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**A documentary film festival circuit
and film festivals as field-configuring
events, adapting to digitalization.**
“... to get together and to really talk about strategies,”

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Abstract

This Master thesis of 30 ECTS credits, discusses the role and function of film festivals within the film industry. The objective of this project was to explore whether there exists a specific documentary film festival circuit that professionals travel on, and, furthermore, to cast light on how these professionals choose the film festivals and the competition that exists between film festivals. Another goal was to clarify the role of film festivals and their financing forums in the field of documentary films. A qualitative, semi-structured interview study was conducted, where international decision makers attending the *Nordisk Forum* 2010 were interviewed. The main results are that there exists a documentary film festival circuit and the festivals compete for the attendance of professionals by positioning themselves uniquely in this market and in a strategic place in the calendar year. The film festival forums have an important role as field-configuring events, as they are sites for networking and to learn of new developments in the world of documentaries for professionals. Film festivals thrive on the interplay between artistic, cultural institutional logics and commercial institutional logics. This interplay appears in a number of different themes within this field:

1. Subsidized film culture versus non-subsidized film culture.
2. Highbrow creative documentaries versus mainstream TV slot and/or content-driven documentaries.
3. Interactive cross-media approaches versus mainstream TV slot approaches.

Efforts of integrating the logics of the experimental cross-media approaches and TV slot approaches seem to be the evolvement in the USA. Films are viewed as content, regardless of platforms. The role of the film festivals in the evolution of the field is to resolve conflicts between two institutional logics, the artistic ones and the commercial ones. They are sites where conflicts between field members both come up and are resolved.

Preface

I obtained the original inspiration for this essay when I was a volunteer at the *Nordisk Forum* in September 2009, when the *Nordisk Panorama 5 cities film festival* was hosted in Reykjavík. I contacted both the director at the time, Karin Johansson-Mex and the head of industry, Katrine Kiilgaard at Filmkontakt Nord in September 2010. They informed me that my study would be most useful for them if I would concentrate on the international representatives attending the Nordisk Forum. I would like to thank both Karin and Katrine for their kind help and for facilitating me in establishing contact with the international representatives at the Nordisk Forum. It was extremely helpful for me to attend the Nordisk Forum for this purpose, both for making an initial introduction to the international financiers and distributors, and also for allowing me to attend the project presentations. Attending the seminars at the Nordisk Panorama Outlook was very refreshing and gave me important insights into the field of documentary films. I would like to mention that Karin and Katrine have allowed me to be absolutely independent in my study.

I would like to thank all the interviewees for their time, effort and patience. Their first-hand accounts were instrumental to this work.

I thank my supervisor, Kristín Atladóttir, for helpful and supportive guidance during this project. I thank my family for their patience and support. Above all, I want to mention my partner Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson, my daughter Þórdís Anna Sigtryggsdóttir and my mother Anna Ingólfssdóttir. In addition, I want to acknowledge my stepfather Bragi Halldórsson, my father in law Jóhann Hauksson and my father Vilhjálmur Rafnsson. For proofreading and good advices, I would like to thank my stepbrother, Andri Björnsson.

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Introduction

Film festivals are an interesting social phenomenon, and their number has grown fast globally in the last three decades. Revolving around this commercial and influencing medium, the moving image, film festivals have various forms, purpose and functions, both cultural and commercial. The digital evolvement has challenged both the aesthetics and genres of films, but in particular the commercial side of selling and distributing them. Film festivals have inevitably been challenged by this technological evolution and have tried to adapt to it. Many film industry professionals see the global environment of film festivals as in a state of crisis (Cousins, 2009; Roddick, 2009), while most film festival scholars find their unique institutional development interesting (Iordanova, 2009; Rhyne, 2009; Rüling, 2009; Cheung, 2009).

Goals, aims and research questions

The aim of this thesis is twofold. One is to describe the international position of the *Nordisk Forum* in a documentary film festival circuit. The second is to shed light on the role and function of film festivals in the dynamic evolution of the film industry. Using a co-financing forum of documentaries, the Nordisk Forum, as a defining frame, a qualitative, semi-structured interview study was conducted. The goal was to gain an understanding of the attitudes, values and motivations amongst the international financiers and distributors that attend this forum, and other similar forums. Financiers in this thesis refer to those professionals that invest in documentary projects that are in the process of being made. The financiers become co-producers of those projects. Co-production does not only mean financial support to documentary films but can also include guidance and discussions of different approaches during the making of the co-produced documentary films. Financiers can be television commissioner editors or other types of funders of documentary films. Distributors are the ones that sell and distribute films onto various platforms. Often times distributors make distribution agreements with filmmakers or write letters of intent for documentary projects that are still in production. An agreement with or a letter of intent from a distributor can be valuable for the filmmakers team in gathering additional financing.

There were two main research questions which each had a few sub-questions:

- Is there a particular circuit of film festivals and forums that these professionals attend?

- How do these professionals select the festivals and forums to go to?
- Do these professional decision-makers find projects for their investments at the Nordisk Forum?
- How is the Nordisk Forum in comparison to other forums or pitch places they attend?
- What is the role and function of film festivals for the field of documentary films?
 - Do the decision-makers attend this forum (or any other similar forum) for other reasons than finding films for co-production?
 - Is networking as important a reason for attending as finding films for co-production?
 - How do they see the digital media evolution affecting the future of the forums the way they are in their current form?

The motivations for attendance and the interest fulfillment of the international decision-makers at the Nordisk Forum was seen as a measure of the international position of the Nordisk Forum while at the same time giving a perspective on the role of film festival forums in general. The reason was that this kind of participants attract other professionals to the event, and give the event stronger legitimacy. Their participation increases the international opportunities for the teams presenting their documentary projects. They also travel between forums and have, as a result, an international perspective of similar forums.

Theoretical background

This thesis builds both on the perspective of institutional theory, and the new study field of film festivals.

To understand the role and behavior (actions) of film festivals, concepts from institutional theory were helpful. Specifically the concept organizational field and the recent concept of “field-configuring event” (Lampel, Meyer, & Ventresca, 2005, p. 1099). The field of documentary films within the audiovisual world is seen as the organizational field and film festivals are seen as field-configuring events in this thesis. Organizational fields evolve and change and field-configuring events play important roles in that development (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). Documentary films have until the early nineties mostly been exhibited in public television stations, when they “managed to break through [that] stranglehold of institutional exhibition practice” and began to have commercial success (Grant & Sloniowski, 1998, p. 19).

Therefore, many film festivals that specialize in documentaries attract decision-makers from the television field. Documentary films have been defined as human made products that bear witness to both the historical world that they stem from and allow that historical framework to be received in a specific way, “be it in sharp distinction to fiction or in close alliance with it (Nichols, 1998, p. 11).” This nature of documentaries gives them a rich social context, as opposed to technical or scientific contexts, as they receive more social scrutiny than any other genre within film, literature or music. The film festivals and forums serve primarily both as social networking hubs and sites where knowledge provisions within the field are enhanced. They thus influence the field evolution indirectly, because they are not a governing body that sets rules and policies within the field. In that sense they have a reactive relation to the field and its evolution while still serving an important role as networking hubs where conflicts between members of the field come up and are resolved, and as a place where individuals representing their companies within the field are learning of new developments and trends (Acheston, Maule, & Filleul, 1996).

Another concept of institutional theory, institutional logics also adds to the understanding of the phenomenon of film festivals because the continuous friction between experimental artistic approaches versus commercial approaches is present. Film festivals both thrive on and struggle to merge the different institutional logics of the culture and art (which originated in the artistic community) and the institutional commercial logics (which originated in economy). These two logics are present both concerning the content of the documentaries and in regards to the exhibition platforms.

Film festival studies are a new study area. It is an interdisciplinary field, that is done both within the humanities as social sciences, mostly by film and media scholars, but also within disciplines such as business, anthropology, space, urban and tourism studies, history, gender studies, community and identity studies. The online thematic annotated bibliography of film festival research illustrates this (Loist & de Valck, 2010). The concept of one international film festival circuit dominated early academic work on film festivals, as in the essay by Thomas Elsaesser, *Film Festival Networks: The new Topographies of Cinema in Europe* (2005a). A later work, in the tradition of network theories, that also included important work on historical and methodological issues is Marijke de Valck's book, *Film festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (2007). The work of Julian Stringer (2001) and Janet

Harbord (2002) that explore the spatial and temporal dimensions of film festivals within the global economy are also significant ground works that contributed to the concept of one international film festival circuit. Festival research has struggled to keep pace with the proliferation of film festivals, and the growth of the film festival circuit during the last three decades. Thirty years ago *Variety* estimated that there were 170 film festivals in total (Acheston, Maule, & Filleul, 1996), by 2001 there were “over five hundred events” (Stringer, 2001, p. 137). Today there is hardly a day that passes without there being, somewhere in the world, a film festival going on, with some estimates going so far as estimating up to 4000 festivals per year (IMDb.com, Inc., 1990-2010; M21 Entertainment, 2006-2010; Blue Compass Ltd., 2010).

The editors of the first volume in the *Film Festival Yearbook* series see it as a lapse in the festival scholarship that too little work has sought to bring forth large, structural models of the film festival circuit, in a way that takes into account their multiple institutional formations and identities (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009). The reason for this is not because of poor scholarship, in the editor’s opinion, but rather that there is a shortage of spaces for productive debate and dialogue amongst those who research festival institutions. The aim of the *Film Festival Yearbook* series is both to explore festivals in a systematic manner, using existing individual case studies, that will bring forth theoretical concerns at the intersection of arts management, cultural policy and film studies. The other aim is to chart the complex structure of the international festival network (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009). Although this thesis includes a case study, the Nordisk Forum, an attempt was made to use it as a window to understanding of a wider perspective. This is done by interviewing the international decision-makers at the event, and to seek an understanding of their opinions and usages of film festivals in an international context.

Key works

They key works that this thesis builds on are works in the first volume of the *Film Festival Yearbook 1; The Festival Circuit*. In particular the work of Dina Iordanova where she criticizes the notion of film festivals as an alternative distribution and the networked film festival circuit. Instead she reasons that the exhibitions of films at film festivals are precisely that but not distribution, and that there exists parallel and overlapping circuits (Iordanova, 2009). Other key works that this thesis builds on is the work of Charles-Clemens Rüling where the history of Annecy International Film Festival and Market is organizationally analyzed with a

view of the film festival as a field-configuring event. Rüling divides the development of the festival into three phases and sees it develop with its environment, and contribute to the field differently in each phase (Rüling, 2009). Another key viewpoint that this thesis builds on is Ragan Rhyne's view of film festival circuits, in plural, and its stakeholders. She also abandons the notion of one networked film festival circuit but sees it instead as an international cultural sector administered through the institutional model of non-profit organizations with an economy of both private and public subsidy (Rhyne, 2009). The fact that the study field is new shows in the different use of terminology about similar things. Rhyne uses the term "non-profit organization" while Cheung uses the word "corporatization" attests terminological inconsistencies like that (Cheung, 2009).

Concepts and terminologies

It is worth clarifying some terminologies and definitions that will be used throughout the thesis. Some times the *film festival phenomenon* is discussed in a wide sense, including many types that expose or are driven by different genres of films such as fiction, documentaries, short films, human right film and so on. Although the case study in this thesis is proportionally a small film festival from a word wide perspective, that specializes in Nordic short- and documentary films, it is a child of the spirit of the time or the zeitgeist, that marks its characteristics. Therefore the film festival phenomenon in the wide meaning of the term is sometimes relevant, while in different contexts a narrower definition of the term is relevant. In the text, an attempt is made to clarify when which sense is used. Sometimes the word festival is used, however in this thesis the only kinds of festivals that are discussed are film festivals.

The term *cross-media* is used to describe the audiovisual world today as a result of the digital development. The term is meant to describe how the viewing of films has developed, and continuously is developing, and that people manage their own time of viewing films on different devices, of which new are continuously being invented. The term *cross-media adaptation* is used to describe how companies and people have adapted to this technology and the audience usage of it. The term *multi-media platforms* is used to describe the that people can view films on different devices, be it on a laptop, mobile phones, iPads or any of the devices that are continuously being invented, and are challenging the traditional platforms of viewing films as on television or in movie theatres. The term *TV-slot* means a specific time slot that is

dedicated to a specific program on the schedule on television, for example at 20:00-21:00 on Mondays.

Decision-makers in this thesis refer to the financiers and distributors that attend the Nordisk Forum and similar film forums. Financiers can be TV editing commissioners or funders, while distributors are the ones selling and distributing films for exhibitions on various platforms.

Construction of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis is comprised of five parts. The next part explains theoretical concerns both from the perspective of institutional theory and its concepts of organizational fields, field-configuring events and institutional logics. This part also describes perspectives from film festival studies. The following part describes the film festival Nordisk Panorama 5 cities film festival and particularly one of its events, the Nordisk Forum for co-finance of Documentaries. The subsequent part describes the methodologies behind the qualitative, semi-structured interview research. The part after that contains the results that are divided in two parts, one anchored with film festival study elements and the other by institutional theory. The conclusion part comes last which includes discussions and summary of the thesis.

Theories

Organizational fields

In order to understand the role of film festivals and their development and actions, a central concept in institutional theory, organizational fields, is crucial. Organizational fields have been defined as “those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products.” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148). Scott¹ defined fields as “community of organizations that partake in a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside the field.” in (Wooten & Hoffman, 2008, p. 138).

