

Temporary clusters in the independent film industry

A qualitative research on investigating the role of international film festivals as temporary clusters in stimulating production

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Abstract

This study examines how film festivals positioned as a temporary cluster in the film value chain in order to stimulate the production of film work, using the International Film Festival Rotterdam as the case study site. Drawing on the heritage of previous film festivals research, this study adopted the concept 'temporary cluster' to further explore the role of film festivals played in the European film industry and the nature process of such formation. To do so, nine expert interviews were conducted in the chosen case study site, in order to gain in-depth understanding on film festivals being a cite of cultural legitimation, how film festivals function as market as well as temporary cluster to foster knowledge exchange and network establishment. Thematic analysis was further used to analysis the collected data, results showed by becoming a community of practice, film festivals have the ability to aggregate new talents together in a global context to learn, practice and form an identity. Findings further elaborated several key roles the film festival played as an active agent in industry as well as fostering face-to-face interaction that film festivals enables for the professionals to compare but also cooperate. In conclusion, by studying film festivals from a business perspective, this study has offered a more nuanced understanding on the role of film festivals in European film industry.

Keywords: *film festivals; temporary cluster; international film festival Rotterdam; community of practices; creative industries*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

With the expanding importance of the cultural industry in economic growth and the commercialization of cultural products, an increasing number of studies have put their focus under the field of “cultural industry”, “creative industry” or “cultural economic”. As an important branch of the creative industries, the film or the motion picture industry has been the subject of expanded academic research and has started to attract more attention to academic discussions in recent years (Kumb, Kunz & Siegert, 2016; Smits, 2018). Kumb, Kunz & Siegert (2016) systematically reviewed extensive researches existing within the landscape of the film industry, and discovered three essential fields of research including “insights from operation and organizational research on intraorganizational decision-making processes, contractual relationship between stakeholders, and the competitive power of markets” (p.16). However, this paper also revealed the majority of film industry research is related to U.S. theatrical exhibitions, therefore, reflected the need of additional research to identify and assess the impact of market characteristics in other areas such as Europe.

What distinguishes the European film market from the mainstream Hollywood film market is the important role played by film festivals. Originating in Venice, film festivals serve as sites for the construction and exhibition of often both financially and culturally important film projects at various stages (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010). Through its diverse prize settings, it also enables film market to “endow films with significant values, exercising a powerful role over the process of enabling cultural flow” (Smits, 2018). Furthermore, film festivals also can be identified as a temporary cluster of communities to foster knowledge exchange, express beliefs, celebrate their identities and confirm social structures and value systems within industry (Moeran & Pedersen, 2011; Yolal *et al*, 2015).

The nature of this collective dimension of film festivals makes it crucial for European independent film markets. Although, film festival research in general is still in its infant stage. Despite the majority of festivals research following a longer standing tradition in tourism and marketing research dedicated to festival impact on host cities, an established literature on film festival research exists on aspects of film festival competition (de Valck & Soeteman, 2010), fund-raising (Bauer, 2007; Ross, 2011) and its position on cultural exchange in post-colonialism 21st century (Elsaesser, 2005; de Valck, 2013; Evans, 2007). Scant academic attention has been paid to the role of film festivals on the effect to its internal stakeholders, especially facing the rapidly changing role of modern film festivals. More and more film festivals have adopted a business agenda, started to shift its function and positioning them as a temporary cluster for various professionals to an intensive knowledge exchange that enables collective process of meaning-making and a marketplace for promising film projects (Henn & Bathelt, 2014).

Although Moeran and Pedersen (2011) analyzed the precise role of festivals in negotiating values in the creative industries, still little research has been recognized and explored the business function of film festivals, the creation and practices of film festivals as a temporary cluster remain a huge research gap. Coming from this different perspective, this research aims to focus specifically on the role of international film festivals, adopting the concept of temporary clusters to investigate how film festival simulate production practices, the development of knowledge network and flow, and the role of prizes and awards for film festivals as a site of cultural legitimization.

This study takes place at the international film festival Rotterdam (IFFR). The festival was founded in 1972, following the commercial tradition of the Cannes film festival, IFFR has shaped itself as a film festival with both aesthetic and commercial interests through a number of events. The festival focuses on independent films and has a taste for the “idiosyncratic, strong-willed and talented newcomers.” (International film festival Rotterdam, 2013), which makes an interesting case to study the influence and role with this goal of encouraging production in the independent film industry. This research hopes to contribute to the development of the temporary cluster phenomenon of the new field of film festivals studies. The results of this study can also be applied to other film festivals or creative industries that aim to apply similar festival initiatives. Therefore, the research question is formulated as follows: *How do International film festivals serve the role as temporary clusters to stimulate production in the independent film industry?*

As the previous literature highlights, this study will also answer the following three sub-problems: a) how the film festival become a site of cultural legitimization through the prizes and awards; b) how film festivals achieve their business agenda through film markets; c) what is the on-site dynamic of fostering knowledge flows and networks in the film festivals. Approaching these three sub-questions provides a different angle and a starting point to tackle the problem and thus, to achieve a comprehensive conclusion to the main research question.

1.1. Social relevance

The landscape of international film festival has experienced exorbitant and sustained growth as according to recent research on European film festivals, there are about 4,000 film festivals exists in Europe (Krainhöfer, 2018). With this booming position, film festivals have established their own ecosystem and for years have functioned as a “key force and power grid in the film business” (Elsaesser, 2005. p.83). Although coming to film festivals to present their work is a natural way for independent filmmakers, what happens at film festivals often remains mysterious or unclear outside the film industry. Many have associated film festivals only with their glamorous side such as red carpet and prizes thus, investigating key functions of film festivals as a temporary cluster helps

deepen the interpretation and functions of film festivals. Furthermore, there has been a growing number of film festivals established around the world in the past years, which leads to the need of film festival to remain a competitive position among the global film festivals circuit. Festival organizers need to gain competitive advantages by understanding and adjusting festivals' strategies. Therefore, this research aims to provide festival organizers a new perspective that leans away from the tradition root of film festivals research. Moreover, film festivals as a cultural event and non-profit organization (Kanzler & Alavera, 2018), are often funded by the city hall of the hosting region, ministry of culture, as well as the European commission. Consequently, it has become essential for policymakers to understand the role of film festivals when constructing policy and regulation or collaboration models for film festivals.

1.2. Academic relevance

While it is commonly acknowledged that film festivals need to be researched in greater detail and rigor, as a hybrid event, film festivals have been studied from various approaches. Scholars researched film festivals mostly from stakeholder perspectives such as its history review (Elsaesser, 2005), the award, jury and film critics (de Valck, 2007; de Valck, 2010), festival programs as national cinema (Evans, 2007) as well as the reception of film festivals such as audience and communities (Falicov, 2016). As an emerging field of research, the business side of film festivals in terms of industry has been vastly neglected in the academic discussion. This research can be an initial contribution that aims to bridge such a gap in research by positioning film festivals as temporary cluster, a concept adopted from economic geography to further deepen the knowledge of the role that film festivals played and the ecosystem that them created.

Moreover, while economic geographer expands and develops the cluster theory in general, little has applied this concept to the creative industries, or more specifically, film industry. existing academic research which connected these two sectors put their focus on the production activities in Hollywood (Scott, 2004). It gives little attention to the film industry events. While Scott (2004, p. 41) states that "film festivals are nowadays important venues in which independent producers and distributors come together to make deals with one another", the dynamic nature of this process is not explored in detail. This research thus aims to provide insights and unpack the role film festivals played as a temporary cluster.

1.3. Chapter outline

The previous sections have elaborated on the relevance of film festivals as the study topic, the research question and sub-questions have also been presented. Following the introduction chapter,

the theoretical framework is presented with relevant theories being reviewed and previous research findings being critically assessed. The first section introduces the background and current state of the independent film industry in EU as well as elaborating on the relationship between public funds and film festivals in Europe. Following this, in the second section, the role of film festivals and its development and change within last decades has been discussed, previous research on film festivals have been reviewed. The third section put its focus on the concept of temporary clusters and the connection between the role of film festivals and temporary clusters is made. In the fourth section, CineMart event of IFFR 2020 as the case study site of this research is introduced and argumentation of why such event has been chosen is made. After reviewing current literature on this topic, a methodology chapter is presented to provide an explanation and justification on research design including data collection, data analysis, sampling logic, as well as the operationalization of the relevant concepts to develop the interview topic list. Accordingly, the results of this research are presented in a logic order and a discussion on the basis of previous research. Last, a conclusion is elaborated and the research question is answered as well as the social and theoretical implications, the limitations and suggestions for future research are also explained.

Chapter 2: Theory and previous research

2.1. European independent film industry and public funds

Although the film industry originated in Europe hundreds of years ago, it developed and flourished in the United States after World War I through the establishment of Hollywood studio system. This refers to the practice of a small number of “major” studios dominating film production and distribution through vertical integration, i.e., the ownership and control of distributors and exhibition, guaranteeing additional sales of films through block booking in Hollywood. Large, monopolistic film enterprises, assembly-line production of movies and star system are some of the most prominent features of this system. Movies made from these studios can be guaranteed to be distributed and therefore secure their box office. Despite the studio system have adapted through the use of television and internet nowadays, this oligopolistic market structure is one of the reasons behind the dominant position of Hollywood films in the global film market (Elsaesser, 2005).

Such a dominant position can also be found in the European film market landscape, with overall 70% of film production from the US (Katsarova, 2014). However, despite the imbalance share of European films and Hollywood-produced films in the EU market, the overall European film production volume is booming in the last couple of years with the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy being the top five producing countries accounted for 53.6% of overall production (Talavera, 2017). These European produced films are often viewed as a counterweight of Hollywood system and a large number of these films were produced outside of the mainstream studio system, which in other words they were independently produced with medium or small budgets. Such independent produced films reflect the core of the EU film industry consists of small, nationally based companies, many of which are focused on one segment of the value network such as production or distribution (Elsaesser, 2005; Katsarova, 2014; Krainhöfer, 2018). Therefore, unlike Hollywood films which have the support from vertically integrated media groups, European independent films do not have such financial security. This has led to several financial challenges many European-produced films now face, including raising budgets globally as well as the lack of profitability (Katsarova, 2014).

However, compared to Hollywood films with emphasis on its box office performance, European independent films overall value more the artistic achievement of one film with the longstanding tradition of European auteurism (de Valck & Soeteman, 2010). The difference between the European film industry and Hollywood system has been characterized as “oppositions between the artistic value of European cinema and the pop culture of Hollywood” (Bauer, 2007). Indeed, this difference in emphasis on box office performance can reflect the historical opinion of culture/art value in Europe and in the US. While the auteur is being regarded and appreciated in Europe

regardless of its market share, if a film doesn't perform well in the screening, it would have received less attention in Hollywood.

The two-fold cultural and economic characteristics of the European film industry elaborated above, as well as the potential financial challenge of a dominant Hollywood film's presence in the EU film market account for a long-standing tradition of public funding aids, which has aimed at improving the global competitiveness of European cinema (Katsarova, 2014). The European Audiovisual Observatory defines a public funding as "a legal entity which provides direct public or state subsidies and grants to film or audiovisual projects, grants loans at preferential rates or transfers resources from one branch of the industry to another, either ordered or assisted by public authorities" (Kanzler & Talavera, 2018. p. 154). According to a report released by the Observatory, there are approximately 250 funding projects of various sizes in Europe in 2014 among 35 European countries (Bauer, 2007; Kanzler & Talavera, 2018;). In addition, Observatory distinguishes the public funds into three categories based on the regional scope the funds will operate in: pan-European funds, national or federal funds and sub-national funds (Newman-Baudais, 2011), while the most of direct national funds embedded with the overall cultural policy and regulation of one country.

To take a closer look at the number of national and sub-national public film funding by country, France with its total of 42 public film funds clearly stands out in the European public film funding landscape. Along with Germany, Austria, Sweden and Italy, the top five countries alone took up more than 50% of European film funding population (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2016; Kanzler & Talavera, 2018). However, the top five countries which have the highest production volume are not on the top five countries list of funding population, which means that direct national funds are not accessible to some more active producers or companies. This imbalance of public funds structure in production stage has made film festival funds an alternative platform to connect public funds and promising projects (De Valck, 2006; Bauer, 2007; Krainhöfer, 2018). Festival funds in European film festivals allow European production companies or producers to gain funds across the border without regulation from institution. Winning a funded prize in film festivals not only helps the projects to gain the financial support, but also being an alternative way of promotion and further distribution.

