



Women representation on radio

A study across the United Kingdom,
Germany, France, Italy and Denmark.

© World Airplay Radio Monitor, November 2020

The data used for this analysis is provided by WARM.

All additional sources are referenced at the bottom of each page throughout the report.

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INTRODUCTION

Lately, several reports have been published addressing gender inequality in the music industry. In January, for instance, the USC (University of South Carolina) published its third annual report titled "Inclusion in the Recording Studio?"¹, an article funded by Spotify and conducted by USC's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative which examined the gender and race of content creators across 800 top songs from 2012 to 2019. Moreover, the "Gender Disparity Radio Report"² was published last August, a study which analyzed the 20 most-played British acts across British radio stations in the period of June 2019-2020, and the top 100 radio airplay chart in 2020. Both papers concluded with the inexorable assertion of the existence of a gender disparity in the music business.



Under this premise, this report aims to study female artist representation on radio in order to see if there is something such as a gender gap and if so, to identify where it stands. Through this report, the position women occupy in relation to men in the music industry, particularly on radio (AM, FM and online), will be carefully analyzed to establish an objective portrait of how the music industry is built.

¹ Wang, A. (2020, January 29). Here's How Overwhelmingly Male the Music Industry (Still) Is. Retrieved from <https://www.rollingstone.com/pro/news/heres-how-overwhelmingly-male-the-music-industry-still-is-940255/>

² Snapes, L. (2020, August 21). Female British artists underrepresented on UK radio, survey finds. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/aug/21/female-british-artists-underrepresented-on-uk-radio-survey-finds>

INTRODUCTION

To do so, this report will focus on the share of female versus male performers in the top 100 songs for five specific countries: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, and Denmark. Each country has been carefully selected as their data is considered to be representative enough to help to depict the scene.

This data in turn will be obtained from WARM (World Airplay Radio Monitor). WARM has a powerful software that tracks radio plays of any song in real-time, using Audio Fingerprint and Music Recognition Technology. Every song gets its own unique fingerprint which WARM matches with the music playing on radio stations around the world. The algorithm behind this is powered by MusicDNA.

The analyzed data will comprise the first six months of the present year 2020, from the 1st of January to the 30th of June, and will revolve around three specific variables: share of artists classified by gender, the gender of the artists occupying the highest positions in the ranking, and most popular male and female artists. Note that WARM acknowledges “non-binary” as a legitimate gender and guarantees it is part of their outlook. However, for this particular report, the categories considered are “female”, “male”, and “mixed collaborations (male-female)” aiming to highlight the gap between women and men.

The report uses a measure defined as the “final score”. A number from 100 to 1 is assigned to every song in the Top 100 ranking - being 100 assigned to the most played one, and 1 to the least. Then, all the data is added up according to the gender-defined categorization: male, female, and mixed collaborations (male-female) to create a score. As there are more men in the ranking than women, the final result will have a deviation which needs to be corrected. To do so, each score is divided respectively by the number of men, women and mixed collaborations that make up the Top 100 songs ranking. The value obtained from this calculation, the “final score”, shows the punctuation of female acts versus male acts.



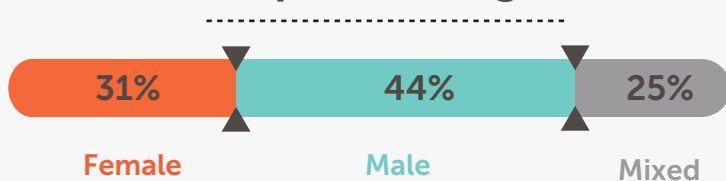
UNITED KINGDOM



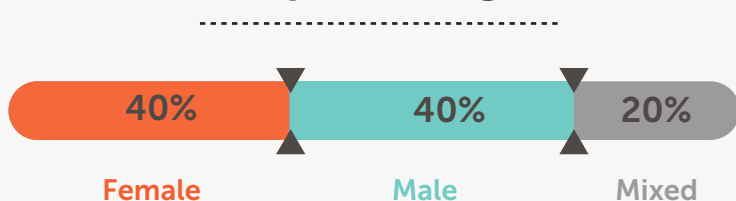
The United Kingdom has the biggest music industry in Europe and the third biggest in the world, right after the United States and Japan according to the IFPI's (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) annual Global Music Report³. It has contributed to the sector with a great variety of genres and female voices like Amy Winehouse, Adele, Dua Lipa, Leona Lewis and Emeli Sandé - who in 2013 became the UK's biggest-selling artist, overtaking The Beatles who had held the title for fifty years.