The field of documentary films within the audiovisual world is seen as the

¹ Scott, W. Richard (2001). *Institutions and Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. <http://books.google.com/books?id=kpDUHaaNhqYC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

organizational field for this thesis purpose. It constitutes of producers of documentary films (suppliers), filmmakers, subsidies (resources), audiences (consumers), film institutes (regulatory agencies) and TV channels and other exhibition platforms of documentaries, to name a few organizations within the field.

Film festivals as field-configuring events

The concept *field-configuring events* recently established by Lampel and Meyer is an interesting and appropriate view on film festivals (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). Events have a role in an emerging field and its evolution. They emerge, sustain, refine or protect a field's identity for example. Lampel and Meyer describe field-configuring events as having six defining characteristics:

1. They assemble in one location people from diverse professional, organizational, and geographical backgrounds.
2. The duration is limited, from a few hours to a few days.
3. They provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face interactions.
4. They include ceremonial and dramaturgical activities.
5. They are occasions for exchanging information and collective sense-making.
6. They generate social and reputational resources that can be deployed elsewhere and for other purposes (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, pp. 1026-1027).

A definition of collective sense-making can be "the process whereby groups interactively create social reality, which becomes the organizational reality" (Boyce, 1995, p. 109).

Field-configuring events encapsulate and shape a market, industry, technology or a development of a profession. They are arenas for networking, making business deals, share news and updates amongst many other possibilities (Lampel & Meyer, 2008).

Field-configuring events can, and should in the opinion of the concept's authors, be situated in context with researches about growth and evolution of institutional, organizational and professional fields.

Lampel and Meyer state that field-configuring events are both the products and drivers of field evolution. A field develops a field-configuring event at a certain time in its development, and then at other times the event can trigger processes that drive the field evolution. That is, under certain conditions a field gives rise to a field configuring event, but then the event itself make their own evolutionary pressure and shapes and can challenge the field's cognitive norms or structures (Lampel & Meyer,

2008). Some events have strong influence on their field evolutions, when others are weaker in this regard, and influence the field evolution indirectly, serving primarily as networking hubs (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1028). Lampel and Meyer state that the influence a field-configuring event has on a field depends on the event and the field itself. They describe events as having either weak or strong “field mandate” in this respect (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1028). The film festival forums in this thesis are seen as in a weak field mandate that influence the field of documentary films indirectly. This is because film festival forums are neither the producers of the films on offer nor the ones taking any decisions about the future fates of the films. Film festivals are the ones that select the films, from a pool of submitters that are obliged to obey the festivals criteria. However, in the end the decision-makers at the forums have the films future fate in hand, not the film festivals. In addition, the decision-makers are working for their own organizations with their respective institutional logics, being leaned towards the institutional logics of commercial documentaries with approaches that suit TV slots. Or leaned towards other exhibition platforms that allow for experimental or content driven documentary films. Institutional logics within film festivals will be discussed further below.

Field-configuring events are spaces where decision-makers and other individuals can represent both themselves and their organizations. Evolution in a field does not only take place in the interaction of organizations, but also because of interaction between individuals. This notion is being explored in this thesis by seeking to understand the opinions and professional behavior of decision-makers attending field-configuring events as film festival forums of documentaries.

The concepts institutional embedded agency, and institutional logic of the field, are relevant here. If an individual adapts to the institutional logic of their field they behave exactly in line with their organizational or professional prescription. That is a paradox because if individuals do that, “they are no longer actors in any meaningful sense of the term” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1028). In other words, if an individual is not given room to be innovative and behave different than in line of the institutional logics, they loose the ability to be useful for the evolution of the field. The film festival’s financial forum’s can be seen as actors, whose challenges are not only to offer projects that fit the institutional logics of the decision-makers organizations, but also to have on offer a variety to give the decision-makers opportunity to be innovative and creative in their selection. Otherwise film festivals

are not meaningful actors within the field. This is by no doubt one of the reasons that forums and film festivals define their selection of projects and make an effort to be unique in that respect.

Field-configuring events give the individuals greater scope for initiatives and creativity, although at the same time being part of the field and its institutional logic. The field-configuring events offer a mechanism that mediates between the macro level, the structural form of the very event that configures the field, and the micro level giving individuals the opportunity to change contested arguments to a legitimate outcome (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1029). This can be applied to film festival forums as they can be seen as the structural macro level themselves, that offer and give the attending decision-makers (micro level) the opportunity to deem the fate of documentary film projects that are presented, be it in line with the institutional logics of their organizations or not.

Institutional logics

Alford and Friedland (1985) introduced the term institutional logics as “an empirically and historically variable combination of explicit norms governing behaviour” (p. 428). Institutional logics are reinforced by norms, laws and action premises, or in fact by the institutions themselves. In their book they describe the capitalism, state bureaucracy and democracy as three different institutional orders, that have each their beliefs and practices that shape how people participate in politics. In addition, they saw these institutional logics as in debate. Friedland and Alford (1991) developed the concept further by viewing individual and organizational behavior in a societal context, as opposed to trying to understand behavior in isolation of society. They see institutions both as supra-organizational patterns of human activity, where they perform their material practices, and as symbolic systems through which they make these activities meaningful. Institutions all have a central logic, which constrains both the ends and means of the behavior of individuals and organizations. They provide both vocabularies of motives and a sense of self to the individuals and the individuals, groups and organizations try to use these means of the institutional order to their advantage (Friedland & Alford, 1991, pp. 232, 251). Another definition of institutional logics set forth by Thornton and Ocasio 1999 is: “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their reality” (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101).

What all these definitions have in common is that the behavior of organizations and individuals must be understood in a societal and institutional context, and this context both regulates behavior and gives opportunity for change (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, pp. 101-102). Sometimes there are two institutional logics within a field that may be in friction. The field might follow one of the institutional logics if one of them is strong enough to force the other to its form, or there might evolve a compromise of a hybrid form or there will be a two co-existing institutional logics as Margrét Sigurðardóttir's study of the music industry shows (Margrét Sigrún Sigurðardóttir, 2006).

These considerations about institutional logics add to the understanding of the phenomena of film festivals because there is a continuous friction between experimental artistic approaches of films versus commercial approaches. Film festivals, in particular those who expose and are driven by fiction films, both thrive on and struggle to merge the two different institutional logics of culture and art, originated in the artistic community and the commercial logics, originated in economy. In addition, the digital evolvement has challenged both the aesthetics and genres of films on the one hand, and also challenged the commercial side of selling and distributing films. The results from this thesis indicate that the two institutional logics (artistic and commercial) are also present within the genre of documentary films. More obvious though in the case of documentaries are the effects of the digitalization that challenges both the genre of films and the selling and distribution of them.

Film festival studies

Film festival studies are a new study area. It is an interdisciplinary study field, that is done both within the humanities as social sciences, mostly by film and media scholars, but also within subjects as, business, anthropology, space, urban and tourism studies, history, gender studies, community and identity studies (Loist & de Valck, 2010). The concept of an international film festival circuit is dominant in early film festival work.

The Film Festival Yearbook series, backed with the project *Dynamics of World Cinema* and sponsored by The Leverhulme Trust in the UK, is hosted at the Centre for Film Studies at the University of St Andrews. The three yearbooks that have been published so far, the first one in the year 2009, are collections of the latest

academic researches on film festivals. The underlying purpose is also to facilitate this new research field to thrive. The principal investigator is professor Dina Iordanova.

Most festival scholarships have used the methodology model of case study research. The significant reasons for this methodology are because “the unique histories of festivals large and small have demanded consideration on the institutional level “ (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009, p. 1).

Film festivals and their development

In a very broad sense, film festivals are adaptive social phenomena that have taken many forms, shapes and have been used, and still are, for various purposes since their origin in the early 1930's. The number of film festivals started to grow rapidly world wide in the 1980's, and that number is still proliferating. There are different opinions on that development and professionals and scholars have different aspects on that. It is general knowledge that the film medium is a powerful medium and the digital evolution has gradually changed people's associate with all kinds of films. New styles and new genres of films are being developed. The digital evolution also challenges traditional ways of viewing and new devices for viewing films are continually being invented.

They way Marijke de Valck unravels the origin and roots of the film festival phenomenon and it's history in her book, *Film Festivals; From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (de Valck, 2007), film festivals can be understood as composed of two institutional logics. They celebrate alternative, artistic, or non-commercial films of the artistic logics and at the same time the commercial aspect and the business role of the economical and commercial field logics is also supported. In her attempt to view film festivals as a phenomenon from an historical, wide perspective, mainly focusing on the first and the big film festivals that are mainly fiction driven, she metaphors them as a figure, both against the artistic avant-garde and the commercial Hollywood, but at the same time having one foot planted in both models. That is one foot is in the avant-garde artistic-value-model and the other one on the beat of the market forces within cultural economy (de Valck, 2007, p. 25). She distinguishes three historical phases of film festivals: The first one from 1932-1968. During this period film festivals were predominantly political and nationalistic. They were all European and their number after the World War II were around a dozen. They exhibited their nations films, but were international de Valck states. It was typical during this phase that there was a national selection of films for nomination. In

the case of Cannes, the national centre of cinematography (CNC) was in charge of the submission, selection process and the nomination for the event (Craig, 2010). By the late fifties the film festivals started to act as launching platforms and new unknown filmmakers were given opportunities at the film festivals, called the *new waves* stars (Elsaesser, 2005a, p. 90). The second phase that de Valck distinguishes is between the general upheavals worldwide in 1968 until 1980. Upheavals occurred in the Cannes and Berlin film festivals in 1968, where it was demanded that the film festivals would pay more attention to the medium as art and to new alternative filmmakers rather than the established filmmakers (de Valck, 2007, p. 61). The film festivals became independent in the process and were themselves in charge of the selection in the official selection (Craig, 2010). With this independence from the national authorities film festivals started to participate in film culture (de Valck, 2007). Marikje de Valck's third historical phase of film festivals started 1980, with the beginning of their proliferation world wide. The film festival phenomenon becomes, to a big extent, professionalized and institutionalized during this phase according to de Valck (de Valck, 2007).

As mentioned before film festival research often uses the methodology of case studies. Charles-Clemens Rüling organizationally analyzed the history of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market, as a field-configuring event (Rüling, 2009). In his research built on research interviews with key actors in the organization of the festival, together with documents from the festival archive, trade journal articles and an one-week period of participant observation during the event in June 2008, he distinguishes three historical phases. Rüling divides the development of the festival into three phases and sees it develop with its environment, and contribute to the field differently in each phase.

Elsaesser describes the power shifts in the 1980's of the film festivals as a shift in the "center of gravity", away from Europe (2005a, p. 91). Film festivals, he continues, in Asia, Australia and North America, particularly the ones in Sundance, Telluride, Montreal and Toronto, gained status and even topped the ones in Europe. Interestingly, some of the successful film festivals, founded after 1980, have either not sought after or held a FIAPF accreditation, and the role of FIAPF is highly controversial (Iordanova, 2009).

It's a challenge to make up a typography of the worldwide film festivals, because of the lack of a large theoretical frame that coordinates the phenomena in a

systematic overview. However it's worth looking at different insights, investigations and researches that have been done about film festivals.

Europe and USA

The United States and particularly Hollywood has had recognizable influence on the historical development of film festivals. European cinema has often been viewed as the opposite or in opposition of Hollywood. The European cinema traditionally many think of as art or highbrow culture and Hollywood as mass entertainment and popular culture. Often the European cinema is looked on as the state or subsidized cinema and the Hollywood studio system or box-office cinema as opposition. You could talk about the European auteur versus the Hollywood star. European festival hit versus the Hollywood blockbuster. Finally the international film festival circuits as European and the Academy Awards an expression of Hollywood (de Valck, 2007). However these opposites are more of a popular way of talking because the reality today is more complex than this. The founding initiative for the festival in Cannes was French, British and American (de Valck, 2007). Also, the initiative for the Berlin International Film festival was an American film officer, Oscar Martay (Internationale Filmfestspiele Berlin, 2010). Thomas Elsaesser attempted to shake up the polarization, art (European cinema) and commerce (American cinema), only to come to the conclusion that "both Hollywood and Europe would no longer mark distinctive territories" in such a line-up (2005b, p. 316).

Different agendas

Turan (2002) classed some festivals according to their agendas. Some with business agendas (Cannes, Sundance), others with geopolitical agendas (FESPACO, Havana, Sarajevo), and finally others with aesthetic agendas (Pordenone, Lone Pine, Telluride).

Mark Peranson (2009) has distinguished two models of festivals, built on his own experience as a programming coordinator of the Vancouver International Festival, and editor and publisher of *Cinema Scope*, the magazine that mainly highlights films that have not systematic theatrical distribution. He sees film festivals as political actors or subjects to pressures from interests groups, in constant struggle for power. The two ideal models include both characteristics typical to the operation, the business festival or the audience festival, and the models also include interest groups that need to be appeased for the continuing support and success. He lists the

importance of different interests groups (stakeholders) for each type of festival (business or audience). Distributors, that are selling and distributing films is the most important interest group at a business festival, while the audience is the most important interest group for an audience festival. These interest groups influence what kinds of films are screened at the festival, states Peranson (2009, p. 25). This distinction also includes differences in who benefits from the festival. The local audience in the city in which the festival is hosted, benefits from the audience orientated film festival, giving the festival greater cultural value. Similarly, according to Peranson, the selection of films is more likely to be oriented towards the audience taste. However, a film festival that is business orientated, with the distributors as the most important interest group will give the festival a more commercial value, and the selection of films more suited towards the commercial needs of distributors rather than the interest of the audience. This describes the two different institutional logics from the institutional theory perspective.

