We Should All Be Filmmakers

An Explorative Research On Contemporary Gender Representation in Film Festival Programming in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

In the age of globalization and digitalization, the demand for universal representation in media is evident. However, women and queer people still face extreme underrepresentation in the film industry, both on-screen and off-screen. This topic has been on the public agenda for decades and mainly discussed within the realm of Hollywood. This research analyses in what ways film festivals contribute to the progress towards a gender inclusive film industry. More specifically, this study focuses on diversity and inclusion of gender through representation in contemporary cinema as part of seven Dutch film festivals. The aim of the research is to explore the programming dynamics of film festivals in the Netherlands and the ways in which they contribute to social change. The film programmer is an interesting research subject because of their expert knowledge, gatekeeping position and behind-the-scenes practice. The main research question this study strives to answer is as follows: To what extent do Dutch film festivals take gender representation into account in the curation of their film programmes? Sub-questions that are considered in the research process are: What programming strategies do festivals apply to achieve a representative film programme? What are the different motivations film festivals have to strive for gender equality? What are the implications of these measures? These research questions are answered by means of in-depth interviews with festival programmers, complemented by content analysis. The main conclusion that is drawn from the data is that Dutch film festivals and their programmers share a collective awareness on the representation of gender. The results show that the festivals have adopted their own strategies to become more gender inclusive. As legitimizing institutes, they take their responsibility to increase the visibility of marginalised gender identities. This research illustrates how film festivals and their programmers are catalysts for social change towards gender equality.

KEYWORDS: film festivals, film programming, gender inequality, gender representation, gatekeeping

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The fight towards gender parity in the film industry has known a long history. Like many other fields, the international ecosystem of cinema is dominated by a homogeneous group of people, consisting of mostly white heterosexual men. Since the global distribution of media images and rise of third-wave feminism, discrimination and underrepresentation in media has become part of public debate. The past years were marked by revelations of sexual harassment in the entertainment industry among others. At the centre of attention were the numerous allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein in 2017, unfolding in international outrage and disrupting the dynamics of the film industry. This scandal instigated feminist grassroots movements like MeToo and Time's Up. Through different platforms, women expressed the need for better working circumstances, equal pay and inclusive hiring processes behind the scenes, but also the authentic portrayal of characters and representation of diverse stories on screen.

The shift in momentum is also reflected in the realm of film festivals, quintessential events in the circulation of cinema. Over the past years, several festivals have faced criticism for not including women, queer people and people of colour in their selection. Research shows that over the past 10 years, there was no major market festival that delivered a gender-balanced line-up (Lauzen, 2019). In 2019, Cannes Film Festival represented thirteen female filmmakers in its official selection. Only four female directors were selected to compete for the Palme d'Or, a poor record for the most influential film festival in the world (Clarke, May 13, 2019). Cannes was heavily criticised for giving their honorary award to Alain Delon, a director who was accused of sexist comments and violence against women (Keslassy & Lang, May 6, 2019). Sadly enough, French-Senegalese Mati Diop made history as the first black female director to win an award, receiving the Grand Prix for her film *Atlantic*. Venice Film Festival came under fire for excluding female directors from its competition in 2018, as for the second year in a row, only one of the 21 pictures nominated was made by a woman (Vivarelli, August 10, 2018).

Some festivals, however, have made considerable developments towards gender parity. In 2018, Sundance dedicated 37% of their line-up to women, 57% of the awards went to female filmmakers and 35% went to filmmakers of colour (Lauzen, 2019). The proportion of women in Toronto's line-up has grown from 22% in 2013 to 36% in 2018, considerable progress (Erbland, September 5, 2018). The Berlin Film Festival set a record concerning female representation in 2019, as seven of the seventeen competition entries was directed by women. Their selection committee consists of 53% of women and their honorary awards were handed out to two female icons, Charlotte Ramping and Agnes Varda (Grenier, February 6, 2019). These festivals not only represent women in behind the scenes of their festival, they also push them forward in

prominent places in their programme.

The launch of the 5050x2020 gender parity pledge for film festivals, initiated by the French organisation Le Deuxième Regard, was a pivotal moment. The pledge was introduced during Cannes in 2018, when 82 female filmmakers walked the red carpet to protest against the lack of female representation in the industry. Jury president Cate Blanchett and director Agnes Varda gave the following statement: "Women are not a minority in the world, yet the current state of our industry says otherwise. As women, we all face our own unique challenges, but we stand together on these stairs today as a symbol of our determination and commitment to progress" (Lang, April 18, 2019). The pledge strives for equal distribution of power in all dimensions of the film industry by 2020. By committing to the pledge, festivals promise to commit to the following practices: compiling statistics on the gender and race of the directors of all films submitted; being transparent about the members of the selection, programmers and programming committees; and achieving gender parity in all bodies of the organization, including the executive board and directors (5050x2020 Website, 2019). That the pledge does not concern mandatory quotas. Rather, they encourage festival organizers to change gender disparity focusing on a representative programme that is able to spark up dialogues and social awareness. Multiple film festivals have signed the gender parity pledge, including Cannes Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, Berlin International Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival and International Documentary Festival Amsterdam.

The amount of conversations, studies, campaigns, pledges and events dedicated to women in the film industry has significantly increased over the last few years. Despite the growing awareness and attention, underrepresentation of gender and race in the film industry is continuous and these developments have yet to make a significant impact on the industry power's structure. Creating an inclusive environment seems to be an unfathomable objective that no one wants to take responsibility for. However, film festivals as legitimizing exhibition institutes have the power to stimulate this social change. This research explores the progress made by film festivals towards gender representation, by analysing the programmes and programming decisions of seven film festivals in the Netherlands. Not only is programming the main activity of the film festival, it is also a practice that takes place behind the scenes. The programmer holds the gatekeeping power between the production and consumption of cinema. The programming of films that contest heteronormative ideas of gender could be a catalyst for changing the norms and values of contemporary society. Research on this topic could be useful not only to create awareness but also to gain insight into what stage of the process the industry is currently in and how it can grow from there in the future.

This research is academically relevant for several reasons. Firstly, De Valck (2007) confirms that academic knowledge on film festivals is lacking: "Despite their obvious importance in various areas, film festivals have seldom been the topic of academic research. Press coverage on film festivals is omnipresent, but it often fails to provide us with an encompassing cultural analysis of the phenomenon that transcends the individual festival editions, both historically and on a contemporary level" (p. 14). Although gender inequality in media is a widely researched topic, the connection to film festivals is rarely made by academics. Secondly, most of these studies provide quantitative data on gender representation in film and film festivals. Much less been qualitative research has been done on film festival programmes and their socio-political value. According to Bosma (2017) programming as the curation of the moving image is a distinct and significant area of research. Hayes (2016) adds that "the absence of critical texts that specifically address the role of programming and curation at film festivals, archives and independent movie theatres leaves a sizable void to be filled within the sectors of both film and curatorial studies" (p.261). Moreover, research has been focus mainly on the representation of women. From my perspective, contemporary gender representation should consider both gender identity and orientation. This research will give new insight because of its intersectional approach to gender representation. This entails an inclusion of not only women, but also genderqueer people. Finally, this research is relevant both socially as academically because to see whether the Weinstein scandal and subsequent movements have had any impact on the interpretation of gender roles in the practice of film programmers. Therefore, it will be interesting to look at how the perception of gender roles in the film industry has changed in the last few years.

The aim of this research is to explore the extent into which film festivals take on measures to fight against gender inequality in the industry. The main research method used to investigate film programming dynamics is in-depth interviews with film programmers. Additionally, content analysis on the film festivals' policy and programmes is applied to substantiate the results from the interviews. These methods will be applied to answer the following research question: To what extent do Dutch film festivals take gender representation into account in the curation of their film programmes? Sub-questions that are considered in the research process are: What programming strategies do festivals apply to achieve a representative film programme? What are the different motivations film festivals have to strive for gender equality? What are the implications of these measures? The results assumed to find will be that most festivals have taken measurements to give more space for female filmmakers as well as diverse characters in their programming. Considering the influential position film

festivals have in the film industry, it seems inevitable for them to not adapt to social and political changes. The manner in which film festivals implement these measurements, however, are expected to differ depending on the film festival's identity and the personal values of the programmer.

In the following chapters, an overview of the current debate on gender inequality in the film industry will be created. The next chapter provides a contextual framework of existing academic theories, introduced and analysed through the reflection of relevant literature. The following scientific areas will be reviewed: gender studies, feminist film theories, dynamics of film festivals and film programming, gatekeeping and agenda-setting. The third chapter carefully explains the methodological guidelines that were followed during the research. The fourth chapter contains an elaborative review of the findings gathered from the data collection. The chapter includes an individual analysis of the seven cases, a comparison of the most remarkable findings, a connection of the detected patterns to the theoretical concepts, and closes off with strategic recommendations for film festivals. Finally, a summary based on the most significant findings will be put in conclusive perspective and answers to the research questions will be provided.

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2. Theoretical Framework

Prior to empirically analysing the complicated relationship between film festival programming and gender representation, a contextual framework of theory will be provided. In order to give context to the theoretical concepts, relevant academic literature will be discussed. For a better overview, the literature is categorized into different themes and topics.

2.1 Gender Inequality & Feminism

Historically, gender inequality has been present in various bodies of society, like the workplace, government, education, arts, religion, law and family (Lorber, 2010). Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, but comes in different forms, depending on cultural demographics. Sen (2001) confirms: "Gender inequality is not one homogenous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and inter-linked problems" (p.446). Discrimination of gender intersects with other oppressed demographics, like race, class, age, disability and sexual orientation. A short introduction on the women's movement and relevant forms of feminism will follow.

Over the course of history, the definition of feminism remains subjective, ambiguous and evermore changing. What should be noted is that feminism is a complex construct that is extremely dependent on social, economic and cultural context (Lorber, 2010). Feminism by contemporary definition is "the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes" (Taylor, 2017, p.276). Feminism as a social movement arose in the early 1900s, promoting and demanding gender equality in all dimensions of society (Lorber, 2010). The historical evolution of feminism is often referred to in periodical waves (Cochrane, 2013). Within the third and fourth waves of feminism, different forms of feminism were established, of which only the ones that are relevant for this research will be discussed.

As a counter reaction on the somewhat radical and misandrist thoughts of second-wave feminism, third wave feminism emerged in the 1990s. Third wave activists take on a more sex-positive approach as they consider gender equality to be the norm and reject the idea that women are oppressed by men (McRobbie, 2004; Lindsey, 2015). This movement was based on the challenging ideas about gender, sex and sexuality. They dismiss the duality of women and men, female and male and homosexual and heterosexual. Rather, they support inclusivity because of the many different forms of gender and ways to express masculinity and femininity (Lorber, 2010). This idea of feminism challenges the socio-historical associations of femininity with weakness and subordination and celebrates women's agency and female sexuality. Lindsey (2015) describes third wave feminism as there is "no universal feminism and women

define for themselves what it is and what it can become. Despite the lack of a common definition of feminism, third-wavers tend to focus on the intersection of gender with race, class, and sexuality in both scholarship and activism" (p.157).

Intersectionality arose during the third wave, emphasizing the way in which different system of oppression, such as race, class, sexual orientation, age, religion and disability, overlap with gender (Lindsey, 2015). This contradicts the ideologies of first and second wave feminism, which mainly focused on creating opportunities for educated, middle class, white women. It started as a criticism of the exclusion of black women and the lack of gender transcending demographics in earlier feminist movements. Intersectional feminists disregard the idea that women are a homogeneous group of people that share the same characteristics and same discrimination (Budgeon, 2011). The term intersectionality was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, in relation to identity politics and violence against women of colour: "Race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination - that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242).

Another third wave theorist that has shaped the interpretation of gender, is Judith Butler. Her work *Gender Trouble* (1990), fundamentally changed the way we now look at masculinity and femininity. According to Butler, gender is a social construct that society assigned to intrinsic biological features of the human body. She questions heteronormative sexism that rules society and acknowledges the battle that people who live outside of gender norms have to face. Performative roles of femininity and masculinity are paired with norms and expectations that are reproduced by society (Butler, 1990). In contrast to the binary division of gender that dominates patriarchal societies, intersexuality refers to gender as a spectrum of ambiguity and fluidity (Butler, 1990). *Gender Trouble* was an important source for the development of queer theory, which debates the notion of gender, sexuality and identity. Queer is an overarching term for gender communities who are not heterosexual or cis-gender, including transsexuality and intersexuality. When talking about gender representation, the focus lies on creating an environment that includes all kinds, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. An intersectional attitude is essential in researching representation and inclusivity in contemporary society, however, due to limited resources this research focusses on women and queer people.

At the beginning of 2000, a neoliberal approach to gender and sexuality emerged, resulting in Post-feminism and Neoliberal feminism. According to McRobbie (2004), third-wave feminism must go beyond its political and oppressive movements and endorses "a new regime of sexual meanings based on female consent, equality, participation and pleasure, free of

politics" (2004, p.260). Post-feminism focuses on the self-exploration of young women, disciplining their bodies and identities. However, these independent disciplines are framed by the values of an individualist, consumerist and neoliberal governance (Budgeon, 2011). In *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism* (2018), Rottenberg explains how the popular Western perspective on feminism actually tends towards supporting the traditional patriarchal capitalist society. Neoliberalism advocates a free market system providing economic freedom resulting in greater choice and agency for each individual, including women (Rottenberg, 2018). This should help to undermine patriarchal and sexist norms, however, as McRobbie wrote, this approach has been appropriated and shaped by current capitalist culture. It is considered a 'hyper-individual' feminism in which women are entitled to their own experiences, devaluing the socio-economic and cultural structures that shape women's lives and neglecting feminist key values of social justice and liberation (Budgeon, 2011).

The Marxist idea that social inequality, in the form of oppression of gender, race and class, is reproduced by capitalist society, has also been touched upon by feminist scholars (Ferguson, 2016). The theory of social reproduction understands the production of goods and services to be part of an integrated process of a capitalist society, one that fosters social inequality. Feminists have developed their own theorisation of social reproduction, one that explores the relationship between oppression and exploitation in patriarchal capitalism. Introduced by Connell in the early 1980s, hegemonic masculinity is defined as a practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society: "Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i.e. things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Conceptually, it explains how and why 'masculine' men maintain dominance over women, and other gender identities, which are perceived as 'feminine' in a given society. This relates to gender stereotypes expressed in ways of behaving based on society's expectation. The capitalist society provides a cycle pattern of hegemonic masculinity that results in a continuation of the subordination of men over women. This socio-economic approach on power structure was derived from Marxist theorist Gramsci, who introduced cultural hegemony in analysing power dynamics among social classes (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Emphasized femininity, on the other hand, focuses on the compliance to patriarchy and suggests female behaviour and traits that complement male authority (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Dominant gender roles are often visible in mainstream media. Film is an instrument that can break these stereotypes, and thus influence society's expectation of gender. This theory will be useful in the analysis of changing gender representation in film.

Simultaneous to the rise of the digital era, critics and academics state we have entered the fourth wave of feminism a several years ago (Cochrane, 2013). Media and the Internet influence the construction of feminism, which results in an ever more changing and a re-evaluation of the term feminism online and offline. Hamad and Taylor (2015) confirm this by stating: "Discursive struggles over the meanings of feminism are now, perhaps more than ever, largely staged in and through media culture" (p.126). With the internet enabling people to act on issues instantly, new campaigns for the socio-political cause of equality pop up weekly, #MeToo being the most popular one of recent years. Women's participation in networking through social media platforms has stimulated online activism and public attention. On the contrary, new media are critical in the framing of feminist issues and vitalize a digital form of sexism and misogyny, making a contemporary version of the feminist movement necessary (Taylor, 2017; Cochrane, 2013).

