

Towards Inclusive Gatekeeping:

Developing theoretical tools for inclusion in the music industries

Abstract

There is a call for inclusion within the music industry (Leung, 2016; Udoh, 2021; Alacovska & O'Brien, 2021; Bain, 2017; Hooper, 2019). This thesis will build upon research done in different disciplines and organisations. Gatekeeping, diversity management, inclusion, intersectionality and intersectional reflexivity are discussed, defined and brought together in the field of inclusion management. A new theoretical concept is developed to serve as a method within inclusion management. This is the concept of inclusive gatekeeping. This concept is formed through in-depth literature research, close reading and a case study. Inclusion, diversity and the concept of inclusive gatekeeping within Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam are analysed. Recommendations for further research and reflections on the field of inclusion management are discussed.

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Introduction

‘The creative industries are constituted by diverse sectors, but there is an alarming consistency in the ways that women, ethnic minorities and the working class have been excluded from participating in them’ (Leung 2016, 10). Udoh (2021, 1) underlines how women within the music industry are underrepresented and work in the ‘shadows of men.’ Additionally, Alacovska and O’Brien (2021) argue that music genres are gendered and racialised. They create norms and values within the professional creative sphere that create ‘unequal patterns of access, distinction and career advancement within creative occupations.’ Genres in that sense have a negative impact on inclusion within the creative sector (Alacovska and O’Brien, 2021). Bain (2017, 2) researched inclusion and diversity within the UK music industry and concluded there is a lack of representation of women, disabled people and people with different ethnic backgrounds. Overall, there is not a lot of support towards inclusion and diversity within the UK music industry. This is illustrated, for example, by the lack of diversity and inclusion policies within music organisations. Other research done in the UK music Industry by Hooper (2019, 2) leads to the conclusion that ‘gatekeeper practise is indeed a significant cause of gender imbalance.’ Based on this, I argue there is a call for inclusion within the music industry, specifically at the gatekeeper level.

This thesis will research how inclusion can be enhanced in musical organisations like music labels, festivals, concert halls, radio stations, music studios etc. There is a Dutch website “Code Diversity and Inclusion” that is trying to make the cultural sector more diverse and inclusive. The website emphasises the need for inclusion. It is run by a diverse group of people and offers a lot of information about diversifying organisations. They offer a scan to test whether or not a music organisation is diverse and inclusive and how to possibly become more inclusive. Code Diversity and Inclusion can be seen as a knowledge library that offers clear guidelines and recommendations for music organisations to be more inclusive. The website is focused on four categories: programming, partners, employees and audience. For all the specific categories there is information about diversity and inclusion. Together with that, solutions for more inclusion are offered specified to the four different categories. They have a practical approach to enhance inclusion, based on research they did through talking to several stakeholders (Code Diversiteit & Inclusie, 2022).

While this Code of Diversity and Inclusion helps make music organisations more inclusive on a practical level, based on stakeholder research, further theoretical approaches should be investigated to add to the body of knowledge around inclusion in music organisations. These theoretical approaches can then underpin and further develop work done by organisations like the Code Diversity and Inclusion. Gatekeeping, diversity (management), inclusion (management), intersectionality and intersectional reflexivity will be conceptualised in this thesis and used as theoretical tools to look at different approaches to enhance inclusion in music organisations specifically looking at the



gatekeepers involved. Gatekeepers are the junior or senior members of staff within musical organisations that grant or block access to other employees (recruiting and gaining higher positions), musical products, organisational information and education. Diversity and diversity management have been defined and explained in relation to inclusion and intersectionality (Thomas 1996; Patrick and Kumar 2012; O'Donovan 2017; Atewologun 2018, 1; Collins, Hill & Bilge 2020, 15). Additionally, intersectional reflexivity is used within this thesis as a framework to reflect on the intersectional positionality of the gatekeepers involved in musical organisations (Jones 2010; Jones and Calafell 2012). There will be an elaboration on different identity markers, like race and gender, that might influence the positionality of people within organisations. One case study is discussed and applied to different inclusion management tools to evaluate and work toward the theoretical concept of inclusive gatekeeping. Inclusive gatekeeping will shed new light on the often access-blocking system of gatekeeping. Inclusive gatekeeping will be defined as a practice where all members of staff (especially employees working at inclusion departments) within organisations can grant access to inclusion practises and diverse employees, but also block access to practises and employees that prevent or even result in a decline of inclusion.

The main question of this thesis will be:

- What are ways in which inclusive gatekeeping, as an inclusion management tool can enhance inclusion within music organisations like Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam?

Sub-questions are:

- How has the idea of inclusion (management) been conceptualized in different fields of research and how does it relate to inclusive gatekeeping?
- In what way is an organisation like Het Concertgebouw (HC) involved in inclusion and what can be done to further enhance it?

The questions are answered through an in-depth literature review, close reading and a case study; Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. The case is discussed and analysed. This will help to get a better understanding of the concept of inclusive gatekeeping. The possible theoretical implications inclusive gatekeeping can have on the broader research field of inclusion in music organisations will be discussed as well.

This thesis will start with a theoretical framework. Followed by a methodology section that will explain more about the methods that have been used in this thesis. Then the case study will be discussed and analysed in relation to different practical theories to enhance inclusion. Furthermore, inclusive gatekeeping will be discussed and brought into relation to HC. The thesis will end with a conclusion and discussion of the findings.



Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework consists of five parts and focuses on music and non-music organisations. There is more literature available on non-music organisations. There is an entire academic field focused specifically on diversity and inclusion within organisations. Firstly, the concept of gatekeeping will be defined and explored in an organisational context. Cultural gatekeeping will be a sub-concept that can help to understand gatekeeping within music organisations. Furthermore, diversity will be defined and connected to diversity management, to tie the concept to the academic field of organisational diversity and inclusion studies. Diversity management will be connected to one of its main goals; workplace diversity. Diversity within an organisation on itself is not enough, because it only diversifies the employees, it does not, for instance, imply that the diverse employees will feel heard and included within an organisation. Inclusion is when all the diverse employees feel included, heard and equally part of an organisation. It can best be described as diversity management 2.0. Or, as this thesis poses Inclusion management. Moreover, intersectionality and intersectional reflexivity will be conceptualised. The benefits of the intersectional approach for more inclusion within organisations will also be discussed. Intersectional reflexivity will be elaborated on as a more narrowed-down concept to better understand how intersectionality can help gain more insight into the gatekeeper perspective. Finally, all the concepts will be tied together and brought into relation with inclusive gatekeeping.

