	8,509 ⁵	50%		32% of jobs located in Glasgow/Edinburgh, but figure skewed by inclusion of a satellite TV company's call centre employment in West Lothian and Fife
Radio				
Scottish Exec. <i>et al</i> (2003)	1,129			64% of companies and jobs are in Glasgow

Advertising				
Creative & Cultural Skills (2006)	600			
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	3,900 ³			
IPA (2007)		49.7% ¹	Scottish IPA member agencies have an average of 34.2 employees	Only one IPA member agency located outside Edinburgh or Glasgow
Architecture				
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	8,000 ³			
Art and Antique Market				
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	700 ³			
Computer Games				
Skillset (2006)	600	17%	Includes 200 freelancers	
Crafts				
McAuley & Fillis (2002)		61%	77.5% operate as sole traders; 83.2% are micro-enterprises with 1-2 FT employees	30% are based in the Highlands and Islands
Design				
Creative & Cultural Skills (2006)	11,070			
Designer Fashion				
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	500 ³			
Music				
Laing (2000)	7,206			
Williamson <i>et al</i> (2003)	4,043		50.5% work full-time, 49.5% work part-time; 79.2% of companies have 10 or fewer full-time employees	
Creative & Cultural Skills (2006)	8,030			
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	5,300 ⁷			
Newspaper publishing and the press				
Pira International (2002)	8,800			45.4% of jobs are in Strathclyde
Public relations				
DTI & IPR (2003) ¹			Sector consists of an 'overwhelming majority of small firms'	
CIPR Scotland (2003)				76.8% of CIPR Scotland members located in Central Belt
Publishing				
Pira International (2002)	1,245 ³			68.4% of jobs are in Strathclyde
Galloway (2003)	9,387 ⁶	42%		39% of jobs are in Glasgow/Edinburgh, 18% in Dundee
Scottish Arts Council (2004)	1,258 ³		Primarily made up of owner-managed SMEs	53.5% of companies are in Edinburgh/Lothian, 28.5% in Glasgow/Strathclyde
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	9,800 ³			
Software and Computer Services				
Scottish Exec. (2006c)	19,300 ³			
Visual arts				

Scottish Arts Council (2002)		60%	38% of all visual artists in Scotland are self-employed	53% of visual artists in Scotland are based in Greater Glasgow, Edinburgh and Lothians
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Notes

1. Applies to UK as a whole
2. Sampled Scottish Arts Council core funded organisations only
3. Excludes self-employed/freelance workers
4. Independent production companies only
5. Television and radio combined
6. Includes newspaper publishing
7. Includes the visual and performing arts