Some film festival scholars are prone to network theories and see this proliferation of film festivals as an international film festival circuit, that festivals are embedded into where there is a strict division of tasks between them in a global context (de Valck, 2007). Some have major importance in the film festival circuit and de Valck classifies film festivals primarily as major international festivals, regional film festivals, local film festivals, festivals with different dedications as to documentaries, short films, animation, education, feminists, also film weeks and film specials (de Valck, 2007).

Others (Iordanova, 2009) come to an investigative conclusion of the existence of many film festival circuits, rather than one big international, consisting of festivals of the same genre. Film festivals are not naturally networked in her opinion. If there is network between them it is because of specific agendas for fostering a specific type of cinematic product. The circuits are for example of types of films (short film, documentaries, animation), films of different genres (comedy, mountain films), or targeted to audiences (children, seniors), or social concern (human rights, women issues, gay and lesbian issues). Local surveys, regional surveys, or diasporic festivals. Festivals of significant commercial activity like the ones in Cannes, Berlin and Venice. Festivals of festivals (Toronto, London), thematic festivals, and if there are networks between them, Iordanova claims, they are formed around specific agendas

that focus on fostering and showing a certain type of cinematic product (Iordanova, 2009, pp. 30-32).

Typical festival practices in terms of institutional business logics are events within them as film markets, seminars, financing forums and even funding of films. As suggested in this thesis that film festivals existence and legitimacy is built on merging or settling between the two institutional logics, exhibiting and celebrating alternative or non-commercial films while at the same time being supportive of the economical, business side of the film industry, these business orientated events within film festivals are the way they practice that hybrid form. Film festivals are field-configuring events that put this institutional logics in dialogue where conflicts and resolutions in the field take place. The insights of many film festival researchers mirror this, as they say that it is in the interest of film festivals to attract more professionals of various kinds and make the festival important as a meeting point for them (Iordanova, 2009; de Valck, 2007). It is in fact the professionals that travel between film festivals that film festivals thrive on (Iordanova, 2009). In this context it is worth noting a comment from an experienced film journalist and film festival consultant, that the success of film festivals has become measured by the amount of business they generate, not of the quality of films they exhibit nor even in how many tickets they sell (Roddick, 2009, p. 167).

Competition

Julian Stringer's focus is on the competition between global cities of prestige and image, and how they market themselves by hosting film festivals. Locations of film festivals matter in their competition of attracting professionals and audiences. The Berlin film festival, for example, needs to attract the same professionals that attend festivals at various other cities that also try to attract them with their unique local culture. He sees the proliferation of film festivals from the eighties as a logical result of the need of a global economy to provide an extra supply of other locations to maintain and rejuvenate both the competition and cooperation (Stringer, 2001, p. 138). The ambition of many film festivals, regardless of their size, is to gain the status of a global film festival event, so what is common is that they model the forms of those global film festival events. Festivals need to be similar to each other, but at the same time different. In that sense they are both global (similar to each other) and local because local particularities become valuable elements in attracting people to the cities and their film festivals (Stringer, 2001).

Rhyne looks at film festivals as a cultural industry, mainly managed through a non-profit model. That model puts film festivals in competition with each other. Every festival has to be special, have a specific mission, have their own agenda or programming focus and prove to their funders that their activities are according to its mission. From this situation grows a new class and network of festival professionals, programmers, directors and administrators. These professionals even found their own festival in their career developments. Political encouragement of competition between festivals, Rhyne states, “for resources, patrons and prestige has been one of the most significant markers of the shift in their administration to the non-profit sector” (2009, p. 13). This is one of the reasons for the proliferation of film festivals in the world in Rhyne’s mind (Rhyne, 2009, p. 19).

Calendar

Film festivals place themselves in the calendar year, in accordance with other film festivals, avoiding overlapping (Stringer, 2001). As there are many different film festival circuits, according to Iordanova (2009), that can be focused on a specific genre of films, each circuit has their own calendar arrangement. The different film festival circuit’s calendar does not affect other festival circuits of another genre. Clash only happens between two festivals if they try to engage in the same cultural agenda during a limited time and space, at the same time fishing from the same “consumer pool” (Iordanova, 2009, p. 30). Iordanova claims that there could include networks between those festivals in each circuit, but they would be focused on fostering specific types of cinematic products.

Time and space

Julian Springer thinks that the spatial logics of film festivals are as important as the films they exhibit. The manufactured film festivals have produced space in itself that “function as a zone for the working through of unevenly differentiated power relationships” (Stringer, 2001, p. 138). Cities market themselves with their film festivals. The film festivals likewise market the city that they are held in, “not just the “narrative images” but the city’s own “festival image”, it’s own self-perceptions of the place it occupies within the global space economy, especially in relation to other cities and other festivals” (Stringer, 2001, p. 140).

Marijke de Valck applies the term “rites of passage” of the anthropologist Van Gennep, which is about a special ritual that societies use to mark changes in the social

structure. During this passage an individual goes through “a series of ritualistic and symbolic performances”, which is “his/her transition to another social position” (de Valck, 2007, p. 37). This thought applies well with film festivals de Valck explains, because they have a variety of rituals, like the red carpet, and symbolic acts, as the award ceremonies. The awards change the cultural position of films and filmmakers within the industry. Victor Turner, that has followed up on van Gennep’s work, focused especially on the transition phase, where people can exist “in a liminal [transitional] state located outside of society” (de Valck, 2007, p. 37). The reason he was interested in the liminal (transitional) state was because during them there is a suspension of normal relationships, time and social structures (de Valck, 2007).

This cultural theory fits well with Lampel and Meyers’s concept of field-configuring events, as those events “create a social space in which individuals can represent both themselves and their organizations” (2008, p. 1018). Field-configuring events allow individuals greater scope for innovation and interaction they continue.

Janet Harbord unravels some of the temporal aspects of film festivals in her article, *Film Festival-Time-Event* (2009). She states that time manufactures the event of the film festival. Film festivals produce a film culture that demands time to be used in the set time of the festival. While the ways of time and places of viewing films are multiplying, that is people are increasingly becoming more and more in control of when and from what device or platform they view films, the film festival keeps it’s characteristic of viewing in a set time. The film festival offers more films for the audience to have time to be able to see all during the film festival, the giving of our time is unquestionable (Harbord, 2009, p. 41). On the other side of the coin, Harbord adds, film festivals manufacture time. They produce an experience of temporality, or time.

As the cinema, in the early days, provided leisure at a specific time, and the eventualities in the films were safe to watch because they had passed and were filmed in a passed time, the film festival event itself is this eventuality in a specific time. The film festival is a performance that cannot be reproduced. The host cities are “inventing theatre” each time (Harbord, 2009, p. 42).

The concept of “liveness” of a film festival is interesting. It is more “live” than live shows at television that are mediated and framed at a distance. As examples of accidental events (eventualities) at film festivals Harbord mentions two spectacles at the Cannes film festival 2008. One, where a director and an actress smoked during a

press conference despite a ban on smoking in public places, making them “Chaplinesque as unwitting victims of circumstances” (2009, p. 43). The other was a widely reported comment from a famous actress on a highly flammable political issue. Both these spectacles produced controversy, but more interestingly they produced “a sense of the event running live” (2009, p. 43).

This discussion links to Daniel Dayan’s concept of “the written festival” and the critical factor of reporting the festival (2000). During his ethnography of the Sundance film festival he concludes that he needed to apply Roland Barthes concept of “the written fashion”, for to reveal fashion’s systematic dimension, one has to turn to fashion magazines, because fashion is made of sentences (Dayan, 2000, p. 51). In the same way the Sundance film festival was “written” by journalists, and that part of the festival was as real and important as the actual physical experience of the film festival, Dayan concludes.

Film festivals need the media to mediate the live events and their witness statements. The temporal dimension of the festival is separating it clearly from everyday life (Harbord, 2009, p. 44). The written reports, that the media writes, though are always written afterwards but they help in sealing the time of the event Harbord states (Harbord, 2009).

The film festival re-institutionalizes the collective viewing of films. They release their audiences from the “temporalities of digital technologies”, Harbord remarks (2009, p. 44). The festival tries to make the point that seeing a film here and now is unlike seeing it at any other time.

Film festivals as a cultural industry and management of stakeholders

Rhyne’s understanding of film festivals touches both methodological and theoretical concerns (2009). She sees film festivals as a new cultural industry that is mainly administered through the institutional model of the non-profit organization and an economy of public and private subsidy. That various stakeholder, as filmmakers, studios, journalists and press agents, professionals and programmers, local cultural councils and supra national agencies, tourist boards and cinephiles, are preserving the film festival industry because they have specific interests in seeing the network proliferate (Rhyne, 2009).

The institutional model of the non-profit organization and an economy of public and private subsidy, is a development in cultural administration that became common after the Cold War, because of changes in the urban global economy. Rhyne

builds on Foucault's argument about this shift as a structure of governmentality where the management of citizens is moved from the state to the bureaucrats and administrators who in the end outsource the job to the citizens themselves. This created a cultural sector with administrators that mediate between the funding sources on the one hand and artists and their communities on the other (Rhyne, 2009, p. 15). Film festivals are not just one example of the institutionalization of cultural management through the non-profit model; far more they are the perfect example of the ways that these policies, neoliberal ones, are enacted "to link cultural labour, governance and commerce toward a common goal" (Rhyne, 2009, p. 15).

Rhyne points to a useful methodology that would move the film festival studies away from the traditional focus on filmmakers, programmers and audiences and extend the researches by understanding the festival as a space where these interests are negotiated because that can tell us about the relationship between film, cultural policy and globalization (Rhyne, 2009, p. 16).

Building on Janet Harbould (2002, p. 60) identification of four distinct discourses that operate within film festivals, Rhyne adds the fifth and puts on the perspective of stakeholders. The five stakeholders groups, she states, can be:

- 1) filmmakers and producers
- 2) journalists
- 3) the film industry of financiers, lawyers, distributors and studios
- 4) tourist and ancillary industries
- 5) policymakers, funders and festival managers (Rhyne, 2009, p. 17).

Policy stakeholders have been given little attention in festival researches, states Rhyne, both in regards to the national cultural policies that influence the founding of film festivals and also the day-to-day management and administration, that is the material practices of the cultural policy (Rhyne, 2009, p. 18). In Rhyne's mind the reason behind the proliferation of film festivals the last two decades are to a big extent a response to changes in [cultural] policy and the general acceptance of the non-profit model to manage festivals (2009, p. 18).

The festival-as-non-profit, she continues, channels the tension of the five categories of stakeholders into a common search for institutionalized independence. Each category of stakeholders has different ideas of whom film festivals should be independent of, the government, the market or the high brow aesthetic tastes. The non-profit model makes the film festivals discursively independent but

simultaneously financially dependent on the state, the public and corporate sector of their funding (Rhyne, 2009, p. 19).

To sum up, the international film festival circuit cannot be understood as a cohesive network, but rather as a new cultural industry that is managed through the non-profit organization model. This form is a response to changes in the new urban global economy and the post-Cold War cultural administration. This can contribute to the understanding of the proliferation of film festivals. If there is a film festival circuit it has to be understood as being both materially and discursively constituted through the negotiations of various stakeholders. The non-profit model is ideal for managing these often conflicting interests, because of their public/private factors that make them good mediators between the states and the market (Rhyne, 2009).

Different interpretation to the proliferation of film festivals

There are different opinions of why the film festival phenomenon has developed in this way. There are some that find network and system theories helpful for explaining this, in combination with globalization theories (de Valck, 2007; Elsaesser, 2005a). Dina Iordanova claims that the film festivals are not inherently networked and sees parallel circuits of film festivals, that are still not in much dialog (Iordanova, 2009). She points out that film festivals are independently founded and proliferate without a controlling or checking body being in place. Ragan Rhyne (2009) has yet another point of view and also abandons the idea of a structural festival circuit as one entity, but instead understands it as a new cultural industry that is administered through the institutional model of the non-profit organization and an economy of public and private subsidy. This development is born because of changes in urban global economy and the post-Cold War cultural administration. Film festivals, she states, need also to be understood as negotiations between various stakeholders that have different interests in seeing the film festival circuits proliferate (Rhyne, 2009). Julian Stringer sees the proliferation as a logical result of a global economy's need to provide an extra supply of locations for film festival to rejuvenate competition and cooperation between festivals (Stringer, 2001).

Professional film festival directors, journalists and other film festival staff are more skeptical than scholars about this proliferation. Generally professionals see the proliferation of film festivals as a crisis. That they are too many, too political and predict that there will be a collapse and saturation on the market (Cousins, 2009, p. 155). When the journalist Nick Roddick assembled what he had written about film

festivals in a column *The business* in the film magazine *Sight & Sound* for four years, from 2005 to 2009, he noticed that he expressed a general downhill in regards to the adaptability of “the film business and the standing of film festivals” (2009, p. 159). An argument throughout his five columns express that the role of the film festivals in exhibiting non-studio (non-commercial) films, in the hope that many of them launch real distribution deals, is under threat from the digital technology which will soon become the dominant distribution way. He predicted that for the future “arthouse pantheons” will bypass film festivals and instead use social-networking sites for advertisements and broadband for distribution. He discussed how the private sponsors seemed to be vanishing and minor film festivals, that had cultural value for their cities, disappearing. He hoped that the “free market” (and the proliferation) of film festivals was dead, because there are only between six and ten film festivals in the world that really matter to the film business (Roddick, 2009).