2.2 Feminist Film Theory

Like mentioned above, feminism was influenced by the rise of the Internet and globalisation of media images. Along with the rise of these movements, feminist film theory originated in the early 1970s and focuses mainly on the different ways women are represented in film and the way this relates to a socio-historical context. While feminism aspired to increase the agency of women, film studies acknowledged the power of equal representation of gender in popular culture (Torchin, 2015). Contemporary cinema has become a space where feminist debates about gender, representation and identity take place, as both on-screen as well as off-screen, women have been a marginalized group within the film industry. Women are often typecast, sexually objectified, marginalized and assigned to lower level jobs and rewarded lower payments (Tuchman, 1979). The disproportionate division of gender in the film industry does not reflect the heterogeneous audience of cinema. Murphy (2015), who analysed how culture influences the changing discourse on gender representations in film, confirms: "The characters on-screen are out of touch with the gender demographics as well as the ethnographic makeup of moviegoers" (2015, p.10). This subchapter illustrates how the politics of gender operate within the current media landscapes and how feminist theorizing shapes academic inquiry of these landscapes.

Multiple studies show that women, queer people and racial minorities are structurally underrepresented in film and white men are vastly overrepresented in film. Martha Lauzen conducted extensive qualitative research on both on-screen and off-screen representation of women in the film industry, to find that this is still a man's world. She discovered the amount of screen time given to female characters is growing very slowly, accumulating to 35% in the top

grossing films of 2018 (Lauzen, 2018). Besides, cinema has had a long history of stereotyping both men and women. Multiple studies show that men are more likely to be portrayed in work-related situations, expressing ambition, dominance, leadership, power and confidence. Female characters often lack depth and complexity as they are confined to roles of the mother, wife, caretaker or love interest or sexual object, expressing dependence, passiveness and quietness (Lindsey, 2015; Lauzen, Dozier & Horan, 2008). Smith (1999) states that "filmmakers' minds must be changed, or this stereotyping will go on forever" (p.15). Contemporary filmmaking does take on an alternative perspective on gender. Nevertheless, the successes of films with a strong female lead, like Hunger Games and Wonder Woman, has led to a growing misconception about the actual status of women in film. These films might stimulate the idea that women are being equally represented in film, while in fact, they are still extremely underrepresented (Murphy, 2015). Smith (1999) stresses that even films with strong female leads that deviate from gender stereotypes can still lead to cliché or commercial motivations.

Feminists did not only critique the gender stereotypes that dominated in cinema, but also the objectification and sexualisation of women in film. Frederickson and Roberts (1997) developed research on the Objectivation Theory in which they suggest female identity as a shared social experience, as "women are constantly exposed to the objectification of the female body and often internalize the observer's gaze, which affects their mental health" (p.13). In an essay named *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* from 1975, Laura Mulvey, a feminist film critic, introduced the concept of the male gaze. This popular concept still used today, proposes a way of seeing women from a male perspective, often related to the multimedia objectification of women. Historically, visual images of women have been made by and for men, which suggests a heteronormative view that reinforces the secondary and inferior social position of women. The male gaze is constructed by the person behind the camera, characters in the film and the spectator. Mulvey (1975) states: "In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*" (p.62). It is the combination of the patriarchal society and the pleasure act of voyeurism, that cinema reproduces female subordination (Mulvey, 1975).

In the contemporary discussion on film and television, the term 'female gaze' is often used to describe a new aesthetic that female filmmakers take on. Jill Soloway (2016), director of successful shows *Transparent* and *I Love Dick*, notes that it is not the exact opposite from the male gaze. The female gaze is not about the placing of women in masculine characters, rather, it conveys more nuanced perspectives and complex characters:

The female gaze is a way of feeling seeing, it can be thought of as a subjective camera, one that attempts to get inside of the protagonist, particularly, but not always, when the protagonist is not a cis-male. It uses the frame to share and evoke a feeling of being in feeling rather than looking at the character. So I take the camera, and I use it to say to my audience: 'I'm not trying to show you this thing, I really want you to feel it with me'. (Soloway, 2016)

Representation of gender behind the scenes of the film industry is as disproportionate as on-screen representation. Bielby and Bielby (1996) researched the labour market of screenwriters for feature films, using longitudinal data on the careers of these writers. They detect a model of cumulative disadvantage, meaning that throughout the careers of men and women, the pay gap grows. They conclude: "The institutionalisation of male dominance of the film industry in the 1930s and the typecasting of women writers has had a lasting impact on gender inequality, which shows little change through the early 1990s" (p.248). Lauzen has tracked off-screen employment in the film industry for more than 21 years in an annual study called *The Celluloid Ceiling*. Her latest report shows that in the top grossing films of 2018, the proportion of female producers, directors, writers, editors and cinematographers was 20%. Comparing this to the figure of 1998, the first year this research was done, there is a growth of 3% (Lauzen, 2019).

Corresponding research by Lauzen (2018) looks at the employment of independent films screened at high-profile film festivals in the US. The findings show that women make up 26% of key roles working on narrative features and 34% of documentaries in 2018. This is a little higher than the top-grossing mainstream films, which should be taken into account in the research approach (Lauzen, 2018). A more recent study by 5050x2020 analysed the representation of female directors in Cannes' selection from 2006-2016. From the 2066 people who made a film during those years, only 23% were female. There is a small growth in the proportion of female filmmakers from 2006-2016, but it is not significant. Furthermore, male filmmakers are more likely to receive new directing projects, as the amount of films corresponds with the male filmmakers' career path, it does not however for female filmmakers. Not only were female directors underrepresented, but the ones that did get the chance to direct a film also received a significantly lower budget (5050x2020 Website, 2019).

Mulvey and Rogers (2015) express the necessity of the contemporary approach on feminist film theory, as the traditional theory in this field is homogeneous in the sense that it is

mainly focused on Hollywood, and excludes racial and class dynamics. Feminist film theory should thus evolve alongside the developments of feminism. Mulvey (2015) emphasizes on the "ways in which the cinema has and might still function as a social and symbolic terrain which to decipher the fluctuations in the meaning of femininity across differing ideological and economic contexts" (p.20). Research shows female and queer presence in film as well as working on film is slowly increasing, even though in many cases this perspective is still mediated by a male gaze. Films made by women and queer people offer an alternative to traditional cinema and have the ability to portray these groups more realistically. Feminist film theory should continue to analyse these developments in the context of contemporary society.

2.3 Film Festivals & Film Programming
Gender representation in the film industry is a widely analysed in journalism and academia, but seldom was the influence of the film festival mentioned in research. Festivals have become an increasingly popular means through which people experience culture. Instead of regarding festivals as merely periodic events, they have become a staple in people's cultural consumption. Even though festivals have the ability to stimulate tolerance and to connect people, they may also reproduce social inequalities and social exclusion.

Film festivals foster international traffic of cinema through temporary events, usually taking place in one city. These events are important for a number of reasons. First of all, they serve as an exhibition space for filmmakers with new titles. Festival screenings are open towards the public and the press, determining which films are worthy of international distribution (Stringer, 2001). Film festivals have enormous outreach and stimulate audience engagement through active viewing experiences. Secondly, the international nature of film festivals provides an opportunity to experience other national cultures from the filmmakers' perspective. Filmmakers tour past various international film festivals to showcase their new film to a diverse cultural audience (Stringer, 2001). Thirdly, a festival contributes to the local economy and urban development of a city, as it attracts many visitors that stimulate localized cultural consumption. Stringer (2001) summarizes the legitimacy of film festivals as follows: "Festivals are significant on regional, national, and pan-national levels; they bring visitors to cities, revenue to national film industries, and national film cultures into the world cinema system" (p.134).
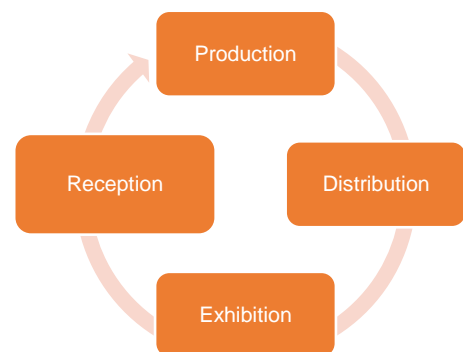

Figure 1: Circulation of film

Film festivals function as certifying institutes that influence the whole cycle of film. De Valck (2007) refers to festivals as sites of passage where a process of cultural legitimization takes place. According to her, festivals are of vital importance for the production, distribution and consumption of both international independent cinema and Hollywood blockbusters. The most famous film festivals are Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance and Toronto (De Valck, 2007). These high-profile festivals play a large role in national and international film culture, attracting attention from industry, press and the public to independent and international films (Czach, 2004). The screening of a film on a film festival has a significant effect on the attention, reception and reputation of the film, and is hoped to result in sales, international distribution deals, the interest of talent agents and critical capital. The latter one refers to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and is gained through the approval of festival programmers, critics and jury (Czach, 2004). Films that receive a considerable amount of success in the film festival circuit, are likely to become part of the canon of cinema (Czach, 2004).

According to Bosma (2017), each film festival has a unique character and historical background: "A film festival is to be characterized as a dynamic meeting where the current state of cinema culture temporarily crystallizes through the dense presentation of selected films, at a demarcated place and limited time span" (p.30). Turan (2002) makes a division of festivals with business, aesthetic and geopolitical agendas. De Valck (2007) explains the agenda-setting nature of festivals as "the dynamics between unequal opinion makers and their products, which leads to a transfer of opinions into dominant topics" (p.157). In other words, by selecting and showcasing films with specific socio-political values, festivals have the ability to draw people's attention to certain topics. Independent programming by film festivals is a value-adding process influencing the film, the festival and the public agenda. In the late 1960s, major festivals changed their selection procedures and started programming themselves instead of letting nations send entries. Programming has become one of the core businesses of international film festivals since the seventies (De Valck, 2007).

This research will focus particularly on the selection and programming process of film festivals. Bosma (2015) refers to film programming as a phenomenon of curation that is a central activity of film exhibition. Film programmers are 'custodians of cinema culture' in the sense that they decide which film productions worth seeing on the big screen. The acclaimed position of the film programmer revolves around selecting films, from a big offer collected from several sources (Bosma, 2017). The behind-the-scenes selection process of programming continues the whole year and builds up in the months preceding the festival. Czach explains the challenging and dynamic nature of the programming profession:

I got paid to watch movies and discuss them with my film obsessed colleagues. I met filmmakers, producers, actors, and other members of the creative teams. I travelled to other festivals and cities to preview films. My programming decisions and the films I advocated helped shape national film culture. During the festival I introduced films and facilitated question-and-answer periods, I attended parties and dinners, and I accompanied celebrities down the red carpet. The months of hard preparatory work melted away in the euphoria of those fast-past adrenaline-filled ten days. (Czach, 2016, p.196)

Czach (2016) goes on to note the downside to the labour of film programming, which involves the intensive assessment of a large number of films, as well as the emotional process of rejection. The critical commitment of programmers is necessary for a festival to prosper (De Valck, 2007).

Quality assessment of films is a subjective evaluation, guided by both personal and professional taste of the programmer (Bosma, 2017). Moreover, the festival's image and identity are taken into account when curating a programme. For the major festivals this means ensuring that there are enough established auteurs participating, enough premieres of big commercial movies out of competition, and a strong national presence, as well as maintaining the more elusive identity markers such as political awareness, artistic accomplishments, ground-breaking quality, and reacting to current global issues (De Valck, 2007). Through the main activity of programming, the film festival adheres towards an art-for-arts' sake ideology expressed in the festival's commitment to cinema. On the other hand, they foster commercial relationships with market professionals through business and entrepreneurial activities (De Valck, 2014).

Due to digitalization, media entertainment has shifted from offline to online screens. This has resulted in increasing importance of film festivals and cinemas as legitimized exhibition spaces (Stringer, 2001; De Valck, 2007). The unlimited availability of audio-visual products that circulate globally, signifies the influential position of the programmer. In this day and age, the programmer has the responsible task to select films from an endless pool and compose a programme that should be relevant for an audience who has many alternative options (Bosma, 2017). In the mediated world we currently live in, the film programmer functions as a professional mediator of cultural products. The critical insight, understanding and taste of the film programmer are determining factors of what the public gets to see. In this context, the everlasting relevance and pleasure of presenting films on the big screen in cinemas have to be

promoted through festivals with unique programmes.

The current academic literature focuses on festivals' ability to programme films instead of merely exhibiting them, as one of the more defining elements of film festivals. However, the value-adding process of film festival curation in relation to socio-political agenda-setting lacks understanding. According to Czach (2004), the manner in which "film festivals make their selections and the repercussion of these choices are complex yet under-examined phenomena" (p. 77). People seem to acknowledge the positive effect of high-profile festivals on a film's success, but only a few understand the mechanics of the selection process (Czach, 2004). This makes the phenomenon of curating film festivals and exploring the developments in the field of an alluring research topic.

2.4 Gatekeeping & Political Agenda Setting

Bosma (2017) names several gatekeepers within the film industry: sales agents, distributors, critics and programmers. The process of film programming, as described above, is considered a gatekeeping process (Bosma, 2017; Czach, 2004; 2016). Through inclusion and exclusion of certain cultural products, film programmers function as intermediaries with deciding-making power that influences the canon of cinema (Staiger, 1985). The phenomenon of gatekeeping was first introduced by Lewin in the 1940s, evolving in a popular concept widely researched in communication, media and journalism (Vuorinen, 1997). The gatekeeping theory was used to explain the selection process and route of news texts from the producer to the user. Vuorinen (1997) defines gatekeeping as "the process of controlling the flow of information into and through communication channels. The controlling function is carried out by gatekeepers located in certain strategic areas, or gates, in the information channel" (p.161). Gatekeepers determine what messages and products enter the consumption patterns of the public.

Although the theory originated in fields of news and journalism, similar selection processes take place in the cultural industry systems, including motion pictures (Hirsch, 1972). Janssen and Verboord (2015) note that one of the most significant practices that cultural mediators take on in the gatekeeping process is 'selection from the supply'. In this case, the festival programmer as an experienced, curious and critical observer of film, is the cultural intermediary that navigates the selection process from a broad pool to a festival curation, connecting networks of production and consumption. Consumers trust these inconspicuous gatekeepers to support cinematic quality in the era of unlimited choice. Furthermore, Janssen and Verboord (2015) mention the various motives of these selectors: "Driving forces behind gatekeepers' decisions range from political and moral concerns, commercial interests, to 'purely'

aesthetic motives. In most cases, they consist of a mixture of these" (p.4).

Existing literature on gatekeeping and canon formation in film focuses mainly on recognition by critics. Even though their influence on global success should not be neglected, it must be noted that before a film reaches a critic, it is already pre-selected by a film programmer. The influence of the gatekeeping nature of film programming is of great importance. Film programmers of film festivals select films with a certain message or moral to create awareness on social issues. Subsequently, critics evaluate these films, looking for new and innovative styles, genres, talent and waves, potentially set a political agenda (De Valck, 2007).