Another key agenda of film festival funds is to support European co-production projects. From a recent report on European film production from European Audiovisual Observatory, one upward trend can be observed is that the increasing number of European films are the co-productions between European countries or European countries with outside EU countries. These co-productions films accounted for a higher volume as well as circulation compared to purely national productions (Talavera, 2017). Thus, such an increasing co-production diversity between EU member states as

well as international has influenced some objectives of film festival funds in order to overcome national distribution and language barriers and facilitate co-production within. Therefore, by distributing funds for co-production projects, film festivals serve as a stage in stimulating international cooperation (Katsarova, 2014; Krainhöfer, 2018). Some film festivals responded this objective and offer specific prizes for co-production film projects.

Above literature and industry reports reviewed the European film production landscape as well as the necessity of public funds. In conclusion, the market structure of the European film industry and the preference of co-production are the driving force of the heavily reliance on public funds, which leads to the film festivals nowadays becoming an alternative platform for film projects to seek financial support from festival funds. Meanwhile, film festivals have also become a platform to execute the objectives of public funds such as encouraging co-production within the EU member states.

2.2. The changing role of film festivals within film industry

Discussing the interaction between public funds and European film production landscape gives this research a broad economic perspective to understand why film festivals have huge influence on the European film industry. Ever since the Venice film festival began in 1932, the film festival has remained a phenomenon in Europe and has increasingly become a key player in the film industry. According to International Federation of Film Producers Association (FIAPF)¹, a film festival is 'screening of quality films at a venue where film artistes, directors, producers, distributors, exhibitors, exporters and importers, film financiers, critics and film lovers congregate and discuss various aspects of cinema, aesthetic or ideological' (FIAPF, 2002). In 2015, the organization certified a total of 52 film festivals, among which there are 15 non-specialized competition film festivals, namely class A film festivals in the world, formed a global film festival circuit as well as the festival calendar, which defines the relation of festivals to one another, their position in the circuit, and sets the expiration date at a one-year maximum. Film festivals in the circuit are comprehensive film festivals, with no specific theme and have a wide coverage with a global influence. The most famous of which includes the three major European film festivals. In addition, some non-class A film festivals also have a great impact in industry landscape, such as Sundance film festival, which encourages low cost and independent production; International Film Festival Rotterdam, which focuses on encouraging youth movie production and visual experiment; Pusan film festival, which is committed to the promotion of Asian cinema, etc.

¹ The International Film Producers Association (FIAPF) was founded in 1933, is a group of 35 audiovisual industry bodies from 30 countries that oversees and certifies international film festivals.

While being an important phenomenon and operating in various stages for the film industry, academic discussion on film festival research remain to be explored in greater detail. An existing amount of literature on film festival research embedded with festivals studies in general, often associating with the local/global dynamic that festivals can bring (Stringer, 2003), as well as the significant role of festivals in marketing/branding for host cities' tourism (e.g. Ooi & Strandgaard, 2009). Another traditional approach to the film festival research is from a geopolitics perspective that film festivals can be seen as the front line of promoting national cinema (Elsaesser, 2005; Evans, 2007). Evans (2007) argues that Film festivals represent the national objective and achieve agenda setting through the program planning, film selection criteria and prize awards. By maximizing the interests of the hosting ethnic/regional/cultural community, film festivals have become an important field for the confrontation and negotiation of diverse interests that allow the engagement of distinctive groups with diverse interests (Dayan, 2000). Furthermore, several studies have approached to understand film festivals' versatility from an organization and management approach. Stringer (2003) and Rüling & Pedersen (2010) explored film festivals as institutions or organizations, pointing out that "film festivals as hybrid events, crossing multiple institutional logics and serving as arenas for the determination, reproduction and contestation of multiple kinds of values" (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010. P.10), while Yodal *et al* (2015) put their focus on the audience and explore the motivation of a film festival's spectator.

As the literature review showed above, there are various theoretical frameworks to tackle film festivals phenomenon with the respect of different stakeholders / interests such as host cities, national cinema or its attendance. This study looked into film festivals from another empirical research root, which is to engage in the diverse festival phenomenon taking business and cultural/aesthetic approach, with professionals in the industry as the main interests (e.g. Turan, 2002; Elsaesser, 2005 & de Valck, 2007). According to de Valck extensive film festivals studies based on Bourdieu's (1970) theory of cultural sociology, one of the most important roles film festivals play for professionals is being a site of cultural legitimization (de Valck, 2016). As a traditional exhibition platform, by showing and prizing films, film festivals serve as credential systems, not only to increase its (inter)national exposure, but also hold power over offering symbolic capital such as "prestige, honor, and recognition" (de Valck, 2016. p.105) for the films and filmmakers. Therefore, film festivals become a 'field of cultural production' that enable films and filmmakers to pass through festivals to make a transition into the professional field. Behind this recognition and prestige, it shows the role of the film festival as a gatekeeper for filmmakers to break into the circuit (Smits, 2016; de valck, 2007). Winning awards and showing in the film festival opens a door for films to be further produced and distributed (de Valck, 2004; 2007).

In recent years, film festivals have expanded their role as sites of cultural legitimization for the industry by not only showing and prizing the films, but also actively associating with the industry by organizing markets (de Valck 2007; Evans, 2007; Iordanova, 2015). Many film festivals begin to provide space between companies and creatives for project acquisitions and negotiations, such as the Cannes film festival has established a prosperous film market as well as the European film market from Berlinale film festival, which has become the main trading place of the German film industry. Facilitating such film markets for the industry made film festivals become a crucial center of trade that allows buyers such as distributor, sellers, producer and sales agents to exchange film related products or services. Moreover, film festivals also begin to hold special events such as pitch sessions, development of funding awards, sessions for additional financing round that fostering production-related activities as part of their festivals (Peranson, 2008; de Valck, 2007; Iordanova, 2015). Film professionals therefore explored the value of the festivals beyond their basic function as showcasing films and gaining symbolic capitals, but also serve as trade events associated with a business agenda.

This notion of film festivals with a 'business agenda' developed from Peranson (2008), who elaborated that business-oriented film festivals generally have the following characteristics: Premiere oriented (world or International), High budget, operating revenue, and not primarily audience/ticket sales, which is opposing of audience-oriented film festivals. Markets or business meetings attached with film festivals attract various stakeholders in the industry to come together for exchanging projects and knowledge, thus made film festivals become organized professional gatherings that "assemble diverse members of an industrial field in a bounded time and space to exchange information or coordinate activities" (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). These characteristics indicate a shift in the role and focus of the film festival, which made it especially important for new creatives. This is not only a platform for them to get the start-up capital for their first work in pre-production, to find sales and distributors in mid-production, and to gain popularity and exposure in post-competition shows, but also a networking platform. Film festivals, therefore, play a role in multiple areas in stimulating production with such a business agenda. However, despite such changing role of film festivals has been recognized by several studies, limited researches have been done to closely analyze how market function of film festivals operated in action. This research aims to bridge such a gap in film festivals studies that specifically investigate how the film festivals achieve such a 'business agenda' by functioning as a temporary cluster.

2.3. Film festivals as temporary clusters

To view film festivals as temporary clusters, a close reflection on the cluster as a core concept is essential to understand such phenomenon. An established literature on cluster theories is grounded in the economic geography research (see Porter, 2000; Maskell, Bathelt, & Malmberg, 2004; Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008; Henn & Bathelt, 2015). With its location focus, Porter (2000, p.253) defines clusters as “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers and service providers, firms in related industries and associated in particular fields that compete but also cooperate”. Cluster theory suggests that productivity is increased by greater ease in accessing inputs and information, coordination among related firms, as well as benchmarking and stimulating progress (Porter, 1998). While clusters have great impacts on regional economic development, related diversity in trans-local linkages, the interaction of firms within clusters, and the development of social milieus for learning and networking.

Furthermore, despite the discussion about cluster effect in trans-local linkages, the cluster concept has been expanded in recent years from a viewpoint of knowledge creation and flows. For example, Maskell (2001) emphasizes the value of clusters for learning and enhanced knowledge creation by spatial proximity to facilitate access to information from disparate sources and bring together agents globally to create temporary spaces for presentation and interaction. In particular, Bathelt & Schuldt (2010) develop the concept of ‘global buzz’ that recognizes the impact on the global knowledge flows as such global industry events provide a context in which information, ideas, knowledges and gossips are shared by event participants. They further argued that clusters can be understood not only as a permanent geographical colocation but also in temporary contexts (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2010; Comunian, 2017). Building upon a knowledge-based conception of permanent clusters, temporary clusters serve similar functions with permanent ones that enable professional interaction and knowledge creation for a restricted amount of time. Therefore, a temporary cluster have been defined as “a short-lived hotspot of intensive and dedicated exchange of knowledge, network building and generation of new ideas” (Bathelt, Malmberg & Maskell, 2004, p.2). Such clusters have the ability to build global ‘pipelines’ and establish connections to non-local knowledge, examine strategies by which firms and actors systematically seek to acquire and access new knowledge flows through spatial face-to-face interaction.

Following this logic, international film festivals can be viewed as temporary clusters because they act as knowledge-exchanging mechanisms by enabling professional face-to-face contact and spatial proximity, albeit in a short-lived and intensified form. Filmmakers in a specific country come to international film festivals can showcase their latest films and projects, meet with potential partners and distributors, learn over workshops and masterclasses, and examine recent market

trends, thus made international film festivals as crucial meeting points for professionals in the independent film industry. Moreover, events and screenings in the festival combine different knowledge from a variety of sources and formed a temporary cluster of industrial knowledge. Thus, film festivals serve as temporary clusters that bring together specialized communities of experts that have similar positions, and responsibilities in their field to foster the knowledge flows (Hemm & Bathelt, 2015).

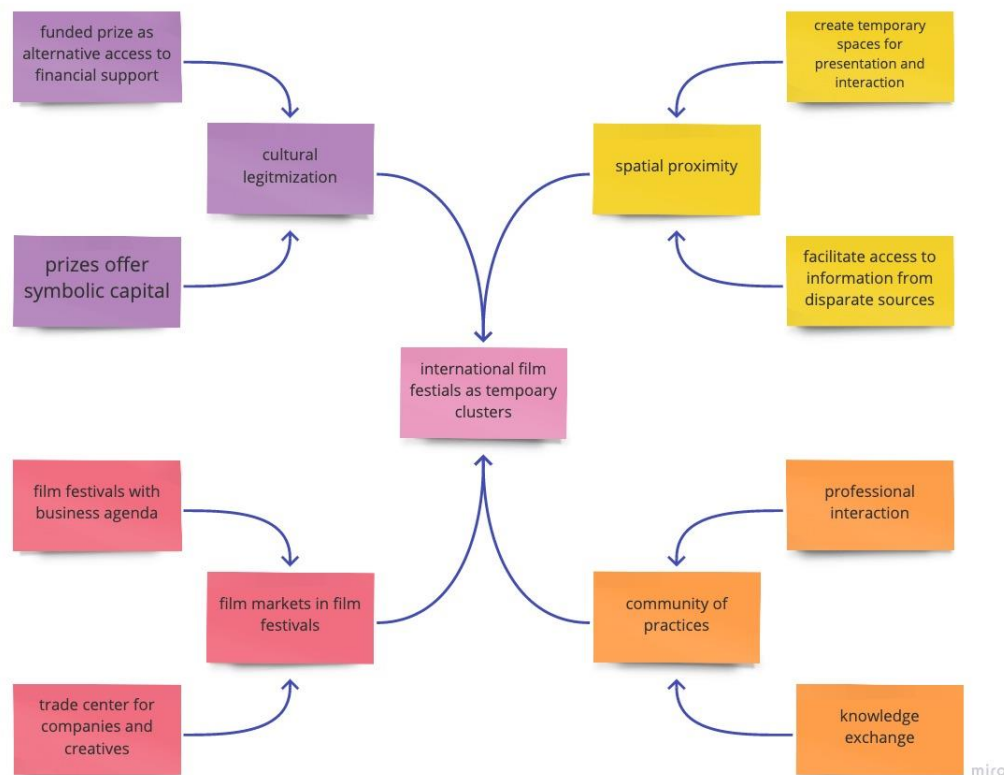


Figure 1: concept map of film festivals as temporary clusters

Looking at film festivals as temporary clusters provides a different perspective to investigate the role festivals played for the industry. They serve as a place in which "people from diverse organizations and with diverse purposes assemble periodically or on a one-time basis, to announce new products, develop industry standards, construct social networks, recognize accomplishments, share and interpret information, and transact business" (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). As previous literature reviewed suggests, more and more film production in Europe are becoming co-production, therefore, provide a place for professionals to network, look for new partner in an international context become crucial for generating co-production projects as international film festivals "enable face to face contact and geographical proximity in professional interaction for a limited time period" (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2004. p.855). Therefore, film festivals function as central spaces for knowledge creation and market processes in the global film industry.