Gatekeeping

Barzilai-Nahon (2009, 1) states: ‘Gatekeeping refers broadly to the process of controlling information as it moves through a gate or filter and is associated with exercising different types of power (e.g., selecting news, enforcing the status quo in parliamentary committees, mediating between professional and ethnic groups, brokering expert information.)’ They¹ wrote a literature review based on the concept and explains that gatekeeping is often researched in specific disciplines and not so often in a general sense. They, therefore, argue that an interdisciplinary review of gatekeeping is in place (Barzilai-Nahon 2009, 63). This thesis will propose different definitions of gatekeeping from different disciplines and narrow it down to a combined definition that applies to music organisations. The definitions I decided to pose are just a grasp of the wide range of definitions available. I chose to use certain definitions after extensive research because they were the most all-encompassing and useful in the context of organisational studies.

Elpers and FitzGerald (2013, 288) define gatekeeping ‘as a mechanism to determine who enters and who is barred from entry.’ They write their research from a social work education perspective and argue that there are often two perspectives on gatekeeping. Gatekeepers as people who

¹ I choose to use they/them as pronouns in this thesis when I refer to specific researchers. In this way, I can preserve an inclusive way of writing, without assuming someone’s gender.



can assist in granting access and gatekeepers as people who can assist in blocking access. It is ongoing and operates as a multi-process consisting of different procedures, strategies and interventions (Elpers & FitzGerald 2013, 288).

Dwivedu et al. (2018) describe gatekeepers as individuals or groups who control other people's access to prominent organisational positions. Vinkenburg (2017, 219) writes that gatekeepers are the leaders in positions of power within organisations that make decisions and thereby 'shape careers by selecting, promoting and supporting organizational members.' This would indicate that within organisations specifically the senior members of staff can be perceived as gatekeepers. Guldiken et al. (2019, 17) support this statement and highlight that specifically CEOs are gatekeepers when it comes to appointing a board of directors.

In research on cultural organisations, like musical organisations, the concept of cultural gatekeeping has been discussed. Erigha (2021,3) writes the following:

During the production of culture, intermediaries mediate the flow of cultural products from the initial fabrication stages through consumption stages, where cultural products reach audiences. Due to their critical role, mediators can act as gatekeepers who are critically situated to influence the manufacturing and maintenance of inequality in culture industries

Cultural mediators are the people within cultural organisations that mediate the flow of cultural products. Cultural mediators are then perceived as gatekeepers. This definition like the one given by Elpers and FitzGerald (2013) shows the two-sided position of gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are the junior or senior members of staff within musical organisations that grant or block access to other employees (recruiting and gaining higher positions), musical products, organisational information and education. Erigha (2021) emphasises the critical role of gatekeepers in enforcing inequality. It is therefore interesting to dive deeper into the definitions of diversity and inclusion, as means to prevent inequality.

Diversity Management and Workplace Diversity

Different disciplines and scholars have posed various definitions of the concept of diversity. 'Diversity refers to any mixture of items characterized by differences and similarities' as Thomas (1996, 5) described. Examples of differences are age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, values, beliefs, physical appearance, ethnicity, cultural background, education, lifestyle, social class and economic status (Norton & Fox, 1997). Patrick and Kumar (2012, 1) add some extra differences: personality, cognitive style, tenure and organisational function. There can be different degrees to which these differences impact the position of an individual within society or an organisation. In that way, visibility can play an important part when it comes to prejudice against certain differences (Milliken & Martins, 1996). Milliken and Martins (1996) make a distinction between observable differences and



non-observable differences. They can then lead to different levels and a different impact on diversity. In conclusion, differences can be subjective and multi-interpretable (O'Donovan 2017, 2).

‘Attention to diversity contributes to an organisation’s inclusionary climate, increases the innovation potential, and enriches the experiences of populations served by the organisation’ (Baker et al. 2016, 60). In this thesis, diversity will be analysed in relation to management, leading to a concept of diversity management. Diversity is in that way studied in relation to organisations, the employees, leaders and consumers that are affected by an organisation. ‘Diversity management is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued’ (Patrick & Kumar 2012, 1). Jones (2005, 170) adds that the ‘systematic and planned commitment’ of the recruitment department within a company is to recruit and maintain a diverse group of employees. The goal of diversity management is equal workplace diversity. Workplace diversity refers to all types of differences between employees within a company. (Wangombe et al. (2013, 216) say the following about workplace diversity:

It is a process intended to create and maintain a positive work environment where the similarities and differences of individuals are valued so that all can reach their potential and maximize their contributions to an organisation’s strategic goals and objectives. Diverse work groups bring high value, good reputation and high productivity to the organisation.

According to Jones (2005, 170), diversity management is a task for Human Resource Management departments within companies. Multiple ways to recruit, performance appraisal, employee development, reward and individual managerial behaviours are important to be taken into account. Diversity management does not always result in workplace diversity. Syed and Kramar (2009, 648) say that diversity needs to be enforced on multiple levels: national, organisational, and individual. Implementing diversity policies on the national, organisational and individual levels can cause workplace diversity, improved business results and social inclusion. This can then be viewed as a socially responsible approach to diversity (Syed and Kramar 2009, 648).

This thesis argues that diversity management is a way to create workplace diversity. This is so that different individuals can be part of an organisation. Different examples of identity markers that play a role when talking about diversity are age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, values, beliefs, physical appearance, ethnicity, cultural background, education, lifestyle, social class, economic status, personality, cognitive style, tenure and organisational function. A socially responsible approach can help organisations to further develop effective diversity management and create a diverse environment in which all people in society are represented.