The stories told and themes addressed in films, will potentially influence the way people look at the world. Although the direct effect of mass media continues to be an ambiguous research case, many studies support the significant impact of media on people's perspective. McCombs and Shaw (1972) examined the selection and salience of issues in the agenda-setting theory. This theory describes the ability of media to influence the attention placed on certain topics that create the political agenda. The press may not be successful in telling people exactly what to think, as they are active agents, but what to think about. The world will look different to different people, depending on the kind of information provided by writers, artists and also filmmakers. According to Shaw (1979), the media is an effective instrument in attracting public attention on specific issues, determining the importance people attach to these issues: "The agenda-setting theory says that because of newspapers, television, and other news media, people are aware or not aware, pay attention to or neglect, play up or downgrade specific features of the public scene" (p.96).

Because of the narrative power of film, this theory is often used in film studies. Several scholars confirm the belief that film is an effective tool for social change, addressing socio-political issues from different perspectives. However, we should be careful with thinking film mirrors society, as it is framed through the lens of the filmmaker, shaped by demographic factors. Smith supports this in the following statement:

> Through history males have done almost all the writing and filmmaking, naturally from a male point of view. Of course that point of view has been moulded or tempered by the culture each man lived in. However, in modern times, through the sudden (historically speaking) sophistication of the media and their uses, there exists a very large possibility that media now shape cultural attitudes, as well as reflect them. (Smith, 1999, p.14)

Like mentioned earlier, the age we currently live in is characterised by excessive information flows, stimulated by sensational and fast-paced news journalism. Film as a slow and in-depth medium provides a larger frame where more complex stories with alternative perspectives can be told. Several studies indicate that the use of film is an effective method to generate discussion and change attitudes about minorities in an entertaining and meaningful way. Lee and Priester (2014) conclude that carefully selected films influence the audience' understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation and other cultural dynamics (Lee & Priester, 2014). Research by Rasat et al. (2012) support a similar ideology in the sense that film has the ability to spread positive messages about certain communities to society: "This study showed that the choice of good and religious-based films contribute to the development of the pro-social personality" (p. 117). Niche film festivals that promote feminine, coloured, queer and disabled identities shape collective consciousness. Authentic representation and accurate portrayal in film stimulate positive attitudes towards people subjected to discrimination (Schwartz, et al, 2010). These festivals hope to provide visibility of these minorities and devalue institutionalised homophobia through film (Gamson, 1996). Consequently, independent film festivals are sites where diversity and inclusivity should be promoted, as minorities lack representation in mainstream media.

The theories reviewed in this chapter have illustrated the complexity of gender inequality as a social, political and historical issue. Literature shows that the interpretation of gender and discriminative struggles that arise with it are dependent on subjective context. The understanding of gender identity is continuously evolving, which is reflected in all dimensions of society, including the cultural industry of audio-visible media. Academics have emphasized on the agenda-setting role of film festivals and the gatekeeping position of film programmers in the realm of film circulation. The film industry has reproduced social inequality for a long time and although change is overdue, festivals could be the catalysts that enforce this change. This research will investigate whether film festivals and their programmers take their responsibility to represent and include marginalised gender identities. In the fourth chapter, the theoretical concepts will be either confirmed or contradicted by the empirical data.

3. Methodology

This chapter will provide argumentation on the chosen methodology for data collection and analysis. All decisions that were made in order to approach the research question empirically will be presented and justified.

3.1 Research Design
Before explaining the methods used in the research process, the exploratory approach should be addressed. This study aspires to explore the current state of cinema, using the film programmes of seven Dutch film festivals as research variables. The aim is to find out to what extent these film festivals take gender equality into account in the programming process and the ways in which they do so. Gender representation is easily measurable by analysing the proportion of male and female makers and characters in the films selected by film festivals. However, this has been done many times before and does not give any background information on the motives and decisions of the film festivals and their programmers. This research goes beyond quantifiable methods and offers a more in-depth analysis of film festival programming.

In order to gain insight on gender representation in festival programmes, the politics of the festivals, as well as the choices of film programmers, need to be understood. Bosma (2017) proposes detailed documentation on the developments, innovations or recurrent issues that are to be observed at curated film festivals. According to him, research on film programming needs to provide an explanation of the various decisions, experiences, reactions and evaluations of film programmers. Through the qualitative examination of film festival programmes and film programmers' attitudes on gender representation, this research aims to provide a coherent overview of the state of Dutch film festivals and their contribution to gender parity. Both the interpretation of gender inequality as the quality evaluation of film, are subjective processes dependent on context, which has enforces the qualitative focus of this study.

The research question will be answered by means of in-depth interviewing, complemented by content analysis. When academically exploring film festivals, De Valck's (2007) recommends the following methods: "For contemporary research, this implied employing ethnomethodology of participant observation at film festivals, interviews, and more text-based media analyses" (p.22). The main qualitative method applied to serve the exploratory purpose of this research is in-depth interviews with film programmers of the seven festivals. Bryman (2012) proposes the method of interviews, as this research focuses on actors with each their own subjectivity (Bryman, 2012). Additionally, data from the interviews is complemented by a content analysis of the film festivals' policy and programme, to understand the phenomena more

completely. Information on the organisations' political values was gathered through annual reports, websites, newspaper articles and podcasts. The programme was analysed by catalogues and archives on the festivals' websites. Specific films selected for the film festivals' programme were assessed by trailers and synopsis found on the website of the festivals. Some of the films mentioned in interviews were personally viewed, but due to limited time, not all of them could be analysed elaborately.

3.2 Units of Analysis

The domestic scope of this research is justified because of Dutch film festivals' contribution to the national economy and culture. A rich economy of festivals, as well as cinema, pervades in the Netherlands. Attending festivals has become the main activity in the cultural consumption of Dutch citizens. Moreover, the growth of cinemas, film theatres and film festivals legitimizes film consumption as part of the cultural agenda. The amount of cinema visits in the Netherlands has been continuously growing over the last 10 years. In 2018, almost 36 million tickets were sold and 312 million euros was made in Dutch cinemas (Bioscoopmonitor, 2018).

The Netherlands counts around 123 film festivals (Festival Atlas, 2017). From this population, a sample of seven film festivals was selected as units of analysis. Before introducing the seven cases, it should be noted that in the early stages of the data collection, three film programmers of independent film theatres were also interviewed. Roderik Lentz of Lantaren Venster, Steven Strik of FC Hyena and Melkweg Cinema and Helena Castro of LAB111. Unfortunately, these cases are not included in the research findings, as the data from these interviewed deviated from the focus of this research. The dynamics of programming for film theatres turned out to differ significantly from film festivals. The selection process for theatres is based on what is already bought by distribution companies for domestic release, decreasing the gatekeeping position of these programmers. Furthermore, the three interviews with film theatre programmers emphasized commercial motives, opposite from the art-for-arts' sake ideology of film festivals (De Valck, 2007). Comparing film theatres and film festivals will thus be inefficient for this study.

The film festivals were purposively selected based on the intention of the study. A non-random type of sampling method was used as the festivals were selected deliberately on the base of their size, location, mission, identity and film programme focus. The festivals differentiated considerably in these characteristics, resulting in a heterogeneous sample. Within the case selection, the festivals' reach range from international to regional. The festivals are located in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, The Hague and Leiden. The three biggest festivals

in the Netherlands are International Film Festival Rotterdam, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam and Nederlands Film Festival. Based on their established position within the Dutch film sector, it was crucial to include them. Leiden Film Festival is a festival that bridges the gap between mainstream and arthouse cinema. Movies That Matter forms an interesting case because it was founded by Amnesty International and focuses on human rights. Arab Film Festival is a niche festival showcasing films from Arabic countries and filmmakers. Roffa Mon Amour is an open-air film festival that focuses on international arthouse by new makers and cult classics. All film festivals will be more elaborately discussed in the results chapter.

In order to improve the reliability of the research, a random sample was taken in selecting participants with a programming function at these festivals. The recruitment of respondents happened via email. A total of twenty programmers were approached with a request for participation. Due to limited resources, only ten programmers were interviewed, of which four male and six female. The age of the interviewed programmers ranged from 26 years old to 56 years old. Apart from the race and sexual orientation, the demographics of the total sample is relatively diverse and thus appropriate for comparison. The table below provides an overview of the cases and respondents.

Programmer	Festival	Year	City	Days	Visits	Films
Laura van Halsema	International Documentary Festival Amsterdam	1988	Amsterdam	12	285.000	300
Inge de Leeuw	International Film Festival Rotterdam	1972	Rotterdam	12	327.000	500
Claire van Daal	Nederlands Film Festival	1981	Utrecht	10	150.000	300
Nick Hortensius	Leiden International Film Festival	2006	Leiden	10	35.000	100
Maarten Stolz	Movies That Matter	2006	The Hague	9	25.000	80
Kirstin Feberwee	Arab Film Festival	2001	Rotterdam	5	1700	15
Lisa Smit	Roffa Mon Amour	2012	Rotterdam	12	1500	27
Roderik Lentz	*Lantaren Venster*		*Rotterdam*			
Steven Strik	*FC Hyena & Melkweg Cinema*		*Amsterdam*			
Helena Castro	*LAB111*		*Amsterdam*			

Table 1: Overview Cases & Respondents

3.3 Data Collection

The interviews followed a semi-structured guideline with open questions, following a list with topics and themes corresponding to the theoretical concepts mentioned in the previous chapter (Appendix A). The list was constructed consecutively in the sense that it started with introductory questions about the identity of the festival and programmer. Followed by questions on the decisions, criteria and limitations of the selection and programming process. Thereafter, questions on diversity were proposed, with a focus on gender, but not excluding other variables of diversity like race and class. My method in preparing for the interviews included a content analysis of the festivals' programme and policy. This analysis focused on the one hand on the policy of the festivals expressed in reports and websites, on the other hand on the festivals' programme in regard to gender found in catalogues, online archives and newspaper articles. The programmers' work was examined as thoroughly as possible, to make sure the appropriate questions were asked.

The interviews were conducted using the Dutch language, which is the native language of all respondents. This way the respondent could express their direct thoughts, without facing difficulties of trying to voice their opinion in another language. This enhanced the validity of the research. An informal environment was created in which the respondent was given the freedom to guide the direction of the interview. Asking open questions that could be interpreted subjectively, the respondent's true thoughts could be discovered. All interviews were held in the office or working location of the programmers' festival or theatre, which created a safe and comfortable surrounding for them to answer the questions. The interviews were recorded on a telephone, for the purpose of transcription and coding. Before starting to ask questions, every interview started with a short introduction by the interviewer about the research, asking them for approval on the recording and using of their names. All respondents expressed the approval on these aspects and participated enthusiastically. During the interviews, the full focus was on the respondent and their answers, so additional handwritten notes were only made when necessary.

3.4 Data Analysis

After all interviews were conducted, the recordings were transcribed and edited. The interviews were transcribed in Dutch and all relevant quotes used in the next chapter were translated into English. Subsequently, the transcribed interviews analysed through detailed coding. This process entailed the assignment of giving labels to pieces of text as a systematic way to understand the collected data. The coding process was structured by the digital software

program *ATLAS.ti*. All answers of each interview were reviewed and assigned one or more codes to quotations that referred to important topics. In total, 122 different codes were created and assigned (Appendix B). After the so-called open coding of the interviews, the method of axial coding was applied, identifying relationships and patterns among the open codes. The codes were categorised in different code groups, based on reoccurring themes that emerged during the interviews. In the next subsection, the operationalisation, the way these themes were measure will be discussed and concretised.

3.5 Operationalisation
Concluding from the theoretical framework, this research touches upon two complex constructs; gender inequality and film festival dynamics. Because qualitative research does not provide concrete measurable of these properties, special attention must be given to the specific ways in which these concepts were measured and observed. Prior to measuring gender representation in the festival programme, it is important to analyse whether the policy values refer to social inclusion beforehand. Evidence for the degree of gender representation of film festival programmes is found in the festivals' policy, the festivals' programme and the programmers' answers. Gender representation is measured by analysing the extent to which festivals include women, queer people and other identifications of gender that alternate from the heteronormative, both on-screen and off-screen. In other words, for gender representation to be more equal, it is not only necessary to include women and queer people, but also give them the same treatment and portray them realistically. Furthermore, the strategies, motivations and limitations of curating a gender inclusive programme are divided into categories. In the table below, theoretical concepts and evidence for those concepts from the content analysis and interviews are structured according to the research questions.

All decisions made in the process of data collection and analysis, confirm the aptness of the instrument. The research process maintains a certain extent of rigorousness, authenticity, trust and credibility. By justifying the validity and reliability in the data collection and analysis, the research question can be answered adequately. Transferring the research into different realms of curation of cultural products could result in similar results. Furthermore, applying the research method among comparable research units, other film festivals, is also expected to provide similar findings. Although the in-depth and subjective nature of qualitative research leads to little generalization, the cases chosen for this study are able to represent other film festivals in the Netherlands.

Research Question	Concept	Measure
Gender Representation in Programming	Gender inequality Feminism Intersectionality Gender Stereotypes Sexual Objectification Male Gaze Female Gaze Heteronormativity Gender Identity Queer culture	Are values of diversity, inclusivity or equality expressed in the festival's policy? How high is the priority of gender representation in the festival's policy? Are female and queer filmmakers represented in the programme? Do the films in the programmes approach gender alternatively? Do the programmers express the need to support female filmmakers? Do the programmers express an alternative approach to gender? Do the programmers express a feminist approach? Do the programmers express a contemporary approach to gender identity? Do the programmers include films on queer culture? Do the programmers include films with themes like transsexuality or intersexuality?
Programming Strategies	Thematic Categories In-depth Programming New Filmmakers Quota	What strategies does the programmer name to represent gender equality in their programme? Why are these strategies effective according to the programmer? Does the festival support new filmmakers? Does the festival apply gender quota? Does the programmer name any films that deviated from the heteronormative?
Programming Motives	Gatekeeping Agenda Setting Film as social change	Is the festival/programmer aware of underrepresentation of gender in the industry? Does the festival acknowledge its social impact? Does the festival acknowledge the impact of film on society? Does the programmer express its concern for gender inequality? Is the programmer personally invested in the cause?
Programming Limitations	Social Reproduction Hegemonic Masculinity Quality vs. Equality Commercial objectives Male Gaze Female Gaze	What makes becoming a gender inclusive festival difficult? What limits the programmer in including more women and queer people? Is the programmer aware of their gaze when assessing film?

Table 2: Operationalisation

4. Results

In this chapter, the findings from the interviews and the content analysis will be discussed, with special attention devoted to unusual results. First, all seven cases will be reviewed individually, in order of the size of the festivals. Their policy will be discussed, followed by a review of the festival's programme and the way they integrate gendered aspects, both on and off-screen. Secondly, the cases will be compared, to find reoccurring themes and patterns. Where possible, the findings will be interpreted in relation to the concepts of the theoretical framework.

4.1 Case Analysis
   4.1.1 International Film Festival Rotterdam
Established in 1972, the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) developed into the largest film festival in the Netherlands, targeting both audience and industry. The 47th edition in 2019 attracted 327,000 visits, over 2,400 film professionals, showcasing over 500 works of film from over 50 countries (IFFR.com, 2019). The festival's aim is to contribute to cinema culture by promoting the strength of independent film, filmmakers and film-related art. IFFR's vision is built on the belief in the power of cinema to increase people's understanding of society (IFFR.com, 2019). They trust in the potential of film to inspire social change. Furthermore, they aspire to create "an environment where everyone has the freedom to express him or herself without fear of harassment, intimidation, discrimination, sexism, or other disrespectful behaviours" (IFFR.com, 2019). IFFR is considered to be at the vanguard of international and world cinema, embracing radical, experimental, and cutting-edge films.