Scholars as said before are not as pessimistic about their future. Iordanova is skeptical though when film festivals are said to serve the role as an alternative distribution network that opens doors to real distribution. Film festivals, she states, do give some films, that would not get a traditional distribution deal anyway, great exposure, but they are not systematic distribution that has an economical significance (Iordanova, 2009). Despite all these different interpretations, film festivals still continue to thrive and proliferate.

Rhyne concludes that in order to understand the proliferation of film festivals they have to be understood as a site of negotiating conflicting interests, including the policy makers interests and the cultural administrators themselves (Rhyne, 2009).

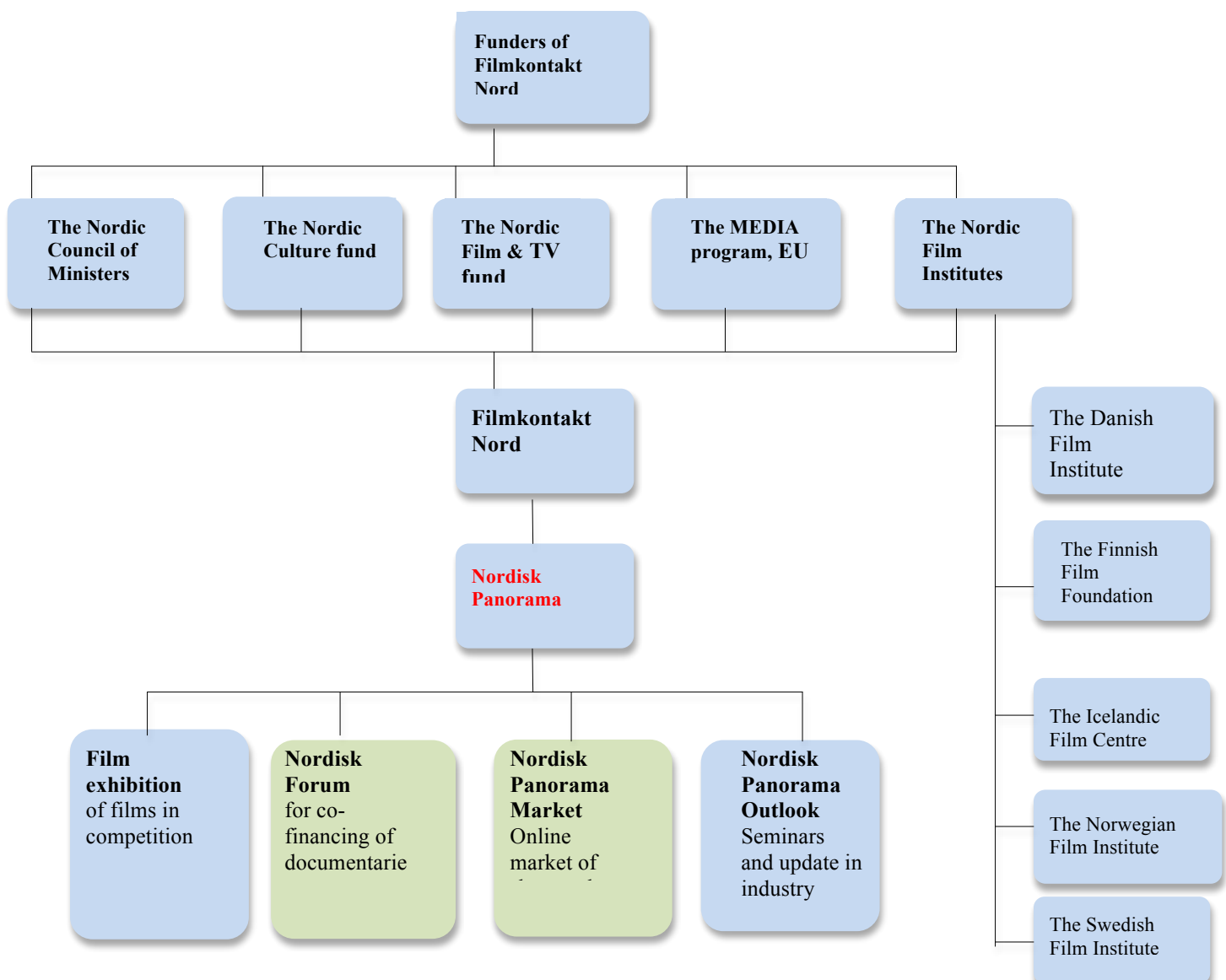
Summary

As the film festival study field is interdisciplinary and done both within humanities and social science the attempted coverage of the literature above would never be all inclusive. The historical development of the phenomenon has been discussed, and the disappearing distinction between European and United States of American approaches in the film industry. The way film festivals have different agendas and the competition that exists between them has been described. The systematic positioning in the calendar year has been discussed as well as the dimensions of time and space and how film festivals utilize and manufacture these dimensions. The viewpoint of film festivals as a cultural industry has been discussed and finally different interpretations to the continually growing number of film festivals on a global basis.

The following chapter will describe in detail the case study of this thesis, the Nordisk Panorama – 5 cities film festival, and particularly one of its business event, the Nordisk Forum for co-financing of documentary films.

Nordisk Panorama – 5 cities film festival

The festival is a major activity of Filmkontakt Nord. Filmkontakt Nord was established 1991 by the independent Nordic short and documentary film community and has from it's establishment been dedicated to the advancement and promotion of Nordic short films and documentaries, internationally. The main objectives are: information, marketing, networking and the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and know-how. Filmkontakt Nord's main function is to serve as a common Nordic platform for a stronger production and distribution network within the Nordic countries and a visible united exposure internationally (Filmkontakt Nord).



Picture 1: The Filmkontakt Nord organizational structure

As illustrated in picture 1, the funders of Filmkontakt Nord are the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic Culture fund, the Nordic Film Institutes, the Nordic film and TV fund and the MEDIA program of EU.

The Nordic film institutes are five: the Danish Film Institute, the Finnish Film Foundation, the Icelandic Film Centre, the Norwegian Film Institute and the Swedish Film Institute. The funders of Filmkontakt Nord are all government organizations of the five Nordic countries along with one European organization, MEDIA. They all have their particular interests and regulations, but their common interest is to promote and enhance Nordic short and documentary films.

The Nordisk Panorama – 5 cities film festival is the major activity of Filmkontakt Nord. It is held annually and travels between the five Nordic cities each year:

- Århus (Denmark)
- Oulu (Finland)
- Malmö (Sweden)
- Reykjavík (Iceland)
- Bergen (Norway)

The Festival consists of four major activities:

- **The film exposition and competition**
- **The Nordisk Forum for co-financing of documentary films**
- **The Nordisk Panorama Market** which is an online market of Nordic short and documentary films and
- **Nordisk Panorama Outlook** which are seminars of updates in the short and documentary film industry.

The Nordisk Panorama – 5 cities film festival is a field-configuring event from the perspective of institutional theory, having all the six defining characteristics that Lampel and Mayer specify.

- They assemble in one location people from diverse professional, organizational, and geographical backgrounds.
- The duration is limited.
- They provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face interactions.
- They include ceremonial and dramaturgical activities.
- They are occasions for exchanging information and collective sense-making.

- They generate social and reputational resources that can be deployed elsewhere and for other purposes (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, pp. 1026-1027).

To name a few types of background of attendees, the festival does assemble both audiences, filmmakers, specifically of short and documentary films, buyers or TV commissioners, distributors, financiers and students from various countries, specifically from the Nordic countries. The duration is usually 5-6 days. People get the opportunity to meet informally. There are ceremonies within the event as the prizes and nominations of films in the competition, and the Nordisk Forum also has its ceremony of activities that will be further described below. Professionals within the field of short and documentary films, at least within the Nordic community, have the opportunity to exchange information and make a collective sense of reality within the field.

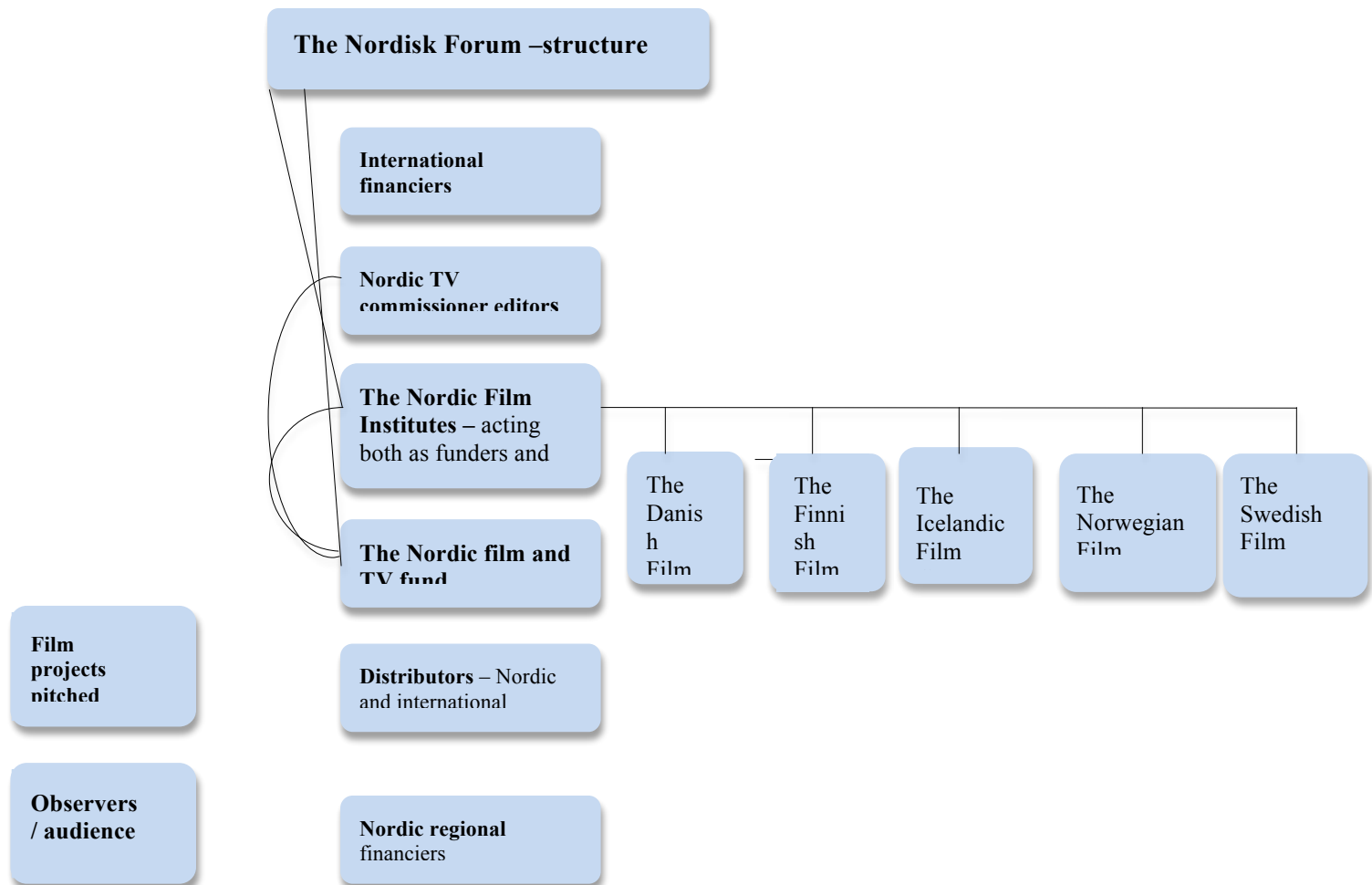
From the film festival studies perspective the Nordisk Panorama is a fruit of its era in how many film festivals have become. It has an institutionalized form and is taking an active role in, at least, the Nordic film industry by organizing events like the Nordisk Forum, the Nordisk Panorama Market and the Nordisk Panorama Outlook. The festival's business elements have a stronger weight than the local cultural weight of exhibiting Nordic short and documentary films. This is not only because of a dedicated choice, but is the outcome of its commitment to travel between the five cities every year. This hinders the festival to build up local audience commitment, as the film festival event arrives only every fifth year in each host city. The Nordisk Forum and the Nordisk Panorama market are specifically partaking in the documentary film industry, and are distinguished in picture 1 with green color, while the Nordisk Panorama Outlook is designed specifically for sharing updates and knowledge within the industry.

The Nordisk Forum²

The Nordisk Forum is a platform designed to enhance the film industry in the Nordic countries, by giving documentary filmmakers possibilities of finding co-finance for their films. This is not only in the interests of the Nordic documentary filmmaking community. To increase the number and quality of Nordic documentary films is also

² An example of a small forum, conducted by EDN (European Documentary Network) can be viewed at this link: <http://www.mipworld.com/en/mipdoc/conferences-and-events/co-production-challenge/>

feeding the festivals supply of films, in the interest of the festival itself and its legitimacy.