However, the discussion among this function of fostering knowledge creation and network flow as temporary clusters have been widely neglected in film festivals studies. While limited research can be found that interact this concept with creative industries, several scholars associated the temporary cluster as a form of community of practices in creative economy (Bettioli & Sedita, 2011; Godart, 2011; Comunian, 2017). Comunian (2017) took a social network analysis approach and analyzed the impact and role played by arts festivals in building knowledge communities and communities of practices. However, while this study focuses on the value of learning and collaborating within the temporary cluster, it has not discovered the role of festivals for its business purpose, nor it discussed the impact of such temporary cluster on the value chain of production. The interaction of various stakeholders and processes of knowledge generation at the festival in creative industries need to be explored in-depth. This research aims to contribute to this research gap, by examining the central feature of knowledge exchanging process and on-site dynamics of international film festivals have adopted and developed, therefore to gain a deeper understanding of the role international film festivals played as temporary clusters for the industry.

2.4. Case study site: International Film Festival Rotterdam and CineMart

To look into the role of international film festivals as temporary clusters in the independent film industry, International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) has been chosen as the case study site of this research. Established in 1970s, IFFR has become one of the biggest film festivals in the world by offering a carefully- selected of worldwide independent, experimental cinema and visual arts for the cinephiles and the professionals for nearly half a century. The festival often begins in the last week of January and holds its closing ceremony in the first or second week of February. During these twelve festival days, IFFR is devoted to be an “essential hub in Holland for discovering film talents, for catching premieres, and exploring its competitions, main sections of recent feature films, short films and documentaries, visual arts exhibitions, theme sections and debates” (Bauer, 2007. p. 61). In the latest IFFR, 575 films were presented, 39 talks and masterclasses were held with nearly 340,000 visits and 2,705 attending film professionals in total (IFFR annual report, 2020). With such a large number of audiences IFFR can bring and its emphasis on independent films, IFFR has become a central node for independent films to present their work and attract audiences.



Figure 2: the demonstration of total visits in IFFR 2020. Source: <https://iffr.com/en/annual-report/2019-2020/facts-and-figures>

Following the logic of two ideal models of film festivals discussed in the previous section, it can be stated that IFFR is a combination of both, being an audience festival as well as industry-driven. Not only does IFFR provides the audiences hundreds of films or visual arts with various program in various venues located within central Rotterdam, there are also projects initiated by IFFR that go beyond mere film screenings. IFFR Pro is one program within the film festival that is dedicated to enable professionals to interact and collaborate with leading experts and organizations in the film industry. IFFR Pro achieves such a goal for example by building spaces for professionals to discuss current challenges in the European and global film industry. Another key element in IFFR showed its determination on facilitating production is the development of CineMart.

CineMart is the first platform of its kind to offer filmmakers the opportunity to launch their ideas to the international film industry and to find the right connections to get their projects financed (www.iffr.com). As a co-production project market, CineMart presents a select number of carefully curated feature film projects with international market potential that will benefit from guidance on the development of their project, as well as being connected to the right creative and financial partners (IFFR annual report, 2020). Every year, CineMart invites a selected number of directors/producers to present their film projects to co-producers, bankers, funds, sales agents, distributors, TV stations and other potential financiers and organizes one-on-one meetings. For five days during the IFFR, hundreds of industry representatives worldwide gather in the assigned conference hall to discuss the projects that have been selected for this year's CineMart. One of CineMart's trademarks is the highly productive, yet informal atmosphere. In order to maintain such an environment, the number of projects is kept to around 45 and the invitation process is selective (Bauer, 2007; de Valck, 2013). CineMart is supported by the MEDIA Program of the European

Commission, Rotterdam's City Development Corporation, Dutch Film Fund, ARTE France Cinéma, and Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development (Bauer, 2007; IFFR annual report, 2020).

While CineMart has grown over the years and increased its impact on the industry, central academic discussion around CineMart or IFFR in general mostly focus on the fund raising of such culture events (Bauer, 2007), the impact of facilitating a market on fostering international cinema (Steinhart, 2006), the dynamic between art cinema and commercialization (de Valck, 2013), as well as film festivals influence on Latin American films through funds (Ross, 2011). To understand how IFFR and CineMart stimulate production by acting as a temporary cluster would allow the research to understand such a position in the industry from a business perspective. The representativeness of CineMart or IFFR as a case study site comes from its active engagement with audiences as well as the industry, thus, can provide an extensive acknowledgement on this topic.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As the previous chapter discussed, how the international film festivals are positioned as temporary clusters by adapting their changing role in the industry, requires to be studied from multiple angles. To approach and generate a comprehensive understanding of chosen topic, this chapter elaborates on the research design of this study.

Investigating the role of film festivals in the industry as temporary clusters requires a qualitative approach as it provides a deeper understanding of the topic. This chapter firstly provides justification of the chosen qualitative research method, more specifically, a brief discussion of conducting expert interviews and case study method is presented. Furthermore, this chapter introduces the chosen sampling method of interviewees and data collecting process. The choice of using thematic content analysis as the method of data analysis is thoroughly explained, as well as the taken steps during the analysis. Additionally, operationalization of core concepts from literatures and its relationship to the research (sub)questions are demonstrated in this chapter, as well as the establishment of the topic guide. Finally, a justification of the validity and reliability of this research is included in the last section of this chapter.

3.1. Choice of method

To gain better insight into the topic of the role of film festivals, qualitative methods is used as they provide more descriptive data and a deeper understanding of the topic. The research question “How do International film festivals serve the role as temporary clusters to stimulate production in the independent film industry?” investigates the role film festivals played by functioning as temporary clusters for different stakeholders in production-related activities. By investigating how film festivals organize, manage and combine creativity and knowledge, as well as the effects on its stakeholders, the aim of this research is to gain a profound understanding of the nature of IFFR nowadays and the position of this temporary cluster for the industry. With a qualitative method, an insightful and comprehensive view of the functions and strategies of film festivals can be obtained more accurately. Qualitative research strives to observe and understand the way people perceive, sense, portray and interpret the world around them (Brennen, 2017), it is suitable for the research seeks to explore the meaning, knowledge and the relations about the chosen topic. Therefore, incorporating qualitative method of research in this study allows the researcher to create a comprehensive understanding of the business strategies of film festivals and how has it been perceived by various group within film industry.

In light of the purpose of this research, qualitative in-depth interviews with experts as a method of data gathering offers flexibility in the process and allows for more thorough analysis of

the topic (Babbie, 2013). Several advantages of using in-depth interviews can be identified for this research. Firstly, it allows the researcher to obtain rich, descriptive data about personal experience, attitudes and perceptions. This meaning-making nature of interviews is most suitable considering the objectives of this study. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic due to their open nature, as well as allow the interviewee to apply their own expertise and knowledge to the discussion (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Close attention should be paid to the properness and advantages of choosing to do interviews with experts. For this study, these experts are considered to be professional festival participants, professionals attend IFFR, to be more specific. Conducting expert interviews provides a deeper insight into the structures of expert knowledge and field-specific practices. It is suitable for the research which “seek to elicit the specialized knowledge gained through the expert’s professional activities as well as the tacit interpretive knowledge that shapes professional practices” (Littig & Pöchhacker, 2014. p.1089). The design of an expert interview is often a semi-structured interview with a person ascribed the status of an expert in its field. Although the definition of an expert relies on the notion of expert knowledge one can bring. According to Littig and Pöchhacker (2014), experts are essential and relevant for such a study as they can provide specialist professional knowledge on organizational procedures and processes, as well as the interpretive knowledge about their field of activity.

However, established academic debates reflected on the methodological ambiguity of expert interviews (see Bogner, Littig & Menz, 2009). Discussion mostly touched upon the clear definition of an expert, the notion of expert knowledge, as well as the various form of expert interviews most used, so far largely depend on the researcher’s interests and the research question under investigation (Meuser & Nagel, 1991). Therefore, in order to avoid such ambiguity, a clear definition of expert is essential to guarantee the transparency and rigor of this study. Experts, distinguished from a layperson or a “well-informed citizen”, have privileged accesses to information and therefore are able to provide knowledge stock that is “characteristic” or “relevant” for a certain field and can offer fundamental problem solutions or can apply these to individual problems within this area (Hitzler, 1994, p. 26; Pfadenhauer, 2009). The aim of this study is to explore how the role of film festivals have been organized, adopted and understood, therefore, interviewing with person who had been involved in the negotiation, drafting, adoption, implementation and perception of such role is needed. Experts in this field often serves as the management team of film festivals, the jury member of certain festival awards, as well as key players in the industry such as sales representatives, funds consultants or producers.

One of the distinctive features of this methodological approach is the active role the interviewer plays for a productive interview (Meuser & Nagel, 1991; Littig & Pöchhacker, 2014). First, whether who is expert and who's not depends on the interviewer's judgement based on the study. Prior established knowledge about the field under study from the interviewer also influences the interaction during the interview, thus, the outcome of collected data as how the interviewer come across affects the willingness of the interviewee to talk. Littig and Pöchhacker (2014) also addressed this issue as the way the interviewer presents as a quasi-expert or a layperson will affect the interviewee's communicative behavior as well as the extent of knowledge he/she may share. Accordingly, intensive research and background preparation of each interviewed expert has been done in order to foster the interaction and knowledge sharing during the interview in this study. Another key influence factor to a productive expert interview is the establishment of topic guide (Bogner & Menz, 2009) as the "effort invested into the design of the topic guide provides the interviewer with the thematic competence enabling him for productive interviewing" (Meuser & Nagel, 1991. p.32). The topic guide of this study is constructed from the theoretical framework and further explained in the next section.

Another noticeably choice of method in this study is a single case study approach. As a common research method in social sciences, case study research is suitable for investigating a complex contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-world context (Yin, 2017). Film festivals as hybrid cultural events, require to be studied with the respect of its complexness. Therefore, using a case study approach is a relevant method for this research as it seeks to establish an extensive and 'in-depth' understanding of film festivals as temporary clusters for the industry. By using IFFR as a case to investigate, this research seeks to illuminate a set of decision made by film festivals: why they were made, how they were made and implemented, and with what results. However, the rigor of case study approach and the generation of the results from chosen case need to be carefully considered when applying case study as research method. This requires the researcher to follow systemically procedures and pay attention to the results are only generalizable to theoretical proposition.

3.2. Operationalization

As addressed above, one of the key elements to ensure a productive expert interview is a topic guide that consist of operationalized core concepts from the theoretical framework. As the central focus of this research lies in the role of film festivals as temporary clusters for production-purpose activities and knowledge generation, the literatures reviewed brought out several core concepts that relate to the three sub-questions and the main research question this study aims to answer.

The first sub-question: 'how film festivals become a site of cultural legitimization through the prizes and awards' aims to further develop from de Valck's research on film festivals (2016). This associates with the concept of film festivals being sites of cultural legitimization. While conducting the interview, the researcher made sure to ask about the logic and objectives of prize settings, the decision-making process of prize jury, the origin of such recognition building, as well as the value of prizes as financial support for new projects. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding on how film festivals construct themselves as sites of cultural legitimization for the industry and what are the specific festival activities done to maintain and enhance such a position.