   IFFR distinguishes itself through their experimental and hybrid programming, which is characterised by a cross-over of cinema with art, music, exhibitions, virtual reality, talks and masterclasses. They define their programme as hotly debated and challenging, as it touches upon issues and tensions of contemporary social relevance (IFFR.com, 2019). IFFR celebrates contemporary cinema, focussing on presenting cutting-edge audio-visual art and innovative films by upcoming and established filmmakers. Programmer Inge confirms: "We are a festival for filmmakers with their own signature. [...] We are very focused on talent, so the first, second or third film of a maker. On the other hand, have we also a section of *signatures* from people who directed many films already" (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). Inge explains that the programme is categorised into different sections, depending on the genre and geographical region.

   Concerning how their policy involves diversity, the following statement on inclusivity can be found in their annual report of 2018:

In organising its activities, IFFR strives for a diverse gender-balanced and inclusive team - from the board of directors to the almost 1000 volunteers. Similarly, IFFR presents cinema from all corners of the world supporting diverse, independent artistic creation. Although numbers may be an important tool for data analysis, IFFR does not believe in imposing quota on film selections to address the lack of diversity in cinema with regards to gender identity, sexuality and ethnic backgrounds. IFFR does not ask anyone to supply antagonising personal data upon film submission. Rather, through HBF, CineMart and other initiatives, IFFR addresses the root causes of inequality and strives to empower artists to make great films, which translates to the breadth of our programme selections and attending guests. (Annual Report, 2019)

What can be concluded from this, is that they are very aware of the inequality that pervades the industry. IFFR is opposed to numerical measures, like a quota, to overcome inequality. Instead, they diversify through the support of upcoming filmmakers with innovative narrative qualities, with the presumption that they challenge normative socio-political ideas. With a focus on international art house and independent cinema, IFFR promotes the stories of hundreds of filmmakers, all with a different cultural background. IFFR carefully select filmmakers with stories that the programmers think should be seen by the public. Inge confirms: "We think it is important to show films which will not be released in cinemas after the festival" (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). This illustrates the responsibility they hold as an international to provide a platform for creative artists with challenging ideas.

Both the interview as well as a review of the programme confirm that IFFR's policy on inclusivity is reflected in their programme as well. In previous years, IFFR has selected multiple films that contest the stereotypical ideas on gender. Inge, who is responsible for the thematic programmes, mentioned several gender-related curations. In 2015, IFFR composed a programme about the current state of feminism, called *What The F?!*. They invited political activists Pussy Riot for a conversation on their political actions, a performance and a screening of their documentary. Hosting this rebellious group at your festival and curating a programme based on their actions is a powerful feminist statement. Films that gained critical acclaim in this program section were *No Men Beyond This Point* and *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*. Inge expressed her personal concern for gender identity in non-binary definitions and often referred to intersectional feminism when talking about gender diversity. She mentions that within the selection of films, she looks for stories that reject gender stereotypes and heteronormativity. In 2016, Inge curated a programme around the theme of gender fluidity, sexuality and identity in

online culture, called *ID:gender.net*. It included a selection of films, as well as a virtual reality installation, called Gender Swap Machine, in which the visitor could experience the opposite gender through 3D-glasses (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). Furthermore, a small selection of short films was released online in collaboration with Glamcult, a progressive platform known for their avant-garde approach to queer culture (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). Inge explains the reasoning behind this programme: "There was a lot to do about that topic that year. Gender-neutral toilets were introduced. Trans people started to make videos online about their gender and how they identified with that. Also, Facebook introduced 53 gender options to choose from" (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). She noticed that filmmakers too, were interested in the topic, as more films with unconventional stories were being released. When discussing this programme, Inge referred to the film *Arianna*, about a young woman struggling with her intersexual identity (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). The festival has pushed forward several gender-bending films that received successful reviews from both the industry as the public. In 2017, *Moonlight* by Barry Jenkins, an emotional coming of age story of a black man who struggles with his sexual identity, premiered at the festival and received the Audience Award. Later in the year, it won the Golden Globe and Oscar for Best Film (IFFR.com, 2019). Some other worthy programming decisions are reflected in other parts of the festival. In 2018, the line-up of *IFFR Live*, a screening event with simultaneous premieres in several European cinemas and live Q&A, coincidentally consisted only female filmmakers. In 2019, they produced a daily podcast interviewing only women directors. Furthermore, they collaborated with *Girls on Film*, a podcast by British film critic Anna Smith on the state of women in the film industry. Also, the majority of the prizes awarded in the Tiger Competition went to women in 2019. These are all programmed decisions in which they show to support gender in all its diversity. What is notable, is that in none of these cases, the gender aspect was mentioned in the communication of the festival.

Even though IFFR seem to do a significant job in diversifying their line-up, Inge mentions the complexity of diverse programming: "I think it is very difficult to do it right. People do diversity by aspects that are easy to measure or visible, like gender and race. While at the same time, intersectional diversity is much more nuanced. Social class is also really important. And sometimes people do have a very culturally diverse background, but maybe you don't see it" (I. de Leeuw, personal communication, April 23, 2019). Due to the progressive and experimental approach towards contemporary cinema, IFFR uses innovative methods to represent gender in their curation practices. They reject the need to incorporate quotas or other policies concerning inequalities. Nevertheless, it seems like the festival actively but implicitly integrates gender

diversity in several dimensions of the organisation.

4.1.2 International Documentary Festival Amsterdam

The International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) was founded in 1988 and has since become the most significant festival for documentary film in the world. In IDFA's last edition, they counted a record amount of 285,000 visits and over 3,400 professionals (Annual Report, 2018). Their programme consists of around 300 films that are categorised into programme sections with a specific focus or theme. Their 2018 report states that over the past ten years, the documentary genre is flourishing both on the artistic and the commercial scope. The latter resulted in critical judgement and uniformity in cinematic experimentation. Hence, IDFA's focus on a "pluriform range of high-quality, creative documentaries, to offer a place for films that use unconventional visual language or complex narrative structures, and to present documentaries made from a non-Western perspective" (Annual Report, 2018). Senior programmer Laura confirms their focus on offering a diverse programme of independent documentaries of high-quality. Diverse in the form and content, but also the cultural background of the filmmaker (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). The festival showcases cinema that stimulates a critical attitude that is still accessible for large audiences. Besides, the IDFA Bertha Fund financially supports the development, productions and distribution of non-Western regions to stimulate the documentary film sector. Laura tells us that this fund helps them to stay updated on the developments in these countries (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019).

Worth noting is that they assigned a new artistic director in 2018, Orwa Nyrabia. Laura mentions how his Syrian background changed the focus of the festival: "Him being from another continent, he tries to create an open space hosting different views and perspectives through film" (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). Their annual report on 2018 states: "In his closing speech, Nyrabia argues for an open and inclusive festival, with a greater focus on artistic authenticity, freedom of expression, gender, and pluralism within documentary. To develop the genre as an art form and to capture the times in which we live in a selection of documentaries: this is IDFA's mission" (Annual Report 2018).

A whole page of their 2018 report is dedicated to inclusion and diversity in the festival. Diversity is one of the main priorities of the festival, deeply rooted in its policy. Their ideals focus on becoming an all-inclusive festival, meaning that at least half of the screened films are made by female directors, a jury consisting for 50% of female members, featuring films from underrepresented regions and inviting professionals from all over the world (Annual Report

2018). IDFA is aware of their influential position: "As the largest documentary festival in the world, we are in a position to strive for lasting change; change that means a complete restructuring of the film industry as it currently is" (Annual report, 2018). From the interview with senior programmer Laura, we learn that diversity is high on the agenda of all dimensions of the festival, namely the organisation, the programme and the audience.

The focus on representing society in all its diversity is reflected in their programme. When talking about the selection process and criteria, Laura from IDFA tells: "We are looking for films that are artistically interesting and extraordinary. We compose a programme with the idea of dispersion in mind. Dispersion of regions, gender and generations" (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). IDFA selects films of creative artists that have an avant-garde, cutting-edge and critical approach to filmmaking. Apart from the artistic quality, Laura mentions the importance of the political element: "Societal relevance is a very important factor in our policy. We try to be a pluriform platform that shows what is going on in the world or in people's lives from as many perspectives as possible" (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). The films that are selected by IDFA's programmers have to evoke the audience to think and talk differently about current issues. This engagement is stimulated by in-depth curation of debates, panel talks and discussions on the festival (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). In 2018, IDFA introduced a think tank that facilitated discussions on diversity within the festival's programming: "During these panels, we entered into discussions with directors and programmers from international festivals on greater gender equality within the festival program, attention for minorities, and attracting an audience that represents all these different groups" (Annual Report 2018).

When focusing more in the gender representation, Laura mentions the 5050x2020 pledge for gender parity and inclusion in film festivals, which IDFA signed in 2018: "If we don't make 50/50 by 2020, we won't get punished. But it is definitely a very serious goal" (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). They stick to a minimum number of female filmmakers that need to be included, which they call a 'shamelevel'. One requirement of the 5050x2020 pledge is transparency on the degree of diversity of the festival. IDFA is very transparent concerning numbers of diversity. In 2018, 296 films and projects were selected from 3,391 submissions. Of this selection, 41% was directed by women, which represents the proportion of female filmmakers in the pool of submissions. The jury consisted of 53% of women, representing 22 different countries from all continents (Annual Report, 2018).

In 2014, the documentary festival devoted a programme part to female filmmakers. After the director of the festival found out that the proportion of women in their pool of submissions

did not increase over 10 years, she decided to highlight this issue by organising a programme of three days including 28 films of women directors. These films were selected by fifteen renowned female documentary makers from all over the whole world. This was also the year in which they introduced Queer Day, a recurring festival section during which five documentaries are screened on homosexuality, LGBTQ activism and gender (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). Laura stresses that queer culture should not be confined to a theme, as it is an issue that is deeply rooted in society: "We should be careful to not frame these issues. For example, we are not making a programme based around feminism because we're a feminist organisation. Rather, we try to internalise this in all different areas" (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019). IDFA also takes on an inclusive approach in their programming by collaborating with organisations that support marginalized groups, like Black Achievement Month. In 2018, IDFA organised a film special as part of a programme about women in the patriarchal music industry during Amsterdam Dance Event. This involved a screening of _Silvana_, a documentary about a Swedish feminist hip-hop artist and activist, followed by a panel talk.

Judging by the analysis of the policy, programme and interview, IDFA seems to takes its responsibility to evoke social change through film very seriously. Due to their diversity policy, gender representation is consciously integrated into their organisation, programming and audience. In this concluding quote, Laura expresses why festivals need to be more rigorous when it comes to the representation of gender in the industry:

> I think sometimes it is necessary to enforce change more. Maybe this is not ideal but at one point we have to stop acting as if it is a natural movement. So 50/50 is not the ultimate goal, moreover it is important that people realise the inequality. It is not only about film selection, but also in production as well. It is about the whole scope of film. As a festival, we are at the end of the scope, so it is a discussion we have with our part of the industry. (L. van Halsema, Personal communication, April 16, 2019)

4.1.3 Nederlands Film Festival

Nederlands Film Festival (NFF) was established in 1981 and is located in Utrecht. The national festival stimulates the Dutch film sector, screening only films made by filmmakers and producers from the Netherlands. In 2017, the festival received 150,000 visits and included 301 films, television and interactive productions (Annual Report, 2017). Their mission is to encourage Dutch film culture in all of its diversity. The festival aspires to attract a large and diverse

audience and connect culture with society, as they search for the relation between the art of the moving image and societal urgency (NFF Website, 2019). Within the supply of Dutch films, their selection includes a diverse range of features, shorts, arthouse, mainstream, drama, documentaries, television and animation. Their programme consists of a crossover of disciplines that operate between artistic and commercial, popular and elite, familiar and unfamiliar, present and past, local and global (NFF Website, 2019).

NFF states that technological, political and social changes guide the programme of the festival (Policy Plan, 2016). The festival stimulates cinema that mirrors the Netherlands, reflecting the country and its filmmakers, in all of its diversity. The policy specifically aims to increase the cultural diversity and youth of their audience. Also, the demographics of the selected filmmakers need to be more culturally diverse, as the stories of these filmmakers deserve a large audience (Policy Plan, 2016). The policy does not imply any improvements necessary on gender diversity, however, the interview with programmer Claire shows that NFF does consciously strive for gender parity in its programme. Claire takes in consideration diversity of gender, race and age in all dimensions of programming. Not only the background of the film programmer but also the guests they invite, jury members, audience groups, selection committee, campaign images, film stills in the catalogue and images on the website (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019). She believes that programming with diversity in mind results in a high-quality programme.

One of their strategies is an unofficial quota: "For example, if we have to select four talented young makers for a programme section, we have the simple agreement that it is going to be two men and two women. So we look at who directs and who produces these films and distribute it equally. If you choose three people, then at least one woman" (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019). Claire also stresses how they also look at the diversity in actors and characters represented in the stories of selected films. Furthermore, they actively promote and support the works of young directors, actors, writers, producers and such, with a different cultural background and radical visions. When she talks about one of her selection committee members from Burkina Faso: "I once saw his graduation film and thought 'You tell different stories!', about themes that I know nothing about, where he grew up with and I did not." (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019). By showcasing the work of these makers, the festival can promote their creative change making stories. Claire expresses that they are very aware that they have a responsibility as a national film festival to put these talented creatives and their important stories in the spotlight.

In the edition of 2016, the festival was completely dedicated to diversity in all its forms. The report of that year states that the fruitful film climate should be a reflection of the dynamic and diverse culture of the Netherlands (Annual Report 2016). One of the programme sections that year was *Meestervertellers*, in which they invited guests to select films with different cultural, ethnic and social perspectives. These films invoked dynamic conversations on assimilation, typecasting, politics and gender (Annual Report 2016). Claire tells she "consciously turned the proportions around. Two white guests and ten people of colour. So that people noticed how unbalanced it normally is" (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019). Claire explains the motive behind that years' theme: "That year we felt we had to pick a societal theme. [...] We had the urge to do something more, that the strength of film can move something. This is not something we only do one year. We implemented it very well that year and try to extend it each year" (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019).

Another curation in which they actively strive for inclusion is recurring *Blikverruimers*, literally translated to eye-openers. Every year five creative trendsetters organize a film special during the festival. Claire talks about how this group of people is carefully selected, keeping in mind the diversity of their background, personalities and work. In 2017, the transgender model and activist Valentijn de Hingh was one of those tastemakers. She picked the documentary *Genderbende*, the first feature film of Sophie Drost, following the struggles of five young individuals who identify neither male nor female. The film won the prize in the prestigious debut competition and was later screened at IDFA and on national television (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019). Another gender contesting project that year was *#Dearcatcallers* by art student Noa Jansma. She raised awareness for street intimidation towards women, by posting selfies of her and the men that verbally and publicly harassed her. Using social media for storytelling purposes, made her win the prize for Best Interactive at NFF 2017.