Despite the so talented list of female British artists, there is a difference between the way men and women are represented in the industry and on the radio. According to WARM's data, the share of female singers in the Top 100 songs in the first half of year 2020 is 31% against the 44% of male artists. As the analysis zooms into the Top 50 and Top 10 songs rankings, the share of female singers increases- being equal to 40% in the Top 10 songs.

Top 100 songs



Top 10 songs



Leona Lewis



Dua Lipa



Emeli Sandé



Adele



Amy Winehouse

Despite male artists being more played on the radio than female artists, when narrowing the scope to the higher positions, Top 50 and Top 10 songs, the male percentage increases by only 2 percentage points, while the female increases by 9 percentage points, up to 40%. This means that although there is fewer female than male artists among the Top 100 songs, women manage to achieve the top positions in the rankings.

Interestingly, during the last years the number of collaborations between artists has increased. As seen at WARM's data, 25% of the songs in the Top 100 ranking were mixed collaborations (male-female). Moreover, collaborations are still more common between men than just between female-only acts. This was stated in an article published in February 2019 titled "Pop music's growing gender gap revealed in the collaboration age"⁴ by the BBC which analyzed the Top 100 songs in the UK in 2018.

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DUA LIPA

According to WARM's data, the most popular female artist in the Top 100 songs is Dua Lipa. She leads the ranking with her second album "Future Nostalgia" which was released in March 2020. As published by *NME magazine*⁵, in an interview with *The Sunday Times* when asked about the music industry she stated "there is a lot less scrutiny of male pop stars". She appears four times in the ranking, right after British artists Ed Sheeran and Sam Smith, the latter being self-defined as non-binary, who appear five times each. According to UK music industry licensors PPL (Phonographic Performance Limited)⁶, Ed Sheeran was also the most played artist during last year (2019), this being the fourth time he has received that recognition in five years.

4X IN TOP 100 RANKING



Dua Lipa

⁴ Youngs, I. (2019, February 19). Pop music's growing gender gap revealed in the collaboration age. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-47232677>

⁵ Aubrey, E. (2020, March 30). Dua Lipa on gender disparity and sexism in music: "There is a lot less scrutiny of male pop stars". Retrieved from <https://www.nme.com/news/music/dua-lipa-on-treatment-of-women-in-music-industry-2636900>

⁶ Ariganello, M. (2020). Ed Sheeran named the UK's Most Played Artist for the 4th time in 5 years. Retrieved from <https://www.ppluk.com/ed-sheeran-named-the-uks-most-played-artist-for-the-4th-time-in-5-years/>

GERMANY



As published by MBW⁷ (Music Business Worldwide), Germany's recorded music industry has managed to bounce back after two years of decline. The country's recorded music revenues have grown 4.8% during the first six months of 2020 due to a huge continued growth of music streaming. Germany has therefore, consolidated as the fourth biggest music industry in the world, only preceded by the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Radio in Germany is divided between public and private channels. This last group has proliferated during the last years. According to Statista⁸, the number of private channels has increased from 8 in 1987, to 262 in 2019. The presence of private channels limits both programs and playlist diversity meaning that national and international artists tend to be broadcasted on public radio stations which hold the right to decide the content offered to the listener. According to WARM's data the most played female and male artists in the Top 100 are Ava Max, with her song "Salt", and Justin Bieber, with "Yummy".

The most played female and male artist in the Top 100



Ava Max

"Salt"

Justin Bieber

"Yummy"



Ava Max



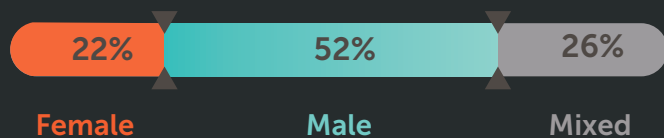
Justin Bieber

⁷ Ingham, T. (2020, September 01). Despite pandemic, Germany's recorded music revenues grew 4.8% to \$856m in the first half of 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/positive-signs-germanys-recorded-music-revenues-grew-4-8-to-856m-in-the-first-half-of-2020/>

⁸ Koptuyug, E. (2020, September 22). Public and private radio stations in Germany 1987-2020. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/382993/radio-public-and-private-stations-germany/>.