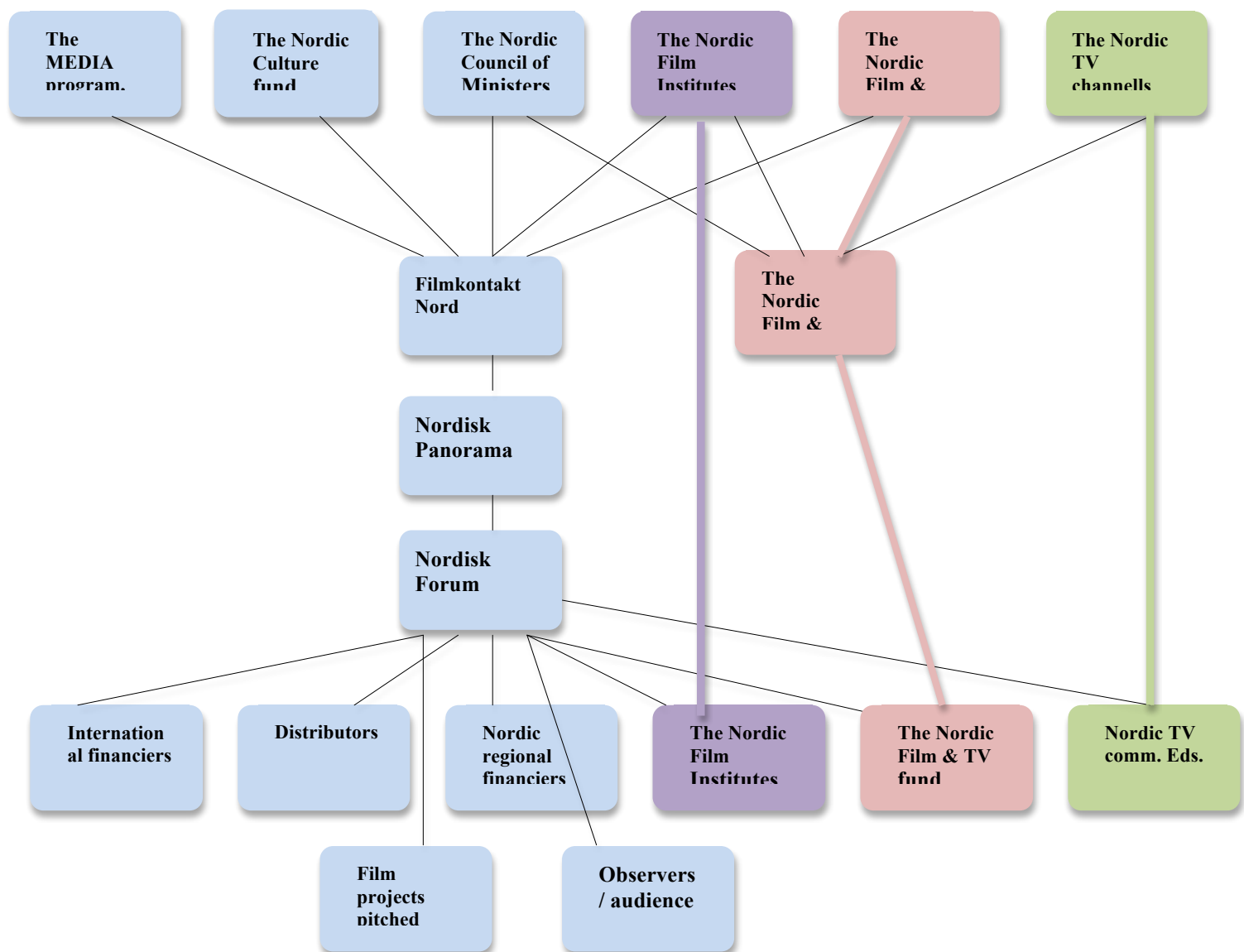


Picture 2: The Nordisk Forum institutional structure

The Nordisk Forum attracts a range of organizations within the field of documentary films, specifically the Nordic ones. In picture 2, the decision-makers at the Nordisk Forum 2010 are put in a column in the middle of the picture, in a hypothetical, hierarchical order of power. As TV channels have for a long time been the main platform for exposition of documentary films, the TV commissioning editors still have considerable power in regards to the future fate of documentary films. On top are therefore selected international financiers (mostly TV commissioner editors), next below are the Nordic TV commissioning editors, the five Nordic film institutes which act both as national funders and financiers at this forum making co-production deals between nations a reality. Below them in the chart is the Nordic film and TV fund, distributors both Nordic and international and Nordic regional financiers. However, as the interview research in this thesis indicates, the TV commissioners are

loosing their power, possibly due to the growing and multiple ways and platforms that people use to watch films today, other than on TV. Distributors are also powerful because they are in the business of selling and distribute films for exhibition. Then there are the resources, the pitch team members, that are there to present their documentary projects to the decision-makers. In this form of forums the projects teams are in an asking position towards the decision-makers that have the future fate of the documentary projects in hand. At the Nordisk Forum there is usually a large group of observers, that consist of filmmakers, producers that are not pitching their projects, or other professionals and students.

Nordic connections and relationships



Picture 3: The Nordic connections and relationships at the Nordisk Forum.

What is worth noting is the connections and relationships that the Nordic organizations and companies have, as illustrated in picture 3. In particular are the Nordic film institutes and funds, together with the Nordic Film and TV fund, in very specific situations and they have multiple roles. First of all they are funders of Filmkontakt Nord, which main event is the Nordisk Panorama film festival and it's four events. The film institutes act both as national funders and as financiers at the forum. The Nordic film and TV fund is funded one third by twelve Nordic TV stations, another third by the Nordisk Council of ministers and the last third by the Nordic film institutes. The Nordic film and TV fund is therefore acting as co-funders together with their own funders, by funding Filmkontakt Nord, and the Nordisk Panorama and the Nordisk Forum and acting as financiers at the Nordisk Forum. In other words, the Nordic film and TV fund is both on equal level of Filmkontakt Nord (their majority of funders are the same as the ones of Filmkontakt Nord) and on a higher level in the organizational chart, as one of the funders. There are therefore close collaborations between the Nordic film institutes, the Nordisk Film and TV fund and the Nordic TV channels, all acting as financiers at the Nordisk Forum.

The participation of the international decision makers (financiers and distributors) at the Nordisk Forum is then clearly an important interest of the Nordisk Forum. They represent international opportunities for all participants and the Nordic film community, co-financing documentaries with money coming from outside of the Nordic nations, in addition to international connections and opportunities for the Nordic producers. The question I think is important, is whether the attendance and participation is in the interest of the international decision makers themselves?

Goals, aims and research questions

As said earlier, the aim of this thesis is twofold. One is to describe the international position of the Nordisk Forum in a documentary film festival circuit. The second is to shed light on the role and function of film festivals in the dynamic evolution of the film industry. The Nordisk Forum was used, as a defining frame, for this qualitative, semi-structured interview research. The goal was to gain an understanding of the attitudes, values and motivations amongst the international decision-makers that attend this forum, and other similar forums. The definition of the international decision-makers is to be the financiers and distributors that attended the Nordisk Forum in Bergen, 27-28 September 2010, that were not working for organizations or companies originated in the Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark,

Norway, Finland or Iceland). There were two main research questions which each had a few sub-questions:

- Is there a particular circuit of film festivals and forums that these professionals attend?
 - How do these professionals select the festivals and forums to go to?
 - Do these professional decision-makers find projects for their investments at the Nordisk Forum?
 - How is the Nordisk Forum in comparison to other forums or pitch places they attend?
- What is the role and function of film festivals for the field of documentary films?
 - Do the decision-makers attend this forum (or any other similar forum) for other reasons than finding films for co-production?
 - Is networking a reason as important for attending as finding films for co-production?
 - How do they see the digital media evolution affecting the future of the forums the way they are in their current form?

The motivations for attendance and the interest fulfillment of the international decision-makers at the Nordisk Forum was seen as a measure of the international position of the Nordisk Forum while at the same time giving a perspective of the role of film festival forums in general. The reason was that these types of participants attract other professionals to the event, and give the event stronger legitimacy. Their participation increases the international opportunities for the teams presenting their documentary projects and they also travel between forums and have therefore an international perspective and comparison of similar forums.

Methodology

Design

This is a case study of the Nordisk Forum event, built on semi-structured individual in-depth interviews, with professionals, and a participant observation of the two day Nordisk Forum in Bergen 2010 during an attendance of the Nordisk Panorama film festival, and attendance as a volunteer at the Nordisk Forum in Reykjavik 2009. This is in some extent an applied research, as the issue of concentration was suggested and

originated from the Filmkontakt Nord's director and head of industry, although the scope is extended onto film festival studies in the global context.

The subject frame is neat, the Nordisk Forum 2010, while the motivations and interests of the international decision-makers demands explanations that could bring forward various opinions and viewpoints. During the attendance at the Nordisk Panorama 2010, some seminars were attended, films were viewed but most importantly the Nordisk Forum was observed and I introduced myself to the international financiers and distributors. I informed them about my academic research and asked if I could contact them later for the purpose of my research. I received kind and positive reactions from all of those that I managed to introduce myself to.

Methods

The research is built on semi-structured individual interviews, and is therefore qualitative. The methodology of this research is built neatly on Gaskell's chapter on conceptual background and practical guidelines to qualitative interviews (Gaskell, 2009) and for the content analysis on Bauer's chapter on classical content analysis (Bauer, 2009). The interviewing method was chosen for the purpose of exploring a range of opinions and points of view, and also to gain clarification and in-dept insights into pre defined topics during the interviews. To establish a ground of trust and confidence during qualitative research interviews is important as that enhances the quality of the data and makes the interpretation of the data an easier task for the researcher, and therefore enhances the reliability.

International decision-makers at the Nordisk Forum are few. They compliment of five financiers and seven international distributors.

Quantitative methods do not apply here for the same reasons. Statistics of this amount of individuals will not give much reliability. Counting the opinions was not the intention, but to understand the opinions and viewpoints, while opening up for as many possibilities as possible was the purpose. This was in the hope of discovering something new, as opposed to measuring known factors which quantitative methodology deliver very well.

Selecting interviewees

The frame is narrow, the Nordisk Forum 2010, and the international financiers and distributors of that event are twelve in number. This is a manageable amount to interview and still keep an overview. They consist of seven distributors/experts and

five financiers (Filmkontakt Nord, 2010). As mentioned before the original idea of interviewees came from the director and head of industry of Filmkontakt Nord, however the group is interesting for the purpose of obtaining an international perspective of other documentary forums, on which these professionals have a unique perspective and experience of. Transcripts of the interviews of this systematically selected group constructs a corpus of text that represents the motivations and interests of this particular group, for attending the Nordisk Forum and other similar forums. The data will therefore supply to an understanding of the function of Nordisk Forum and other similar forums in the international documentary film industry. This selected group is different to a random sample that would describe the distribution of an already known property in a social area (Bauer & Aarts, 2009, p. 20).

This amount of interviews is good as the key point is that more interviews do not necessarily “imply better quality or more detailed understanding” (Gaskell, 2009, p. 43). The reason is twofold. Although experiences may appear to be unique to the individual, they are in some measure the outcome of social processes and outcomes. This becomes clear when a researcher realizes that there are no surprises or new insights coming forth. When this kind of meaning saturation occurs, the researcher may check if he or she has the right understanding, and if so, its a signal that it’s time to stop. The second reason for why more interviews are not necessarily better, is the importance that the researcher, while analyzing, “lives and dreams” the interviews and can remember details and reasons for a question or a tone in an interview. For these two reasons there is a limit to the necessity of how many interviews are conducted and the possibility to analyze them. The thumb of rule is that for one single researcher, 15-25 individual interviews are manageable to analyze (Gaskell, 2009, p. 43).

The scope of interviewees was widened at a specific time during the data gathering process by also interviewing one of the moderators that conducted the Nordisk Forum 2010 and the then director of Filmkontakt Nord.

Data collection

The nine interviews were conducted between 4th of March to the 12th of April 2011. Seven out of twelve from the original selected group, were interviewed or 60%. Those seven were complemented by the two additional interviews with a moderator at the Nordisk Forum 2010, and the then director of Filmkontakt Nord. The interviews were of 20-50 minutes in duration, except for the first two, which lasted 10 and 15 minutes.

That was not fully unfortunate for the benefit of the research, because those first two interviews brought valuable information and data. The interviewees were phoned via Skype, and the confidential conversations were recorded onto a computer, with the awareness and agreement of the interviewees. During the interviews an attempt was made to control the conversations into the themes, as neutrally as possible, in search for descriptions.

The corpus construction is then made up of transcripts that were made of the nine semi-structured interviews with these professionals, which were made specifically for the purpose of this research and dissertation.

Procedures

The pre-prepared topic guide that was used went through three phases of changes during the interview process. The main themes were however all in there from the beginning. The first and the last topic guides are in the appendix.

Six interviews were conducted via Skype, and three through landline telephone numbers. The Skype interviews brought closer connection during the interview, possibly because then both the researcher and the interviewee could see each other via the camera and read body languages. During the first interview the line broke four times during the 15 minutes interview, which was unfortunate because this disrupted the flow in the conversation. However, that interview gave valuable information all the same.

Data analysis

A content analysis was done, where the content of the text was coded according to themes and categories, on a nominal scale, except the sub-codes under the themed code, N networking, was ordered on a rough scale in an order of surface to depth, micro to macro purposes, or straight forward importance to a underlying wider importance to the field. N1 being the most surfaced, micro and straight forward importance, and N6 is the most in-depth, macro and of a wider importance.

There is much control of the textual content in the respect that the interviews are made solely for the purpose of this research, and texts that are written with a different purpose in mind are not used. If that would be the case I would be making a classical content analysis and much considerations would go into sampling and categorizing the text units (Bauer, 2009).

Transcripts were made of the interviews, which then were coded and categorized. See codebook in appendix III.

Enhancing quality in content analysis

Coherence in the coding frame

A coherent coding frame is one that is “internally coherent and simple” in the way that “all codes flow from a single principle” (Bauer, 2009, p. 141). In this research the principle is “motivations and interest fulfillment” of the international decision-makers. The themes were coded from the topic guide for:

- T) annual tour
- C) comparison between forums
- R) Nordisk Forum regional focus
- N) networking,
- CM) changes / cross-media
- F) future.