NFF focuses more one cultural and generational diversity than gender diversity, because judging from the interview and the content analysis, the proportion of female and male directors is not very out of balance in the Dutch film sector. She confirms that they value male and female filmmakers equally. The festival consciously integrates diversity in all aspects; directors, actors, jury members, advisors, guests, partners as well as the stories told in the festival films and their media exposure. Claire states that if they do not integrate diversity consciously, it will never happen naturally: "We don't want to handle this too forcefully, but we definitely mind it" (C. van Daal, personal communication, May 1, 2019).

4.1.4 Leiden International Film Festival

Founded in 2006 by a group of students, Leiden International Film Festival (LIFF) has grown into a ten-day festival, receiving around 35,000 visits and screening more than 100 different films in 2018. They are audience oriented with a regional reach. Their unique selling point is the education project Scholieren Film Festival. This is an education programme in which high school students learn how to organise their own film festival (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). The festival is characterized by their playful image and eclectic style of programming. They distinguish themselves from other Dutch film festivals by making artistic films accessible, balancing between arthouse and mainstream cinema (Policy Vision 2013-2018). Within their programme, they distinguished several themed categories, based on genre or country: *Panorama, Bonkers!, Nordic Watching, American Indie Competition*. As the festival takes place in between NFF and IDFA, it does not include Dutch films or documentaries. Programmer Nick describes their programme as follows:

> Apart from those two, our programme selection is a playground of what we think it is suitable. [...] Type films on our festival are cross-over films. They are too weird for commercial cinemas, but too accessible for IFFR. So we're in between. This balance is fun on the one hand, but on the other hand it is difficult to form an identity because it is so broad. (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019)

When asking about how they take diversity into account, Nick says that diversity is of growing importance in their organisation, just like the rest of the film industry: "I am very consciously trying to programme diverse, especially in the competition I look at the balance. Last two years, at least one-third of those films was from female makers." (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). He acknowledges the responsibility they have as a festival and stresses the importance of representation: "We have a very diverse audience so you want to show diverse films too. It is important to show those stories because they give you an insight into a different perspective or different experience. So it is definitely something that is on our agenda" (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). Additionally, he notes that this process should not be too forced, as films have to suit the image of the festival in the first place.

Their selection process is based on a 'cherry pick' practice in which the programmers select films from what is already selected for national distribution. Nick explains how this forms a limitation in inclusive programming: "We are dependent on what is bought by distribution

companies and what is in the list of releases. So if that is out of proportion, there is not that much we can do" (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). Furthermore, they base their selection on the films that are screened at high-profile international festivals. Programmer Nick goes to Sundance, Berlinale and Cannes to explore films, legitimizing their influential position (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). He detects a vicious cycle in which international film festivals have the powerful position to enforce change in the industry by selecting films about or made by marginalized people: "It is very difficult because the quality is always a priority. We are not going to select a film from a woman or cultural minority that we don't think is good enough. On the other hand, the industry is not going to finance these makers as film festivals do not select their films" (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). Nick signifies the influence of these high-profile festivals: "Sundance gets thousands of entries, so they have a bigger pool to choose from. You also notice that women and other minorities are just as good at making films. The biggest sales done at Sundance last year were of films by female filmmakers" (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). He notices a growing demand and understanding from both the industry and the audience on the representation of women in film. In 2018, one of the films they selected that contest normative gender roles is _Girl,_ a Belgium film about the identity struggles of a transitioning ballet dancer. The film was a major hit at Cannes in 2018 and received many prizes and nominations. However, it faced some criticism from the LGBTQ community for using a cis perspective, as neither the actor as the director is trans. The director explained how the story was inspired by real life experiences of a transsexual dancer, who was very involved in the production process. For him, the film was meant to help increase the visibility of transsexuality (Clarke, March 12, 2019).

LIFF's policy and programme do not specifically address the inclusion of gender, however, Nick mentions that they are aware of the issue and do take it into account: "You really notice that it is a growing concern, and as a small festival, we contribute to it as much as possible" (N. Hortensius, personal communication, May 7, 2019). They provide a heterogeneous line-up of various genres and themes. The playful and hybrid style of programming makes the festival attractive to all kinds of people.

4.1.5 Movies That Matter Film Festival

In the footsteps of Amnesty International Film Festival, Movies that Matter Film Festival (MtM) was founded in 2006. They organise events throughout the year and on different locations, but their annual festival in The Hague is their main focus. This festival attracted around 25,000 visits

and screened 79 movies in 2017 (Annual Report 2017). The festival crosses the bridge between cinema and human rights. Their mission is "to open eyes to human rights by offering a stage for poignant fiction films and revealing documentaries that stir debates about human rights, sustainability and the fight against injustice" (MtM Website, 2019). They consider film to be a powerful medium that activates people to participate in the fight for human rights and a righteous society. This is confirmed by Maarten, head of programme, as well: "Film can open your eyes. It can nuance, correct or completely reject your views on the world and people. That is what we believe and why we do this" (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019).

Programme coordinator Maarten explains the focus of the festival is based on human rights in all its variety. They offer film and debate, meaning that the in-depth conversations complementing the films are as important as the films, Maarten tells: "We really focus on the content, so these talks sometimes take 45 minutes. It is not just about the film. We offer an in-depth programme in which you can discuss human rights more elaborately" (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019). The festival also offers a unique education programme, in which they select films for educational purposes, reaching over 160,000 students per year. The objective is to offer films that make students discover human rights in a playful manner (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019). They believe this is necessary because they "believe in the extraordinary expressiveness of film; it is a powerful tool to positively influence the knowledge and attitude of youngsters towards human rights" (Annual Report 2017).

Several criteria are at play in the process of composing the festival's programme. Apart from the practical criteria, it is essential that the films stimulate the audience' perspective on urgent human rights related themes: "We are looking for films that cause a discussion about human rights. Not only does the film touch upon human rights, but it is also a means to make us talk about it" (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019). Furthermore, the films selected must have artistic quality. This is based on both the content as well as the cinematography of the film. The film must convey a unique story in a visually pleasing manner that creates awareness and discussion (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019). The selected films are divided into competition and categories. Themes in these sections are for instance democracy, sustainability, justice, LGBTQ and women's rights. These themes change annually depending on their urgency and the number of high-quality films released that suit the theme (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019).

Inclusion of marginalized and oppressed communities is high on MtM's agenda. During the selection for competition and themes, they focus especially on geopolitical dispersion: "We look at where the films come from, what are the topics, which countries do the makers come

from and what production countries are connected. To make sure there is a correct balance" (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019). When asked about how they attempt to become an inclusive festival, Maarten answers:

> Since a few years, we really consciously involve all groups of people and all regions, but there is still a lot of profit to be made. On the part of audience, but also programming. We are part of the Human Right Film Network, a network of film festivals all over the world who support human rights. This makes our programme more diverse, because we have close connections with them. (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019)

They support international human rights related film festivals in developing countries where freedom of the press is limited because they believe films can make a difference in these places. Multiple queer and LGBTQ film festivals are supported, as same-sex relationships are problematic in many countries. Since a few years, the LGBT+ theme is a prominent category at the festival. Maarten explains the reasoning of this theme: "There are still a lot of countries where it is not easy to live when you are not hetero, and there are many films being made about this topic. Even in the Netherlands, you notice that it is not fully accepted, so this is a discussion you have to continue. This is a theme that fits perfectly in our mission" (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019). In 2019, the film _Rafiki_, a story of forbidden love between two Kenyan girls, was selected for the LGBT+ category. The film gained international critical acclaim but was banned from Kenyan theatres, which illustrates the complexity of the issue in today's society (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019).

Another category is dedicated to women's rights, called _FemmeTastic_. In 2019, this category included the films _Cold Seat_, _The Feminister_ and _Soni_. Maarten says there are more films being made on women's rights and that there is an active debate going on in the film industry. He explains festivals can act as a catalyst to evoke social change in the industry:

> For three years there's a discussion in the film world about how it is dominated by white men. The _MeToo_ discussion is only the tip of the iceberg of that discussion, underneath that, the discussion on the lack of female filmmakers has been going on for many years. So there are already more festivals who provide a platform for female filmmakers. Not because they don't exist, but because they don't get the same chances. When new female filmmakers get the chance in a festival, they also stimulate other women to start making films, and consequently, there are more films being made with

women as powerhouses taking strong leading roles. (M. Stolz, personal communication, April 24, 2019)

MtM is a festival focused on human rights, hence the importance of supporting marginalized oppressed communities, like women and queer people. An inclusive attitude is expressed through the festival's policy as well as the interview with the programmer, focusing mainly on geopolitical diversity.

4.1.6 Arab Film Festival

Arab Film Festival was established in 2001 and takes place every year in Rotterdam. It is a niche festival that showcases films from Arabic filmmakers and producers. The festival attracts around 2000 visitors and screens a selection of around 20 films. Their aim is to give people an alternative or more nuanced image of the Arab world (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019). Director and programmer Kirstin believes in the power of the moving image and considers film to be the perfect tool to address the current issues at play in Arabic culture: "I think film can have more educative power than news, because news is very quick and only shows the negative side of things. It is true that there is war in those countries, but that does not represent the whole Arabic world. There are many developments and changes happening in those countries. A film about these themes goes deeper into the stories and people" (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019). AFF's aim to challenge stereotypes of the Arab world that rule in Western society is reflected in the powerful slogan 'Change through cinema'.

Despite oppression and violence in Arabic countries, the production of high-quality films, music and art is substantial. Especially in this day and age, a platform for young Arabic filmmakers to express their emotions, thoughts and insights in relation to contemporary society is necessary (Policy Plan 2019). When talking about how film catalyses change in society, Kirstin refers to a film they programmed in 2013, called _Wadjda_. The female directed drama handles how driving cars and bikes is illegal for women in Saudi Arabia. The film was censored in many Arabic countries too, which shows the controversy of the theme. According to Kirstin, the ban was finally lifted in 2018: "You cannot say that the film made this happen but it definitely contributed to the developments in society and the awareness of these topics" (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019). Another progressive film supported by AFF is _What Will People Say_. The second feature of female director Iram Haq tells the immigrant story of a young woman in Norway that tries to break free from her strict Pakistani parents. After the film

received critical success at AFF and IFFR in 2017 and 2018, the film was released in national theatres.

In their 2018 programme, half of their films were made by female filmmakers. This was not on purpose, Kirstin tells: "This happened accidentally, that half of the films were directed or produced by women. We consciously communicated this, because it does not match the image people have of Arab cinema. The last edition, it did not happen to be equal, which is very disappointing, but you can't force it" (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019). They are dependent on the films that are programmed at big film festivals in Dubai, Cairo, Jordan and Morocco. From what they offered that year, they unconsciously selected 50% films directed by women. This suggests objectivity in the sense that the programmer looks at the quality of the film instead of the gender of the filmmaker. According to Kirstin, the film has to be good, regardless of the background of the filmmaker, suggesting all filmmakers receive equal opportunities (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019).

Inclusive programming is furthermore expressed in the organisation of Ladies Night, an evening just for women. Kirstin tells that this translates into a liberating experience as Islamic women have the freedom to take off their hijab when there is no man in the room (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019). They focus on connecting local citizens from different cultural backgrounds, which is reflected in their organisation as well as their audience. "Through programming in a fun and light manner, we try to bring people with different backgrounds together. We also organise substantive debates and educational programmes, but we try to avoid heavy political discussion" (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019).

Gender inclusion is not expressed in AFF's policy, however, learning from the interview, they do mind it. Kirstin stresses the importance of representing society in the organisation, the programming and the audience. People working in the film industry need to be aware of the homogenous space they operate in, and thus work harder to involve people from outside. When asking how Kirstin sees the industry changing, she notes that it is an issue the industry can no longer neglect:

> As cinema or festival, you cannot justify your decisions if you do not engage in different perspectives and backgrounds that your own. [...] As a film festival you have a significant impact by programming certain films, so we have a lot of responsibility. But this happens after the film is already made, so the film producers have to change as well, because that's where it all begins. (K. Feberwee, personal communication, April 23, 2019)

4.1.7 Roffa Mon Amour

Roffa Mon Amour (RMA) is a niche art house festival in Rotterdam, organised by two women. It was established in 2012 and is one of few open-air cinemas in the Netherlands, screening one film every evening for the course of 12 days. Their mission is "to celebrate the work of intelligent creative and noble directors that dare to challenge their audience to open their mind, to ruminate not swallow, to question never accept" (RMA Website, 2019). By programming of unique arthouse cinema, they consciously distinguish themselves from the Dutch supply of cinema. Apart from their regular film programme, they organise an educational programme focused on cult classics, called Summer Film School. Additionally, they cross over the art of cinema and music in Cinema Concerts (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

They offer an eclectic film programme of films by new filmmakers, as well as historical cult classics. This entails the first or second feature film of upcoming directors that have been released the year prior to the festival and have not been bought by Dutch distribution companies (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). Lisa, director and programmer of the festival, explains: "Within the *New Makers* section, we look as wide as possible at continents and themes. If one film is heavy and serious, the other one is more genre-specific and weird" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). Lisa continues to walk through all the films they have selected for their upcoming festival. She describes the films shortly and explains how and why they have selected them. The films they select are of high artistic quality and international variety. Their carefully curated programme consists of independent films that share "a unique story, visual intelligence and authentic beauty" (RMA Website, 2019).

This year they introduce a new category called *Activism Now*, a selection of films that address some form of activism. Part of this programme are cult classics *La Haine*, *Malcom X* and possibly *Last Tango in Paris*. The latter one is an Italian erotic drama from 1972 by Bertolucci and is especially notable because of the historical debate on the ethics of this film. The film was banned in many countries and deemed controversial because of the explicit sex scenes, that actress Maria Schneider, 19 years old at the time, was forced to participate in even though it was not in the original script. Programming this film on a film festival is an act of activism, according to Lisa, addressing questions like "Can we still screen this film in this day and age?" and "How do we handle cultural heritage?" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). She explains her consideration as follows: "From a film history perspective, it is a beautiful film. But when you take into consideration the conditions under which it was made, it would never have been accepted in the times we live in now" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). Another film they hope to programme in this section is Rosa Luxembourg: "A

fiction film from the 80s about a female activist in the first world war, the predecessor of Hannah Arendts, sort of. She was focused on letting the voice of the people be heard, democratic activism is what she did" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). When asked about the political motive behind programming films related to activism, Lisa states: "I think all the films we programme have some sort of social or societal context. So the films in both *Activism Now* and *New Makers* all have some degree of societal relevance. But we do not position these films as educational or political" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

When the question of diversity in programming was raised, Lisa answered: "We really try to look at this. What makes the discussion tricky is whether you choose equal dispersion or what content is best?" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). In the selection of Summer Film School, they struggled with this issue for example. The theme of Italian film history is called *Italian Maestro's*, which sounds quite masculine already. From the four directors, at least one woman had to be included. A difficult but essential criterion according to Lisa. She notes that something goes fundamentally wrong when people keep saying that there are no female filmmakers. For the programme of *New Makers*, the proportion of male and female has to be equal. An achievable goal according to Lisa, because more high-quality films are directed by women (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

Apart from the background of the filmmakers, they also consider diversity in the narratives and characters in the films, as well as the guests they invite for talks (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). Female filmmakers tend to have a different story to tell and a more nuanced perspective on gender. Lisa exemplifies by the film Chilean film *Tarde Para Morir Joven*, by a female filmmaker. It is a coming-of-age story about the developments of a girl that is harmed by her first love, an older boy, and the complex struggles that she faces in her commune (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). Another science-fiction film, called *Jessica Forever*, transcends typical gender ideas as it put one woman at the forefront of an army of dependent male orphans (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019).