When comparing the share of female singers in the Top 100 songs to the share of male singers, the difference is surprising. Only 22% of the Top 100 songs are performed by female acts, whereas 52% are performed by male artists, more than twice over the women's share, and just a 26% by mixed collaborations (male-female). In the Top 10 songs, women's share increases by 4 percentage points, to 26%, and the male's share decreases by 3 percentage points, to 49%. Even though Germany presents a big gender gap, when looking at the highest 10 positions, women manage to move up fewer seats when compared to the UK.

Top 100 songs



In Germany, the female final score introduced earlier is 54 points whereas the male is 53 points. This exemplifies the above mentioned tendency. Women, although considerably less in number, lead the rankings.

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Germany presents a big gender gap when looking at the highest 10 positions, when zooming into the Top 10 songs, women's share increases by 4 percentage points from 22% to 26%.

Top 10 songs



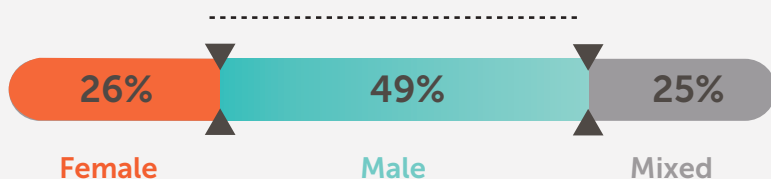
FRANCE



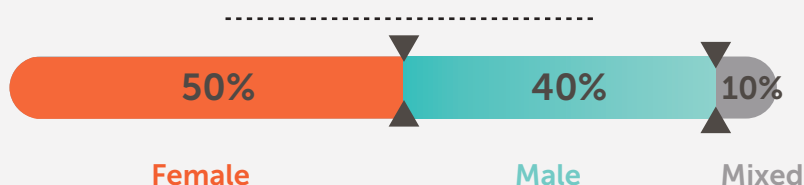
According to MBW⁹ (Music Business Worldwide) the recorded music market in France has grown 0.4% in the first six months of the year 2020. Although it is clearly a minor growth, it is remarkable as it forms part of a global trend. As published by the IFPI¹⁰ (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry), the total recorded music industry revenues generated in France have increased by 1 million Euros in 2020 compared to 2019.

According to WARM's data, the share of female singers in the Top 100 songs in France in the first half of the year is 26%, against 49% of male singers. When narrowing the analysis to the Top 50 songs, the female share rises to 32%. The difference is even broader when focusing on the Top 10 songs. Female acts encompass a 50% while the male share decreases to 40%. Once again, the number of female acts is notoriously inferior when looking into the Top 100, but as the focus reduces in size women head up the top positions in the ranking.

Top 100 songs



Top 10 songs



⁹ Stassen, M. (2020, September 21). France's recorded music market generated revenues of \$305m in H1 2020. Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/frances-recorded-music-market-generated-revenues-of-305m-in-h1-2020/>

¹⁰ IFPI (2019). Global Music Report https://www.ifpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Global_Music_Report-the_Industry_in_2019-en.pdf



Camila Cabello



Lady Gaga



Khalid



Ed Sheeran



AVA MAX

Two of the most played female singers in the Top 100 songs are Camila Cabello with her hit "Liar" and Ava Max with hits like "Salt" and "Torn". As for Ava, she has become one of the latest rising stars of the music industry. Max became famous two years ago after the release of her breakthrough single "Sweet but Psycho", which immediately topped the charts in 20 countries including France. Early reviews have compared her to other female artists like Lady Gaga, but as she recently declared in an interview with *The Sun* newspaper's Bizarre column¹¹ "I think a lot of people compare me to her because I have blonde hair and I make pop music, which is so weird. People shouldn't compare women that much [...]".