Within the theme N) networking six sub categories were coded:

- N1) practical meeting point
- N2) cultivate contacts
- N3) update yourself
- N4) discussions with colleges
- N5) face-to-face meetings
- N6) strengthen each other

Transparency

As qualitative methods demand interpretation and sometimes creativity of the researcher, transparency is important and therefore the coding frame is in the appendix with this thesis where the coding process is documented. That is to ensure public accountability, and to make it easier to reconstruct the process and is important in making the data objective (Bauer, 2009, p. 143).

Reliability

Reliability is an agreement of interpretation. It depends on amount of training of coders (if many), definitions of categories, the complexity of the coding frame and the material (Bauer, 2009, pp. 143-144). The interviews are confidential and therefore only one person interpreting the interviews. The transcripts were read often, with time intervals, which improves intrapersonal reliability, consistency and stability. The coding frame is rather simple that helps the reliability, as a complex coding frame

would make ambiguities and errors more likely. It was also kept in mind that some themes and codes were more reliable than others and they were ordered in a row of importance and together because of relevance in the coding frame.

Validation

Validation is how the results correctly represent the text or its context (Bauer, 2009, p. 144). In regards to the data, the codes should relate to the words in the transcripts for semantic validity, and they are only made out of the transcripts. That Charles-Clemens Rüling (Rüling, 2009) research also applies the concept of film festivals as field-configuring events, adds to the validity of the results from this thesis. The coding frame represents organizational theory, institutional logics and field-configuring events. However the main fallacy of content analysis is inferences of intentions or understandings of the text.

External validity is not known in this research as the results will only apply to this particular case (the Nordisk Forum at the Nordisk Panorama – 5 cities film festival) and it is impossible to know if the results would be the same for any other similar forum at other film festivals. However, to generalize the results to other festivals, or other decision-makers opinion, is not the main concern in this research.

Limitations

The Nordisk Forum is a relatively small, regionally focused event and has relatively few international decision-makers, so the results can only give insight into the viewpoints of these particular decision-makers and can not be generalized as viewpoints of most decision-makers in the international field of documentary, nor the film industry.

In addition two of the seven financiers/distributors that were interviewed were of Nordic origin, although working for international organizations or companies. In total four of the nine interviewees are of Nordic origins. This may bias the results, towards supporting the Nordisk Forum, and given the results, a big part of the interviews were about the Nordisk Forum.

There remains always the possibility that the one financier and four distributors that could not be interviewed, hold different perspectives and viewpoints than the ones that were interviewed. This could therefore affect the reliability of the assumptions that are made in this thesis about the viewpoints of the international decision-makers of the Nordisk Forum attendance. The results only mirror the viewpoint of the decision-makers that were interviewed.

Besides, the interviewees do not have an obligation to be honest during an interview, even though the interviews were confidential. The analysis will not indicate who said what. Although the interviewees were informed that this thesis was independent from the management of Filmkontakt Nord, they were all informed of, that Filmkontakt Nord assisted me in making contacts with them.

Results from analyzing the themes

The six themes from the topic guide were coded, see codebook appendix III. The first three codes support and relate to film festival studies on the existence of many parallel film festival circuits, their arrangement on the calendar year and the competition between them. The last three themes relate to the role of film festivals and their financial forums like Nordisk Forum in particular, building on institutional theory and particularly the concept of field-configuring event.

1. A documentary film festival circuit – Film festival studies

1.1. T - The annual tour

The circuit - IDFA, Sheffield Doc/Fest, Hot Docs and Nordisk Forum

All the interviewees mentioned a few events that are clearly important places to go to if you work with documentaries. All interviewees mentioned *IDFA* (IDFA International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) as an important event for documentaries. Also *Sheffield Doc/Fest* (Sheffield Doc/Fest, 2011) and *Hot Docs* (Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, 2011).³ Those three festivals and their forums, or “meet-market” in the case of *Sheffield Doc/Fest*, seem to form a circuit that professionals concerned with documentaries attend. As one financier mentions when counting the film festival she and her boss travel to,

... it's also very important for [her boss] to be at the bigger events as well, for example IDFA, she'll be at Sheffield this year...

One of the financiers describes the tour as something that is straight forwards for every body in the field of documentary film:

³ Other film festivals mentioned were, *Sunny side of the Doc* sunnysideofthedoc.com, *Dok Leipzig* dok-leipzig.de, *Krakow Film Festival* kff.com.pl, and the *Banff Mountain Festival* banffcentre.ca/mountainfestival by the Europeans. The Americans mentioned the *Sundance Film Festival* sundance.org/festival, *Silver docs* silverdocs.com, *MIPTV* mipworld.com, *FESPACO* fespaco-bf.net, *Thessaloniki documentary festival* tdf.filmfestival.gr, and *Guadalajara international film festival* guadalajaracinemafest.com.

Everybody goes to Toronto, to Hotdocs, everybody goes to IDFA. [...] And also the Sheffield festival of course. [...] few of us from the international TV world go to Nordic Forum, but all the Scandinavians are there.

Competition, distinctions and the arrangement on the calendar

These three forums that the interviewees agree are important within the documentary film field, are clearly in competition of prestige and attendance of professional decision-makers. Their websites all list the ones that attend their forums.⁴ Sheffield Doc/Fest even list previous guests on their website.⁵ Although they have the human, social and political interests in common, (Sheffield Doc/Fest however does not mention any focus of content interest on the website), they coexist parallel to each other, both because of their arrangement in the calendar⁶ and also because they have some differences. The differences and uniqueness can be seen as their competitive identities, which are both in regards to the international range of projects selected for the pitchings and the nationalities of the decision-makers that attend, giving them different territorial weights.

If one look at the nationalities of the projects selected for the pitching, IDFA has the most internationally distributed selection of projects. A typical forum at IDFA consists of 50 projects from 30 countries.⁷ Sheffield Doc/Fest also prides itself of an international range of projects. Sheffield offered last year 64 projects from 20 countries although UK projects are more than one third of the amount.⁸ Hot Docs selected 27 projects for the 2011 forum, from 12 countries, half of them being Canadian or USA productions, giving it a narrower regional focus.⁹ Nordisk Forum in this respect has by definition a narrow regional focus, being open for Nordic and Baltic productions only.

There is also territorial differences between the forums, because from the filmmaker's point of view, the Hot Docs is strong for seeking co-productions or collaborations with Canadian or USA agents because at the event those countries, close to equally share more than 60% of the decision-makers at the forum. The

⁴ hotdocs.ca/conference/hot_docs_forum/2011_attending_buyers/
idfa.nl/industry/markets-funding/the_forum/guest-list.aspx
sheffdocfest.com/buyers

⁵ sheffdocfest.com/view/aboutdocfest

⁶ Hot Docs 28 April – 8 May 2011, Sheffield Doc/Fest 8-12 June 2011, Nordisk Forum 25-27 September 2011 and IDFA 16-27 November 2011.

⁷ idfa.nl/industry/markets-funding/the_forum/forum-online-catalogue/forum-selection-2010.aspx

⁸ sheffdocfest.com/view/meetmarketprojectselection

⁹ hotdocs.ca/conference/hot_docs_forum/2011_projects/

Sheffield Doc/Fest attracts 210 professionals, of which 104, or nearly 50% of them are from the UK. IDFA does not classify the nationalities of their attending decision-makers, but do emphasis that their forum attracts 400 professionals, and the Nordisk Forum 2010 attracted 42 decision-makers (distributors or financiers), thereof twelve represent international companies while the rest and majority, more than 70%, are Nordic (Filmkontakt Nord, 2010).

Notably the more international events, IDFA and Sheffield, are placed in the calendar year with approximately six months between them (Sheffield in early June and IDFA in late November), and the more regional focused Hot Docs and the Nordisk Forum have their place in between (Hot Docs in late April, early May and Nordisk Forum in late September). It even seems like the dates of the events are adjusted to the travelling of filmmakers and decision-makers. Interestingly in this context it was mentioned in one of the interview that Sheffield used to take place during the autumn, but moved it's dates to early June, which took some travel weight off the autumn for the attendees.

Guides in selecting film festival forums

What supports the issue of the competition between the forums of attending professionals is most clear in regards to the distributors. Some distributors mentioned that a forum becomes more interesting, or they are more likely to attend if they are invited. "...there is also a lot of festival that we attend because we get invited."

...often times it's because I'm invited. We don't have a huge budget to travel all over the world... [...] So it's really, who bought us there.

Typical straightforward answers when asked how the interviewees select forums and film festivals to attend were because of their importance, quality and the people you meet there. Other reasons mentioned were, selecting pitch places with a difference, often regional focus, as opposed to the ones that offer mainstream content that "everybody go to". Selecting film festivals in regards to the companies target territories or interest was acknowledged. Mentioned was that film festivals and pitch places that are purely for documentaries are more focused than at fiction driven film festivals with a documentary part. Human right festivals were also mentioned as an important source for documentaries.

...this is a festival that is sort of driven by fiction films and documentary is a part of it, it's a very important part of it but it's not the whole festival, so it can, you know it's a, it's, you know your not focused on one particular thing.... For example

the human rights festivals are all about human rights issues and docu, most of them are documentaries...

Finally, it varies how much these professionals travel between film festival forums. It is common that there is a division of tasks within organizations that means that the financiers and distributors divide between them the travelling and the attendance at forums. Some select four to five pitch places over the year, while others mentioned up to 12 festivals over the year, and others express it as being 40% of their time travelling between film festivals, while their other colleagues spend even more time travelling.

...but during the year both [her boss] and I travel, and [her boss] does probably the majority of the travel, [...] I, probably forty percent of the time I am travelling too to pitching forums, festivals, conferences...

1.2. C - Comparison between forums

When the interviewees were asked to compare the forums they attend, what came forth concerned mainly their forms, their reputation and for what purpose they are used.

Most of the forums have the pitching form where you have a panel of financiers and distributors sitting at the table and filmmakers and producers present, or pitch, their projects. Straight after the pitches the panel gives them feedback and a short questions-and-answers sessions follow. This is all done in theatres of different sizes in front of an audience of observers. After the pitching sessions there are scheduled one-on-one meetings between the pitch teams and the decision-makers at the panels. Sheffield Doc/Fest does not have this form. They schedule and match-make one-on-one meetings, but do not organize a pitching forum. In the interviews the point of view came forth that the big pitching forums at IDFA for example and Hot Docs may be daunting, due to their sizes as one interviewee mentioned, "I think IDFA can be very daunting because it is really like this very big thing", the form is however appealing because of the feedback and the questions-and-answer sessions straight after. This was considered beneficial both for the pitch teams, "... for the filmmaker you can get feedback from the people sitting around the table" at once, and the decision-makers can learn, and update themselves, from the comments and questions of other colleagues at the panel. It gives an idea about what works for whom.

Although the decision-makers at the panels usually can see and study the projects before they attend the forums, in a password-protected area online, this is the only presentation they have before meeting with project teams at the Sheffield

Doc/Fest. Sheffield's meet-market is therefore more oriented as a service to the projects and their teams. During the meetings, the project teams are the ones that have fixed tables that the decision-makers move between every 15-20 minutes, not vice versa as at the forum form. The Sheffield Doc/Fest can be seen as a service to the projects teams. The element of how good project teams are in presenting the project in front of an audience is removed. That presentation is a service to the panel, but requires a different kind of talent than making a good documentary film, and is not necessarily talents that go together. The Sheffield meet-market can therefore be seen as serving the filmmakers and the project's content rather than the decision-makers. There could also be an underlying purpose to make the professional decision-makers do their homework, before attending. One interviewee mentioned that it demands a lot of work beforehand,

I think you need to do a lot of work before. You need to read through all these 65 projects, to decide, is this interesting or not. No, not for me because it's, I think it's just too many,

...

and he/she has experienced projects having a different appeal when seen pitched than when seen online. This touches upon the digital communication as opposed to direct face-to-face ones that will be discussed under the theme of networking.

The Nordisk Forum was generally seen as a forum where the projects are of good quality and demanding to the decision-makers for serious commitments. It was also mentioned that at the Nordisk Forum you could find filmmakers with an international scope. The Nordisk forum was also seen as a forum where you can see new projects, as opposed to projects that have been circulating on the smaller forums, or are in their final stages of production.

That's also something which still is quite appealing, [of the Nordisk Forum,] I think to all of the participants that you can actually hear and see something that has not been circulating, [in the smaller EDN forums] but you hear something for the first time.

For Nordic producers the Nordisk Forum is used as an initial place for feedback, before going to the bigger, more international ones like IDFA. The IDFA forum is the originator of forums that others have copied, the Nordisk Forum being one. As one of the financier phrased it:

I remember when [...] started the Nordic Forum, in the same way as Amsterdam, IDFA Forum functions. [...] ...everything that has been happening in the audio vision world started with this IDFA forum model, you see. So that's how it started.

IDFA is therefore, amongst the interviewees, respected as an important big forum for documentaries.

The Nordic film institutes function as financiers at the Nordisk Forum, but not at other forums as IDFA. This is relevant as co-productions between the Nordic film institutes are common in the Nordic countries.

... and in this Forum the film institutes are actually participating as financiers. At some Forums the film institutes do not participate as such, but for us here at Nordisk Forum, this is very relevant because we have a lot of co-production between the Nordic countries, so, and as long as you have a creative co-production between one Nordic producer to another, in another country, it is possible for film institutes to actually come in and step into a project and part take as co-funders of the project....