Rather than applying a quota, they suggest incorporating diversity through inclusive programming: "You can ask yourself what has the biggest impact? In competition, it is more important to have a balance because these films attract the biggest audience and the most media attention. If you show a diversity policy in those films, you profile yourself differently" (L. Smit, personal communication, April 17, 2019). When asking about the change in the industry, Lisa firmly notes that acting upon the issue of gender inequality is inevitable as a film programmer and that at this moment you really have to justify your decisions as a festival.

4.2 Case Comparison

In this part of the chapter, the findings from all seven cases will be compared and the most unusual will be discussed. First, a comparison of the festivals' policies is made to see whether they express the importance of gender representation. Secondly, the programming process, criteria and strategies and their relation to gender are reviewed comparatively. Where possible, the findings will be connected to theory.

4.2.1 Gender Representation in Policy

Like De Valck (2007) and Bosma (2017) mentioned, every festival has a unique identity with a specific set of values. These values are expressed in the mission and vision of the festival's policy. Four festivals explicitly mention social inclusivity, namely IFFR, IDFA, MtM and NFF. These festivals take on a more socio-political attitude, and referring to Turan (2002) have a geopolitical agenda. Festivals with an aesthetic agenda, like IFFR and RMA, indirectly refer to social inclusion by stimulating progressive filmmaking and alternative storytelling. AFF indirectly refers to representation by breaking stereotypes. LIFF refers to a diversity of genres and themes in their policy. This has led to interesting insight in regard to their programming practice, which will be assessed in the next part.

IFFR	• Supporting the art of international independent cinema
IDFA	• Shifting perspectives through documentary film
NFF	• Supporting Dutch cinema in all its diversity
LIFF	• Bridging between arthouse and mainstream cinema
MtM	• Creating conversation on human rights through film
AFF	• Breaking down Western sterotypes through Arabic cinema
RMA	• Supporting new makers and independent arthouse cinema

Figure 2: Festival Policy Objectives

In the examined policy reports, the social impact of film is emphasized by four festivals. They shared the idea that film influences people's view of society. The interviews show a similar logic on how cultural products like film legitimize certain issues, raise awareness and stimulate a conversation. This relates to the theory on political agenda-setting and social impact of film, as explained by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and Smith (1999). Some programmers even mention how film is a reflection of current issues of today's society, referring to films as a tool to change the audience' perspective on certain societal themes. This validates the responsibility of the festivals to represent people with different backgrounds, as well as the responsibility of the

programmer to select films with a certain message. Judging from the policy analysis, most festivals advocate in creating awareness on the inequality of gender and other discriminating factors. IDFA and IFFR are the only festivals that specifically mention the representation of gender in their policy. The other festivals acknowledge the issue of gender inequality after being asked specifically in the interviews. The collective consciousness detected in the policies is encouraging, however, it does not yet show the measures made towards inclusivity. In the next part focusses on whether the policy values correspond with the programme of the festivals.

4.2.2 Gender Representation in Programming
4.2.2.1 Programming Process

Before looking at the criteria that guide the selection process of festival curation, it is necessary to look at the dynamics of this process. In the year preceding a festival, the programmer watches an extensive amount of films, from which a selection is made. Different strategies are applied to find films for pre-selection; Firstly, some film festivals work with submissions, like IFFR, IDFA and NFF. Through an open call, all filmmakers get the chance to enter the pre-selection of a festival. Secondly, programmers collect films through scouting, based on field research and network connections. Programmers visit film festivals and premieres, where they correspond with other programmers, filmmakers, distribution companies, sales agents and production companies to stay updated on what is being released in the near future. Thirdly, also commonly used by programmers, is selecting from the offer of films that are already bought by distribution companies. This confirms the influence of distribution companies as they decide which films will be spread across festivals and theatres.
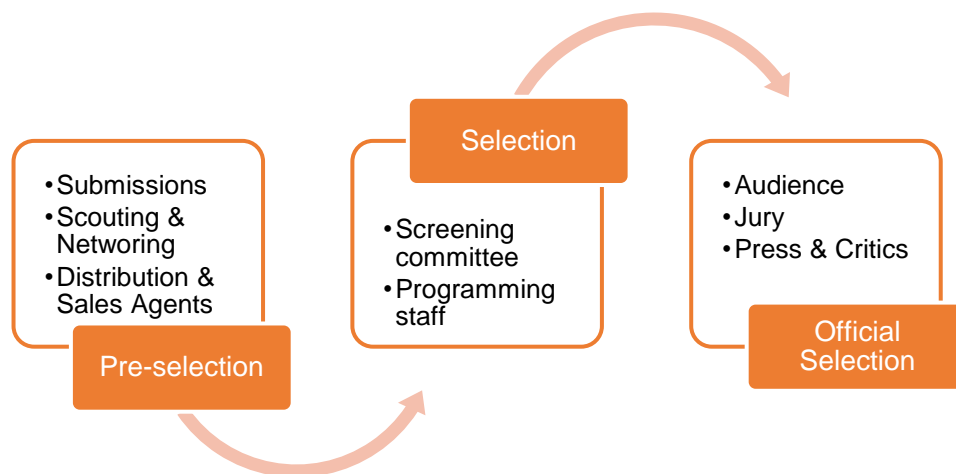

Figure 3: Film Selection Process

The programming process impacts the degree of gender representation in the line-up of festivals. When programmers are dependent on the offer provided by distributors and other

festivals, they are relatively limited in what is already selected by others. In other words, if the pre-selection of films includes a skewed distribution of male and female filmmakers, it will be more difficult to make a balanced selection. On the other hand, the festivals that work with entries, have more freedom and options to choose from, resulting in better opportunities for unestablished and upcoming filmmakers to enter the festival circuit. This is reflected in the programmes of IDFA, IFFR and NFF. The majority of the programmers mention how they search films that are not yet bought for theatrical distribution. This signifies the autonomy and creative freedom of programmers when personalizing and diversifying their festival selection.

Lastly, several programmers mention that they are limited in making a fully diverse programme because they have little influence on the production process. The issue of gender representation should thus be considered at the beginning of the film production chain. Nevertheless, the gatekeeping position of film festivals in the developments towards an inclusive industry, should not be disregarded. Film festivals with business agendas, IFFR, IDFA and NFF, do in fact have a significant influence in the production of filmmaking. To overcome this limitation, IDFA and IFFR have set up film funds that support filmmaking by new talented filmmakers. IFFR's Hubert Bals Fonds and Cinemart, for example, supported the production of *Rafiki*, which opened up a public debate on the oppression of the LGBTQ community in African countries. NFF has close ties with local production companies and national film funds to guide the domestic production climate.

4.2.2.2 Programming Criteria

Within the process of composing a film program, many considerations are taken into account. Based on the data from interviews, the criteria can be categorised as follows: practical, aesthetic, socio-political, diverse and commercial. The hierarchy of these criteria differed across the festivals, depending on the values expressed in their policy. First of all, there are practical considerations that festivals adhere to. Most of the festivals, want to carry exclusivity in the films they program, meaning the films should not have had a theatrical release. Films are often premiered at festivals to attract a bigger audience and more press. Subsequently, the film has to be finished in the year prior to the festival, which makes the timing of the festival a crucial factor in the programming process. Festivals that focus on new makers, like IFFR, RMA and AFF, only screen the first or second feature film of a filmmaker. Secondly, almost all programmers mention the artistic quality of the film to be of high importance. The quality assessment of a film is a subjective matter, according to Bosma (2017). To overcome a homogeneous programme, the quality evaluation is never an individual act, as the programmers say films are always reviewed

by multiple experts. Thirdly, the societal relevance of the content is referred to by most programmers. All festival programmes include films that address socio-political themes present in today's society, consciously selected for this reason. Related to this is the political motive of festivals to raise awareness for human rights-related themes like gender inequality. Especially IDFA and MtM seem to value this criterion. Only a few programmers mention diversity in terms of including different gender, race, class and other demographics, as a criterion in the programming process. Programmers of IDFA, MtM, NFF, RMA all say their programme must include a wide variety of different genres, stories, nationalities, genders and so on. When asked upon specifically, most of the programmers agree that considerations of gender inclusion are present, but not the main priority. Lastly, economic motives in the form of commercial criteria are almost never mentioned. Although some programmers talk about how they kept potential audiences in mind when selecting films. The festivals in this research express and art-for-art's sake ideology, confirming De Valck's (2014) theory.

Practical Criteria

Artistic Quality

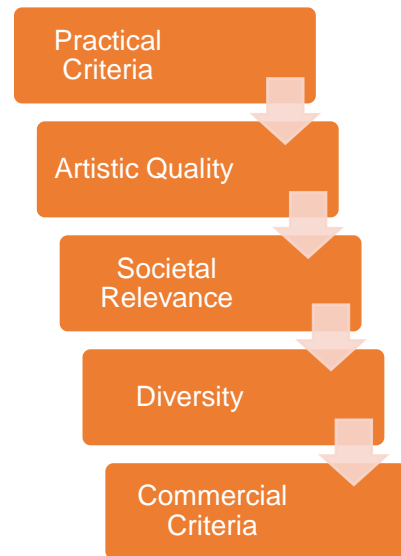Societal Relevance

Diversity

Commercial Criteria

Figure 4: Programming Criteria

4.2.2.3 Programming Strategies

The programmers reveal several programming strategies that contribute to visibility of marginalised gender identities. The following strategies come to light when asking how an inclusive programme is developed: thematic categories, in-depth programming, educational projects, supporting new makers and quota.

First of all, almost all festivals make use of categories or themes within their programme. This practice entails combining films with similar genres, themes or topics into an overarching category. A few programmers, Inge (IFFR) and Maarten (MtM), mention this not only helps structuring the programme but also made it easier for the visitors to choose a film. A category is founded when a substantial amount of films address a similar social-relevant theme. IDFA, MtM and IFFR curate programmes sections related to queer culture and the LGBTQ community. IFFR and MtM both have highlighted feminism and women's rights in themed categories. NFF devoted their whole festival in 2016 to diversity in the Dutch film industry. Programming films that touch topics like gender or sexuality in reoccurring themed categories, legitimizes the urgency of the issue. It provides a context for the audience to start a conversation and increase their consciousness. According to Czach (2007), combining films in a so called 'spotlight programme', adds value to both the film and the festival. This strategy is effective in the way it

attracts attention to the discrimination of marginalized groups. However, by putting these communities together in one category, you emphasize their difference from the normative. Thematic programming of gender related topics potentially isolates these communities.

Secondly, in-depth programming, in the form of facilitating a discussion or conversation, is a practice all programmers seem to take on. After seeing a film with a different perspective or unique story, a debate or conversation naturally evokes. It is important that film festivals actively organise for these discussions to take place at their events. According to the interviews, this happens in the form of an introduction, interview, panel talk, Q&A, masterclass, debate or podcast. The programmers invite knowledgeable guests and filmmakers to discuss themes and issues related to the film. In many film festival screenings, the audience participates as they are allowed to ask questions to the filmmaker or expert present. In-depth programming adds value to the film and contributes to the public debate on current issues. Programmers believe socio-political films have the ability to change people's perspective on certain themes.

Another programming strategy in which gender issues are advocated is education. Film as a means to educate people on socio-political issues is mentioned in the theoretical framework as well as in the interviews. With the social impact of film in mind, it seems obvious that film festivals offer educational programmes. Usually, this happens in the form of a film screening followed by an active discussion by the students. A significant number of interviewees refer to the selection of films for educational purposes, of which some festivals provide a more in-depth and long term learning experience, like LIFF and MtM. By providing young adults with stories they normally would not see, festivals are able to stimulate social change. The only festival that clearly addresses gender related topics in their educational programme is MtM, who offer films like *What Will People Say* and *Rafiki* in their online educational database.

In light of inclusive programming, supporting new makers is mentioned by six programmers. The importance of providing a platform for young filmmakers to show their stories on the festivals is emphasised by IFFR, IDFA, NFF, MtM, AFF and RMA. Upcoming filmmakers are characterised by a progressive mind-set, innovative filmmaking skills and alternative perspective on social issues, like gender and sexuality. Their radical works often contest the conventional stories told by established filmmakers. In order to change the canon of cinema, providing new makers with the opportunity to participate in a festival is crucial. By selecting films made by and about women and queer people, programmers make sure their voices are being heard. This confirms the gatekeeping theory of film programmers as described by De Valck (2007) and Bosma (2017).

Lastly, some festivals refer to a numerical strategy to incorporate a gender balance. The

only festival that explicitly handles a gender quota towards a more inclusive festival, is IDFA. It is the only festival in the Netherlands that signed the 5050x2020 pledge for gender parity and inclusion in film festivals, resulting in a programme with a significant amount of female filmmakers. In 2018, half of the filmmakers selected by AFF was female. Like explained in the case analysis, this selection happened unconsciously. Programmers of NFF and RMA also refer to quota, however, in the form of a minimum amount of women that need to be included in the selection. They do not track gender proportions but measured roughly and internally. A few programmers, like Lisa from RMA and Nick from LIFF, mention how imposing gender representation in programming too forcefully is ineffective and suggest a more natural approach.
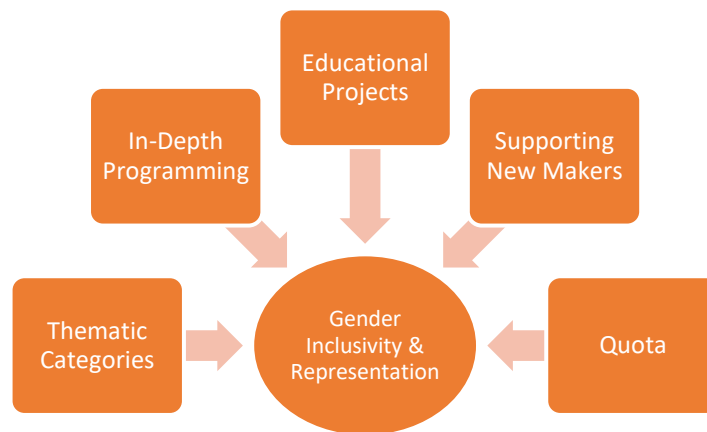

Figure 5: Programming Strategies

When justifying the decision to not apply gender quotas on their programme, many programmers explain how quality will always be the first priority in selecting films. They prioritize the quality of the films over the background of the filmmaker is insignificant, which is understandable as a programmer. Although this signifies equal and objective quality assessment, it is unfair to neglect the circumstances a filmmaker has when making a film. This suggests certain blindness regarding gender, an argument often used when indicating equal treatment through a transcending perspective on gender, race, class and sexual orientation. Even though this line of thinking has good intentions, it is problematic because it consciously neglects historical discrimination towards marginalized communities. This neutral standpoint in which the programmer positions itself in, could harm the context of the film. Besides, film programming as a subjective practice as described by Bosma (2017) contradicts this kind of objective programming, as the programmer is always biased by personal experiences.

4.2.2.4 Gender Progressive Films

Including different gender identities both on-screen and off-screen does not automatically imply authentic representation. Gendered identities that are included must be portrayed realistically and representative. All film festivals have programmed films that challenge gender stereotypes and heteronormativity, some more than others. The programmers refer to several films they selected because of their contemporary approach to gender, gathered in the table below. The stories and characters portrayed in these films are touching themes like homosexuality, intersexuality and transsexuality, but also put forward strong female leads.