From Diversity Management to Inclusion Management

Now that we know more about diversity management it is important to look at inclusion. What is inclusion in relation to diversity management? O'Donovan (2017, 1) poses that inclusion is diversity management 2.0. Diversity management 1.0 was all about hiring diverse employees, while inclusion is about integrating all the diverse employees into the 'social fabric of the organisation' (O'Donovan 2017, 14). O'Donovan (2017,14) mentions the following: 'An inclusionary approach to diversity management is one in which: Differences are recognized, valued and engaged [...] voices [...] are heard and integrated into decision making and problem-solving processes' (Davidson & Ferdman 2001, 130). Focusing on including employees, with their differences and similarities, through active involvement of the entire organisation is leading to inclusion, rather than just diversity (O'Donovan 2017, 15).

Shore, Cleveland, and Sanchez (2018, 178-182) make a distinction between different types of inclusion within an organisation; workgroup inclusion, leader inclusion, perceived organisational inclusion, organisational practices inclusion, and inclusion climate. Workgroup inclusion is about the degree to which individuals feel included within a workgroup. Belongingness and uniqueness are very important elements when it comes to inclusion. There should be a balance between feeling similar and being included in the workgroup. Feeling unique and able to make contributions is also important (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez 2018, 178-182). Leader inclusion is essential to the overall inclusion of employees. When a manager within an organisation reflects the inclusion goals of an organisation, the overall inclusion goals are more likely to be reached. Perceived organisational inclusion looks at how individual employees feel included within an organisation. Higher levels of perceived inclusion, result in a more inclusive climate, overall well-being of employees and task effectiveness (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez 2018, 178-182). Organisational practice inclusion is all about the way in which the organisation practices inclusion. Shore, Cleveland, and Sanchez (2018, 181) specifically note that 'A key role for organizational leaders which is emphasized, involves addressing discrimination issues in the organisation while also supporting and building a pipeline of talent among members of marginalized social groups through inclusive practices.' This points out that to reach inclusion within an organisation, different hierarchical organisational layers should directly reflect the inclusion goals of the organisation. The last type of inclusion mentioned by Shore, Cleveland, and Sanchez (2018, 178-182) is inclusion climate. Creating an inclusive climate within an organisation can lead to difficulties since many different people are working together. On one hand, these difficulties can be tackled by incorporating employees in 'decision making, equitable employment practices, and integration of differences' (Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez 2018, 182). On the other hand, one of the difficulties could be the occurrence of discrimination. Assuming that this is likely to happen, an organisation must be open to addressing and solving these issues.



Riordan (2014, 1) describes that it is often difficult for organisations to reach inclusion. They state four organisational dynamics that prevent organisations from being inclusive. ‘Broadly, they tend to stem from strong social norms and the failure to gain support among dominant group members’ (Riordan 2014, 2). The first problem they talk about is how people are more likely to like or hire someone they feel similar to. This creates a kind of similarity bias that causes managers to, for example, only promote and hire people who are similar to them. Leaders within companies need to break through this bias and reflect on the process by which someone is hired. They need to specifically assess the level of inclusion and focus on the systems that are in place within the organisation that keeps inclusion from developing. The second problem they mention is the “subtle bias.” Within an organisation, minority employees are often faced with discrimination based on the stereotyping of other employees and managers. This might result in unequal opportunities. To make sure this does not happen, it is important for managers to invest in different trainings for employees and to give all employees equal access to opportunities. Another issue that might occur according to Riordan (2014, 1-5), is conforming behaviours of the minority group to the majority group. In this way, the diverse characteristics of certain employees are less visible. This is a shame because their unique perspective and experience can be useful within the organisation. It is therefore important for managers to specifically ask different employees about their individual experiences within the organisation and encourage being different (Riordan, 2014). Lastly, Riordan (2014, 1-5) argues, that employees who are not perceived as different, or part of the majority, often feel excluded when new inclusion policies are implemented. The majority might feel excluded and unable to see why inclusion is important. Therefore, it is important to explain clearly why inclusion is crucial for everyone within an organisation and how one can benefit from it (Riordan 2014, 1-5).

Based on the literature this thesis concludes that diversity management 2.0 is inclusion management. Diversity is the start of a bigger process to work towards inclusion. Rather than just focusing on diversity within an organisation, inclusion management opens the road to integrating all the different diverse employees within the organisation. To reach inclusion, a multi-level approach is important. Inclusion goals must be implemented within different levels of an organisation. Various problems can arise when new inclusion policies are imposed. To tackle these, open communication and the inclusion of all employees are important. Training to show employees the importance of inclusion can help to integrate inclusion goals within different parts of an organisation. These aspects shift the main focus of diversity management to inclusion. I pose to use inclusion management as a theoretical tool to enhance inclusion within organisations. Diversity is then an integrated part of this area of study and often a starting point.

Intersectionality and Intersectional Reflexivity

Intersectionality is an instrument for ‘understanding boundaries and hierarchies of social life’ (Anthias 2012, 13). Different social positions relate to each other and produce social relations and lives. There



are social categories, like gender or race, that in different contexts may cause disadvantages for people. Especially, the combination of different social categories in one individual can cause disadvantages (Anthias 2012, 1-17). When it comes to using intersectionality as an instrument to understand social situations, theoretical framing, as done by Anthias (2012, 4) can be useful: 'I propose a theoretical framing which attends to different levels of analysis instead of questions about what is being referred to (social categories or concrete relations), societal arenas of investigation and historicity (processes and outcomes.)' Together with this, they argue it is important to use intersectionality within the wider social arena of hierarchy and power. In this thesis, the organisational area of investigation is most important.

'Intersectionality conceptualizes knowledge as situated, contextual, relational, and reflective of political and economic power' (Atewologun 2018, 1). Intersectionality is about the experiences of people in different social situations or organisations. It tries to contextualise different intersections in which individuals are positioned and how their positions are co-constructed (Atewologun 2018, 1; Collins, Hill & Bilge 2020, 15). For example, there can be an employee that has the male gender, identifies as homosexual and has a migration background. Depending on the social, cultural, political and organisational context, this human is more likely disadvantaged and subjected to discrimination based on their sexual identity and migration background. This example explains how intersectionality examines different intersections and how they can give a wider understanding of the situatedness of individuals within an organisation. Intersectionality tries to make these intersections, which are sometimes invisible, visible. This visibility results in more knowledge and the power to change organisational environments.