The following sub-question: 'how film festivals achieve their business agenda through film markets' is linked with another core concept: the changed role of film festivals. This was assessed by analyzing and interpreting the film festivals as a market, which mostly related to the case study site of the CineMart in this research. Key points related to this concept include the market structure, circulation of film projects, the phenomenon of festivals adopting a business agenda and the influence of this changing role to individual projects also to the European film industry.

The last sub-question strives to understand the on-site dynamic of fostering knowledge flows and networks in film festivals, which is associated with the concept of film festivals as temporary clusters. This concept was approached with Comunian (2017) research on the relationship between temporary clusters and community of practices, with respects of Bathelt & Schuldt (2004) definition of temporary cluster that highlighting the importance of face to face contact and geographical proximity in professional interaction. The measuring instrument of this concept was through questions about the networking building process, knowledge exchange, generation of new ideas in a limited time and space. Specific questions were asked about the different kinds of knowledge exchange, what were the types of social relationships and knowledge only happening in film festivals, the instruments the film festival have taken to achieve such goals.

3.3. Sampling and data collection process

As the research method was designed to be based on expert interview, the interview participants recruitment needed to be selective in order to reach the expert knowledge they can provide that this research desires. Based on this objective, expert sampling was used to collect the interview participants. Expert sampling is one form of purposive sampling used when research requires one to capture knowledge rooted in a particular form of expertise. Purposive sampling allows researchers to choose participants on the basis of their experience or opinion on the research topic, thus beneficial to explore the research topic in depth (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Therefore, the study purposively selected interviewees from individuals who attend or organized CineMart in international film festival Rotterdam between 27th of January and 2nd of February in 2020 based on the following criteria: A) participants needed to have attended at least once during the CineMart event. B) participants needed to work in the film industry or serve as a jury member. Since the selection strategies of CineMart states only representatives from the film industry may apply for accreditation and attend the event, I would argue that almost all the participants of CineMart event can fit in the sample criteria of this research. Due to Covid19, the researcher could not fully capitalize on the existing contacts in the IFFR office, however, nine participants proved to fulfil data saturation principles. Furthermore, recruited participants are from various groups and roles within the film industry such as distributors, sales agents, jury members of awards, filmmakers and organizers of CineMart to comprehensively and critically reflect the understanding and interaction of the role of film festivals, therefore answering the research question.

Although getting access to experts is generally limited (Littig & Pöchhacker, 2014), there is an existing connection between the researcher and the CineMart management team, thus, a contact list was available for the researcher to reach out to the potential interviewees. First, all the potential interviewees were contacted via email from the list in order to request a face-to-face interview and were provided with an explanation of the research purpose and method to take into consideration if they agree to the interview. Later on, a consent form was sent separately to all participants and exact dates for the interviews were discussed and scheduled. Nine interview participants instead of intended number of 10 were recruited in the way mentioned above, as the participants recruitment was hampered by the Covid19 outbreak. Among these nine interviewees, attention was also paid to having a mix of demographics and backgrounds represented in the study. Four participants are producers with projects that came to CineMart, one participant is the jury member of an award in CineMart, three interviewees are IFFR staff, one works as a sales representative and one serves the role as international constant in film funds Netherlands. The ratio of the male/female among interviewees are 3:6 [N=9].

Table 1: overview of interviewees

	Position	Region
Ellis Driessen	Consultant International Department in film funds NL	Netherlands
Nelleke Driessen	Sales representatives	Netherlands
Bero Beyer	Ex-festival director of IFFR (2015-2020)	Netherlands
Sonia Shvets	Jury member of young network award	Netherlands

Thomas Hakim	Producer with project	France
Iván Eibuszyc	Producer with project	Argentina
Ada Solomon	Producer with project	Romania
Alessia Acone	Manager CineMart & Rotterdam Lab	Netherlands
Liu Ying	Producer with project	China

The data collection process took place between the 9th and 31st of April 2020. However, since the researcher was based in Netherlands and when the interview process took place, the measures to contain the Coronavirus included social distancing and minimized physical contact. Therefore, all interviews were conducted online instead in order to follow the regulations set out by the Dutch government. All but one interviews were conducted through Skype, as one interviewee was Chinese therefore, the choice of platform switched to Wechat (a Chinese social media app) out of the interviewee's request. Compared to face-to-face interviews, online interviews indeed have certain drawbacks such as the difficulty of building rapport quickly, less non-verbal communication between interviewer and interviewee (Brennen, 2017). In order to reduce such a disadvantage, more icebreaking questions were asked in order to build trust and more probing questions were included to boost interaction. The interview typically lasted between 45mins to one hour, except the interview with Bero Beyer, which only lasted 30mins. However, despite the shorter duration of this interview, the content and knowledge were rich and extensive enough due to his role as the former festival director in the organizational hierarchy. All interviews were in English and were audio-recorded for further transcription and data analysis.

On the basis of the operationalization of core concepts, the interview topic list (see appendix A) was divided in a few consecutive parts with predominant emphasis on understanding how the value of being such a temporary cluster in IFFR have been adopted and understood by various stakeholders. There are four main parts in the topic list and each of divided part is aiming at answering the sub-questions and further to connect within. The first part of the interview serves as a warm-up, which allows the researcher to ask the interviewee to describe their work, as well as their experience in attending film festivals. Asking such icebreaking questions helps the researcher to build rapport with the interviewee and ease in to the main topic of the interview (Brennen, 2017). The second theme of interview dived into the information of the connection between festival prizes and cultural legitimization, including its prize settings, award criteria, the focus on the specific region, the decision-making process of the award jury, prizes with funding support, especially its value to the newcomers in the independent film industry. Following this, the next topic of the interview explored the market function of IFFR, using CineMart or other co-production event to demonstrate the selection-strategies of nomeid projects, the effectiveness of this market on

encouraging production, the uniqueness of this event. The Last topic of the interview put its focus on the notion of film festivals as temporary clusters, aiming to explore the information about the principles and the practices of this event, on-site dynamic of meetings and program to reflect the objective of IFFR, as well as the design and organizational structure of different function programs.

3.4. Method of data analysis

The chosen qualitative method of data analysis is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is one form of content analysis that focuses on examining and converting research data into categories to identify and report on key themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes are defined as “patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to a specific research question” (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). By focusing on finding common themes throughout the data, thematic analysis is the most suitable method to answer the research question of this study. One of the benefits of thematic analysis is its flexibility. It not only allows the research to be deductive or ‘theory-driven’ that focus on specific theories that the researcher may wish to code around, but also allows for themes to be inductive that can emerge from the data. This kind of flexibility makes thematic analysis can provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of the data.

Before the actual thematic analysis process take place, all the interviews audio-records were transcribed, then the transcripts were organized and categorized to make sure the data was accessible for the researcher. Each interview transcript was firstly color labeled as an identification to help the researcher locate each data source easily. Then, all the interview transcripts were grouped together into one file, which became the raw data of this study. Raw data is the words as they were spoken by the participants in interviews.

After the file of raw data was created and the preparation of collected data was done, a qualitative thematic analysis was used in Google sheets to describe, discuss, interpret, explain and evaluate the data and to reach a conclusion. Ordering data according to a prior logic by first breaking the data down into relevant elements (Brennen, 2017), thematic analysis allows the research to have an iterative practice based on the process of coding in several phases to develop meaningful patterns from the data. The phases of thematic data-analysis are adopted from Braun & Clarke (2006) and Matthews & Ross (2010), and the analysis was divided in the following steps.

For the beginning, the researcher firstly aimed to familiarize herself with the data. This required immersion in the data by reading and re-reading the transcript of the conducted interview (p. 87) accompanied by writing down initial codes. Second, an initial coding was conducted in order to identify some initial key themes. In this initial stage of analysis, the data is coded in a deductive

approach and the initial codes were roughly derived from the literature review and the theoretical framework, thus the segments or the initial codes of the transcriptions which were related to the interview topic and research question were created. However, the creation of the codebook (see appendix B) was also adopted an inductive approach which was flexible enough to allow relevant sub themes to emerge from, such as follow-up questions, which led to third step that included identification of the main prior themes derived from data.

After coding the raw data in a combination of deductive and inductive manner, emerged codes were grouped into three main themes and ten sub-themes. Then, these themes were reviewed and improved by looking back to the raw data to make sure they were inclusive and accurate, with the research question in mind. This step requires continual examination to develop a clearly structured relationship between these themes, as well as with sub-themes. After this, three themes were conceptualized including generating clear definitions and names for each theme. Lastly, based on the generated themes, a report of results and discussion was conducted in the following chapter.

3.5. Validity and reliability

To ensure the research design of one study remain rigorous, the validity and reliability of the research must take into consideration when making decisions. According to Babbie (2017. p.154), validity refers to “the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under researching”. He also stressed that qualitative research measurements such as interviews generally have more validity but less reliability than surveys or experiments as it can provide much more detailed and comprehensive meaning in concepts for certain research topics.

To make sure this research design is measuring what it is intended to measure, various literatures have been used when constructing the meanings and measurements of the core concepts in this study (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Although the sampling method of this study requires more involvement of the researcher as it depends on the judgement of the researcher on who is the expert and who is not, however, the recruitment of interviewees was carefully conducted with the aim of covering the range of meanings or stakeholders included within the concept, in such way, the content validity of this study can be secured (Babbie, 2017).

In order to guarantee the reliability of this study, extra attention has been paid to the transparency of the interview topic guide. First of all, the same interview topic guide was used for all the participants, with a slight change depending on the interviewee’s characteristic. Such consistency made sure that all participants were exposed to the same research topics and core concepts were discussed in each interview, thus ensuring the researcher remain unbiased (Babbie, 2017). Additionally, all participants were provided with a consent form before the interviews, in

which the aim of the research was accurately explained. Moreover, the concepts used in this interview topic guide as well as the interpretations of the data were alongside the existing theory. Decisions on the coding of interview transcripts are also available in the appendix B to ensure the rigor of the research design.

Regardless, some reflection of the research design from this study can also be addressed. Although the difference of professional position of each interviewee was desired when sampling, it also led to the imbalance of perspective the interviewees can bring. Some interviewees were able to give a wide perspective about the film festival as a whole organization, while others could only provide daily workflow. This may lead to a less coherent context when interpreting the data.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

With the aim of finding out how film festivals function as temporary clusters for the industry to stimulate production, nine qualitative expert interviews were conducted in order to firstly understand how different stakeholders in the industry as well as IFFR staff perceive film festivals. Subsequently, a thematic analysis was applied with the aim of organizing, categorizing and interpreting the gathered data. After segmenting, categorizing and systemically analyzing all interviews, three main themes emerged from the data conducive to answer the research question. In this chapter, the results and a discussion of the research findings is presented in a systemic order. The code book with the main themes and sub-themes, in which the results were based and analyzed, can be found in the appendix B.

4.1. Community of practices

As the literature overview highlights, there is an existing relationship between community of practices and temporary clusters (Comunian, 2017). Findings in this study further revealed such connections if we take into consideration and understand the film festival from such network knowledge-based framework.

Community of practices is a concept developed by Wenger (1998, p.1) that can be defined as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” The film festival clusters talents that share a similar passion for films and provides a platform for them to learn and interact with each other. It can in turn be viewed as a community of practices. Consequently, three crucial characteristics (learning, meaning and identity) when constituting a community of practices explained by Wenger (2000) can also be identified in the film festival.

By establishing a specific taste that the film festival can represents and passes on to the participants, the film festival forms an identity that the participants can adopt and learn from it to further adapt their projects accordingly. Moreover, by giving prizes, the film festival becomes a site for talents to gain cultural recognition and add meaning to the projects. Additionally, presenting new projects and receiving feedbacks from peers and experts created a link between learning and performance, thus made the film festival becomes a community that allow participants to engage in joint activities and discussions, learn from each other and exchange opinions. To facilitate such functions mentioned above, efforts have also been put in to establishing a sense of community. In this community initiated by the film festival, shared trust and experience is valued, discussions and engagements are encouraged thus further stimulating production related knowledge and activities.