Jessica Forever (2018) • Caroline Poggi, Jonathan Vinel • RMA	**Silvana (2017)** • Olivia Kastebring, Christina Tsiobanelis, Mika Gustafson • IDFA
What Will People Say (2017) • Iram Haq • AFF & MtM & IFFR	**Wadjda (2012)** • Haifaa Al-Mansour • AFF & MtM
Genderbende (2017) • Sophie Dros • NFF & IDFA	**Moonlight (2017)** • Barry Jenkins • IFFR
Rafiki (2018) • Wanuri Kahiu • IFFR & MtM	**Girl (2017)** • Lucas Dhont • IFFR & LIFF
Arianna (2015) • Carlo Lavanga • IFFR	**Dirty God (2018)** • Sacha Polak • IFFR & MtM

Figure 6: Gender Progressive Films

All of these films have an activist attitude in the sense that they have socio-political narratives, but are not political manifestos. From my personal experience of seeing these films, the conclusion can be made that these films impact the audience' understanding of gender identity. They contribute to the public debate on gender roles in society, as they were highlighted in the festival programmes and considered festival favourites. It must be clear that not every film can

be totally representative of all gender identities, however, by composing a programme, a festival can be representative. Judging from these successful films selected by festivals over the last years, there seems to be a rise in gender progressive cinema, contributing to the contemporary interpretation of gender. Some programmers mention that recently, more films with contesting ideas on gender are being made, making it easier to curate an inclusive festival programme.

Strikingly, five of these films are made by female filmmakers, two by a combination of both and three by men. The gender of the filmmaker should be taken into account when qualifying a film, because of the male and female gaze theory by Mulvey (1975) and Soloway (2016). These theories suggest that the gender of the filmmaker is an important factor in how stories and characters are portrayed. The theory of the male gaze by Mulvey (1975) suggests that male directors reproduce gender stereotypes and sexual objectification. These films adhere to the female gaze as described by Soloway (2016), which shows that both male and female directors can take on the female gaze. Several programmers confirm that female filmmakers tell different stories and stories differently. For a story to be authentic and representative, the maker should have some personal connection to the narrative and its characters.

There seems to be a correlation between not only female filmmakers making gender progressive films, but also female film programmers selecting these films. Notable in this line of thinking is the programmers' motivation to showcase films with themes that are deer to them. From the interviews with female programmers, the urge to screen films with strong female leads or made by female directors was dominant. The male programmers focused more on diversity in terms of race and nationality. Consequently, the film programmer is a spectator that views films through a gaze shaped by their personal characteristics and experiences.

Another similarity is that many of these films are coming-of-age films. This is a genre in where characters face the complex struggles of adolescence and identity, requiring a nuanced view on the character. It seems as if this is a genre where gender-related themes can flourish, often seen in films by upcoming directors. These directors take risks by deviating from the male gaze that has dominated cinema for so long. A new generation of filmmakers is redefining femininity and masculinity through filmmaking. Film programmers too can influence the interpretation of gender identity in contemporary society, by giving these makers a platform.

4.2.3 Gender Representation in Film Festivals

After having reflected on both the policy and the programme of the festivals separately, this chapter rounds off with a summarizing comparison of the seven cases in relation to gender politics. First of all, little discrepancy is to be detected between the values in the policy and the implementation of these values reflected in the film programmes. The importance of gender

representation as a criterion in the selection process differed across the festivals, but in all cases corresponded with the festival's policy, as the figure below shows.
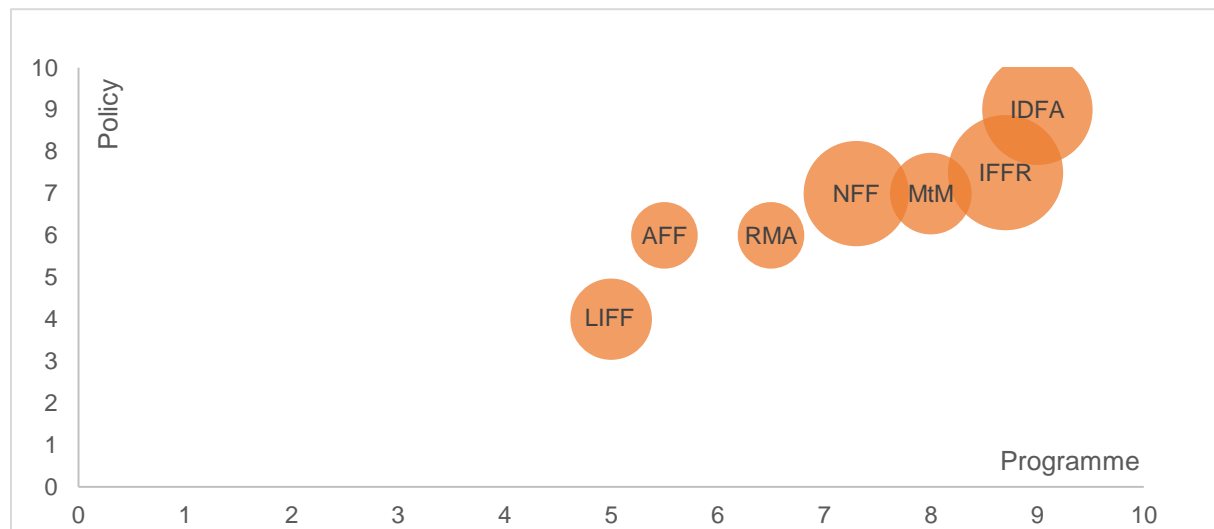
Figure 7: Gender Representation in Policy & Programme

All festivals and programmers show awareness concerning the importance of inclusivity, however, the degree in which they actively apply inclusive programming strategies, differed among cases. The becoming of an all-inclusive and representative film festival seems to be a collective ambition, however, the complexity of inclusivity and gender representation makes the implementation a difficult process. Significantly, the majority of the festivals' programmers express an intersectional attitude to representation, by including all dimensions of diversity in terms of gender, class, race and sexual orientation. The programmers often relate gender inequality to other forms of discrimination, confirming intersectional feminism as defined by Crenshaw. Neo-liberal and post-feminism as explained by Rottenberg (2018) and McRobbie (2004) is contradicted by the empirical data, as the festivals adhere to third wave feminism.

Furthermore, in the analysis of policies, programmes and interviews, a traditional binary interpretation of gender prevailed. Representing women in programmes seems to be higher on the festival agenda than including genderqueer people. However, some festivals express a non-binary attitude to gender, referring to topics like intersexuality, transsexuality and genderfluidity. Especially Inge (IFFR) expresses the need to represent a wider range of gender, by programming films that explore gender identity. Several other programmers challenge heteronormativity in their programming decisions, by selecting films and composing themed categories that revolved around the LGBTQ community, like IDFA and MtM. Developments in the film industry have shown than contemporary approach to gender is that masculine and feminine identities have become more fluid. This confirms a third wave approach of feminism

and gender as a social construct as explained by Butler (1990).

Within the intersectional approach, the data shows that festivals face difficulties in balancing diversity and equality. Five programmers prioritize the aim to fight for gender equality over other forms of discrimination. Notably, four out of five of these programmers interviewed were female. The male programmers express more concern towards racial and international diversity. Even though the male programmers seem to be less invested in the issue, they do show a supportive attitude. Some female programmers indicate that the issue of gender representation in the festival is a 'women's issue'. Laura from IDFA, however, mentions how everyone in their organisation shares the ambition to fight for gender parity. The finding that female programmers are more concerned in composing a gender-balanced programme, confirms that representation in the decision-making functions of the organisation is a key factor in reaching inclusivity. The theory of social reproduction of gender inequality through hegemonic masculinity is appropriate, but has to be nuanced as more women are entering the film industry.

Apart from the personal investment of the programmers, the degree of gender representation is dependent on the organisational values of the festival. Referring to the theoretical framework, Turan (2002) explained 3 types of agenda's film festivals tend to follow: geopolitical, aesthetic and business. The three biggest festivals, IFFR, IDFA and NFF, are very much oriented on stimulating the market of film. This focus on industry suggests they are following a business agenda. Three of the seven festivals, IDFA, MtM and AFF, focus on themes that suggest a geopolitical agenda. IFFR, LIFF and RMA take on an aesthetic agenda in the sense that they prioritize to support the art of cinema. Not only do these agenda's overlap, but I would also like to add a fourth dimension, namely a socio-political agenda. The degree to which the festivals strive for inclusivity of all demographics depends on their willingness to contribute to social change. Almost all festivals acknowledge the social impact of film, resulting in gender representation becoming an item high on the socio-political agenda.

The three major festivals, IFFR, IDFA and NFF, take on an inclusive attitude in all dimensions of their events, namely their organisation, programming and audience. As international film festivals, they have a responsibility to reflect society and represent all communities, even though in different manners
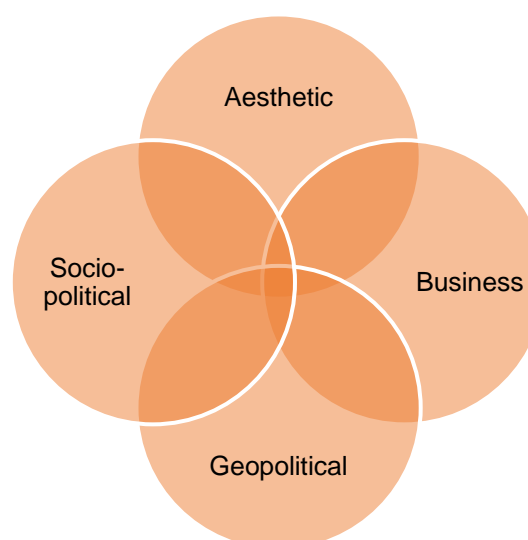

Figure 8: Overlap in Agendas

and focussing on different aspects of social diversity. IDFA takes on an explicit and transparent strategy when it comes to social inclusion, signifying an activist approach. IFFR, on the other hand, integrates representation more internally and implicitly, as they express in their diversity policy. NFF focuses more on cultural diversity in their festival, as the gender proportions are relatively balanced in the Dutch film sector. The smaller niche film festivals seem to be aware, but have less responsibility and are limited in their resources to represent society in all its variety. LIFF uses a diverse strategy in playfully programming different genres and themes. MtM is very representative as they focus on supporting oppressed communities through film. In the few films RMA selects, they seem very considerate in selecting different genres, themes and filmmakers with different demographic backgrounds. Like mentioned before, not every film can be representative of all communities. The more films a festival is able to programme, the higher the degree of representation of gender, race, class and sexual orientation.

The last few years, more active measures are being taken by film festivals towards representing all kinds of gender, including stories about and made by women and queer people. The research shows that the major three festivals actively made measures since five years. IDFA emphasized the need to include more female filmmakers in a programme in 2014. This resulted in a festival that actively fights for gender equality, committing to rigorous measures with regard to transparency and justification of decisions. IFFR curated a programme on feminism in 2015. NFF devoted a whole festival on diversity and inclusivity in 2016. MtM started spotlighting women's right since 2015 and the LGBTQ community since 2016. It is encouraging to see that even before the Weinstein Scandal and MeToo, film festivals were already aware of gender inequality in the film industry. Unfortunately, there is not enough information on the other festivals to see since when they started applying measures towards gender inclusivity.

4.3 Recommendation

This research has given insight into the developments towards an inclusive film industry. It gave an overview of the measures taken by film festivals and their programmers. All film festivals and programmers should be hailed for their progressive approach towards gender inclusivity. It is really encouraging to see (inter)national film festivals taking steps to become more representative. Even though this research showed that there is no one solution or best practice, I would still like to propose some recommendations for film festivals to improve their inclusivity.

First of all, festivals have to prioritize representation in their policy. It should not be a criterion in the selection process but an overarching organisational value. Once representation becomes the norm that transcends decision-making processes, inclusion can be achieved more

easily. For this reason, the inclusion of gender in film programming should not have to exclude quality. Moreover, authentic representation in the festival's programme is more attainable when the programming team consists of people with different demographics. It must be noted that not only the programming team but all dimensions of the festival should represent society. Applying quota in the organisation could be the first step towards more balance in general. If people in decision-making functions, like programmers, jury and selection advisors, are represented by a heterogeneous group, this will reflect in the diversity of the programme.

Even though I'm in favour of creating a natural gender balance, forceful measures are necessary to evoke actual change to take shape. The implementation of quota could have a bigger effect on the industry, as 5050x2020 proves to do. In order for quotas to work, they have to be nuanced according to the festival's policy. The research shows that some festivals already adhere to gender quotas, either implicitly and internally or more openly. Gender quotas will always be debatable, as it provides the issue of selection of quality over the background of the maker, but the effect is undeniable. It should be stressed that a balance of 50% female and 50% male is not the end goal, rather, the balance should include a diverse range of people.

The implementation of gender quotas off-screen, will reflect in better representation on-screen. In other words, when more female and queer filmmakers enter the industry, this will also reflect in the stories portrayed in film festivals and cinemas. Hence, the need for film festivals to support new filmmakers, especially the ones with marginalized backgrounds. They can do so by opening up the selection process for submissions, lowering the barriers for new filmmakers to enter the festival. Film programmers could also spotlight the stories of these filmmakers in special programme sections, to give them more recognition. Feminist and queer filmmaking is often programmed in themes, genres or niches. The intention of spotlighting women and LGBTQ stories in thematic programmes is very admirable, as it creates special attention to the issue of gender inequality. However, programmers should be careful not to isolate these groups into categories or themes. By putting them in a special programme, their difference from the normative is emphasized. Rather, incorporate these films and filmmakers in regular film programmes, so they become part of the canon of cinema. The only way to create a balanced film industry is when marginalized communities are represented throughout filmmaking, instead of being confined into a genre.

Like mentioned before, festivals have little influence over what films are made and which people are being included in the filmmaking process. Nevertheless, they should not underestimate their powerful position in the industry. As they are a stakeholders in both the production, distribution and exhibition chain of the film cycle, festivals have the power to turn

things around. Other industry stakeholders, like distributors and production companies, are extremely dependent on festivals for the success of their films. Remaining close ties with these parties and advocating for gender parity in these networks could definitely influence who and what films are being made. The Hubert Bals Fund of IFFR and IDFA Bertha Fund are great examples of how festivals have an influence on the production process and the diversity of the people involved.

5. Conclusions

This research explored the ways in which Dutch film festivals and their programmers take into account the representation of gender, providing an overview of the current state of cinema and its effort towards social inclusion. The main question that guided the research was: To what extent do Dutch film festivals take gender representation into account in the curation of their film programmes? This research question was supported by the following sub-questions: What programming strategies do festivals apply to achieve a representative film programme? What are the different motivations film festivals have to strive for gender equality? What are the implications of these measures?