Breslin, Pandey and Riccucci (2017) researched the implications intersectionality has in research on leadership within public organisations. Often, organisations focus only on one dimension of inequality. Intersectionality offers the opportunity to also research other dimensions of inequalities that are often missed and maybe even strengthened by a one-dimensional approach. Socioeconomic status can be a source of inequalities as well. This possibly results in unequal access to leadership positions within organisations. Intersectionality can help organisations to further comply with their inclusion goals and enhance their performance. Together with this, intersectionality can uncover how leaders lead and are viewed by employees (Breslin, Pandey & Riccucci 2017, 177-178). Intersectionality can be viewed as a method to identify processes around leadership, leading strategies and experienced leadership from the viewpoint of employees.

Liu (2018, 94) argues, that when intersectionality is not implemented together with its roots of social justice, this might lead to the commodification of people with differences. It then becomes a matter, within an organisation, to have a certain amount of different employees, like with diversity management 1.0. This does not result in deeper multi-level organisational inclusion and keeps power



dynamics and systems of inequality in place. Just focusing on differences and commodifying them as such can happen when implementing intersectional practices within an organisation. Christensen (2018, 122) poses solutions for this that result in ‘a multiplicity of emerging and intersecting categories of diversity while simultaneously overriding them, thereby acknowledging difference without fixing it as such.’ The solutions they pose are about norm critique. Norm critique is a strategy in which there will constantly be critical reflections on the norms within an organisation. There is space to acknowledge differences, but not a constant focus on the different categories of being (Christensen 2018, 103-130).

The intersectional approach can move further towards intersectional reflexivity. ‘Engaging in intersectional reflexivity requires one to acknowledge one’s intersecting identities, both marginalized and privileged, and then employ self-reflexivity, which moves one beyond self-reflection to the often uncomfortable level of self-implication’ (Jones 2010, 122). The intersectional approach in Jones’ study is applied to the researcher of research. Intersectional reflexivity should be a part of the research process. It can uncover the privileges/power, and disadvantages that position the researcher and influence the research (Jones & Calafell 2012, 963). Intersectional reflexivity is an addition to intersectional research that will further ingrain the insight and importance of social positionality and its intersections. I think intersectionality should not only be used as an analytical tool for researchers, but it is also useful for all employees within an organisation to reflect on themselves and become aware of their position within a (music) organisation.

Intersectionality is an analytical approach that can identify the different intersections in which people can be disadvantaged. It is important to incorporate this approach within organisations that want to create an inclusive corporate climate. It should not be used to merely point out and emphasise differences and in that way commodify them, it should be ingrained in the deeper structures of an organisation. Differences should be acknowledged and appreciated, but not be the only point of focus. Intersectionality also offers possibilities for researchers and employees. They can use intersectional reflexivity to reflect on their personal intersections and explore how these intersections possibly influence their positionality within an organisational sphere.

Inclusive Gatekeeping

All the different concepts stated in this theoretical framework are part of inclusion management, but why are specifically these concepts important? What are the ways in which they tie together and how do they relate to inclusive gatekeeping?

Diversity management is the predecessor of inclusion management. With diversity management, the main focus was enhancing diversity within an organisation. Inclusion came to be the next step. When organisations start thinking about diversity and for instance hire diverse employees, the next step is to include them. To be able to enhance inclusion and include employees equally within



an organisation intersectional awareness is key. Knowing through which personality markers and intersections one might be marginalised opens the door for discussions and reflections on how to prevent people from being marginalised and/or even excluded. Intersectional reflexivity is the practical approach to which this can be done by anyone interested in becoming more knowledgeable about inclusion and intersectionality. Gatekeepers within organisations are the ones blocking or granting access to certain people, policies and practices. While often the gatekeeper perspective is about how people can block access, inclusive gatekeeping is more about granting access. Inclusive gatekeeping is defined as a practice where all members of staff (especially employees working at inclusion departments) within organisations can grant access to inclusion practises and diverse employees, but also block access to practises and employees that prevent or even result in a decline of inclusion. This concept can help think about ways in which organisations can grant access to diverse employees, enforce policies and practices that enhance inclusion and educate employees so that they become access granters to organisational inclusion and blockers of anti-inclusion measures. Creating an organisation with employees that are skilled and educated in enhancing inclusion can create an organisation with inclusive gatekeepers.

Methodology

This thesis is based on in-depth literature research and critical review. Literature from a wide range of different disciplines is researched and combined into a theoretical elaboration of the enhancement of inclusion within music organisations. The concept of gatekeeping serves as the starting and finishing point of this thesis. It initiated questions regarding inclusion and served in the end as a theoretical tool to further the research about inclusive gatekeeping.

The first main method is laying the theoretical basis, through reviewing different theoretical tools that can help to understand inclusion within (music) organisations. It defines and combines different sources to come to a comprehensive understanding of the implications the concepts have. The concepts are also brought together and viewed in relationship to one another. They together built the theoretical foundation that later on in the findings section will be built upon with further review. The literature is analysed through a method of close reading. Close reading, in its broadest sense, according to Jarvie (2021, 2) refers ‘to the slow and careful examination of the aesthetic properties of a text (looking closely at what is there).’ Duarte et al. (2020, 1) further elaborate that close reading is ‘an analysis focusing on the structures and patterns present in the text.’ Within this thesis, close reading enabled an in-depth understanding of the theory and literature.

All the concepts in this thesis are focused on enhancing inclusion within (musical) organisations. The concepts are therefore analysed as inclusion tools and are all part of the wider field of inclusion management. Different solutions and implementations are discussed to enhance inclusion. One case study is presented to exemplify the tools and work towards a new tool; inclusive



gatekeeping. The process of gatekeeping is viewed in relation to the different theoretical approaches. The gatekeepers are in this thesis the main actors of inclusion and are in that regard researched as such. One might pose the question if gatekeeping is not in itself exclusionary. In literature, it is often described as such. This thesis tries to shed a different light on the concept and tries to review in what ways gatekeeping can be used to inclusion's advantage. Gatekeeping is and will be present in organisations, so therefore it's useful to review how it might be used to enhance inclusion, instead of blocking inclusion.