4.1.1. Cultivating IFFR taste

Cultivating a specific taste is one way for film festivals to establish an identity and influence the participant's interpretation on the value of prizes such as 'what is prize-worthy' or 'what is aesthetic'. Reaching to its 50th edition, IFFR has built up the reputation that this is a film festival with a preferred taste of independent and innovative art house films and that it stands for values such as freedom, artistic quality and avantgarde works of art (Steinhart, 2006). By establishing and representing such a taste and successfully delivering it to its audiences, IFFR has thus become a tastemaker in the industry representing or standing for a specific value and taste. Because of this taste establishment of the film festival, certain aesthetic disposition regarding cinema and films is continuously confirmed by awarding matching projects, and thus shape and shepherd the filmmaker's understanding of artistic value. Once the interpretation of taste and value have been cultivated by the film festival, the behaviors of filmmakers are predisposed to produce films in certain traditions that match with IFFR's identity.

The process of cultivating IFFR taste requires the selecting process to be highly selective and strict. Ample attention is paid to the aesthetic quality of projects when selecting them into either main competition or the project market as Ellis Driessen, one of the jury members of CineMart award explains:

and it has to stand out in story and the approach of the subject. That's first of all, I mean do we care about this project? Do we value about the story [...] It has to be appealing (Ellis Driessen, funds consultant & jury)

Moreover, how the artistic quality of the project would interact with the IFFR taste is as important as its own artistic characteristic. Whether the selected project would enhance the IFFR taste or challenge it relies on a certain degree of shared understanding of the "IFFR taste". This criterion applies to projects not only entered into the main competition but also the projects came to the market that are still under development. Therefore, one of the criteria of the selecting process is whether the selected project can reflect the value that IFFR stands for:

I would say like, really the editorial line of the festival itself. It's the main criteria. Whether we think that this will be a film that it the fit within the art house world and IFFR style is quite important. (Alessia Accone, Manager CineMart & Rotterdam Lab)

In addition, consistently communicating such a taste internally as well as externally is another way IFFR attempts to maintain and confirm its position as a tastemaker. Joint efforts exist in almost all departments of IFFR to build such an identity as the former festival director Bero Beyer explains:

[...] It's like preaching the mantra. Basically, it's coming together not just with the programmers, but also with the communication department or the department that looks for funding or the production department to have. And I care very much about these elements that every detail of the outing of the

festival that you can always refer back to what the heart of the festival. (Bero Beyer, former festival director)

Positioning itself as a tastemaker for the industry through attention to quality and consistency of communication, the film festival formed an identity and set a standard for newcomers, wherefore further shaping the interpretation and behavior of the talents, as well as the industry. Filmmakers who wish to get selected in IFFR would need to adjust their project in order to fit with festival's taste, in this way, the film festival influence their meaning-making process by practicing and comparing their work to the festival standard.

4.1.2. A site of cultural legitimization

As is mentioned above, since one of the selecting criteria is whether the project matches with the festival taste, therefore, the selection process of project for prizes or participation into the market has become a quality assessment based on such a taste. Winning a prize means the quality of the project has been confirmed by authorities. De Valck (2006, p.105) argues that "such emphasis in selection criteria, film festivals are able to offer what is called cultural legitimization: selection by a festival brings cultural recognition to the film and its makers, because it serves as hallmark of quality." This cultural legitimization is multidimensional in that it firstly provides symbolic capital that points at the resources available to one on the basis of prestige and honor. One of the ultimate symbolic capital of professional recognition are the prizes or award given by the film festival. Ada Solomon, the producer of project 'Sleepwalkers', who won the ARTEKino International Prize in CineMart this year confirmed such way of professional recognition:

Well it confirms the quality of the project. Because these events are very, very selective and very competitive. So, the moment that you are picked [...] like being one of the 24 selected out of 500 or 800 projects, that's definitely speaks about the qualities. (Ada Solomon, producer)

Furthermore, most prizes come with funds attached, interviewees expressed such financial supports also serves as a way of cultural legitimization. It can help boost a producer's career and spin off the next production steps faster, as well as to be one criterion to filter promising projects for programmers in selection committee.

However, such credibility and recognition given by the film festival is not always beneficial for everybody. Although in principle projects with prizes hold a higher chance to be acquired by film sales agents as the prize added meanings or symbolic capitals to the projects, sales agents may need to pay a higher price for award-winning titles without the guarantee of a valid market performance. And for the projects with supportive funds attached but still under development, there is always a risk that this project will not be made, therefore, the funds may have been given for nothing:

If there's an award involved, so to say, the acquisition price will get higher and this is very dangerous because it can flop. I mean an award for a film doesn't mean that it has good box office hopes and is a difference, that is the risk. (Ellis Driessen, funds consultant & jury member)

4.1.3. Test ground for newcomers

As a site of gaining cultural legitimization and potential financial supports, the film festival has its attractiveness for newcomers to present their projects and get valuable feedbacks from experts. A direct link of learning and performance or presentation has been created by the film festival that allows the participants to learn or practice by participating. This on-going process of learning-by-participating turns IFFR into a test ground for the newcomers to learn from each other and improve for the projects from being presented in the film festival.

This reflects a relevant function of the film festival that is to provide a platform for newcomers to test how their projects are perceived on an international level. Presenting the project in the film festival potentially allows it to be seen by a large number of audiences therefore, allowing filmmakers to identify, anticipate and predict audience's taste and needs. The feedback and discussion from experts, peers and audiences has therefore become an extremely crucial asset for constructing any further adjustment of the project. Several interviewees confirmed such function of the film festival and came to IFFR to test their project as a way of practice:

[...] to test the project for people that are not from your own culture or people that are not familiar with the director and style. And like this. It's even a part of the exercise of building the marketing and promotion strategy of the film. (Ada Solomon, producer)

Thus, the film festival can be seen as a gatekeeper for newcomers that they need to 'pass' to proceed into the professional field. As a way of practices, attending the film festival with a project helps producers to stay in the spotlight in the industry to gain experience, and to get a sense of how production works in the film industry. It also helps to increase awareness of new producers or directors, presenting their first or second work in the film festival is like putting spotlight in their work and therefore, introducing them to the professional field. Liu Ying as a producer came to IFFR with her second feature film explained the importance of presenting film in IFFR as a way of learning and practicing:

it's also a great experience to meet those producers and also, we want to kind of train ourselves and the director because we also need to go out a bit more to get to know what's going on the industry. (Liu Ying, producer)

Additionally, showcasing film in the film festival helps small-budget art house films increase the film's exposure and visibility as it provided exhibition opportunities, therefore can be used for marketing purpose:

[...] when it comes to marketing. And so that way festivals being sort of you don't have to put more of your money to ads there. It seems like the only avenues you get that exposure without additionally fueling and the money. (Sonia Shvets, jury member)

4.1.4. A sense of community

Becoming a place to cultivate taste for the industry and a test ground for its newcomers to practice and improve their idea requires a shared trust between the film festival and its participants. The communality created by the film festival provides such trust and thus influences how participants interact within. The interviewees confirmed that IFFR has successfully created a sense of community in which shared trust and experience are valued. The environment that the IFFR produced during the whole festival week emphasized on approachability and intimacy, some participating producers even described it as almost a family:

Everything is like working assets recognition and saying this is someone already paying attention. (being selected means) We got you. So, we are part of this family for this year again. (Iván Eibuszyc, producer)

By building such a community environment, international professional gatherings like IFFR further foster the network building and dynamic between various stakeholders.

Within this community of practices, discussion, reflection, and engagement with the films' content and aesthetics are valued and encouraged by the film festival. First, IFFR values projects with audience engagement strategies. Several interviewees identified that whether the project has the potential to appeal and engage with the audience is one of the main criteria when it comes to prize or program selecting. The reason why within art house cinema, audience engagement is highly valued may be because it's rare that high art films can crossover big audience commercial. Therefore, IFFR tries to foster such engagements by connecting outspoken artistic art with a huge audience.

Furthermore, initiatives to foster discussion among participants by putting different focus into programs can also be found in IFFR community-building strategies. Four distinct sessions in the main competition of IFFR were created with different focuses such as presenting films investigating relevant social / political issues or presenting cinema art in various form. In such way, IFFR staff believes each session would give the participant a context and attract them with shared interests and thus foster discussion and engagement in the IFFR community as Bero Beyer explains:

...This is a fantastic film, but what kind of film is it? Where should be placed? It? How does it benefit most from the context that the festival can bring? And that's a discussion. And we like those kinds of discussions because it's the same discussions the audience will have after the film or the press when they have a beer and say what did we just see? (Bero Beyer, former festival director)

Finally, encouraged discussion and interaction existed not only between audiences and projects, but also between the film festival and projects. Programmers or staff in the selection

committee consistently provide valuable feedback if the projects didn't get prize or selected into the market:

the markets are really caring about all the applicants. And they are letting you know why you weren't selected, which are the weak points of the project. And this already gives you some elements of where you have to work and which direction you have to go and stuff like that. (Ada Solomon, producer)

Such information and feedback serve as third form of cultural legitimization – critical recognition that help newcomers to learn and practices in the professional community.

4.2. Active agent in the industry

The literature review suggests that since film festivals have adopted a business agenda, festivals strive to become an active agent themselves in the industry. By functioning as temporary clusters, festivals have moved increasingly into various segments of training and funding of all stages of film production and distribution, adding markets, talent campuses, and script writing labs, while also facilitating co- production markets, and distributing film funds. IFFR is one of film festivals that followed this agenda and has become such an active agent by scouting projects, supporting new talents, organizing project markets as well as fostering international talent flows with the connection to the film festivals circuit worldwide.

4.2.1. Researching and scouting projects

One of the key roles of film festivals is to “categorize, classify, sort and sift the world's annual film production.” (Elsaesser, 2005. P.96). To achieve such function as a gatekeeper for the industry, the film festival is actively researching and scouting strong projects globally throughout the year. IFFR typically programs independent arthouse films without well-known actors on small or medium budgets. With this focus in mind, IFFR staff researches on projects they encountered in other film festivals or producers they have been followed to get these into the circulation of IFFR. In return, promising projects are selected into market later become successful such as being awarded in multiple film festivals enhancing film festival's researching expertise. Such curating process was also recognized and trusted from other stakeholders in the industry such as a consultant in fund organization looking for projects in CineMart:

[...] the curating process that makes it easier for us or buyers or distributors. So, the work of research has been done by the film festival and they pick the best so to say, which is not always the case. But in general, yes, they pick the most interesting films. (Ellis Driessen)

When scouting projects into the film festival, territory often played a role in the decision-making process. A number of European film festivals nowadays have developed special market or

festival fund to help projects from 'emerging film cultures' or the 'developing world'². One interviewee gave an example of the market in Locarno international film festival, with an emphasis to scout projects from such regions:

But look at Locarno for instance, they have a project or not a market but project section and where they choose their territories and it's also mostly from far away countries I have to say. [...] so many countries popped up and they're all developing their own film industry. [...] What Locarno did was, for instance, picks and choose projects from those territories to represent there. That's in principle, there's a lot of festivals do give another opportunity nowadays to find out what's happening in the world. (Ellis Driessen, funds consultant & jury member)

The same is true for IFFR, with the Hubert Bal Fund as a script and project development grant, having the initiative to support remarkable projects from Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe (International film festival Rotterdam, 2020). Only filmmakers from the HBF list of eligible countries can be scouted into the grant. In such a way, IFFR gets involved in the very early production stage of projects from the developing countries, thus influences and shapes their production work.

4.2.2 Supporting new talents

Supporting new talents has been marked as the trademark of IFFR and they have achieved such talent development by actively engaging in different steps in production from the initial script writing/development process, into the post- production and then distribution phase. Findings in this study elaborated several key acts from IFFR to achieve such a goal.

To make IFFR become an essential hub for supporting and developing new talents, firstly, film entry regulated by director's experience. Only the directors of a 1st, 2nd or 3rd feature length film that is presented in world premiere in Rotterdam can be selected into main competition and project market (International film festivals Rotterdam, 2019). Furthermore, the age of talents is also one of the award criteria according to one jury member of Wouter Barendrecht Award:

[...] Yeah, we have our rules. Let's say some people have to, they can't be older than 35 and its their second or first film. (Nelleke Driessen, jury member & sales representative)

With such entry regulations and award criteria, IFFR intended to position itself as a platform to discover, support and connect new talents in the film industry by clustering new talents from all around the world with similar interests together into a limited space in a limited time.