To answer these questions, two qualitative methods were combined; a content analysis of annual reports, archives, newspaper articles and other documents of seven Dutch film festivals and in-depth interviews conducted with programmers of these festivals. The content analysis gave detailed insight into both the policy and the programme of the festivals. The interviews complemented this information by exploring the decisions, strategies and motives of festival programmers. Prior to the data collection and analysis, several theoretical phenomena were touched upon, like gender inequality, intersectionality, feminism, film festival dynamics, film programming, gatekeeping and agenda-setting. The topic of the research was chosen due to the increasing social pressure to represent marginalized communities in all dimensions of society. In the film industry specifically, gender representation has become part of the collective consciousness. Although visibility of minorities in media entertainment has been on the social-political agenda for decades, the last few years were marked by events that accelerated the developments towards gender parity in the film industry. This research analysed in what ways film festivals and specifically their programming practice contribute to this progress.

Concluding, the issue of social inequality seems to be on the agenda of Dutch film festivals. However, the extent and ways in which they implement it, differs significantly among all cases. The demand for diversity and inclusion has been acknowledged by the film festivals and their programmers, but they are using their own ways to cope with it. The results show that the seven Dutch film festivals and their programmers are all taking gender representation into account in their curating practice, but only a few festivals seem to care enough to advocate the issue purposely. The extent to which they take measures depends on the organization's capacity, identity, policy and employees. The major festivals actively pursue gender parity in all dimensions of the festival. These festivals follow their own diversity policy and some of them focus pragmatically on the numbers, making explicit and concrete strides to illustrate that mere representation is not the end result. Others focus more on a balanced programme, on-screen

and off-screen, by including a variety of gender identities in more playful and natural manners. Either way, all festivals and programmers are evolving towards more inclusive and diverse spaces, in ways that best fit the identity of their organization.

The practice of film programming proved to be a challenging one in which different people with need to be included. The objective of a film festival to represent everyone appropriately might be unfeasible, as different tastes, opinions and values need to be considered. Within capacity of the festival, however, the optimal rage of inclusion should be aspired. While representation may be a good first step towards an inclusive festival, it fundamentally falls short of adequate implementation. Inclusive decision making in film festivals entails not only including marginalized communities, but also giving them a voice. Successful representation is only possible when an inclusive culture is fostered that flows through all processes and practices of the organization. Subsequently, representation on screen seems be more feasible when implemented by the similar people behind-the scenes. This illustrates the importance for a balanced representation in decision making functions.

This research has confirmed the importance of gender representation through the gatekeeping process of film festival programming. In the information age we now live in, cultural products gain value when evaluated and filtered by trusted cultural intermediaries like festival programmers. There is a significant impact the network of (inter)national film festivals can collectively make. Film festivals bring communities together that are eager for new cinematic experiences. These organisations foster cinema that is meant to shift people's minds, elevating topics through sharing discussions. During and after the festival, the festival should be a reflection of society, including all gender identities, colours, ages and abilities. As stated at the beginning of this research, the feminism as well as the LGBTQ community have made considerable progress in their fight for equality. The next step is to normalize their place in society, which can be done through the narratives in film. There seems to be a rise of radical filmmakers that challenge traditional gender norms. In this day and age, films about and made by marginalized people are more likely to be legitimized by the industry and become part of the canon of cinema. These filmmakers stimulate progressive attitudes towards gender and are shaping contemporary understanding of sexuality. By supporting these filmmakers, film festivals use their potential to accelerate change towards gender equality.

The theoretical concepts mentioned in this research proved to be suitable as in most cases, the empirical data reinforced the theoretical concepts. However, some theoretical concepts are overdue and deserve a reconsideration, like hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. These feminist concepts should be nuanced and adapted to

contemporary context of both gender and film. The only theories that were not confirmed are post-feminism and neoliberal feminism. This proves that we are on a turning point from post-modernism to trans-modernism. A new academic interpretation of feminism is necessary to understand how equality of gender will progress in the future.

This research brought to light that we still have a long way to go when it comes to universal representation of people in media. Changing a socio-political issue of this extent, does not happen overnight. The cultural industry, and in this case the film industry, is one where awareness on the issue of underrepresentation of women and queer people is evident. Although the growing awareness in the field of cinema is encouraging, we have yet to experience whether measures taken by film festivals have a significant long term effect on the industry. Forceful measures and policy objectives have to be made and followed in order to activate social change. As illustrated by this research, film festivals contribute to their own fight for gender parity.

5.1 Research Limitations

One of the main implications of this research is the complexity of defining and applying gender representation. In this day and age, gender has become an ambiguous social construct making it more difficult to represent. This study shows that there is no one universal solution and no best practice to solve gender equality. Although this research took on an intersectional approach by including both women and queer people, unfortunately, it did not take into account racial factors in the programming process of film festivals. However, I am aware that racial minorities face underrepresentation in cinema too, as I found out there is a lack of queer and programmers of colour. Secondly, the investigation was limited by the amount of programmers that could be interviewed. Of each festival, only one programmer participated in the interviews, representing the programme department of the festival. This does not take into account conflicting values of other programmers working at the festivals. Thirdly, representation of gender in the cultural industry is expressed in the organization, the audience and the programme. This research shows that in order to reach inclusivity, all the three dimensions need to be restructured accordingly. By focussing on only programming, the other aspects where representation is just as important are overlooked. While qualitative data seemed to be very valuable, this research lacks quantitative data on the representation of women and queer people in the programme of film festivals. Creating a more complete overview of the inclusivity of festivals, qualitative analysis on the festivals' programmes needs to be conducted. Only then, more concrete conclusions about the correspondence between values expressed in their policy

and the programme can be made. Finally, just as the programmers are biased by demographic characteristics which shapes their gaze, I am too limited by my own gender. I am aware that my identity as a female feminist could have influenced the focus of this research.

5.2 Future Research
This research illustrated that gender inequality in the form of underrepresentation in both the cultural industry and media is a fascinating research topic. The current developments in the field of film are an indication of social change. Future research on the topic is desirable, first and foremost, because it contributes to the awareness and understanding of the issue. The programmes of film festivals need continuous assessment to find out if measures taken by the festivals have any effects. Future research on film festival programming in relation to gender will also shape the public understanding of the progress towards gender equality. The approach of this study was aimed at the industry side of the cinematic spectrum, focusing on production, distribution and exhibition of film. A qualitative research on the consumption side of the market will give more insight into whether gender inclusive programming has any impact on audience reception. Even though this research showed that female programmers approach gender and film differently than male programmers, this phenomena could be researched more elaborately. The concept of male and female gaze and gender transcending selection of film should be researched to find out whether male programmers make different quality evaluation than their female counterparts. The research could be replicated in other creative fields that provide forms of exhibition, for music, theatre and art for instance. All these sectors make use of programmers and curators. More specifically, future research could focus on the effect of quotas in different sectors. Not only in film, but also in other professional sectors, initiatives revolved around numerical balance of the gender have been put forward. Many industry professionals have shared that gender ratio is the only measure that can break the hegemony in these fields. When multiple sectors prove that gender quota can be applied efficiently, together they can bring about a collective effort towards social equality. Moreover, the limited influence of the programmer on the film its production was emphasized, confirming the importance of the production companies in the beginning of the chain. Future research, therefore, must focus on the dynamics of film production and filmmakers, to investigate whether this part of the industry represents gender adequately.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Guide

Introduction

My name is Suze and I'm currently studying the master Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. At the moment, I'm writing my master thesis about the changing representation of gender in the film industry and the influence of film programmers within this development. This interview will be part of the empirical data collection, along with a content analysis.

It will be an in-depth interview that will take around 45 minutes. This interview is semi-structure and questions will be based on a topic list with specific themes that are touched in the current state of cinema. There will be no strict direction or list of questions that is followed, meaning you're free to answer however you like.

For the purpose of analysing the current interview, it will be recorded and transcribed. However, this interview will only be used for research purposes and not be published. Please let me know if you're not okay with this or if you would like to remain anonymous. Also, you can always let me know when you feel uncomfortable answering a question or when you need more context or explanation about a discussed topic.

Before I start the interview, I would like to thank you in advance the time and effort it took you to participate in this research. If you're ready, I will start the interview now.

Topic list

Topic	Sub-topic	Question	Sub-question
Introductory questions	Personal information	Who are you? What is your current job? What is your background in the film industry? How would you describe your taste in film?	What is your specialisation? How did you end up becoming a film programmer? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the job?
Film industry	Current state of film industry	What is your opinion on the current film industry? What are interesting developments you see occurring?	Do you see changes in society being reflected in cinema?

		What films that have been coming out have changed the way we look at cinema or society?	What filmmakers/programmers/critics etc. inspire you/change your view on things?
Film Festival & Cinema	Intermediary role of the film festival/cinema	What is the mission or vision of the film festival/cinema? What do you consider the key values that the film festival/cinema to be? What do you consider the role of the film festival/cinema within the film industry to be? What do you consider the role of the film festival/cinema within society to be?	What does the festival/cinema want to express to the outside world? Are these values artistic, social, societal, economic, and politic?
Programming & distribution	Gatekeeping	What is your role as programmer within the film festival organisation? Can you tell me a little bit about the process of selecting and programming films? What is the role of the distributor in the programming process? What criteria do you have to take into account when programming? What factors or aspects are important in the programming process of a film festival? What are the limitations you encounter within the programming process? There are several theories that support the idea that media influences the	Is it an important role and if so, why? What steps need to be taken in order to program a film? How much does the distributor have a say in the selecting process? How do you decide on what films you select or program? Are these backed up by commercial or art for arts sake ideologies? *national presence* *established filmmakers* *premières of big commercial movies* *recurring themes* *genres/categories* *political awareness* *artistic accomplishments* *ground-breaking quality* *reacting to current and/or global issues* Do you consider cinema to have the ability to educate people?

		agenda of society, do you agree?	
	Theory of media influencing Agenda-setting	Do you believe by selecting films addressing societal issues, you have the influence to shape the mindset of the viewer?	Does your job as film programmer entail a certain societal duty?
		How important do you think it is to program films advocating social issues?	
	Social Corporate Responsibility	Do you feel like you have a certain social responsibility as film programmer for a festival/cinema?	
Art house vs. commercial cinema	Artistic vs. commercial values	What is the relation between the art films shown at the festival and more commercial films shown in cinema?	How do you find a balance between commercial and artistic values in your selection of films?
		Do think art house films have the ability to influence more commercial films?	
		What is the difference between programming commercial films and art house films?	
		Are exhibition sites for arthouse film catalysts for influencing commercial films?	
Diversity		In the process of creating a film program, do you consider diversity an important factor?	Why is diversity of a film program important?
		How is a race/class/gender represented in the films you program?	
		Is diversity referred to in the policy of the festival/cinema?	How is it described?
		Do you encounter limitations when making a film program diverse?	Can you describe these limitations?
	Gender	Do you take into account gender equality? In what way?	By numbers/ratio? Female filmmakers? Female protagonists? Stories that portray gender equality?

			How is gender represented in the films you program?
		What measurements are taken to maintain a gender diverse program?	
		Any examples of films shown at the festival that created awareness on behalf of gender?	Why are these film suitable for the film festival?
		Why is it important to show these kinds of films at the festival/cinema?	In what way do these film influence the image of the film festival/cinema?
	Quotas		What is your opinion on the parity pledge that many film festivals signed?
		What is your opinion on handling a certain quota to maintain gender diversity?	
	Tokenism	What is your opinion on having a program focussed on only female filmmakers?	Why is it necessary? Using women as a theme or category?
		What is your opinion on all female casts or all female production crews?	
	Male gaze	Do you emphasize the female attributes of a filmmaker or character?	Why is this important?
		What is the difference between male and female filmmakers and the films they produce?	
		Do you think your gender affects the way you program films?	
	Gender stereotypes Heteronormativity Hegemonic masculinity Emphasized femininity Bechdel test Relationships between men and women	Are you aware of gender stereotypes in films?	
		How does it affect the programming process?	Is there a demand for films with unconventional gender representation?
		What is the reaction of the audience to films representing gender deviating from stereotypes?	
Feminism	Third wave feminism #MeToo Post-feminism	The issue of gender inequality is omnipresent in the film industry. In what way do you as a film programmer contribute or coop with this?	Have you been influenced by the current ideas on gender in the way you program films?

		Do you take other attributes into account than just gender when programming films?	
	Intersectional feminism		Class, race, education, sexual preference?
Examples & Cases		What films that you programmed in the last years think have changed the way we look at gender? What filmmakers have changed the way we look at gender?	What films/film characters/filmmakers can you think of that challenge the notion of gender?
Closing		What do you think the future of the film industry will look like considering a growing awareness for diversity? Would you like to contribute to this in the future? In what way? Is there anything you would like to add, you think could be of interest?	

Appendix B – Coding list

Code	Feminism	Gatekeeping	Gender Representation	Criteria	Process	Strategies
# Audience				X		
# Cinematography				X		
# Content				X		
# Different Perspective				X		
# Diversity				X		
# Exclusivity				X		
# New Makers				X		
# New Release				X		
# Quality				X		
# Societal Relevance				X		
# Stimulate Conversation				X		
# Unique Story				X		
5050/2020			X			X
Activism	X					
Adding Meaning/Value		X			X	
Artistic Director						
Artistic values						
Associative Programming						X
Authenticity				X		
Bechdel Test	X		X			
Binary	X		X			
Catalyst		X				
Change in Industry		X				
Change in Society		X				
Changing Demand						
Cinema Description						
Class	X					
Collaborative Programming						X
Commercial Motive				X		
Competitive Industry		X				
Creating Awareness				X		
Cultural Consumption						
Cultural Diversity			X			
Democracy						
Distribution		X			X	
Diverse Programming					X	X
Diversity			X			
Diversity in Organisation			X			
Diversity in Stories			X			

Code						
Diversity of Filmmakers			X			
Documentaire						
Dutch Cinema						
Entries					X	
Example of Film						X
Experimental				X		
Expert Knowledge					X	
Facilitate the Discussion						X
Female Filmmaker			X			
Female Gaze			X			
Female Representation	X		X			
Feminism	X					
Festival as Platform		X				
Festival Categories						X
Festival Competition		X				X
Festival Description						
Festival Program						
Film as Art				X		
Film as Education				X		
Financial Restrictions						
Gatekeepers		X				
Gender Definition	X					
Gender Equality	X					
Gender Identity	X		X			
Gender Inequality	X					
Gender Stereotyping	X		X			
Genre			X			
Growing Supply						
Human Right Film Network						
Human Rights	X					
Impact of Programming		X				
Inclusivity	X		X			
Independent Film		X				
Interactive Programming						X
Integration of Diversity			X			
International Programming						X
Intersectionality	X		X			
Introduction						
Isolation of Minorities	X		X			
Justice						
LGBTQ	X					
Male Dominance	X					

Male Gaze	X		X			
Male Representation	X		X			
Media						
Minimum						X
Mission						
Narrative of Film			X			
Objective Programming						X
Occupation						
Online Culture						
Personal Experience			X			
Personal Taste					X	
POC Network						
Policy						
Political Values						
Power of Film						
Première		X		X		
Professional Background						
Program Advisors					X	
Program Criteria						
Program Department						
Programming Limitations					X	
Quality Evaluation			X		X	
Racial Diversity						
Racial Stereotyping						
Reaching a New Audience		X				
Reflection of Society			X			
Role of Festival		X				
Sales Agents		X			X	
Selection Process					X	
Shifting Perspectives						
Special Programming						X
Supporting Cinema Culture		X				
Target Audience						
Theatrical Release		X			X	
Thematic programming						X
Tokenism						
Transcending Gender			X			
Unique Selling Point						
Valuation Process					X	
Whiteness						
Women Rights	X					

Appendix C – Interview Transcriptions
Available on request.