ED SHEERAN

Regarding men, the most played singer in the Top 100 is Ed Sheeran. As in the United Kingdom, he has become one of the most popular male singers in the country. He stands out of the ranking for his collaborations with other artists like Khalid with "Beautiful People", Camila Cabello and Cardi B with "South of the Border" and Justin Bieber with "I Don't Care". Ed Sheeran is preceded in the list by Colombian singer J Balvin with hits like "Loco Contigo", a collaboration with The Black Eyed Peas and Norwegian singer Kygo who brought Whitney Houston's voice back to life in his song "Higher Love".



THE MOST PLAYED SINGER



¹¹ Showbiz, B. (2020, September 17). 'People shouldn't compare women': Ava Max on Lady Gaga comparisons. Retrieved from https://www.contactmusic.com/news/people-shouldn-t-compare-women-ava-max-on-lady-gaga-comparisons_6322992

ITALY



CAMILA CABELLO

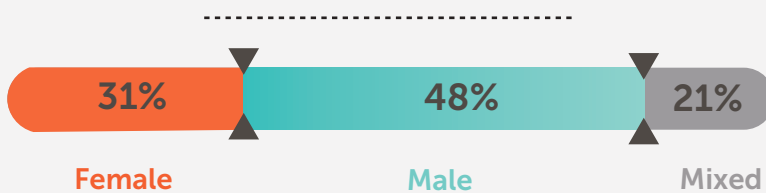


Camila Cabello

The Italian music industry is an emerging business which continues to grow. According to Music Business Worldwide¹², in 2019 Italy was the twelfth biggest record industry in the world. In the first six months of 2020, Italy's recorded music industry has generated 2.1% more revenue than in the same period of 2019.

According to WARM, the share of female singers in the Top 100 songs is equal to 31%, being the male share equal to 48%. When zooming in into the Top 10 songs, the difference is quite noticeable. The female share almost doubles itself, up to 60%, and overpasses the male share by 20 percentage points.

Top 100 songs



Top 10 songs



This scenario is best depicted in what has been named as the final score. According to it, women have nearly 54 points; they overpass men by almost six points. As previously mentioned, this means that although in general terms there are fewer women in the top songs, they overpass male artists in terms of ranking position. The female artist who leads the charts is Camila Cabello who appears up to four times in the top 100 songs ranking with songs like "Liar" and collaborations like "My Oh My" with American singer DaBaby.

4X IN TOP 100 RANKING

¹² Ingham, T. (2020, September 22). Italy's recorded music industry grew 2.1% in H1 2020, with streaming up 26.4%. Retrieved November 09, 2020, from <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/italys-recorded-music-industry-grew-2-1-in-h1-2020-with-streaming-up-26-4/>

...although in general terms there are fewer women in the top songs, they overpass male artists in terms of ranking position.

J-AX

Surprisingly, Italy is the first non Anglo-Saxon country in this study to have a native speaker singer among the most played male artists in the Top 100 ranking: J-Ax. This is a remarkable fact as neither Germany nor France have a national singer leading their charts. But this is strictly related to the policies Italian government is implementing in the national media. According to an article published in *The New York Times*¹³ in February 2019, the rightwing League MP Alessandro Morelli submitted a bill in the Lower House requiring one in three songs played by radio stations in Italy belong to Italian artists. The aim of this policy, as declared by Morelli, was not to forbid foreign music in the country, but to help promote the Italian culture.



ALESSANDRO MAHMOUD

This came after Italian-Egyptian singer Alessandro Mahmoud won Sanremo Music Festival in February 2019 with his hit "Soldi" ("Money"), a non-traditional Moroccan-pop song. According to *Time Magazine*¹⁴, his victory quickly became a cultural turning point in Italy's polarized climate about immigration as the country's leading politicians were the first who expressed their dissatisfaction on social media. This opened a debate about the need to protect music from lobbies and especially from political interests.