The mission of supporting new talents does not just stop at designing film entry regulations to only new talents. For those eligible to come to IFFR, various programs, markets as well as funds were

² Although the definition of the 'developing world' is lack of clarity, this term in IFFR often refers to the region that on the list of HBF eligible countries. The list was roughly based on the DAC-list of the OECD and the World Free Press Index. <https://iffr.com/en/fag/hbf-general>

established with the purpose of supporting the projects from pre-production phase to post production activities. Moreover, despite distributing funds as an added source for new talents, there are also masterclasses or workshops which serve as an educational value for new talents to gain theoretical knowledge and practical skills. For example, the Rotterdam lab is a five-day training workshop within CineMart that aims to provide themed masterclasses for emerging new talents. The theme and topic in the training workshop varies as Alessia Acone, the manager of CineMart & Rotterdam Lab elaborated:

We also gave them sort of like thematic days. So, for example, one day it's about developing script or projects development. And another day is about financing strategies. [...] Like for example, we had a legal panel about corporation and co-production agreements like what it means to really set a collection agreement on a legal aspect. (Alessia Acone, manager CineMart)

By bringing together a mix of producers from all around the world and providing them with needed practical knowledge in production activities, Rotterdam Lab has generated many international co-productions, thus making IFFR a facilitator of international co-production activities. For the projects during production that are supported by IFFR, efforts have been put into the year-round guidance and on-going monitoring of the project. The festival monitors the status of the projects to establish a lasting relationship with talents:

we do keep in touch with the Rotterdam lab alumni. We do keep in touch with the projects. We get updates from them. We ask um, basically every year, what is the status of the project? (Alessia Acone, manager CineMart)

Establishing a lasting relationship with the new talents who were supported by the film festival enables IFFR to create their own talent pool that they can invite back or further development. Some filmmakers who became successful with the cornerstone of IFFR support would come back to the festival:

So, when prominent filmmakers [...] revisit the festival travel, and we celebrate them with a big master class and they've had a body of work, they almost always refer back to the beginning of their career, 9 out of 10 times. Their first strides towards being a filming artist had a connection to Rotterdam. (Bero Beyer, former festival director)

Thus, talents who receive support from IFFR and stayed in a lasting contact become a crucial asset for the film festival to enhance its prestige in the industry as they were supported or 'discovered' by them. Falicov (2016) also identified such a role that the film festival has the ability to shape, shepherd and develop the 'festival' films that by developing such talent pool belongs to the film festival.

4.2.3. Active agent in practices: CineMart

As the oldest co-production market (started from 1983) in the independent film industry, CineMart has obtained its prestige by being continually active on facilitating international co-production projects, therefore, helping them stay in a competitive position. The fact that the market has been held at the end of January every year since its establishment, also became a start event of the 'festival year' as producer Ada Solomon stressed:

The fact that it is in the beginning of the year, CineMart gives a perspective for the whole year in terms of applications and relations and setups of stuff. (Ada Solomon, producer)

Despite its advantageous time in the film festivals circuit, over the years, CineMart has developed into a professional project market in terms of communicative efficiency, the quality of projects, and the overall organizational for its films and guests. The two unique selling propositions of CineMart explained by de Valck (2014) can also be identified in this study, which are their strict selection and professional but informal environment. Additionally, a third unique selling proposition of CineMart can be found in this study, which is to provide connection with the film festivals circuit.

For the selection procedure, a selection committee with a diverse background (culture, race, gender, educational level) work with CineMart to select 30 projects out of around 350 submitted projects into the market, which can be divided into three phases. The pre-selection phase (September- October) is based on the initial information collected from the submission form, which includes the company attached, the director's previous work as well as the region of the project. The following phase is a second-round selection with more detailed information required such as location scouting pictures, budget status and the potential audience engagement plan. Last, the selection procedure moves to a final selection phase and would announce the final selected projects in the beginning of December. The most two significant criteria are focused on the artistic value of the project, which in line with the IFFR taste cultivating strategy discussed in the previous theme, and also the projects with market potential.

After the selection phase is completed, for the projects into the market and look for potential investors or co-producers, a mentor is assigned to each project to help them carefully go through the production and market strategies, as well as offer advice to make sure the teams can create the right connections. Such mentor sessions have been thought as helpful and beneficial for producers as Liu Ying, a producer came to CineMart with her second feature films explains:

We really have lots of opportunities to let us know what people really think about the project and they give a good mentor. And then I talk with a mentor and they criticize a project a lot therefore helped us to develop. And that's a very good strategy. (Liu Ying, producer)

What is worth noticing here is that not only do the projects need to go through such a strict selection process for the invitation only market, CineMart also carefully craft their guest list. The

guest list includes various stakeholders in the industry such as sales, funds, potential investors and co-producers, with adjustment every year depending on the characteristic of selected projects of that year as Alessia Acone explains:

We can focus on our guest lists with people that we know are good fit for the projects that we have in this selection. And we really try to create a list every year. (Alessia Acone, Manager CineMart)

To further achieve the role as a matchmaker that connect projects with the right guest, a pre-booking module from both sides was used when arranging these one-on-one meetings in the market. The CineMart staff create a detailed project book to let guests choose up to 5 projects of their interest beforehand, with the possibility to request more on-site. Both the project teams and mentors will assess these meetings requests and will also have the possibility to pre-book meetings with CineMart guests in return before the market took place. Such a pre-booking and request-only arrangement improved the efficiency and dynamic between projects team and guests in the market. Producer Iván Eibuszyc expressed such a pre-booking arrangement helped him to “boost the confidence of project”, another producer Thomas Hakim also agreed with this:

And when you go on markets here, the logic is on the other side they ask(pre-book) you for meeting. So I think it's interesting at the first meeting that they come to you and if you like have more power. But it's kind of in terms of dynamics. I think it's interesting. (Thomas Hakim, producer)

With such a tailor-made business meeting schedule for both project teams and CineMart guests respectively, CineMart further helped the projects team to have the right connection among all the potential partner. Besides scheduled business meetings, informal events to help projects teams and guests to network were scheduled as often as formal meetings. CineMart arranged breakfast, lunch and after parties to foster networking interaction. Sometimes, informal events give participants a chance to follow up collaborating points in the previous business meetings and it is the combination of professional meetings and informal events that makes CineMart relevant for its participants.

Moreover, continuing efforts have been put into creating connection with other program in IFFR as well as other co-production markets in the global film festivals circuit. Several interviewees confirmed that a number of the projects got selected into CineMart were supported by Hubert Bal Funds in the development phase therefore, CineMart was fueled with new projects by another program in the IFFR. Additionally, highly collaborative effort can be found among the film festivals circuit to provide the most suitable market for project to develop. Markets in different film festivals communicate and recommend projects with each other as the project of Thomas Hakim was recommended in Berlinale from CineMart staff:

But actually, they also talked between markets. So, the girl from the Berlinale market told me that she talked with the CineMart team and when she knows that we were selected there she was happy

because she knows she knew that we would get like the exposition of the market. (Thomas Hakim, producer)

Film festivals also host collaborated events to further boost and connect with projects. One interviewee gave an example of collaboration between Berlinale and CineMart called 'Rotterdam-Berlinale Express' that once the project get selected into CineMart, it automatically has the chance to present in Berlin.

4.3. Pivotal hotspot for face-to-face interaction

As previous themes revealed, the film festival clusters new talents together to provide a community of practices as well as develops multiple initiatives to become an active agent in favor of facilitating co-production market and advancing projects. The basis of such functions is the film festival providing the participant face-to-face interaction.

Face-to-face interaction is widely held to be a necessary condition for establishing trustful relationship and communicating sensitive, not well-established knowledge and further production activities, especially with global face-to-face interaction which takes place at international professional gatherings such as film festivals. Being a hotspot to facilitate such interaction made the film festival function as a temporary cluster, thus becoming pivotal for the film industry. Due to the current situation of the global health crisis, Cannes film festivals 2020 announced to cancel offline and part of its market will be moved online (Festival de Cannes, 2020) when conducting the interviews for this study. Almost all the interviewees stressed that one of the key values of coming to the film festival is to gain opportunities of face-to-face interaction with professionals around the world and there is little possibility to make the full use of the role of the film festival if holding a film festival online as the film sales representative Nelleke Driessen explains:

because the whole industry, it is about meeting people. It is about being in contacts with people. So, it's really hard if that can't happen. Of course, you can do a lot by skype and calls but it's not the same. And online festivals, it's also not the same. Although we do it and we participate, but it's less sufficient. (Nelleke Driessen, film sales representative & jury member)

With the emphasis of face-to-face interaction that the film festival provides, by analyzing the interviews with respect to the on-site dynamic of such interaction developed in IFFR, it has shown that this temporary event has a significant impact on the structure of professionals' work, industries, markets and the development in specific film projects. Within such a face-to-face interaction, potential partners can be identified, both vertical and horizontal relationships can be established, a form of tacit knowledge exchange can be transmitted.

4.3.1. Identifying potential partnerships

The vital position of film festivals for business was underlined by all interviewees. One of the things that participants do through face to face interaction during the CineMart event is to identify and secure potential partners for their co-production project through scheduled meetings. Around 10-12 meetings last around 20mins were held for three days for producers to exchange project information, share past experience on co-production, as well as discuss potential collaborating points. A central place for producer to face-to-face interact with potential partner is essential for their decision-making process as the nature of film production work require them to get along. Therefore, IFFR gathers professionals together temporarily and give them the chance to interact:

but also, for the sake of being able to meet with people who might help them in developing the project further and just establishing that network to help them creatively. (Sonia Shvets, jury member)

Furthermore, producers intended on choosing partners with shared film festival attending experience as such a mutual connection and experience reduces some uncertainty of cooperation. Flourished friendships based on attending film festivals together becomes an asset when identifying potential partners, producer Iván Eibuszyc adds:

a friendship besides work that had the power of that. It's not like I am close friend of all my co-producer. But at the end you somehow choose one over another because you have some affinity as you been in the festival together, you together watching some movies, some other friends connect you together in the festival. (Iván Eibuszyc, producer)

Sales and distribution experts also came to IFFR, wishing to identify potential projects by getting involved in the early stage of promising projects production, thus gain advantages when acquiring the titles. However, this process of identifying potential partnership during these business meetings remains exploratory. The meetings remain as a starting point of following collaborating activities, function as exploring the field instead of securing any fixed partner as several participating producers said there was no closed deal in the CineMart. This finding fits within the line of the dimensions of temporary clusters Bathelt and Schuldt (2005, p.855) identified that "incentive interaction flows in the cluster however, real transactions need not take place."

Although almost no real economic transactions took place during the market, some participants did find potential partners such as co-producer or distributor, interestingly, they schedule their next meeting based on the film festivals circuit calendar:

And there is a German company that we've met, first in Rotterdam (IFFR). Then we had another meeting with them in Berlinale and now we are preparing an application with them. (Ada Solomon, producer)

Scheduling meetings based on the festivals circuit calendar reflects the way of how the film festival as a temporary cluster influence the construction of their production work. Although the film festival temporarily clusters professionals together for them to interact, such a temporary form does happen cyclically, therefore, construct a circuit that influences the professional to schedule their production work based on it.

4.3.2. Networking building via face to face interaction

Networking opportunities within the community were consequently an important reason to attend film festivals. The film festival brings together of agents of similar expertise/ background and creates a temporary place for them to interact. Participants establishing new relationships by booking meetings beforehand or approaching each other in an informal setting such as social drinks. Participants also consider attending the film festival as a way of maintaining existing international networks within the community. The opportunity to maintain face-to-face contacts with professionals around the world is therefore extremely valued in the industry as it has been perceived it is all about personal relationships, thus festival fit perfectly to this networked based film work.

Furthermore, the interaction happened in this temporary cluster was both vertical and horizontal. For producer participants, they met producers from different regions or projects to discuss experience and share networks such as film festivals regulations or funding opportunities in a specific country. They also meet for sales expert for the business as well as adjustments for their strategy. Funding experts also have the chance to meet fellow funds from different countries to discuss about the situation, they also meet jury members or programmers to exchange information:

[...] Then you have meetings with fellow funds from other countries. You discuss possible other things with the very various countries. (Ellis Driessen, funds consultant & jury member)

The relationship and network building upon in the film festival have been identified as an essential asset when it comes to production activities for different stakeholders. This formation of international networks stimulates talents flows as well as international film co-production. Co-production as the new norm in the European independent film industry requires two or more production companies from different countries to work on the same project, sometimes for years. Therefore, building an international professional network via face-to-face interaction in the film festival is essential for co-producer to get to know each other in a professional yet social environment before embarking on a project.