This has resulted in that creative cinematic documentaries have found shelter at the Nordisk Forum, as one of the interviewee describes it:

There has been a lot of examples where there has been films who have been pitched [at the Nordisk Forum] that the television stations are not interested in. And the reasons for this is that the films have been seen as a little bit too strange to a little bit off the road that they will not draw in the big audiences, that they're too narrow, so then the film, the television stations do not ... support them, and then they don't get anywhere. But because of Nordisk Forum we have several examples of films where there has been like a deliberate decision, where the film project has been pitched, none of the television stations are interested, but then the film institutes have gathered, you know, some of them have gathered and started talking in the pauses and said, that is really interesting project, we just got to lift it off the ground. So the film institutes have deliberately co-operated to really get some of those really like, very individualistic projects off the ground. Projects that the television stations had never believed in.

It is therefore a deliberate intention of the Nordisk Forum, to have on offer creative documentaries. The role of the film institutes, which are both funders of Filmkontakt Nord, national funders of the documentary projects that are being presented, and also act as financiers at the Nordisk Forum is seen here in a nutshell.

... but because the film institutes have a creative strength, an artistic strength, those [creative cinematic] projects have been financed by the film institutes. And then what has been interesting, is that some of these projects that have been financed like this, have been complete successes, and then been sold to television.

IDFA and Hot Docs are more for the slots, and therefore more commercial, as according to one of the interviewee, which has also been in the role of pitching documentary projects,

I've always worked with a very, sort of, maybe on the more difficult end of the creative documentaries, and so HotDocs was quite commercial or already by then and it's my understanding it's gone even more so. That you have to really have something for the slots and that there is really a product whereas in Nordic Forum, we can, because of the presence of the funds there is always this very strong emphasis on very cinematic creative documentaries,

Two of the interviewees mentioned the difference between forums in the USA and North America on the one hand compared to the forums in Europe. That the North America and USA forums are two years ahead of the European ones for example in how the multimedia-platform projects and the TV slots are more integrated than in European forums. This will be discussed further in the theme, changes and cross-media.

1.3. R - Nordisk Forum's regional focus

The regional focus of the Nordisk Forum was seen as a good quality, of three interviewees that said anything about it when mentioned. One of the financiers specifically chooses regional forums as the Nordisk Forum, as oppose to the big mainstream forums. Otherwise this theme did not start off much talking. The likely reason being that other reasons for attending the Nordisk Forum seemed more important for the decision-makers when choosing the forums to attend, as the quality of the projects and the people you meet.

Summary

Above a core documentary film festival circuit has been distinguished, the competition between the film festival financial forums described and how they try to distinct themselves in that competition by positioning themselves uniquely. Their calendar arrangement has been discussed which allows the forums to co-exist parallel each other and make up a circuit possible for the decision-makers to travel on. The form of the financial forums have been discussed, their reputation described and for what purpose filmmakers use them for has come forth.

2. The role of the event – Institutional theory

2.1. N - Networking

The theme of networking during the forums and markets was a natural theme to discuss during the interviews. In this light the forums can surely be classified as field-configuring event, serving the field as a networking hub and for updates. Six significant secondary codes under the networking theme were coded, see appendix III. The sub codes were numbered in an order of surface to depth, micro to macro purposes, or straightforward importance to an underlying wider importance to the field. N1 being the most surfaced, micro and straight forward importance and N7 is the most in-depth, macro and of a wider importance.

2.1.1. N1-Practical meeting point

The most straight forward one is the mention of the forum being a practical meeting point, where people can meet many important people in the industry at the same place for the price (or invitation) of one fare and accommodation. In the case of the Nordisk Forum the importance of the meeting of the film institutes (funders) was considered of great importance. The following sentences from the transcripts describe this.

“So many people that we work with are there...”

[Attending a film festival forum] “... allows me to meet colleges and projects and our chosen producers”

“and you know that you will always meet people there.”

“... you have a chance to meet a lot of people, either officially or unofficially, it's always beneficial,”

“... it establishes a relationship, and that's what's, you know, that's what these things are really about.”

“... it's the chemistry it's the contact, it's sort of like, ... whatever chit chat going on, so I mean that's somehow quite important.”

“... this desire to interact and meet each other and really like get to the bottom with what's happening and how is the status, you know, kind of touch base ... I think this is also a very strong reason of why people are coming.”

2.1.2. N2-Cultivate contacts

Cultivating contacts was mentioned by most as an important reason for attending a forum. “It’s also necessary to have social meetings and so on, ... to keep friends well minded ...”

“It’s about taking up contact from earlier times, ...”

However there is a sign of a change in this regard as some interviewees are using more and more digital communication, by face to face meetings and conversations via platforms as Skype or other social networking sites, being very valuable in precisely this, cultivating already established contacts.

... personally I find that follow up digitally and to maintain that relationship and to keep it going, uhm, digital is really really valuable for that,

Also using digital communication to reach to a wider audience and cultivate contacts with that genre of methods.

We’re also doing ah, more and more digital field relations through facebook through other social networking sites, through online chats and blogs,

2.1.3. N3-Updating yourself

Learning of new trends and developments in the industry on the forums is very clearly important during the attendance at forums. Following the trends, see how the market is changing, see the taste and focus of other colleges,

[you hear and see] ...what kind of projects people are investing in, and you really can learn a lot from the other colleagues you know, because you listen to their arguments, you listen to their discussions. You see also how the market is changing. What people are... I mean the taste you know and the focus and what kind of work for many of the ... a big part of the panel and which are not, you know. So this changes also.

Updating yourself of what is going on in the international broadcasting world and hoping to discover somebody new, was how some described it.

... to talk about how we work, to support the films that we funded, and, ehm, and to you know, learn in address different issues that are going on internationally in the world of international broadcasting documentary etc. So that’s how, and you know that’s why pitching forums are so important to us, ...

2.1.4. N4-discussions with colleges

Discussions with other colleges about projects are a very important issue by attending the forums, attested by the interviews. To exchange opinions about the projects that they are all thinking about, discuss and listen to other colleges arguments and find out what works for whom was mentioned as valuable.

...projects which we are all thinking on and so on, oh what do you think about, and what is the new trends and in which direction does it go.

During the question and answer session straight after a presentation of a project can give a new light on a project. Underlining the importance of the discussions, one interviewee described an experience of a digital online panel, which was efficient in regards to saving time and travelling. What was usually done in two full days was done in four hours. However they felt they missed out on the dynamic discussions that usually took place during the otherwise two days event.

Yeah, we, one year we, uhm, we actually did a panel, on an international panel, here in the office, ... it was really, actually really fun and it was actually exciting, but we found that, now we used to have that panels here in the office that panels would last for two full, very very full days, with the discussions, and we found that doing the panel online, it was more streamlined, yeah, and we got to the point and we talked to ... about the documentary, but there were something... we were done in, something that we would take two full days, to fully discuss, was done in four hours, and, so it, you know while it, while it worked in many ways, it wasn't the fully flashed out really dynamic discussion that we might have had face to face. So...

2.1.5. N5-face to face meetings

The importance and great value of face-to-face meetings with filmmakers was an argument through most interviews. It makes it easier to judge with whom you could work as described by one financier:

[to go to the film festival forums] this is just in a way wonderful because there you meet the people directly, ... you always have the possibility to meet the other people who didn't, who haven't been accepted with their approach so, it's always behind the scenes or... sometimes I discovered the most interesting projects not at the table but behind, you know, when I met the people, so it's ... I mean then [when you go to forums at festivals] you know more about the people, you know, with whom you could work ...

The importance of meeting and get to know people that you are going into a long term business relation with, by spending non-business time with people was mentioned.

That it's easier to meet somebody for the second time describes the importance of the human contact. A few interviewees had experience in meeting filmmakers digitally via platforms as Skype and a few viewpoints came forward on that issue. One is that it is not as efficient as was expected and that face-to-face contacts are very important and that is the most important thing that film festivals provide.

I ended up doing meetings over Skype, with filmmakers. But I have to say that I didn't find it as useful as I thought I would. Everybody is talking about the fact that we have computers now, and we can do these voice calls and we can do web calls and video conferencing, but it really didn't work in terms of having a sense of who the people were that I was meeting with. There is something very very important about face to face contact and that's most important things that festivals provide. ... Face-to-face contact is really critical.

Another viewpoint is that even though digital face-to-face meetings as on Skype do not replace a real face-to-face conversation, they are valuable in the sense that they "establish a relationship", which is what meetings are about. For an initial contact establishment, the face-to-face contact was considered important however.

... we're doing, are doing more meetings via facebook, ichat, all those, so it's extremely valuable in those places too. But it doesn't really replace, I don't think it replaces the one on one. ... Not yet. I don't know that it ever will, I mean there's nothing like, uhm, you know actually ...

Related to this is the metaphor that came forth, of pitching forums as "live theatre[s]" as opposed to digital online viewing of presentations. The dynamic, and energy in the place where many people at the same time see something on a big screen, is very exciting and much more powerful than online.

2.1.6. N6-strengthen each other

While the previous five sub-codes within the networking theme, are descriptive of the concept of a field-configuring event, the sixth sub-code spells it straight out. This issue may not deserve to be sub-coded as such because it was only mentioned directly in few interviews, but is however significant and worth highlighting. This is the opinion that the documentary film festivals and forums have served a role in strengthening the documentary field, and how valuable and important it is that the field members meet and "strengthen themselves":

I think it's quite important [for people working with documentaries at TV channels] to come together and strengthen themselves [...] within the TV channels I think it's very important to, at a certain moment in the year to get

together and to really talk about strategies, and what is, what is changing and ...

Even that it can be shown that the field has become stronger by the fact that,

...documentaries [are] much higher in acceptance now than [they were] fifteen years ago. ... investigative documentaries ... they have high [viewing] ratings and they are very accepted in societies, NGO's [non governmental organizations] are working with them. They are using film for their political work etc. So ... a lot of things have happened...

Another viewpoint of the configuring effects of the film festival forum, was that the production culture, both in Europe and in the Nordic countries have become more professionalized, as, for example, before it was more common that people had two hats as director/producer, whereas today it is more common that there are specific producers and directors for each project. Sometimes the producer's name is more known than the directors.

Still back in the nineties they, and early 2000 they would be a lot more, director/producers, there still are, but at that time it was sort of more regular it would be you would have a director/producer and then some director would have producers or there would be some production houses that would bring projects over, which is now more the common case that this is a, it can be the name of the producer that's more sort of, the name of the producer is known and then you can therefore rely to production to be some, of some standard.

And even as a meaningful actor in the field of documentary films, the Nordisk Forum has,

... made both the television stations, in the Nordic regions, a little bit aware, and to not being so scared of really creative and individually told stories. It has, I think this is one of the reasons why we have been able in the Nordic regions to keep a hand and the guardiance and you know, cater to the more creative, creatively told, artistically told, personally told documentaries.

2.2. CM - Changes and cross-media

The theme of changes and cross-media turned out to give a wide range of topics and discussions. This theme surrounds the very evolution of the field. If there is one theme beyond the discussions that includes all the interviews, it is the difference between USA and Europe. This is both in regards to adaption to the digital, cross-media development, and, maybe the core reason for the distinction, the difference between the European subsidized culture and the USA non-subsidized culture in the film industry.

2.2.1. Cross-media adaption

While the Europeans expressed general positivity towards cross-media ways, and are reasonable updated about what it is about, the interviewees from the USA seemed further adapted to the development. One European financier mentioned that USA was further ahead than the forums in Europe in regards to this.

That's the huge difference I noticed between, between [... European] festivals and our pitches and Forums and the pitches in North America. ... Banff for example, ... it has one TV business festival and it's also, at the same point now, a few years ago [...] the multimedia was under the TV and now it's in the same level,

The Europeans, and their organizations, make a distinction between documentary films that are made the cross-media way or are made for other platforms than TV on the one hand, and the ones that find their way into TV channels. The USA perspective is no longer (at least formally) making this distinction, but integrating multimedia departments and broadcasting programming departments, looking at films as content in a similar way.

... our interactive team is now part of the programming team. ... They used to be a separate department and, but we're looking at content as, and programming as, as the same thing whether it goes to broadcast or multiplatform aspects, we're looking at coming from the same department now. We're looking at it fully as content, no matter what the platform might be, so.

Europeans hint that there is a difference in quality of films made the cross-media way or for other platforms, than the ones that are made for TV channels or in co-production with TV broadcasters.

I think working with commissioning editors can be also a support in quality you know, and of discussion, and I think can increase also the quality of the film. I mean there is maybe the tendency you know to do your film by yourself, to do the writing, the camera, the editing, everything by yourself and to finance it yourself, I mean all this is fine, you know, I think it's just a different, it's just a different approach and what I would hope for is that it opens the market and it gives much more possibilities for people who maybe normally would not have the possibility to be accepted by a TV channel ... TV shouldn't be the only measure, you know the only ... criteria for making a film.

There came also forth some skepticism about if the cross-media way of thinking will suit the creative documentary genre and filmmakers, nor if this way of thinking will produce creative documentaries.

now [with the] the crowd financing, when it's easier to finance yourself, of course there is now great tools to do that, but we haven't actually seen, we've seen actually one major documentary being crowd financed really, but then we, this type of stuff that we also want there [...] creative cinema documentaries for the more perhaps cultural values, I don't see them, that you can really make them in crowd financing way in such a level, that you can make them...