A case study is a research method that focuses on one specific context, person or group. This case is then used as an example to generalize findings. It is a systematic approach to better understanding complex phenomena (Heale & Twycross 2017, 7). Crowe et al. (2011, 1) continue that a case study tries to obtain 'an in-depth, multifaceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context.' A case study exists out of multiple steps; defining the case(s), selecting the case(s), collecting the data, analysing, interpreting and reporting on the case(s) (Crowe et al. 2011, 6-8).

In this thesis it was decided to pick one case study; Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. This is a renowned concert venue. The data from the organisation is gathered through their website and other publicly available online sources. It is important to mention that what this organisation publishes publicly on their website is not always an accurate representation of reality and is often part of a marketing strategy. To take this into account, other publicly available information about Het Concertgebouw has also been reviewed and incorporated into the thesis.

Findings

Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam (HC) will be described and analysed regarding the literature discussed above and some additional literature that offers some practical ways in which organisational inclusion can be enhanced. The theoretical tools behind the inclusion strategies within this organisation will become clear. Inclusion management will serve as a way to analyse the case study. Inclusive gatekeeping will be applied to the case study and result in further reflections.

Case Study: Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam

Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam is a world-renowned concert venue with more than 900 activities per year including concerts, educational projects, and private events. Cressmann (2016) states that Het Concertgebouw exists since 1888 and is in the worldwide top three concert venues with the best acoustics.

Public and private funds generate the main income of HC. HC is a limited liability company. Only about five per cent of HC's annual income is issued by the Dutch state (Het Concertgebouw - organisatie, 2023). To get certain subsidies in the Netherlands as a musical organisation, like HC, it is mandatory to work with the Code of Diversity and Inclusion (Code Diversiteit & Inclusie, 2022). This



implies there is a growing importance within the Dutch musical sector, governmental culture and organisational culture for diversity and inclusion. The Amsterdam Municipality partially subsidised HC, because they are involved in enhancing inclusion. Together with this, the main funding of HC is donations from organisations, foundations and individuals (Het Concertgebouw Fonds, 2023).

As their mission HC states ‘Het Concertgebouw connects and enriches people with a sublime musical experience’² (Het Concertgebouw - organisatie, 2023). In the section where they discuss their vision, they continue ‘Het Concertgebouw wants to be accessible to everyone with its unique building and high-quality programming. We are striving to write musical history and keep on being a part of the world-renowned concert venues’ (Het Concertgebouw - organisatie, 2023).

On the website of HC, there is a large amount of information available about their inclusion and diversity statement and strategy. They want to create a safe and inclusive environment for their employees, performing artists and audience. They state that everyone is welcome, whatever their age, background and musical preferences may be. Additionally, they want to create a working environment where all employees can be themselves. They have policies in place regarding diversity and inclusion based on the recommendations of the Code of Diversity and Inclusion. They also formulated and signed the charter diversity from the organisation SER diversity in-company³. Through this, they commit themselves to effectively enhancing their diversity policies. In this charter they pay specific attention to attracting and keeping (culturally) diverse employees, creating awareness within the organisation around diversity and inclusion and creating an inclusive working environment with diverse teams. Also, some attention is paid to how leaders within the organisation are role models when it comes to inclusion and diversity. Their behaviour will be mirrored towards employees. The general manager of HC made a statement on their website regarding diversity and inclusion (Het Concertgebouw – Inclusiviteit en diversiteit, 2023):

Everyone that is connected to or affiliated with Het Concertgebouw, needs to be able to be themselves. Only then there is a safe environment where everyone feels at home and appreciated. From my position as a General Manager, I see it as my responsibility to together with my colleagues work on creating an inclusive culture where we can accept and respect each other just the way we are.⁴

HC held an interview series to discuss how Het Concertgebouw and the world of classical music can be more inclusive. All the interviews will be published in a book. They also have a podcast in which they discuss forgotten black composers within the classical music arena. Many events that they planned are visibly focused on creating more representation of different people with different

² Translated from Dutch

³ Translated from Dutch

⁴ Translated from Dutch



backgrounds. For instance, they have a remembrance concert for the abolishment of slavery in the Netherlands (Kulturu: Keti Koti herdenkingsconcert - Het Concertgebouw, 2023). On top of that, they also published an interview with their manager diversity and inclusion. The manager explains how HC wants to focus on creating a culture where inclusion is incorporated. They state ‘What matters is creating a culture where inclusion develops. A culture where everyone, regardless of one’s background, will be appreciated, and where talent will be recognised and acknowledged’⁵ (Houtman, 2022).

De Amsterdamse Kunstraad is an independent advisory committee. They advise the managers of the Amsterdam municipality about many different topics relating to the arts and culture. They evaluate different art forms and through that advise about fitting strategies for art organisations (Amsterdamse Kunstraad, 2023). They wrote a report about Het Concertgebouw Amsterdam in 2020. They state that the existence and continuation of HC are very important. The value of HC is unparalleled, specifically when it comes to classical music (Kunstraad 2020, 207). They also explain that Het Concertgebouw is the biggest musical venue in Amsterdam for classical music and therefore of great importance to Amsterdam. They welcome professional and amateur artists and invest money in educational programs. De Kunstraad furthermore states that the way the organisation operates and is managed is an example of other musical venues in the city (Kunstraad 2020, 208-211). A big part of the report is the evaluation of the diversity and inclusion policies of HC. HC has become more aware of the importance of inclusion and created a plan to improve inclusion. De Kunstraad nonetheless states ‘The intended activities are so incidental and generic that a dedicated and sustainable diversity and inclusion policy is barely evident’⁶ (Kunstraad 2020, 210). HC does not have many culturally diverse employees. They do not, for financial reasons, want to hire more people, which makes it a challenge, but not impossible to create a more culturally diverse environment. The supervisory board is also not culturally diverse. De Kunstraad emphasises that because of the cultural diversity within Dutch society, it is necessary for the future of HC to get a more diverse audience. Paying more attention to this is evident. Moreover, they argue that getting advised by other cultural organisations with different audiences than HC ‘is the first step towards actual diversity and inclusion policies’ (Kunstraad 2020, 211). In the business plan of the organisation, no distinction is made between the different social-economic backgrounds of non-western audiences. Non-western is put on the same line as a specific social-economic background, which is a preconception, according to de Kunstraad (2020). De Kunstraad would like to see a more diverse spectrum of musical styles. There is no fitting strategy for that, which results in HC only having a mainly ageing audience. De Kunstraad does state that they understand that moving towards changes in the area of diversity and inclusion can be difficult for a big organisation like HC. Nonetheless, they state that with the budget HC has, it should be

⁵ Translated from Dutch.