4.3.3. Tacit knowledge exchange

After examining the establishment and the dynamic of professional network built upon in the film festival, face-to-face interaction additionally helps form a 'tacit knowledge' that has been

produced and interacted between professionals in the film festival. Tacit knowledge suggests some information and learning is “transferred through practices, observation, doing or sharing” (Comunian, 2017. p.331). Such a tacit knowledge is most likely exchanged and flowed in the condition of face-to-face interaction, therefore a temporary cluster like IFFR provides participants access to gain such knowledge. Tacit knowledge exchange was identified through several interviewees that one of the reasons they came to IFFR is to learn by participating in film festivals and by interacting with peers and competitors. IFFR gives participants a place to observe and compare with peers, thus constructing adjustments for their own marketing strategy or project development.

The fact that IFFR bring together talents with professional background from different cultural region, gives IFFR have the ability to stimulate tacit knowledge exchange on an intercultural level. It brings together those producers who would not normally interact with each other in a geographically proximity in a limited time. Participants from different cultural settings inevitably talk about subjects such as the funding situation in various countries or exchange knowledge on art house cinema in specific countries:

People are quite interested in what's going on in China in general. So, they would ask like does art cinemas doing well and how activities are these art house for years [...] (Liu Ying, producer)

Such tacit knowledge exchange on an intercultural level happens mostly when face to face interaction occurs in temporary clusters. Exchanging knowledge in a different cultural setting provides background information for various stakeholders when deciding potential partnership and whether to enter its regional market. By talking to producers or funding staff from this country helps them to understand such a market preference.

Consequently, IFFR has also become a central node for professionals to acquire knowledge about the newest trends globally in the industry. It gives producers the chance to check the new topics that have arisen the past year and stay updated with the state of art in the industry by interacting with each other or attending masterclass or lectures. It has also become an essential hub for sales agents to discover new talents and hot topics in order to stay competitive in the market:

(We talk about) life in the film industry and indeed about trends and about the film situation in a specific country and how that reflects or how the working together between countries. It is about so many new things. Yeah, there is no end in topics. (Nelleke Driessen, jury member & sales representative)

Staying updated about recent market trends and getting inscription for new projects positively stimulates the production as it is a vital source of constructing a new project or finding the potential co-producer.

Furthermore, the community environment and the establishment of network encourages participants in the film festival to share and recommend projects or talents with each other, rather than considering others as competitors. For example, some business meetings with sales agent that producers had, are established based on the recommendation from another producer. Exchanging opinion about recent films or recommendations is encouraged from the film festival which not only further facilitates the interaction, but also brings new perspectives for production activities.

To facilitate face to face interaction and knowledge exchange on site, informal social events were arranged every day during the market as well as the festivals such as lunches or parties, combined with the promoted community atmosphere in IFFR. Additionally, limited time and space certainly played a role when encouraging face to face interaction in cluster theory (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008). Geographically proximity and arranged informal social hub boosts the on-site dynamic in film festivals thus, establishment of networks (Henn & Bathelt, 2015) that normally would have chance to do outside the festival platform.

Overall, findings in this study revealed several central roles IFFR played when functioning as a temporary cluster. How the film festival clusters talents together become a community of practices has been analyzed as well as how does the CineMart organized to expand its impact as an active agent for the industry. Furthermore, the on-site dynamic and network establishment process among various stakeholders in IFFR has also been detailed explained in the finding. Regardless of being a community of practices or a central node for professional to build face-to-face interaction, evidences showed that by functioning as a temporary cluster, the film festival positively stimulate production in diverse ways.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this last chapter, a summary of the research findings and a conclusion is presented to answer the main research question as well as three sub-questions. Both theoretical and social implications are discussed followingly based on the conclusion. Furthermore, a critical reflection of this study is additionally presented including the analysis of limitations and suggestions for future research. The research question 'How do International film festivals serve the role as a temporary cluster to simulate production in the independent film industry' aims to investigate in what way international film festivals such as IFFR have positioned themselves as temporary clusters in actions and its impacts on participating professionals as well as the independent film industry. To answer this research question, a brief discussion and summary on the three main themes discovered through the interviews and thematic content analysis is needed to reach a comprehensive explanation.

The first theme can provide evidence to answer the first sub-question, which is aims to investigate how the film festival becomes a site of cultural legitimization through awards and prizes, as well as what the festival has done to enhance this position. Results showed, by cultivating specific festival criteria, distributing funded prizes, creating spaces for newcomers to learn by interacting and participating, IFFR established a shared understanding of value, identity and community between the festival and participating professionals. Thus, IFFR further becomes a community of practices that not only allow professionals to gain financial, cultural and symbolic value, but also give new talents a space to interact and learn within this community. Positioning film festivals as temporary clusters thus provide a different perspective to understand de Valck (2007)'s theory about the film festival being a site of cultural legitimization. While this theme confirmed de Valck (2007; 2010) finding on the value that festivals prizes and awards can bring to professionals, results in this study further discovered that film festivals formed a community of practices that congregate talents together to provide a stage for learning, participating and practicing based on prizes and awards and thus help for production-oriented activities. Furthermore, to establish such a community to cluster talents together, efforts have been put in to creating a community environment at IFFR to encourage engagement and foster the process of learning-by-practicing. Understanding how the film festival becomes a site of cultural legitimization and a community of practices explains the motivation of professionals to come to the film festival, therefore, further providing explanation on why film festivals can function as temporary clusters for the industry.

The second theme can lead to the answer of the second sub-question, which is associated with the changed role of film festivals with their business agenda. By closely looking into the operation of the market in IFFR, findings provide strong evidence on the film festival being an active

agent for the industry, thus confirming the changing initiatives from being the traditional gatekeeper role to developing its business principles, as explained in the reviewed literature (Peranson, 2008; Iordanova, 2015). Results showed that by adopting its business agenda, IFFR acts as an active agent through scouting projects globally, supporting new talents by training and funding in the several stage of production, as well as developing their own talent pool to engage with the industry in several ways. Moreover, results in this study not only confirmed such a changed role that IFFR has adopted, but further discovered several key acts from IFFR to facilitate such role. CineMart as a co-production market in IFFR has been carefully studied as an active agent in practices and three unique selling propositions have been identified through micro-level analysis of this film market. By using its strict criteria, professional yet informal environment as well as the connections in the film festival circuit, CineMart strongly influenced the process of formatting European co-production projects. Providing such a trade space between companies and projects, as well as building connection between talents with markets in international film festivals circuits, CineMart becomes active in various stage of the film production value chain (Steinhart, 2006). Furthermore, being an active agent for the industry revealed another dimension of the international film festival function as temporary clusters to stimulate production activities. Thus, IFFR has established a strong impact on the European independent film landscape by positioning as a temporary cluster to adopting a business agenda and organizing film markets like CineMart.

The last theme of the finding is suitable to answer the third sub-question, which is focusing on the on-site dynamic of knowledge exchange and networks within the film festival as temporary cluster. Above all, data has showed that IFFR brings together talents from all over the world and create temporary spaces of presentation and face-to-face interaction, in which their latest or upcoming films, projects or ideas are shown, compared and evaluated by their peers and competitors. Such interactions are extremely valuable in business meetings as well as network establishment as it gives them access to establish and maintain social relationships, compare situations and strategies across borders, and exchange intercultural and tacit knowledge to generate new ideas and improve business. Because of these attributes, IFFR is arguably essential for professionals to lookout for suitable partners for co-production projects and knowledge creation. More importantly, such engagement of network and knowledge exists in this temporary cluster is built upon on face-to-face interaction that IFFR facilitates. Therefore, being a pivotal hotspot of face-to-face interaction for network establishment and knowledge exchange explains a third dimension of the role film festivals played as temporary cluster. Cluster theories often highlight the importance of face-to-face contact in professional interaction such as business meetings or international trade fairs in other industries (Henn & Bathelt, 2014), findings in this study reinforce such importance for

the film industry. Being a part of creative networks and creative practices, the film industry is able to reflect the similar network and project-based nature of creative industry in general, in which face-to-face interaction is also emphasized (Comunian, 2017) for the development of projects.

To conclude, this research finds that various stakeholders in the film production chain attend IFFR as a strategy to gain access to key industry knowledge, partners and assets, which may not be accessible elsewhere. Compared to the traditional view of the film festival as an exhibition platform, this study analyzed the role of the film festival in the industry by understanding it as a temporary cluster. By using IFFR as the case study site, results confirmed its increasingly important position of the film festival as an active agent in the industry and further explored several key roles IFFR played such as tastemakers, gatekeepers, community of practices and facilitator of face to face interaction to stimulate production. It extends the traditional role of the film festival for the industry to “accommodate culture and commerce, experimentation and entertainment and geopolitical interests” (de Valck, 2006), to becoming a temporary cluster by acting as a community of practices for professionals to gain identity, cultural legitimization, networks building and knowledge generations by facilitating face-to-face interaction in this film festival community. In such way, IFFR is able to stimulate (co)production by connecting knowledge and networks together and provide the platform to start off a project for European film industry.

5.1. Theoretical implications

As the introduction discussed, the aim of this research was to explore the topic of film festivals and bridge the gap between the film festival studies and its business perspectives. Previous research demonstrated in the literature review provides a rich theoretical framework of the film festival studies from geopolitical or organizational approaches (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010). Little research has touched upon the business side of the film festivals. Moreover, economic geography also has a growing interest in the cultural sector however, very little research has been conducted on the role of festivals with such a context. Hence, this study has combined the two concerns together and further expanded the business and cultural perspective on film festivals studies by connecting film festivals with the concept of temporary cluster and offered a more nuanced understanding of the film festival as a phenomenon.

Results in this study contribute to existing film festivals studies by not only providing vital evidences that film festivals can function as temporary cluster for the industry, but further revealing how such a cluster operates on the micro level of interactions and networks. The characteristics of temporary clusters, such as enabling face to face interaction, knowledge and contacts exchange, network interaction in a geographical proximity have been identified and confirmed in the analysis

of the film festival, which contributes to the interaction between general cluster theory with creative industry. Findings further expand the understanding of the role film festivals played as sites of cultural legitimization by discovering prizes are connected to potential financial success, which is highly relevant for the business side of developing a film. Furthermore, considering film festivals as community of practices give a different perspective to see film festivals as sites for cultural legitimization that become a stage for learning, participating and practicing based on prizes and awards. Considering film festivals as temporary clusters also provided a new perspective to understand how film festivals adopt a business agenda and develop strategies for organizing film market. Overall, by bridging theories on film festivals and temporary clusters together, this research provided a comprehensive understanding on the way how temporary cluster theory interact with creative industries and offered an alternative approach to understand the impact that film festivals can bring for the industry.

5.2. Social implications

While a nuanced insight from one case study site has been drawn, this research marks a significant initial contribution to the understanding of the roles that international film festivals play, and the ways in which they contribute to the film industry and creative production, thus can be beneficial to understand other international film festivals. Nowadays, more and more film festivals have adopted a business agenda and have clustered talents together for various purposes, it has thus become crucial for the festival organizer to understand how such a cluster is formed as well as operated. Furthermore, festival research insights are relevant for those involved in film production as the findings of this research provide insightful points on the role of the film festivals played in the film production value chain, therefore, allowing filmmakers or companies to interpret the impact of the film festival on their production work as well as adjust their strategies. This research finds that newcomers in the film industry benefit from attending such industry-driven film festivals. Considering film festivals as temporary clusters which augment industry learning and networking may help filmmakers, producers and companies alike, perceive the value of attending key festivals.

Additionally, this research can also serve as a guideline for cultural policy makers in the EU to understand and develop the function of film festivals for the European film industry. More specifically, an emphasis needed to be put on the implications of this study on understanding the positive impact of film festivals on prompting co-production projects within EU. With co-production projects are becoming the new norm in European film production landscape (Talavera, 2017; Blázquez *et al*, 2020), this study provides several reasons why the film festival has become a place to generate this highly network-based way of film production. Finally, this research can also shed light

on understanding the role of festivals in the creative industry in general. The networked and project-based nature of the creative industry often rely on such international gatherings to develop a project or expand network (Comunian, 2017) and the results from IFFR can be used as an example to understand how festivals function from a cluster perspective and to allow the creative workers to gain more insights on this sector.