One USA distributor in this research, views cross-media ways of thinking as where the most creative ideas come from and that will influence established forms and broadens the spectrum of the audience. He criticizes the US cable networks that fill their TV slots with mainstream documentaries:

they're not looking for films that are going to, you know rock the boat, they're just looking for nice films that are going to be, you know, successful like previous nice films they had and [...] And I think it's unhealthy when filmmakers are making movies for slots. ... It's just you know, it just limits the possibilities and the creativity,

This can be seen as a description of how the digitalization challenges both the aesthetic and commercial side of documentary films.

Understandings that came forth in the interviews about what cross-media is about were reasonable the same, although it was sensed that the interviewees from the USA are more advanced and used to the concepts than the Europeans. The cross-media multiplatform ways are understood as a tendency to do much of the production yourself as funding, filming, directing and taking responsibility of the distribution. Making additional material of the documentaries, as short, value adding versions of the main documentary and using social networking sites for awareness of films, offering online chats about the documentary on organization's websites. One European interviewee mentioned that currently the cross-media evolution is in the hands of the producers, but that the financial forums are not very well organized for this.

... and currently it's on the side of the producers where it happens, huh. The Forums at the festivals are not ..uhu... good organized in this way.

The viewpoint on multi platforms and cross-media ways as positive opportunities was noticed from both European and USA interviewees.

When asked if the form of the forums will be affected of the cross-media development, there were few direct answers. Some doubted that they would be much affected, as will be explained under the future heading theme. However, the director

of Filmkontakt Nord, that was one of the interviewees, had a straightforward answer. There will be changes in the documentary film festival forum circuit as a networked initiative geared for adaptation towards the digital evolution in the field has started. Nordisk Forum and Hot Docs will have a collaboration geared specifically towards interactive, cross-media projects. This initiative is called docXchange and is open for European and North American producers working on interactive documentary projects. There is a two-step initiative, the first part taking place in May at the Hot Docs festival and is a three-day seminar/workshop and a one-day financing forum at the Nordisk Forum (Filmkontakt Nord)¹⁰ (Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, 2011)¹¹.

... we first host a seminar together with 12 Nordic slash European producers and 12 American slash Canadian producers, so all in all 24 producers with concrete cross-media projects. ... the day after the Nordisk Forum, ... there will cross-media pitch, [...] documentary pitch, and the financiers that we're going to invite for that will have to be different. Some of them will be the same as in the Nordisk Forum, but there will be some of them who need to be exchanged,

On the financing forum at the Nordisk Forum, financiers will be invited that are already working with interactive documentaries. Some of those will be other decision-makers than the ones that regularly attend the Nordisk Forum.

This is an example of how film festivals adapt to technological advancement and evolution of the field. They are in a responsive position towards the evolvement of the field, however having the urge to be updated and finding it to be their role to do so.

...this development ... we have to take it seriously... and start working with it on an industrial level, and I think the Nordisk Forum ... is the event to do that. ... we need to bring in those experts, we need to bring in that field into our professional arena.

This is clearly a network between two film festival, the way Dina Iordanova sees it, formed around "specific agendas that focus on fostering and/or showcasing [...] a certain type of cinematic product." (Iordanova, 2009, p. 32). Film festivals do not automatically work together unless there is a specific agenda. This can be rephrased in line with organizational theory. Firstly (the position towards field), the field-

¹⁰ <http://www.filmkontakt.com/docXchange-458/>

¹¹ http://www.hotdocs.ca/media/press_releases/call_for_interactive_doc_projects_to_participate_in_new_docxchange

configuring events, Nordisk Forum and Hot Docs, have a responsive position towards the evolution of the field. They do not have powerful influence on the future evolution of the field of documentary. They are not cradles of technological advancements in the field or sites where the real life that documentaries are made about or take place. Secondly (service to field), this collaboration between the Nordisk Forum and Hot Docs, named docXchange that is fostering interactive, cross-media projects, is enhancing the festivals primary service to the field. The festivals are primarily sites for social networking and updates or knowledge provisions for the field of documentaries. Thirdly (role in evolution of field), the collaboration of the Nordisk Forum and Hot Docs offer a mechanism (the docXchange initiative) that bridges the gap between the individual interactive production teams of the field (micro perspective) that are producing innovative cinematic products, and the digital development and market in the field (macro perspective) that producers are obliged to adapt to. Through this social interaction a collective knowledge is produced in the field. Field-configuring events do exactly this, “offer middle-range mechanism that bridge the gap between these two [micro and macro] perspectives” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 1019).

2.3. F - Future of the forums

There is a general believe that there is a future for the financing forums. However, some mentioned that their role will diminish. The doubt that nothing will replace the face-to-face meetings and “live theatre” elements of the forums was used to support that.

The great thing about a traditional forum, which I like is that it is a lot of people at once are, get to see the project, get a sense of the project, immediately the project goes on their radar. So immediately we all know about it, and there is something really great about that.

...television is extraordinary, but there's nothing like going to see either a film or even a documentary on the big screen, with an audience, to have the human reaction around you, and I think that's one of the exciting thing about pitching forums, is just that, you're in a group together, there is a level of the dynamics, the energy, just from being with other human beings, uhm, and it's kind of in a way like live theatre, uhm, in some ways too, it's a performance, yeh, it's a performance for the producers and filmmakers, but it's really, it's very exciting,

That it is a win-win situation for everybody attending: the producers need financing, the various platforms need films were the opinions.

Summary

Above the networking role of the film festival forums for this genre of films have been thoroughly described. Their role of maintaining relations, keeping professionals updated, the importance of face-to-face meetings has been discussed and how the gathering of these events strengthens the field. The way digital advancements is affecting and changing the field has been described and how this is changing both the field and how the film festivals and forums are adapting and channeling that advancement. What has also been discussed is how the technical advancement that digitalization is, both affects the content and style of documentary films.

Conclusion

Discussions and summary

This thesis has unraveled the film festival phenomenon from the perspective of organizational theory and from the perspectives of the new study field, film festival studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and the co-financing forum Nordisk Forum was the case study. With the intention of expanding the perspective outside of the case study the opinions and viewpoints of the international decision-makers that attended the Nordisk Forum 2010, were sought after. The results from the interviews support evidence from the film festival research on film festival circuits. There is a core documentary film festival circuit that professionals travel on. The film festivals compete of the attendance of professionals in the field with efforts in making themselves unique and placing themselves in a convenient spot in the calendar year. The documentary film festivals coexist parallel to each other with little networking activities except for the purpose of fostering a specific cinematic product. One example of an ongoing collaboration is between the Nordisk Forum and Hot Docs which has the purpose of adapting to and fostering interactive documentary productions.

The role of financial forums like the Nordisk Forum for the audiovisual field of documentary films has been looked at. In particular their function as sites for building relations and follow up on trends and novelties within the field. The financial forums role of configuring the field of documentaries has been looked at with an emphasis on their function as networking hubs and a place for learning of new developments and trends within the field. The film festival event fits therefore well to the concept of a field-configuring event that are both products and the drivers of field evolution. They influence the field evolution indirectly and are in a rather responsive position towards the field evolution.

It has been reasoned in this thesis that the digital evolvement has challenged both the aesthetics and genres of documentary films. Also in particular the commercial side of selling and distributing them. Film festivals are challenged by this and try to adapt to this technological evolvement by offering workshops and financial forums specifically geared towards this development. Technological advancements have in history of film had impact on the form of exhibition and aesthetic of films, as Marijke de Valck describes when the technological transition of silent films to sound

films evolved (de Valck, 2007). Seen from this perspective, the view of many professionals today that see film festivals as in a state of crisis, even to the extent that they have to reinvent themselves, seems very relevant (Cousins, 2009; Roddick, 2009). Digitalization is a challenge for filmmakers of all genres and is evolving different types of documentary films that are thought of different audiences and for new platforms. This will evolve with the people that use the different viewing platforms and the generation that grows up using them.

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Pictures:

Picture 1: The Filmkontakt Nord organizational structure.

Picture 2: The Nordisk Forum institutional structure.

Picture 3: The Nordic connections and relationships at the Nordisk Forum.

Appendix I

Topic guide- 1st version

Aim and objective

To understand the **motivations** and **interests** of the international decision-makers who participate at the Nordisk Forum. Get different viewpoints.

Inviting a description:

- How would you describe the Nordisk Forum to someone that has never been there before?
- Could you tell me how you perceive the purpose of the Nordisk Forum?

Motivations and interests for coming to the Nordisk Forum.

- Could you tell me what your motivations are to come to the Nordisk Forum?
- Do you find what you are looking for at the Nordisk Forum?
- What do you think of the Forum being open for Baltic and Nordic applicants only?
 - Is this an advantage for your interest? Why?
- Has your interests in the Nordisk Forum changed over the years for you?
- In your experience, is networking efficient at the Nordisk Forum?
- From your experience and in your opinion, what sort of standard of documentary projects would you say the Nordisk Forum is a platform for?
- In your opinion, does the Nordisk Forum, (with it's rules and mission) work well in combination or interaction with the rules and/or guidelines of your institution?
 - Have the rules and/or guidelines of your institution changed over time that has changed this relationship with the Nordisk Forum, in your opinion?
- Within your institution/company; have you noticed a policy change (over time), that moves towards local financing and away from international co-financing?
- What other documentary festivals do you attend? Is there a documentary film festival circuit you travel on?

Projective questions:

- For whom do you think the Nordisk Forum suits best, the way it is today?

Test a hypothesis, if applicable, AFTER A FEW INTERVIEWS.

Additional reminders:

Taking things further:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- What makes you have that opinion?
- Why is this important to you?

Draw forward contextual information of what comes up in the interview:

- When did you hear about this, where were you and whom were you with?
- What did other people you were with say at the time?
- What was your reaction?

From general to specific and vice versa of what comes up in the interview:

- Can you give me an example of that?

- From your experience, is this typical of what people think attending the Nordisk Forum?

Naïve position:

- I am not very familiar with that, could you tell me a little more about it?
- How would you describe that to someone that is new to this/the Nordisk Forum?

Final thoughts:

- I think we have covered a lot of interesting issues, is there anything we have not covered?
- Is there something else you would like to tell me?

Appendix II

Topic guide – Final version

DESCRIPTIONS

Can you describe your job to me?

THE ANNUAL TOUR

- Thinking about your attendance and travelling between film festivals and events, How would you describe this experience over the year between these events?
 - Who do you go to?
 - How do you choose them? Do you spend much time choosing?

INTERNATIONAL VERSUS REGIONAL

- If you compare for me, in your experience, the more **international festivals / events that you go to, to the more regional/national NISCHE** or specialized events as the Nordisk Forum. How are they different for you?
 - What do you think of the Forum being open for Baltic and Nordic applicants only?
 - Is this an advantage for your interests? Why?
 - From your experience and in your opinion, what sort of standard of documentary projects would you say the Nordisk Forum is a platform for?
 - They need to have secured financial backing from a national and regional financier, and also a letter of backing from a commissioning editor.

NETWORKING

- In your experience, is networking efficient at the Nordisk Forum?
 - Are the relationships that you maintain of the people that attend the Nordisk Forum practically useful for your work?
 - Is the attendance important in regards to face to face contact, instead of online ones or over the phone?
 - **WHY IS MEETING OTHER COLLEGES IMPORTANT!**

COMPARISON

- **IF YOU COMPARE THE NORDISK FORUM FORM TO THE IDFA, SHEFFIELD, HOTDOCS FORUMS FOR EXAMPLE, OR OTHER FORUMS AND PITCHPLACES YOU ATTEND:**
 - Which one is the most efficient for you and why?
 - **International** versus **regional**

CHANGES – CROSS-MEDIA

- Now when we are moving into cross-media way of making films. In the spirit of Peter Broderick and his recommendations to producers and directors, to tailor the distribution to each project, stressing the importance of seeking alternative ways. The old ways do not function anymore, he says. Directors should make personal contacts to their fans... crowd funding etc.
 - Now the Nordisk Forum is for example filled with financiers and tv commissioners and film institutes.
 - **WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THIS?**
 - **HAVE YOU NOTICED CHANGES IN BEHAVIOURS OF PRODUCERS**

FUTURE

- How do you see the future for an event like the Nordisk Forum?
- Are these kind of forum outdated and no need for?

Appendix III

Codebook

Codes that refers to film festival studies:

Code	label	Description
T	the annual tour	The travel between forums and pitches each year.
C	Comparison of forums.	Comparison between the forums and pitch places.
R	NF regional focus	Nordisk Forum regional focus, discussions about that.

Codes that supports the concept of field-configuring event:

Code	label	Description
N	networking	Meeting and interact with colleges and discussions of the importance of it.
CM	Changes/cross-media.	Discussion about cross-media ways and how that affects Forums.
F	Future	Discussion about the future of forums and pitching places.

Six sub-codes of N networking in an order of surface to depth, micro to macro purposes, or straight forward importance to a underlying wider importance to the field. N1 being the most surfaced, micro and straight forward importance and N6 is the most in-depth, macro and of a wider importance:

Code	label	Description
N1	practical meeting point	Festivals as practical too meet the industry gathered at one place.
N2	cultivate contacts	Socialize and keep friends well minded.
N3	updating yourself	Learn of new developments in the industry.
N4	discussions with colleges	Discussing with colleges and compare what works for whom.
N5	face to face meetings	Discussions about face to face meetings.
N6	strengthen each other	Strengthen and support each other within the field.

Codes for the interviewees:

F1, F2, F3 and F5:	international financiers
D3, D6 and D7 :	international distributors
Mo1:	moderator of Nordisk Forum
Ma1:	director of Filmkontakt Nord