⁶ Translated from Dutch



possible to make some measurable changes (Kunstraad 2020, 212). It is important to take into account that this report is written in 2020. Several changes have occurred, like hiring a diversity and inclusion manager. This is the most recent report available, but can still be used to get more insight into how diversity and inclusion can be enhanced in organisations like HC.

Het Concertgebouw and practical theories

Diversity management is in this thesis understood as a tool in inclusion management's toolbox. Diversity management is a great starting tool to mainly reach workplace diversity. This is focused on incorporating diverse employees within an organisation. However, this can also be a part of the practices within an organisation, as discussed in research done by Abbazio, Boddie and Ogihara (2022, 377-378). They talk about how music libraries have been trying to diversify more and show different musical voices. Curating diverse and equal music is a challenge and is something that should be researched more by academics. Observation and reflective strategies are important when implementing diversity curating in music libraries. It is relevant to motivate people and administrators to invest more money in diversifying music libraries. There should be collaboration and interdisciplinary efforts, to together show a wide range of musical voices (Abbazio, Boddie & Ogihara 2022, 377-378). What a music library is can be interpreted in different ways. However, the most important thing is the way in which a wide range of music is presented, and specifically the differences in artists that are represented. HC directly programmes artists and looking at their website they try to do this in an inclusive way. HC tries to bring forth musical products (musical voices) in a more inclusive manner, focusing on space-making for underrepresented and diverse people. This does seem different than a few years ago when the report of de Kunstraad was written.

A wide range of musical voices can be compared to a wide range of organisational voices that like to be heard. McDonald (2015, 325) writes about organisational communication from a queer perspective. 'Organizational communication research that is rooted in queer theory can expose previously hidden insights about organizational life—especially since queer theory enables us to engage with what is often considered as unspeakable, taboo, and even radical ideas and constructs.' Queer theory helps communication systems within organisations to reflect from a new perspective on the normativity that is present within the communication of an organisation. Queer theory supports the intersectional approach in that it helps to question the multifaceted construction of beingness within an organisation and therefore within the communication of an organisation (McDonald 2015, 325). HC focuses on educating people in and outside their organisations. Reflection on the importance of diversity and inclusion seems to be present on their website and there are specific departments in the organisation that focus on diversity and inclusion. The queer perspective can be an interesting addition to the reflections, considerations and education that is happening within HC.



Shore et al. (2017, 185) created a model to increase inclusion within organisations. In the model, it becomes visible that it is important that the management of a company is invested in taking steps towards inclusion. This encourages employees to move towards more inclusion as well. It is very important that specifically underrepresented people are included in the organisation so that they can contribute equally to the larger organisation. 'In a world of increasing change and complexity, diversity provides the variety of perspectives and experiences that can benefit organizations and the communities in which those organizations reside' (Shore et al 2017, 186). Van der Hamsvoord (2021, 40) researched what managers and employees think will help create a more inclusive climate within an organisation. Managers mention that it is important that inclusion will be part of different policies within organisations. They also mention they as managers can start conversations around inclusion. Employees think it is important that managers are more invested in what is happening within different layers of an organisation. Managers should put more effort into getting to know diverse employees and talk and listen to them more carefully. More information about inclusion and diversity is useful for the entire organisation and when steps towards inclusion are taken, it is important that managers communicate this towards the employees (Van der Hamsvoord 2021, 40). HC tries to focus on diversifying the employees within the organisation when reading its website. They try to incorporate different voices in the workplace and they acknowledge the importance of leadership in enhancing inclusion. HC tries to enhance inclusion and workplace diversity throughout all levels of the organisation.

Kipnis et al. (2021, 145) write about how there are three aspects that keep diversity and inclusion goals from being successfully implemented within an organisation. Cultural-cognitive aspects and shared meanings, normative aspects, and regulatory aspects help to support the existence and or transformation of institutions. To help with the implementation of inclusion management, actors within organisations should gain more knowledge about the subject and share this knowledge within the company to gain more acceptance. Furthermore constructing identities specifically for professionals that try to implement inclusion measures is important, just like establishing departments specifically focused on inclusion. Changing normative perspectives and associations within organisations is also relevant to create an open environment in which there is room for questioning and reflection on norms (Kipnis et al. 2021, 154). Establishing departments focused on inclusion can create gatekeepers who try to expand access to inclusion enhancing on multiple levels. In HC this is present. HC has a manager who focuses on diversity and inclusion within the entire organisation. However, this manager only started to work there last year. Having an entire team might be better so that a more diverse group of employees can reflect on and discuss diversity and inclusion.

Therefore, it is also interesting to look at the importance of the national context when it comes to the susceptibility of organisations to successfully implement inclusion measures. Stroemer et al. (2016) researched the influence of national culture on inclusion climate. They conclude that indeed



there is a relationship between the cultural assumptions and values within a national culture and the extent to which inclusion measures can be implemented into societal (and possibly organisational) structures. Stroemer et al. (2016,19) in short, propose:

Cultural values of low power distance, high collectivism, low uncertainty avoidance, low masculinity, high long-term orientation, and high indulgence serve as a conducive context to effectively implement diversity and inclusion management practices and create inclusion climates.