5.3. Limitations

The findings of this research do come with some limitations and it can be discussed from both a methodological and a theoretical context. The first limitation comes from the process of data sampling. As the conducted expert interviews in this research required purposive sampling, the interviewee recruitment can be subjective as it was in some extent based on the judgement of the researcher. However, to reduce the impact of such a limitation, all interviewees were carefully recruited based on their professional background as well as their experiences on attending film festivals. Another limitation of this study is the sample size that due to the global health crisis, the researcher could not fully capitalize on the existing contacts in the IFFR office to reach the ideal 10-12 interviewees in total, however, nine participants proved to fulfil data saturation principles. Additionally, although an established literature can be found on the topic of temporary clusters, limited research can be found on how the temporary cluster theory interacted with creative industry or more specifically, with film industry, therefore, some core concepts needed to be adjusted to fit in the general film festivals studies. Furthermore, qualitative studies often lack the ability to generalize the findings. Therefore, this study provides a micro-analysis on IFFR as a case study site and therefore calls out for more research on this topic.

5.4. Future research

Apart from the limitation mentioned above, this research has provided rich information on the role of the film festival as a temporary cluster, thus there are profuse opportunities for the future research based on the findings of current one. Below are a few key areas that can be identified as important directions of future research.

It can be observed from the findings of current research that each of the film festivals puts its effort in building its 'brand image' or identity such as the IFFR branding itself as the essential hub for independent films. Therefore, it would be useful to assess how film festivals build and communicate their reputation and brand image to their targeted audiences from a communication studies perspective. Furthermore, despite film festivals functioning as a temporary event, they are part of a broader cycle of events (i.e. global film festival circuit). Negotiation between film festivals in the

circuit about the titles and premieres exists and deserves a close analysis for the film festivals research as it influences the total landscape of film production. Additionally, comparative studies can further investigate the performance of projects supported by film festival funds with the projects that have not been supported, to additionally understand the impact of film festivals' funds on the structure of production work.

Finally, taking this research into a broader context, there are possibilities to conduct a comparative study on how a single film festival operates and performs over time to explore such as new initiatives as a temporary cluster. Research on festivals in other cultural industries (e.g. music, art) may be interested in collaborations that compare case studies across cultural industries as well.

In conclusion, this research provides insights on a little studied topic: international film festivals. Using IFFR as the case study site, the findings in this research have shown that, by acting as a temporary cluster, the film festival has significant impact on the structure of production work, generation of co-production projects, knowledge and talents flows, as well as the career development of attending new creatives.

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Appendix A: Interview topic list

Before the interview starts, the research thanked the interviewees for participating in the interview. Then, the topic of the interview was once again being introduced to each interviewee. Permission for recording the interview was followingly asked. Each interviewee was informed their rights to stay anonymous if they wish to as well as stop the interview anytime.

Warm-ups --- allow researcher ask interviewee to describe their work, as well as their experience in IFFR, or film festivals in general.

1. how is your project going?
2. can you tell me about what is your role in IFFR?
3. what make you choose to come to film festivals to present your project?
4. can you tell me a bit more about your experience on attending film festivals in general?
5. how many films acquisition / distribute you did through the platform from film festivals provided?

Topic 1 --- film festivals as site of cultural legitimations

For film producer/director:

6. what does win a prize in film festivals means for your project in general?
7. why do you think your project was selected to be in CineMart this year?
8. do you think getting recognized from film festivals can help this project into next production step or the next one? Why?
9. being recognized professionally in the industry, how valuable is this recognition for further production in your opinion?
10. Is there any other way you can think of to receive such professional recognition other than film festivals?
11. not only a professional recognition, most of the prizes are together with funds support. Will you prefer the funds support from film festivals or private financial support?
12. do you consider getting funds support is also a way of credentials from the industry?
13. despites film festivals, where else will you seek such financial and professional recognitions to stimulate the production of project?

For the expert from film sales representative/film funds:

14. what was the decision-making process as the jury member when you represent the film sales firm?

15. does films with film festivals prizes hold a higher chance to be acquired by your firm? Or are there any other criteria?
16. how do you think the prize setting of CineMart stimulate the production?
17. do you consider being invited to CineMart is also a credential for your companies?
18. "the role of film festivals within industry – how setting the standard and the taste, acting as gateways or gatekeepers to become a platform in which films and filmmakers need to gild and gain recognition in a professional field", do you agree with this statement?

For the staff from IFFR and jury member:

19. as a jury member/staff, can you tell me about the prize settings in the festivals? why was this award was categorized?
20. what is the award criteria of certain prizes?
21. what do you think the prize value of CineMart to the newcomers in the industry?
22. who gets invited to the CineMart? What was the decision-making process of choosing projects/ Interaction between the HBF CineMart?

topic 2 --- the market function of film festivals

For film producer/director:

23. can you tell me a typical day of IFFR CineMart you experienced this year? What was it like?
24. how many potential partner (co-producer/distributor/sales) you had meetings overall, approximately?
25. what was the decision-making process for you deciding on whether this can be your potential partner during these one-on-one meetings?
26. did you find the creative, strategic and financial partners for your project in CineMart?
27. since the CineMart is focusing on being platform for ongoing project and financial partners, do you think this model so far is efficient as a producer?
28. How do you feel about this informal one-on-one meeting in CineMart compared to other film market?
29. in what way do you think CineMart as film market stimulates or help the project get done?
30. how IFFR has been facilitating this role and expend its impact?
31. What are the objectives of CineMart in your understanding? And how does it designed/organized to achieve such objectives?
32. How do CineMart develop and monitor the talents over the years?

33. how does CineMart support relationship establishment among professionals in the industry?

34. IFFR PRO (CineMart) becomes a hotspot of knowledge exchange, network building and generation of new ideas, what do you think its impact to the European film industry?

Topic 3 --- film festivals as temporary clusters

35. you mentioned that you had around xxx meetings during the festivals, what would you mostly talk about?

36. where does the conversation mostly happen? The meetings organized by IFFR or more in an informal setting?

37. despites of vertical interaction, did you also talk to your peers, such as producers from another project or from same region?

38. are these social relationships build upon in film festivals useful/strong for provoking production to you?

39. do you think that being there at the film festivals foster the knowledge exchange or help you generate new ideas?

40. how does the film festivals support your network/relationship establishment?

41. do you think film festivals as a gatekeeping that you need to 'get through' to get into the business?

42. where else would you choose to meet professionals from all the world?

43. What kind of knowledge you think it will only get from film festivals? what about networks, that you will only get in touch with/the most?

Appendix B: Codebook of thematic analysis

test the project in a different culture setting	a test run place for newcomers and projects on an international level	community of practices
Come to film festivals helps profucers to stay in the spotlight in the industry		
Present huge audience with hardcore film art		
Ff is a needed place to present and showcase for its industry		
A test run for how project is perceived by audience		
Ff is gatekeeper for new talent into professional filed		
It serves as a test running place for newcomers and projects on an international level		
They choose to go to berlinale as it have bigger exposure		
Increase exposure therefore as a marketing tool		
Whether a project get selected is based on its own characteristic	Cultivate and confirm the taste that film festivals stand for	
Selected project have to be in line with iffr main taste		
Iffr stands for certain value and taste and wish to present to its audience		
Represent certain value through programs focus		
Have conversation with everyone to maintain the festival style (consistent message)		
Be selected means being confirmed by the artistic value		
iffr is famous for the taste they stand for		
Winning a prize confirm the quality of project		
Iffr is important and prestigious		
Prize provide financial support to small budget film		
Being selected gives symbolic recognition		
selecting process is quality assessment		
film with prizes in principle hold higher chance to be acquired		

sales person needs to pay more for films with prize	
prize does not guarantee a good market perform	
Have an award gives a good exposure for the film	
Award helps project get into next step faster	
Prize helps gain authority	
Prize as symbolic recognition	
Prizes added value to future	
Come to ff regularly	an environment of community was promoted
Iffr is good, friendly and welcoming environment	
Ff organize social drinks and lunch	
Create an intimate environment for professionals	
Being selected makes filmmakers to be part of community	
Emotional tie between ff and talents being supported by them	
solidarity	
have an environment that of intimacy and approachability	
the pitch was light and informal	
iffr is dynamic and casual cool	
Create a sense of community – they remember the name	
A combination of formal business meetings and informal drinks	
Stay close contact with everyone --- community	

Iffr is important because it's the beginning of film festivals season	Researching and scouting interesting project all around the world	active agent in the film industry
Previous succeed project from this ff		
Cm is experienced with researching and selecting strong projects		
Ff have the role of researching and scouting interesting project from all over the world		
help to find the partners and markets that are right for the project		
Ff has different expertise on different region		

sales trust the curating process of project from ff		
ff program have the initiative to choose project from developing countries		
Programs are tailored based on selected projects/producers		
Ff provide theoretical tools knowledge for producers		
Support talent from their early career then get back		
on-going monitoring of promising project	Support new talents (project development, market, presenting, mentor, on-going monitoring, offer tailored support) matchmakers	
one of award criteria is age of the director		
Support new talents is iffr trademark		
Lasting relationship between ff selection committee and talents		
Establish the mentor program		
Ff provide guides in the early strategy setting		
Coming to ff to look for foreign investment		
Cinemart intend to select project from all over the world		
Ff is their chance to face an international environment		
One collaborated lab is look for producers from specific region		
Connecting professionals across the border	fostering international talents flow with the connection in film festivals circuit worldwide.	
negotiation on premier title between ff around the world		
Work in ff helps him to meet talents locally and internationally		
European ff put focus on Chinese project		
Interaction and communication between different ff in the world		
The history of this market		
Meeting based on request		
Business meetings also happened over dinner or lunch		
The time of this ff in film festival circuit	active agent in practices: CineMart	
Workflow of selection process		
Pre-selection is based on application form		
Second phase is more detailed with photo and the budget plan		

Ff pay attention to the project with co-production strategy		
Professionals who have long lasting relationship with ff get invited		
Guest list is crafted based on the characteristic of selected project of this year		
Different program offer support on every level of film production		
cm is well organized		
Producer bring director into the market		
being booked with a lot of meeting boost the confidence about the project		
follow up stuff in informal network events		
the venues is concentrated		
different activities suitable for networking		
Come to ff to look for international partner is inevitable		
Already have money attached – the chance of being made		
Cm is no longer a market for buyer and sellers		
share inspiration during pitch session		
cm arranges social hub for people to network		
to help connect project with the right partner and market		
cm is designed for project that still in development		
Increase dynamic on site		
ff is vital and essential for business	Identify potential partner through market	enable face to face interaction among professionals
Coming to festivals face to face adding more chance to find partner		
Intend to choose partner meet in ff as you shared same attending experience		
relationship built are very starting point. No closed deal happened in cm		
face to face contact is essential when deciding potential partner		
Identify potential partner		
Look for potential collaborating points		

Identify potential partner during informal drinks		
maintain existing relationship with other professionals		
Establish relations with the new generation		
Producer meet people from sales and distribution		
interact with peers		
A place for new producer to establish international networks		
Ff have the responsibility to provide access of funding, visibility and networking		
creating an atmosphere to foster social relationship building		
Relationship built in ff is an essential asset		
the network was both vertical and horizontal		
An opportunity to meet major sales for small producer		
Stay face to face contacts with professionals		
Check the new topics and countries		
Travel to ff to meet companies that normally would not meet		
Talk about new situation in the industry		
Attend ff helps them change perspectives and career		
Helps them to learn by compare and share and discuss with peers		
Ff gives talents a place to watch and compare with peers		
ff becomes the place for to find out the state of art in industry		
Meeting opportunity are essential for new generation of producers		
Exchange knowledge on different countries		
meetings based on recommendation from others		
Share information about the project and know-whom		
Learn by interacting with peers in ff		
Exchange opinion about recent films		
Share opinion on certain projects		
share experience		

great breakthrough of project based on face to face interaction		
Meet with producer as well as sales		
Share information about different region		