Alessandro Mahmoud

¹³ Horowitz, J. (2019, March 31). Italian Minister Pans Hit Song by an Immigrant's Son. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/31/world/europe/italian-minister-pans-hit-song-by-an-immigrants-son.html>

¹⁴ Webster, J. (2019, September 11). What Italian-Egyptian Mahmoud's Success Says About Italy. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5673880/mahmood-eurovision-italy/>

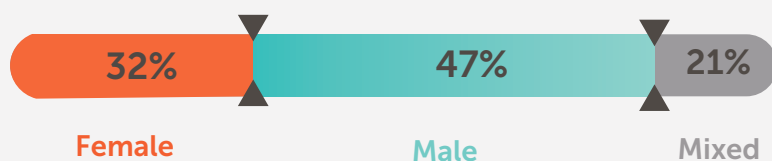
DENMARK



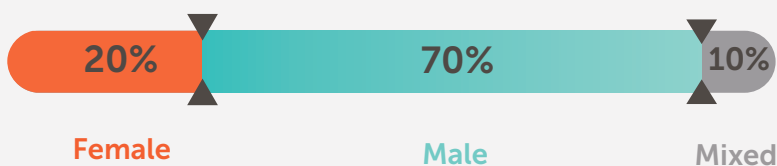
Music in Denmark became institutionalized in the XIX century, according to European models, and so the industry started to develop under the shelter of private associations. However, this model broke around 1930 when new communication channels like radio were created, then live music started to slowly get replaced by recorded music first, and later on by streaming music.

According to *Statista*¹⁵ in its report "Digital recorded music revenue in Denmark 2013-2022", the digital recorded music revenue in the country in 2017 amounted to roughly 740 million Danish kroner, almost 100 million Euros, and will, according to the forecast, increase to almost 1 billion Danish kroner in 2022, approximately 135 million Euros.

Top 100 songs



Top 10 songs



Top 10 songs



Denmark is the only country analyzed in this study that does not follow the general tendency. The share of female singers in the Top 100 songs is notoriously lower than the share of male artists, 32% and 47% respectively. When zooming into the Top 50, unlike in other countries studied in this report, the share of male artists increases much more than the share of female artists. The difference is even bigger when analyzing the Top 10 songs. The share of female acts dramatically decreases to 20% and the male share almost doubles.

Justin Bieber



According to this data, as the focus narrows from the Top 100 ranking to the Top 50 and Top 10, the male share increases, reaches and overpasses by far the share of female artists. This is very surprising because the difference between male and female share in the Top 100 is not as broad as it is in other countries like Germany or France where the deviation is about 30 and 23 percentage points respectively.



Dan + Shay

5x
ranked in
top 100 positions

Regarding the most repeated artists in the ranking, when looking into the female category, Ava Max with "Kings and Queens" and Clara with "Nobody's Lover" own the female representation; their songs are the ones that appear the most in the Top 100 ranking, four times each. Among the male artists, Justin Bieber leads the ranking. He appears five times with his hit "Yummy" and collaborations like "Intentions" with rapper Quavo and "10,000 hours" with duet Dan + Shay.



Clara



Ava Max

CONCLUSION

Aiming for a clear view of the female representation on radio, this report compiles data from the 1st of January to the 30th of June 2020 for 5 European countries, representative of the music industry: the UK, Germany, France, Italy, and Denmark. After seeing the results of this analysis, it can be concluded that there exists a gender gap on the radio. Hereby with proven data from WARM, this report makes the following statements in order to dispatch the current scenario.

Male singers are more represented on radio than female singers in all European countries analyzed in this report. Overall, taking into consideration the three selected categories, female, male, and mixed collaborations, the share of male artists in the top 100 songs ranking is higher than the female share. Although the gap between the share of males against females is not necessarily broad in all countries, the analysis shows an important disparity mainly in Germany and France, where there is a difference of 30 and 23 percentage points, respectively. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Italy show a smaller gap of 13, 15, and 17 percentage points respectively.

Female artists manage to be more represented in the top positions even though there are more male artists in the overall ranking in all countries, except in Denmark. When zooming into the top 10 songs ranking, compared to the top 100, the female share increases and, even overpasses, the male share. As expressed before, Denmark doesn't follow the same tendency: in the top 10 ranking women's share is only 20% while men's is 70%.

While for men to reach the top 100 songs positions is easier than for women, it is the lack of opportunities for more women to reach these same charts, the main issue this report shows. Nevertheless, it is remarkable how, despite being much less represented in the top 100 songs on the radio across these five countries, women manage to secure the highest positions in the ranking.



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