They also looked at the tightness and looseness of cultures and the way that influences the effectiveness of inclusion implementations. The looseness or tightness within cultures is about the level of tolerance when people deviate from societal norms. A loose culture would be a culture that is tolerant towards deviating away from social norms, and a tight culture is the opposite (Stroemer et al. 2016, 17). It cannot be said that tight cultures are more difficult when implementing inclusion practices. It can be beneficial to implement inclusion measures within a tight culture, especially if there is a low power distance and/or a small amount of uncertainty avoidance. However, if a tight culture is more individualistic it can be more complex to implement inclusion measures. In loose cultures, cultural values are often not perceived as so important. Individual values are more significant when it comes to inclusion management. Focusing on changing these individual values can lay the road to implementing inclusion measures (Stroemer et al., 2016). This research makes it interesting to look at the context in which HC is operating. Creating inclusion climates can be very important in enhancing inclusion. HC is situated in the Netherlands and can be described as a loose culture according to (Stroemer et al., 2016). It would then be interesting to focus on changing individual values to more easily implement inclusion measures. This is when one assumes that the cultural values of national culture are similar to values within organisational climates. This is certainly not always the case, especially if the organisation works internationally. Within the Netherlands, there is more attention being paid to diversity and inclusion, specifically looking at the music industry and governmental funding. This influences HC directly, through governmental subsidies and reports like the one from de Kunstraad.

One of the educational resources that can be used within organisations is created by Thomas et al. (2021, 1-13). Thomas et al. (2021, 1-13) researched how employees can be trained in intersectionality, an important tool within inclusion management. He developed an educational training package for organisations to increase knowledge about inclusion and intersectionality. The package is called the intersectionality walk (IW). The IW is an educational training in which employees can experience the importance and impact of intersectionality. It practically demonstrates the different dimensions of being, how they intersect and how that can lead to possible disadvantages. When awareness is created, knowledge is shared to structurally change organisations through inclusion (Thomas et al. 2021, 4).



‘An individual’s increase in awareness, and understanding of intersectionality, empathy for others, and the acknowledgement of one’s role in promoting intersectional practice, lead to positive changes in redressing to institutional structural barriers, systems, and cultures’ (Thomas et al. 2021, 11). Thomas et al. (2021, 1-13) describe how inclusion and intersectionality should be implemented together and need each other to make structural changes within organisations. The IW is a way of promoting the intersectional approach within the minds of employees. The IW can be an interesting educational training for employees of HC.

Bain (2017, 2) brings inclusion management back to the context of music organisations and concludes that organisational support from managers is very important in creating a more diverse and equal working environment. Together with that, he offers seven recommendations to create a more diverse and inclusive working environment within music organisations.

1. Skills within the organisation to create more inclusion; ‘1. Promoting the business case for diversity 2. Creating policies to improve the overall gender balance within the sector 3. Creating policies to improve the overall ethnic balance within a sector 4. Supporting women into management 5. Improving HR planning and diversity management 6. Providing additional support (e.g. for child care) and flexibility to enable wider labour market access’ (Bain 2017, 78).
2. Creating a charter organisation with multiple music organisations that try to create more inclusion and diversity within the music industry is beneficial.
3. Getting subsidised training for musical organisations about diversity and inclusion is another way to create more inclusive work environments.
4. Diversity and inclusion policies should be implemented throughout the entire hierarchy of the organisation. This should often be reviewed and deeply embedded within the organisational structure.
5. Setting up a way to monitor the developments around diversity and inclusion within the company.
6. Freelancers and musical organisations should all be part of the charter for music, together they should take an effort towards diversity and inclusion.

Bain’s (2017) recommendations are very comprehensive. When looking at HC, not all of Bain’s recommendations can be properly discussed, due to a lack of information. One of the interesting recommendations of Bain (2017) is creating or becoming a member of a charter organisation with multiple (music) organisations that want to enhance inclusion. HC is part of a charter organisation that



tries to enhance inclusion. This charter is called SER Diversity in-company⁷ and is something that organisations can sign to show they are committed to increasing workplace inclusion. It is a place where knowledge is gathered about workplace inclusion and organisations get support and access to a relevant network. The charter signed thousands of organisations throughout Europe (Diversity at Work, 2023).

Inclusive Gatekeeping and Het Concertgebouw

When painting a picture of the way Het Concertgebouw is involved in inclusion two main sources stand out. The report of de Kunstraad in 2020 and the website of HC in August 2023. Looking at the website of HC much has changed since the report of de Kunstraad. However, the changes that seem to be visible are public knowledge and are part of a marketing strategy. Therefore, it is important to take this with a grain of salt. Inclusive gatekeeping within HC will be discussed based on both sources to get a broader and more realistic picture of the inclusion culture.

Inclusive gatekeeping is defined in this thesis: as a practice where all members of staff (especially employees working at inclusion departments) within organisations can grant access to inclusion practises and diverse employees, but also block access to practises and employees that prevent or even result in a decline of inclusion. In the report of de Kunstraad (2020), it is clearly stated that aside from an inclusion plan, not a lot was done to enhance inclusion within HC. They emphasised that HC is the biggest venue in Amsterdam for classical music and is world-renown. This, therefore, underpins their gatekeeping function within the Amsterdam (and Dutch) classical music scene. Even going as far as an international gatekeeping function, because so many international artists are being booked there. HC has the financial means to enhance inclusion and so should they if they want to expand their audience. Inclusive gatekeeping is here only present in a few employees that created a plan for inclusion. It seems as though inclusion is not integrated into the entire organisation at all, because employees are not culturally diverse and the non-western audience is even viewed with preconceptions. There is more gatekeeping in the sense of blocking access to inclusive measures than granting access. With an impact on Amsterdam, the Netherlands and even the world. When moving towards inclusion, the impact of inclusive gatekeeping, and granting access can be as impactful, if not more, as blocking access. HC has the capability of becoming an inclusion example and leader within the world-renown concert venue scene, just as the Dutch and Amsterdam scenes. Maybe after 2020, they were more on the way to realising this.

The website of HC in August 2023 sheds a different light on the inclusion measures taken. There seems to be more awareness, education, the programming is more diverse and there is even a diversity and inclusion manager. This manager is an inclusive gatekeeper, managing all the inclusion measures taken within HC. Hiring a diversity and inclusion manager also implies within HR and other

⁷ Translated from Dutch



parts of the organisation there were employees and or managers trying to grant access to more inclusion. It is difficult to say based on their website if the audience has become more inclusive. Diversity and inclusion are more on the agenda of Het Concertgebouw than before. Hiring a diversity and inclusion manager implies that they decided to invest more financial means into enhancing inclusion. However, the downside of instating a manager of diversity and inclusion can be that inclusion and diversity become the job of just one person. While effective diversity and inclusion within organisations is a process of policies and reflections where everyone should be included in. To begin with, it is important that the diversity and inclusion manager is part of all the different layers of the organisation, participating in different debates to get as many employees as possible on board when it comes to inclusion. Enhancing inclusion is also about including everyone in the process itself. It is important for HC to make sure they educate all their employees about inclusion and make sure there are policies in place to hire and include diverse employees. When all employees within HC are part of enhancing inclusion, they are all inclusive gatekeepers, granting access to more inclusion. Inclusive gatekeepers are also able to block access, specifically to policies and/or practices that prevent the enhancement of inclusion. Gatekeeping is then an active instrument fuelling inclusion.

Conclusion and Discussion

Diversity and diversity management offered a great start to better understand how inclusion can be enhanced. However, diversity management and workplace diversity by itself is not enough. Creating an organisation with diverse employees requires in-depth measures to make sure that everyone within an organisation feels included and heard. This requires a constant movement towards inclusion and reflection (O'Donovan, 2017). Inclusion management would be the field of research where different tools and measures can be researched and implemented. Diversity is a part of inclusion and therefore diversity management is part of inclusion management. The other concepts in this thesis; gatekeeping, intersectionality and intersectional reflexivity are all tools, in inclusion management's toolbox.

Moving back towards the case, HC has people in place that are specifically hired to improve diversity and inclusion. Making inclusion someone's job can be a very impactful way to enhance inclusion (Kipnis et al. 2021). When there is a department or employee specifically focusing on inclusion they can be viewed as inclusion gatekeepers. They can be the ones to grant access to certain inclusion measures and block access to measures and policies that will keep inclusion from enhancing. The depth and the way these gatekeepers are involved within an organisation (granted access by other gatekeepers) influences the amount of inclusive gatekeeping they can actually practise.

Inclusive gatekeeping is not only present in employees that are hired to focus on inclusion. Inclusive gatekeeping starts with all the people within an organisation that can make decisions that influence inclusion. Different studies present the importance of multi-level implementation and making sure all leaders are on board and ready to enhance inclusion (Shore et al. 2017; Hamsvoord



2021; Bain 2017). Depending on the organisational structure, leaders often have more influence and power than other people within the organisation. This also impacts their ability to gatekeep. They will be more likely able to enhance inclusion through their inclusive gatekeeping. This does not change the fact that in the end, everyone is to some degree a gatekeeper. This thesis argues that the inclusive gatekeeping that can happen within an organisation can be all about granting access to the enhancement of inclusion and blocking access to the decline of inclusion. In this way more diverse people can be hired within an organisation and incorporated in implementing and reflecting on inclusion. When the path towards inclusion is open within an organisation, different policies, training and reorganisations can be developed. It is, however, also relevant for further research to dive into more methods that can help move beyond organisational challenges that prevent inclusion measures from working. Different challenges were described by Riordan (2014), like similarity bias or conforming behaviour from the minority group to the majority group. Overcoming these challenges can strengthen the different approaches posed in this thesis. When all employees within an organisation see the importance of inclusion, no matter who they are, they can all become inclusive gatekeepers.

On the website of HC, there is clear communication to the wide world: they are involved in inclusion. It is important to take this message with a grain of salt and also reflect on the way de Kunstraad (2020) expressed their thoughts around diversity and inclusion in HC. In HC it became apparent that they seem to have a focus on hiring diverse employees and incorporating them more, together with inclusive programming of diverse artists. This is also because there has been more focus within the Dutch music industry and Dutch government on diversity and inclusion, looking, for example at the Code of Diversity and Inclusion. This also brings it back to Stroemer et al. (2016) who researched the connection between national culture and the degree to which inclusion measures can be successfully implemented. Through this, further education can be started around learning more about different cultures and countries. More research into the relationship between national culture, organisational culture and inclusive gatekeeping is recommended.

Inclusive gatekeeping can be an addition to music organisations according to this thesis, but is likely to be an addition to other organisations as well. Further research into this topic is recommended. This thesis is laying a theoretical basis, that can lay the foundations of practical research. Getting more information about the practical dynamics that revolve around inclusive gatekeeping can be useful. Inclusive gatekeeping can be a tool within inclusion management to think about gatekeeping as a way of granting access. It is an instrument and a way of acting within an organisation. Everyone within an organisation can be a gatekeeper, but only the people deciding to enhance inclusion can be inclusive gatekeepers. Different trainings, like the one created by Thomas et al. (2021) can bring inclusive gatekeeping to employees. The dynamics behind the Intersectionality walk they created can be explained through intersectional reflexivity. This is very important to effectively practise inclusive



gatekeeping. It is not just reflecting on the self and one's intersections, it can be about thorough reflexivity about the marginalisation and privilege one might be subjected to (Jones, 2010). Further research into intersectional reflexivity as a tool to enhance the process of inclusive gatekeeping is suggested.

Inclusive gatekeeping is best viewed, like inclusion, as a process. There is no finish line. It is an ongoing practice of enhancement and reflexivity. The degree to which someone is an inclusive gatekeeper can differ per situation and decision that is made. More research can help to better understand this dynamic and grasp how inclusive gatekeeping can really be embedded in the working lives of employees. The recommendations posed by Bain (2017) are the most comprehensive when enhancing inclusion within (music) organisations. The recommendations they state can offer a more practical overview of what measures will enhance inclusion and perhaps also create more inclusive gatekeeping processes.



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